Boeing Awarded $250 Million Contract to Modernize NATO AWACS Fleet

Move from analog to digital flight deck and avionics technology boosts mission efficiency by increasing access to worldwide airspace

SEATTLE, Aug. 6, 2014 – Boeing [NYSE: BA] has received a contract from NATO worth approximately $250 million to install digital flight decks and avionics on 13 of the alliance's Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, which are based on the Boeing 707 commercial airplane.

The new technology ensures compliance with current and future air traffic control and navigation requirements, giving the aircraft broader access to airspace around the world.

"Increasing airspace access means greater mission efficiency by saving time and fuel during operations," said Jon Hunsberger, Boeing AWACS program manager. "The improvements also provide the pilot and co-pilot user-friendly and customizable engine, navigation and radar data."

Additionally, the upgrade will result in a cost savings in personnel because the flight deck crew will be reduced from four to three. It also solves the challenge of finding out-of-production avionics for the AWACS fleet by utilizing readily available commercial-off-the-shelf digital avionics. The modifications begin in 2016 and will be completed by 2018.

Under an earlier Engineering Manufacturing and Development (EMD) contract, Boeing installed a new digital flight deck and avionics on one NATO AWACS. Flight testing begins in the fourth quarter of this year with delivery scheduled for December 2015. As part of the EMD contract, Boeing also will upgrade the flight deck and avionics of a U.S. AWACS aircraft beginning this November.

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