Boeing Laser Avenger Destroys Improvised Explosive Devices in Test

HUNTSVILLE, Ala., Dec. 1, 2009 -- The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] and the U.S. Army successfully completed a test in September in which a laser system mounted on an Avenger combat vehicle destroyed 50 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) similar to those used by adversaries in war zones.

During the laser firings Sept. 22-24 at Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Laser Avenger neutralized multiple types of IEDs, including large-caliber artillery munitions and smaller bomblets and mortar rounds. The system operated at safe distances from the targets and under a variety of conditions, including different angles and ranges. Soldiers traveling with Laser Avenger would not have to get out of their armored vehicles or wait for an explosive ordnance disposal team to destroy an IED and continue their mission.

"Improvised explosive devices continue to threaten U.S. troops deployed in war zones, and Laser Avenger provides the ultra-precision, stand-off capability our warfighters need today to safely neutralize those threats," said Gary Fitzmire, vice president and program director of Boeing Missile Defense Systems' Directed Energy Systems unit. "In addition, Laser Avenger's versatility makes it useful in a wide range of battlefield conditions."

The U.S. Defense Department's Joint IED Defeat Organization (JIEDDO) sponsored the test, which was conducted by Boeing and the Army Program Executive Office for Missiles and Space.

The test follows 2008 and 2009 demonstrations in which Laser Avenger shot down a small unmanned aerial vehicle in each event, and a 2007 demonstration in which an earlier version of Laser Avenger destroyed five targets representing IEDs and unexploded ordnance.

Boeing Directed Energy Systems in Albuquerque, N.M., and the Boeing Combat Systems Global Forces and Robotics Systems team in Huntsville 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. Laser Avenger is a Boeing-funded initiative to demonstrate that directed energy weapons are maturing and are relevant to today's battlefield.

Boeing is developing laser systems for a variety of U.S. Air Force, Army and Navy warfighter applications. These systems include the Airborne 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.

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