News Release

Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency

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3701 North Fairfax Drive
Arlington, VA 22203-1714

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DARPA AWARDS FUNDING FOR X-45C
JOINT UNMANNED COMBAT AIR SYSTEMS

The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) today awarded the Boeing Company, McDonnell Douglas Corp., St. Louis, Mo., $766,696,178 in funding to continue the X-45C portion of the Joint Unmanned Combat Air Systems (J-UCAS) demonstration program over the next five years, in addition to the $291 million currently under contract for the Boeing J-UCAS effort.

Under the newly awarded funding, Boeing will continue their effort to design, develop and demonstrate three full-scale, flight-worthy air vehicles and two mission control elements. The system will combine advanced air vehicle hardware, including integrated sensors, communication, navigation equipment and low-observability features, with the J-UCAS Common Operating System to meet mission capability demonstration objectives established by the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Navy.

"With this award to Boeing and previous awards to Northrop Grumman and Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory now in place, the J-UCAS program is poised to serve in a pivotal role in the formation of the nation's defense vision and strategy," said Dr. Michael S. Francis, director of DARPA's J-UCAS program. "The final product will be an integrated system-of-systems comprised of a network of high-performance air vehicles that will help pioneer our approach to air combat for the most dangerous missions expected during the 21st century."

Boeing's X-45C platform will be designed to survive in a high-threat environment and feature beyond line-of-sight network connectivity for global operations. The platform will also have the ability to conduct land-based suppression of enemy air defenses; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions; and other missions, while demonstrating advanced target detection, interoperability, and advanced command and control techniques. Additionally, the effort will include initial investigation of simulated aircraft carrier operations using the Joint Precision Approach and Landing System.

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The X-45C's first flight will occur in Spring 2007. The J-UCAS capabilities demonstration program will culminate in an operational assessment to demonstrate the capabilities of the J-UCAS system in realistic mission scenarios.

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The J-UCAS program is a joint Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency/U.S. Air Force/U.S. Navy effort to demonstrate the technical feasibility, military utility, and the operational value of a networked system of high-performance, weaponized, unmanned air vehicles to effectively and affordably execute combat missions. The J-UCAS Common Operating System will allow unmanned aircraft systems to intra-operate with each other and with the Global Information Grid. The J-UCAS system-of-systems concept plans to demonstrate the military utility and the operational value of airpower in the 21st century combat environment. More information on the J-UCAS program can be found at http://www.darpa.mil/j-ucas.