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FURTHER test firing success for ROYAL NAVY'S SEA VIPER AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM

Sea Viper, the Royal Navy's new advanced naval air defence system, was successfully test fired for a second time on 4th February from the trials barge Longbow at the French DGA's CELM (Centre d'Essais de Lancement des Missiles) test range near the Ile du Levant off the French coast.

The successful firing marks a further key step in the demonstration of the maturity of the Sea Viper system, known until recently in the UK as PAAMS (S), in the lead up to the missile system entering service onboard the Royal Navy's new Daring class Type 45 destroyers.

The trial comprised the firing of a single Aster 15 missile launched against a Mirach target simulating a low level attack by an anti-ship missile. All aspects of the system behaved as expected with the Aster missile intercepting the target at very close range.

Nick Neale, PAAMS Project Director in the Aster Systems Programme directorate, said: "Following on from the successful first firing in June last year, this second firing success kicks off our 2009 programme of work in the best possible way. We look forward with pride to completing the remainder of the system qualification programme and to the entry of the system into service on board the RN's new Type 45 destroyers".

Antoine Bouvier, MBDA's CEO, said: "This second successful firing is another important milestone for PAAMS and MBDA's Aster missile system family. It provides a clear demonstration of the performance leap that the PAAMS system will bring when it enters service."

All the Sea Viper system elements have been set to work on the first of class Type 45, HMS Daring. Phase One system integration activities on HMS Daring have been completed with Phase Two of the system integration programme set to start in June. The final system qualification firing trial is scheduled to take place in the summer. Deliveries of Sea Viper equipment to the second and third Type 45 destroyers, HMS Dauntless and HMS Diamond, are complete with remaining deliveries progressing in accordance with the requirements of the ship build programme.

Notes to editors

Sea Viper came into being on 28th January 2009 when Vice Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, Chief of Material Fleet, announced the name selected by the Royal Navy for its PAAMS (S) air defence system.

PAAMS is the self, local and fleet area defence system family that will, as Sea Viper, equip the Royal Navy's new Daring class of Type 45 destroyers and, as PAAMS (E), equip the Horizon and Orizzonte frigates of the French and Italian Navies respectively.

PAAMS is a 360° omni-directional system providing multi-layer air defence to armed fleets or groups of unarmed support and merchant ships. It incorporates three separate mission capabilities in a single naval air defence system – ship self-defence for protection of the PAAMS warship; local area defence for nearby ship defence; and medium and long-range air defence. PAAMS has been designed to provide optimum

protection against omni-directional and co-ordinated attacks from sub- or supersonic missiles, aircraft and high value UAVs.

PAAMS comprises a Multi Function Radar (MFR), a sophisticated Command and Control sub-system (C2), and a dual missile Vertical Launch Sub-system (VLS) containing a combination of forty-eight, ready-to-fire Aster 15 and Aster 30 missiles. PAAMS is supported by a Long Range Radar (LRR) for long range surveillance.

Depending on the threat, the combination of the Aster 15 and Aster 30 missiles enables the PAAMS system to fire in any configuration from the PAAMS Sylver A50 launcher providing a near impenetrable defence envelope day or night, even in cases of extreme electronic countermeasures and in all weather conditions.

The Royal Navy's Sea Viper system differs from the PAAMS (E) selected by France and Italy with respect to the Multi Function Radar (MFR). Whereas France and Italy opted for the EMPAR MFR, the very specific requirements of the Royal Navy have resulted in the development of the SAMPSON MFR by BAE Systems INSYTE.

With industrial facilities in four European countries and within the USA, MBDA has an annual turnover of more than €3 billion and an order book of more than €13 billion. With more than 90 armed forces customers in the world, MBDA is a world leader in missiles and missile systems.

MBDA is the only 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 owned by BAE SYSTEMS (37.5%), EADS (37.5%) and FINMECCANICA (25%).

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