MEADS Successfully Intercepts Air-Breathing Target At White Sands Missile Range

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ORLANDO, Fla., MUNICH, and ROME, Nov. 29, 2012 /PRNewswire/ -- The Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) detected, tracked, intercepted and destroyed an air-breathing target in its first-ever intercept flight test today at White Sands Missile Range, N.M. The test achieved all criteria for success.

MEADS is a next-generation, ground-mobile air and missile defense system that incorporates 360-degree radars, netted and distributed battle management, easily transportable launchers and the hit-to-kill PAC-3 Missile Segment Enhancement (MSE) Missile. The system combines superior battlefield protection with new flexibility to protect forces and critical assets against tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and aircraft.

The MEADS test configuration included a networked MEADS battle manager, lightweight launcher firing a PAC-3 MSE Certified Missile Round and a 360-degree MEADS Multifunction Fire Control Radar (MFCR), which tracked the MQM-107 target and guided the missile to a successful intercept.

"Today's successful flight test further demonstrates MEADS' ability to identify, track, engage and defeat targets attacking from any direction using a single mobile launcher," said NATO MEADS Management Agency General Manager Gregory Kee. "MEADS is proving its capability to defend our warfighters and key assets against a growing 21st century threat."

The test exploited the MEADS capability for full-perimeter, 360-degree defense with the PAC-3 MSE Missile performing a unique over-the-shoulder maneuver to defeat the target attacking from behind the MEADS emplacement.

"MEADS provides advanced capabilities that detect, track and intercept evolving threats from farther away and without blind spots," said MEADS International President Dave Berganini. "Today's successful intercept proves MEADS' advertised capabilities are real. Its digital designs and modern hardware and software ensure high reliability rates and dramatically reduced operational and support costs."

The MFCR is an X-band, solid-state, active electronically scanned array radar which 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. An advanced identify friend-or-foe subsystem supports improved passive threat identification and typing.

Using its 360-degree defensive capability, the advanced MEADS radars and PAC-3 MSE Missile, MEADS defends up to eight times the coverage area with far fewer system assets and significantly reduces demand for deployed personnel and equipment, which reduces demand for airlift.

MEADS successfully completed its first flight test on November 17, 2011, against a simulated target attacking from behind. A PAC-3 MSE Certified Missile Round was employed during the test along with the MEADS lightweight launcher and battle manager.

MEADS International, a multinational joint venture headquartered inOrlando, 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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