Boeing Tests Entire Weapon System on Advanced Tactical Laser Aircraft

ST. LOUIS, Aug. 13, 2008 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] has successfully completed the first ground test of the entire weapon system integrated aboard the Advanced Tactical Laser (ATL) aircraft, achieving a key milestone in the ATL Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration program.

During the test Aug. 7 at Kirtland Air Force Base, N.M., the ATL aircraft, a C-130H, fired its high-energy chemical laser through its beam control system. The beam control system acquired a ground target and guided the laser beam to the target, as directed by ATL's battle management system. The laser passes through a rotating turret on the aircraft's belly.

"By firing the laser through the beam control system for the first time, the ATL team has begun to demonstrate the functionality of the entire weapon system integrated aboard the aircraft," said Scott Fancher, vice president and general manager of Boeing Missile Defense Systems. "This is a major step toward providing the ultra-precision engagement capability that the warfighter needs to dramatically reduce collateral damage."

After conducting additional tests on the ground and in the air, the program will demonstrate ATL's military utility by firing the laser in-flight at mission-representative ground targets later this year.

On May 13, the high-energy laser was fired aboard the ATL aircraft for the first time, demonstrating reliable operations previously achieved in a laboratory. During that test, an onboard calorimeter captured the laser beam before it left the aircraft.

ATL, which Boeing is developing for the U.S. Department of Defense, will destroy, damage or disable targets with little to no collateral damage, supporting missions on the battlefield and in urban operations. Boeing's ATL industry team includes L-3 Communications/Brashear, which made the laser turret, and HYTEC Inc., which made various structural elements of the weapon system.

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