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F-35 successfully conducts first firings of MBDA's ASRAAM

The F-35 Lightning II stealth fighter jet has successfully conducted its first firing trials of the MBDA Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile (ASRAAM).

The trials are the first time a British-designed missile has been fired from the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, and the first time any non-US missile has been fired from the aircraft.

Conducted from both Naval Air Station Patuxent River and Edwards Air Force Base in the USA, the effort has seen both flight trials and air-launched firings of the ASRAAM successfully take place.

MBDA is currently under contract, awarded in 2016, to produce the highly capable infra-red (IR) guided air-to-air missile for the UK's F-35s. ASRAAM's large rocket motor and clean aerodynamic design gives it a high kinematic capability that delivers superior end-game performance compared with other countries' in-service IR missiles.

The trials were conducted by the integrated test teams at Patuxent and Edwards, which include Lockheed Martin, BAE Systems, MBDA and Northrop Grumman.

The development trials work is being conducted under the integration programme for ASRAAM onto the UK's F-35 aircraft. This effort is currently progressing to plan and these integration activities will allow the Initial Operating Capability of the aircraft by the UK.

MBDA is also under contract for the ASRAAM Capability Sustainment Programme (CSP) to build replenishment missiles for the Royal Air Force's Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft. The CSP effort makes use of ASRAAM's commonality with the CAMM missile family, also being bought by the Royal Navy and British Army, to deliver extensive cost savings across the UK Armed Forces.

Notes to editors:

ASRAAM is the Advanced Short Range Air-to-Air Missile (ASRAAM) in service with the RAF on the Tornado and Typhoon, the Royal Australian Air Force on the F/A-18 Hornet and on order for the Indian Air Force's Jaguars.

The missile flies at over Mach 3 and its sleek, agile airframe and powerful motor ensure that the missile can fly faster and further than competing short range air-to-air missiles. The ASRAAM's sophisticated seeker and software is designed to defeat current and future countermeasures.

In total some 500 UK companies are involved in the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter programme.

With a significant presence in five European countries and within the USA, in 2016 MBDA achieved a turnover of 3.0 billion euros with an order book of 15.9 billion euros. With more than 90 armed forces customers in the world, MBDA is a world leader in missiles and missile systems. MBDA is the only European group capable of designing and producing missiles and missile systems that correspond to the full range of current and future operational needs of the three armed forces (land, sea and air). In total, the group offers a range of 45 missile systems and countermeasures products already in operational service and more than 15 others currently in development.

MBDA is jointly held by AIRBUS Group (37.5%), BAE SYSTEMS (37.5%), and Leonardo - Finmeccanica (25%).

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