Boeing-led Team Completes Major Upgrade for NATO AWACS Fleet

SEATTLE, Dec. 03, 2008 -- A team led by Boeing [NYSE: BA] has completed a major mission-system upgrade for the NATO Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) fleet under the $1.32 billion Mid-Term Modernisation Programme.

Modification of the 17th and final AWACS aircraft was completed on schedule Nov. 3 by the European Aeronautic Defence and Space Company (EADS), as an industry partner and subcontractor to Boeing.

Boeing also delivered two NATO AWACS mission simulators it had modified into the Mid-Term configuration.

"Achieving this milestone represents the culmination of a true international effort by many talented people from across North America and Europe, including the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Programme Management Agency, Force Command, the NATO E-3A Component, the U.S Air Force and more than 15 key subcontractors from 12 nations," said Lee Strom, NATO AWACS programs manager for Boeing.

"This has been, and will continue to be, a prime example of how great companies and their customers can work together on a global scale to field a world-class product," Strom added. "NATO AWACS is now the premier airborne surveillance aircraft."

The enhancements provide a superior view of the battlespace by integrating data from various AWACS sensors and other sources, as well as an increase in the number of targets the system can manage at one time.

This highly capable mission system allows NATO AWACS aircraft to receive mission orders from remote locations and updates via satellite data links, and to electronically integrate this information.

The system offers increased interoperability with other AWACS platforms as well as with fighter aircraft, ground stations, ships and satellites.

The enhancements include:

- New situation display consoles with flat-panel displays and user-friendly navigation
- An open-architecture mission computing system, allowing cost-effective future upgrades to the hardware and software
- Multisensor integration that improves the reliability and accuracy of target tracking and identification, and eases operator workload
- Digital communications systems to improve crew access and use of radio links, including improved over-the-horizon communication via satellite
- Broad-spectrum VHF radios that will support increased operations with Eastern European nations' air and ground forces
- An improved friend-or-foe identification system compatible with emerging international air traffic control systems' requirements
- Upgraded aircraft navigation that takes advantage of the latest Global Positioning System technology.

A unit of The Boeing Company, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is one of the world's largest space and defense businesses specializing in innovative and capabilities-driven customer solutions, and the world's largest and most versatile manufacturer of military aircraft. Headquartered in St. Louis, Boeing Integrated Defense Systems is a $32.1 billion business with 71,000 employees worldwide.

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