United Kingdom Awards Lockheed Martin $5 Million Order For Desert Hawk III Unmanned Aircraft Systems

The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence awarded Lockheed Martin [NYSE: LMT] a $5.1 million contract for additional Desert Hawk III unmanned aircraft vehicles.

Desert Hawk III's improved payloads maximize target detection and recognition by providing 360-degree -- daytime and nighttime -- coverage in a common turret package. These latest generation payloads also include a Lockheed Martin-developed navigation system that delivers more refined target position information and superior image stability to the troops.

Awarded by the MoD's Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) organization, the latest contract calls for Lockheed Martin to deliver the Desert Hawk III air vehicles -- which as a result of ongoing obsolescence management and technology advancements in this area feature enhanced 360-degree infrared and 360-degree, 10-times zoom electro optics -- by Fall 2010.

"We are extremely pleased with the enhanced capability that these new payloads bring to Desert Hawk III and the British Army," said Duncan Robbins, program manager for mini-UAV systems, UK MOD DE&S. "Desert Hawk's latest enhancements allow it to operate more effectively in difficult conditions and provide our soldiers with greater situational awareness in a very timely manner."

"The battle-proven Desert Hawk III can operate in high winds, extended altitude and extreme temperatures, making it very effective in areas such as Afghanistan," said Mark Swymeler, a vice president for Lockheed Martin's Ship and Aviation Systems line of business. "Unlike some other UAVs, it is extremely quiet and virtually undetectable beyond 150 meters."

Equipped with steerable, plug-and-play imaging payloads, the Desert Hawk has provided the British Army with greater situational awareness capabilities in Afghanistan since 2006.

The eight-pound Desert Hawk III features an open architecture environment and consists of a light weight, hand-launched, ruggedized air vehicle with snap-on Plug and Playloads(TM), a portable ground station and a remote video terminal. The snap-on payload capability allows a single operator to swap sensors on the air vehicle in less than one minute to meet immediate and rapidly changing mission requirements.

Headquartered in Bethesda, Md., Lockheed Martin is a global security company that employs about 136,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture, integration and sustainment of advanced technology systems, products and services. The Corporation's 2009 sales from continuing operations were $44.5 billion.

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