Boeing F/A-18E/F IRST System Advances to Next Development Phase

New Super Hornet Infrared Search and Track (IRST) system tracks targets via infrared emissions

Approved for Engineering and Manufacturing Development

ST. LOUIS, July 21, 2011 -- The Boeing [NYSE: BA] F/A-18E/F Super Hornet Infrared Search and Track (IRST) program received a Milestone B Acquisition Decision Memorandum from the U.S. Navy on July 13. This allows the program to advance to its next development phase -- Engineering and Manufacturing Development.

The IRST system is a passive, long-range sensor that searches for and detects infrared emissions. The system can simultaneously track multiple targets and provide a highly effective air-to-air targeting capability, even when encountering advanced threats equipped with radar-jamming technology.

"The IRST sensor system will expand Super Hornet detection and targeting capability in multiple mission profiles, including electronically denied environments," said Tim Adrian, Boeing F/A-18E/F IRST program manager. "The F/A-18E/F features a balanced approach to combat survivability and lethality, employing a variety of onboard sensors that provide aircrews with unmatched situational awareness. The new IRST system will continue to expand the Super Hornet's advanced capability."

IRST is a critical element of the Navy's F/A-18E/F Block II Super Hornet Flight Plan, a series of planned capability enhancements that ensures the Super Hornet will continue to outdistance known and emerging threats over the coming decades.

Subcontracted to Boeing on the IRST contract are Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT], which is producing the IRST sensor; GE Aviation [NYSE: GE], for the fuel tank assembly that will contain the sensor; and Meggitt Defense Systems Inc., Irvine, Calif., for the unit's cooling subassembly.

The Boeing Super Hornet is a multirole aircraft, able to perform virtually every mission in the tactical spectrum, including air superiority, day/night strike with precision-guided weapons, fighter escort, close air support, suppression of enemy air defenses, maritime strike, reconnaissance, forward air control and tanker missions.

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