MEADS Life Cycle Costs Significantly Lower Than Fielded Systems, With Coverage Area Eight Times Greater

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ORLANDO, Fla., MUNICH and ROME, Sept. 22 /PRNewswire/ -- The Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) program has presented a required life cycle cost estimate to the three partner nations that proves the MEADS system design will significantly reduce the cost of ownership compared to air and missile defense systems that are currently fielded.

MEADS will especially reduce operation and support (O&S) costs. Ordinarily, over two-thirds of the total cost of ownership is spent in this area, but MEADS O&S costs are about half. Savings result from features of the MEADS design that include high reliability, automated fault detection, prognostics, two-level maintenance and a reduction in the number of system elements.

Additionally, MEADS was shown to defend up to eight times the coverage area with far fewer system assets. This allows for a substantial reduction in deployed personnel and equipment, and demand on airlift. Once in theater, MEADS elements emplace more quickly and can be repositioned dynamically.

"There's a clear advantage over the older system designs that MEADS will replace," said MEADS International President Steve Barnoske. "Not only does MEADS get to the theater quicker and keep up with maneuver forces, it doesn't require nearly as many vehicles or personnel to provide better protection against 21st century threats."

NAMEADSMA General Manager Gregory Kee said, "The combination of advanced 360-degree sensors, near-vertical launch capability and the improved PAC-3 MSE Missile gives MEADS a far greater defended area. MEADS active phased array, digital beamforming radars make full use of the extended range of the PAC-3 MSE Missile. MEADS is timely and needed in today's threat environment."

All hardware for each MEADS Major End Item has been approved, and integration and test has begun in support of flight tests starting in 2012.

Under development by Germany, Italy and the United States, MEADS is a mobile system that will replace Patriot in the United States and Nike Hercules in Italy. It will replace Patriot and the retired Hawk system in Germany. The system is designed to permit full interoperability between the U.S. and allied armies, and it is the only medium-range air defense system to provide full 360-degree coverage.

MEADS will meet challenging new requirements not addressed by any previous or planned Air and Missile Defense system. The system will combine superior battlefield protection with extensive flexibility, allowing it to protect maneuver forces and critical assets against tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and aircraft. It also provides an open architecture for 21st century air and missile defense system-of-system integration capabilities that allow operational mission-tailoring. MEADS is designed to provide greater firepower with less manpower than current systems, producing dramatic operation and support cost savings.

A multinational joint venture headquartered in Orlando, FL, MEADS International's participating companies are MBDA in Italy, LFK in Germany and Lockheed Martin in the United States. Today, 1,800 employees from these companies are developing MEADS, which is closely watched as a model program for collaborative transatlantic development.

The United States funds 58 percent of the MEADS program, and European partners Germany and Italy provide 25 percent and 17 percent respectively as partners in the NATO Medium Extended Air Defense System Management Organization (NAMEADSMO). Its program management agency NAMEADSMA is located in Huntsville, AL.

SOURCE Lockheed Martin

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