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MBDA's SPEAR-EW moves to the next stage

MBDA has received additional funding from the UK Ministry of Defence to accelerate the development of the SPEAR-EW stand-in jammer.

SPEAR-EW is a novel electronic warfare effector designed to confuse and suppress enemy air defence, protecting friendly forces and acting as a significant force multiplier.

The additional Rapid Design Phase funding will accelerate SPEAR-EW's development, maturing all its key sub-systems, and perform mission and planning evaluation.

Chris Allam, Managing Director of MBDA UK, said: *"SPEAR-EW will be a true game-changer for the suppression and defeat of enemy air defences. As we have seen lately, air defence networks are exceptionally hard to operate against with today's toolkit: SPEAR-EW is the key that will enable allied air forces to unlock this challenge and gain air superiority"*.

Dean Pask, Spear Senior Responsible Owner at the MOD, commented on the commitment: *"By embracing collaborative partnering, agile methods, and strategic technology, we are steadfastly dedicated to ensuring that our front line commands receive critical capabilities in the most effective and efficient manner possible"*.

The weapon's electronic warfare payload is being developed by Leonardo and utilises the company's Digital Radio Frequency Memory (DRFM) technology. This technology is mature, was proven effective in trials and will deliver the advanced sensing and electronic attack capabilities of SPEAR-EW. Operators will be able to use SPEAR-EW to jam enemy radar systems as well as deliver more subtle electronic warfare effects such as creating decoy targets to draw the attention of threat systems away from crewed aircraft or effectors.

Iain Bancroft, SVP Electronic Warfare at Leonardo UK, said: *"SPEAR-EW will incorporate a world-class electronic warfare payload, designed and manufactured here in Luton, UK. Based on our experience providing on-board jamming capabilities for the Eurofighter Typhoon and, more recently, off-board jamming in the form of our BriteCloud expendable active decoy, our technology can reliably beat current threats while remaining adaptable for the threats of the future"*.

SPEAR-EW utilises the same airframe as MBDA's SPEAR miniature cruise missile being manufactured for the Royal Air Force. This commonality has reduced the development costs for SPEAR-EW and is also enabling a joint integration/launcher solution, reducing logistics burden and offering a high load-out potential.

About MBDA:

MBDA is a unique multi-national European group, a world-leader in the field of complex weapon systems, playing a key role in keeping nations safe. Created in the spirit of international co-operation, MBDA and its 14,000+ employees work together to support the national sovereignty of France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK, and their allies worldwide. As an accelerator for innovation, MBDA is the only European group capable of designing and manufacturing complex weapons to meet the full range of current and future operational requirements of the three armed forces (land, sea and air). Airbus (37.5%), BAE Systems (37.5%) and Leonardo (25%) jointly own MBDA.

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