360-Degree MEADS Radar Begins Integration Testing At Italian Test Range

ORLANDO, Fla., MUNICH and ROME, April 19, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- In preparation for an intercept flight test later this year, the first Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) Multifunction Fire Control Radar (MFCR) has begun system-level testing at Pratica di Mare Air Force Base near Rome, Italy.

(Photo: http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20120419/FL90736)

The advanced 360-degree rotating X-band MFCR recently completed initial performance tests in a near-field facility at SELEX Sistemi Integrati SpA in Rome. At Pratica di Mare, the MFCR will begin system-level integration tests with a MEADS battle manager and launcher.

Test objectives include performance verification and demonstration of the MEADS MFCR in a full system configuration. The MFCR will demonstrate key functionalities including 360-degree target acquisition and track using both dedicated flight tests and non-military aircraft.

The MFCR is an X-band, solid-state, phased array radar using element-level transmit/receive modules. It provides precision tracking and wideband discrimination and classification capabilities. For extremely rapid deployments, the MEADS MFCR can provide both surveillance and fire control capabilities until a surveillance radar joins the network. The MFCR uses its main beam for uplink and downlink missile communications. An advanced Mode 5 identify friend-or-foe subsystem supports improved non-cooperative threat identification and typing.

Through its plug-and-fight capability, the MFCR simply acts as a node on the MEADS network. The MEADS battle manager lets a commander dynamically add or subtract sensors and shooters as the situation dictates without shutting the system down.

NAMEADSMA General Manager Gregory Kee said, "The MFCR, together with its advanced identify friend or foe, Mode 5 capability, is another example of the cost effectiveness of MEADS. The advanced solid-state architecture is more reliable than fielded systems, and MEADS can provide eight times the coverage with far fewer system assets."

MEADS International Technical Director Marco Riccetti said, "The MEADS MFCR combines extraordinary capability to detect and track advanced threats, yet provides high mobility and C-130 transportability. The MEADS system offers coverage and flexibility at a lower cost, including complete 360-degree defense that protects military sites and civilians against next-generation threats."

An initial MEADS flight test was successfully completed at White Sands Missile Range, N.M., in November 2011. Integration work continues in support of two upcoming intercept tests planned for White Sands Missile Range.

MEADS International, a multinational joint venture headquartered in Orlando, Fla., is the prime contractor for the MEADS system. Major subcontractors and joint venture partners are MBDA in Italy and Germany, and Lockheed Martin in the United States.

The MEADS program management agency NAMEADSMA is located in Huntsville, Ala.

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