MEADS Demonstrates Interoperability With NATO Air Command And Control System In Joint Test

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ORLANDO, Fla., MUNICH and ROME, Sept. 27 /PRNewswire/ -- The Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) battle management capability successfully demonstrated interoperability with the NATO Air Command and Control System (ACCS) during a Joint Project Optic Windmill (JPOW) test in July. The interface test was conducted using the Active Layer Theatre Ballistic Missile Defense (ALTBMD) Integration Test Bed being developed by NATO.

The test proved a key interoperability milestone for the MEADS, ALTBMD and ACCS programs, and is an early maturity demonstration for the MEADS battle management and command, control, computers, communication and intelligence (BMC4I) capability. MEADS is designed to interoperate with a wide range of platforms and command and control structures.

NATO's ALTBMD program is tasked with designing a theater missile defense architecture that will include MEADS as a key component. The NATO Air Command and Control System is the overarching tactical command and control element for NATO theater missile defense.

Through interoperability features designed into the system, MEADS will dramatically improve combat effectiveness and situational awareness, reducing the potential for fratricide. The result is air and missile defense designed for coalition warfare. MEADS units from the U.S., Germany or Italy will seamlessly integrate into each nation's, or NATO's, combat architecture as required.

MEADS International President Steve Barnoske noted, "Joint Project Optic Wind was an early opportunity to prove out the interoperability of the MEADS battle management architecture and its ability to serve as the integrating element for an air and missile defense task force. Open, modular software gives MEADS great flexibility to accommodate additional requirements."

NATO MEADS Management Agency General Manager Gregory Kee said, "The opportunity to work closely with the NATO ALTBMD office has allowed us to demonstrate this key interoperability milestone much sooner than previously planned. The combination of the ALTBMD architecture and the MEADS capability represents the highly effective air and missile defense system NATO has envisioned."

The integration event took place during the experiment phase of the NATO JPOW exercise, during which the MEADS battle management capability shared simulation and military communications data, including track reports for different tactical ballistic missile threats. The test represents the first time that the MEADS program has been authorized to exchange data outside of its three partner nations.

The JPOW tests exercise theater air and missile defense elements to develop and explore interoperability. They provide an opportunity to demonstrate new concepts, doctrine, tactics, technology and techniques.

Hardware designs for each MEADS Major End Item (MEI) were approved through the MEI level reviews in August 2009, clearing the program to fabricate end items. MEADS system elements are continuing integration and testing at system integration laboratories in the U.S. and Europe, and are on track for flight tests at White Sands Missile Range, NM, 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 also replace Patriot and the already retired Hawk system in Germany. The system is designed to permit full interoperability between the U.S. and allied forces, 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.

http://www.meads-amd.com

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