Boeing Brings B-52 into Digital Age with Significant Communications Upgrade

Enables in-flight task changing and weapons retargeting

Greatly improves situational awareness and mission

OKLAHOMA CITY, May 7, 2013 -- Boeing [NYSE: BA] is providing an upgraded communications system for U.S. Air Force B-52 bombers so aircrews can send and receive information via satellite links, allowing crews to change mission plans and retarget weapons in flight and better interact with aircraft and ground forces.

To date, mission information has been uploaded to a B-52 only before a flight, not during. The upgrade, one of the largest improvements to the venerable bomber fleet, will therefore significantly improve B-52 effectiveness and flexibility.

"We are bringing this amazing workhorse of a bomber into the digital age and giving our customer the infrastructure necessary for continued future improvements," said Scot Oathout, Boeing B-52 program director.

The upgrade will be done through a new $76 million Combat Network Communications Technology (CONECT) contract that covers low rate initial production of the first CONECT kits, along with spare parts and maintenance and service at Tinker Air Force Base, Okla. System installation will begin during the latter part of 2014.

Other improvements will include a state-of-the-art computing network with workstations at each crew position and an integrated digital interphone with increased capacity; it will enable crew members to talk to one another on headsets with noise-cancelling technology.

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