Sikorsky S-97 RAIDER™ Program Begins Ground Tests

West Palm Beach, Florida -

STRATFORD, Conn., Feb. 4, 2015 /PRNewswire/ -- Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., a subsidiary of United Technologies Corp. (NYSE: UTX), today announced the start of bladed ground testing, a major milestone, for the S-97 RAIDER™ program. The RAIDER™ is an armed reconnaissance rotorcraft designed to significantly outmatch conventional military helicopters in maneuverability, payload, speed, range and high/hot environmental conditions.

"Testing all of the aircraft's systems together, for the first time, marks significant progress in the development of this next generation helicopter and moves the program closer to first flight," said S-97 RAIDER Program Manager Mark Hammond.

During the ground runs phase, the S-97 RAIDER team is testing the first of two aircraft prototypes as a completed system for the first time. The team will perform initial ground tests with the aircraft tied down and will focus on verifying correct operation of the propulsion system, drive train, rotor control system and pilot-vehicle interface.

This testing comes on the heels of the recent successful completion of software qualification testing, component fatigue testing, and gearbox testing, for the first S-97 RAIDER prototype.
Sikorsky launched the S-97 RAIDER program in October 2010 with the objectives of maturing the X2™ rotorcraft design and offering a helicopter to meet U.S. Army reconnaissance and special operations needs.

In addition to ground runs for the first prototype, the program team at Sikorsky's Development Flight Center in West Palm Beach, Florida, is prepared to begin final assembly of the second prototype S-97 RAIDER helicopter, following acceptance last month of the fuselage structure from Aurora Flight Sciences. Sikorsky rolled out the first prototype in October 2014.

Based on Sikorsky's rigid X2 rotor coaxial design, the S-97 RAIDER helicopter features next-generation technologies in a multi-mission configuration, capable of carrying six troops and external weapons. The coaxial counter-rotating main rotors and pusher propeller provide cruise speeds up to 220 knots (253 mph).

"We look forward to the opportunity to demonstrate the RAIDER's revolutionary performance and unmatched maneuverability for the U.S. Army," said Steve Engebretson, Director, Advanced Military Programs. "We're delivering on our promise to design and build a helicopter with performance capabilities not seen before."

The S-97 RAIDER helicopter demonstrator program is 100 percent industry-funded. Sikorsky provides 75 percent of the investment and the suppliers provide the remaining funding. Sikorsky's goal is to attract government interest in the program.

Sikorsky Aircraft Corp., based in Stratford, Connecticut, is a world leader in helicopter design, manufacture and service. United Technologies Corp., based in Hartford, Connecticut, provides high technology products and services to the building and aerospace industries.

This press release contains forward-looking statements concerning opportunities for development, production and sale of helicopters. Actual results may differ materially from those projected as a result of certain risks and uncertainties, including but not limited to changes in government procurement priorities and practices, budget plans, availability of funding and in the type and number of aircraft required; challenges in the design, development, production and support of advanced technologies; as well as other risks and uncertainties, including but not limited to those detailed from time to time in United Technologies Corporation's Securities and Exchange Commission filings.