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UK ASTOR RADAR GOES “LIVE”, DELIVERS QUALITY TARGET IMAGERY

LONDON (10 January 2006) - - - The flight test programme for the U.K. Airborne Stand-Off Radar (ASTOR) programme is progressing well in the U.S. and the U.K. As of December, 2005, a/c #1 (based in Greenville, Texas) was well into its series of check flights while in the U.K. a/c #2 had completed its first phase of flight testing. According to the test team, the DMR in a/c #1 was producing good quality imagery on only its second operational check flight.

Successful system connectivity was demonstrated on the first attempt with virtual end-to-end data flow demonstrated from the aircraft to the ground station in near real-time. Hand in hand with the radar and system testing regime, software release-vetting continues with additional image-manipulation features enabled such as pan and zoom controls.

Justin Monger, U.S. ASTOR programme manager, said, “We are well into the flight test programme and making very good progress, especially regarding the radar and its imaging quality. The ASTOR integration and test programme is proving out the revolutionary capabilities of this system and securing its role in network enabled coalition operations - from SAR and GMTI, connectivity with air to ground and interoperability with systems like Joint STARS.”

Separate from aircraft testing of the Sentinel Mk.1, ground segment elements have now completed environmental testing and are in the midst of speed and mobility tests in the U.K.

Raytheon Systems Limited President and Managing Director, Jack Cronin, said, "We exceeded our expectations for ASTOR in 2005 and finished the year on a high with all segments deep into their test schedules. 2006 will see the culmination of all this hard work and these images show just what a superb system it will be."

When it enters service, the MoD's ASTOR system will be the most advanced of its type in the world. The complete system will include five Sentinel R Mk I aircraft, each equipped with dual-mode (SAR and Moving Target Indicator) radar and operator workstations where the mission management and imagery can be exploited and then transmitted to the various brigade and divisional/joint level ASTOR ground stations by datalink. The system operates in near real time to give battlefield commanders rapid access to highly accurate information about what is happening in their area of interest.

RSL, the UK-based subsidiary of Raytheon Company, employs over 1500 people. The company is a prime contractor and major supplier to the UK Ministry of Defence and is involved in numerous, high priority programmes for the US Department of Defense. RSL designs, develops and manufactures a range of high technology defence and commercial electronics.

Raytheon Company, with 2004 sales of \$20.2 billion, is an industry leader in defence and government electronics, space, information technology, technical services and special-mission aircraft. Headquartered in Waltham, Mass., Raytheon employs 80,000 people worldwide.

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