ATHENA Successfully Defends Drone Threat

FORT SILL, Okla., Nov. 7, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Lockheed Martin (NYSE: LMT) recently demonstrated their laser weapon system for the U.S. Air Force at a government test range at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where the system successfully engaged and shot down multiple fixed wing and rotary drones.

The Advanced Test High Energy Asset (ATHENA) operated in a fully-netted engagement environment with a government command and control (C2) system and radar sensor. The radar track was provided to airmen who operated ATHENA via cues from the C2, then ATHENA's beam director slewed, acquired, tracked and defeated the drone with a high-energy laser.

Validating this type of full kill-chain performance has been a priority of the U.S. Air Force and other branches of the Department of Defense, and it remains a requirement for laser weapons to be effective against unmanned aerial systems (UAS) on the battlefield.

"We've watched in recent news this type of laser weapon solution is essential for deterring unmanned vehicle type threats, so it's an exciting time for us to watch airmen compete Lockheed Martin's critical technology. ATHENA has evolved to ensure integration and agility are key and it remains an affordable capability for the warfighter," said Sarah Reeves, vice president of Missile Defense Programs for Lockheed Martin.

The ATHENA system was developed by Lockheed Martin to integrate seamlessly and provide a cost-effective, complementary anti-drone capability with the network of systems the warfighter is already using. ATHENA was operated by USAF personnel during this demonstration, and it was able to destroy multiple drones in engagements representative of what is being encountered by U.S. armed forces today.

The ATHENA high-energy laser system is transportable and therefore enables the Air Force to emplace it anywhere they need to defend bases and high-value assets.

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