Boeing Laser Systems Destroy Unmanned Aerial Vehicles in Tests

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M., Nov. 18, 2009 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] in May demonstrated the ability of mobile laser weapon systems to perform a unique mission: track and destroy small unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).

During the U.S. Air Force-sponsored tests at the Naval Air Warfare Center in China Lake, Calif., the Mobile Active Targeting Resource for Integrated eXperiments (MATRIX), which was developed by Boeing under contract to the Air Force Research Laboratory, used a single, high-brightness laser beam to shoot down five UAVs at various ranges. Laser Avenger, a Boeing-funded initiative, also shot down a UAV. Representatives of the Air Force and Army observed the tests.

"The Air Force and Boeing achieved a directed-energy breakthrough with these tests," said Gary Fitzmire, vice president and program director of Boeing Missile Defense Systems' Directed Energy Systems unit. "MATRIX's performance is especially noteworthy because it demonstrated unprecedented, ultra-precise and lethal acquisition, pointing and tracking at long ranges using relatively low laser power."

Bill Baker, chief scientist of the Air Force Research Laboratory's Directed Energy Directorate, praised his team and Boeing for these successful UAV shootdowns.

"These tests validate the use of directed energy to negate potential hostile threats against the homeland," Baker said. "The team effort of Boeing and the Air Force in developing MATRIX will pay major dividends for the warfighter now and in the years ahead."

As part of the overall counter-UAV demonstration, Boeing also successfully test-fired a lightweight 25mm machine gun from the Laser Avenger platform to potentially further the hybrid directed energy/kinetic energy capability against UAV threats.

Boeing Directed Energy Systems, based in Albuquerque, developed MATRIX, a mobile, trailer-mounted test bed that integrates with existing test-range radar. Directed Energy Systems and Boeing Combat Systems in St. Louis cooperatively developed Laser Avenger, which integrates a directed-energy weapon together with the existing kinetic weapons on the proven Avenger air defense system developed by Combat Systems.

Boeing leads the way in developing laser weapon systems for a variety of U.S. Air Force, Army and Navy applications. These systems include the Airborne Laser, Advanced Tactical Laser, Free Electron Laser, High Energy Laser Technology Demonstrator and Tactical Relay Mirror System.

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 billion business with 70,000 employees worldwide.

# # #

Contact:

Marc Selinger
Boeing Missile Defense Systems
703-872-4240
marc.selinger@boeing.com

Chuck Cadena
Boeing Missile Defense Systems
703-872-4503
chuck.cadena@boeing.com

Additional assets available online: Photos (1)