



Dragonfire laser turret unveiled at DSEI 2017

The new laser weapon demonstrator being built for the UK Ministry of Defence has been unveiled for the first time by the UK Dragonfire consortium at DSEI 2017 in London.

Led by MBDA, under contract to Dstl, UK Dragonfire is a grouping of the best of British industry brought together to develop this advanced and complex new programme for the UK Armed Forces.

For the first time, the consortium has revealed the design of the turret – known as a beam director – that will be used to trial this new technology. The beam director, which will be provided by Leonardo, brings together QinetiQ's powerful laser emitter, as well as world-class electro-optics for target identification and tracking. MBDA is bringing prime weapon system delivery experience and advanced weapon system command and control (C2) and image processing capability to UK Dragonfire, in addition to co-ordinating the overall effort.

The full-scale beam director is present at UK Dragonfire's stand, at ND4 in the Naval Static Display Area. Half-scale models are also present on the stands of Leonardo, MBDA and QinetiQ.

Known as the Laser Directed Energy Weapon (LDEW) Capability Demonstrator Programme (CDP), the effort will see UK Dragonfire trial this new sovereign capability in the maritime and land domains in 2019.

Among the uses of LDEW systems are providing very short-range air defence capability, close-in protection for naval vessels, counter-unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), and protecting friendly forces from mortar and artillery attack.

A key benefit of the Dragonfire LDEW technology is that the base system is highly adaptable and its effects are highly scaleable. As such it offers a range of different engagement solutions depending on the tactical scenario, these include tracking, deterring, dazzling the sensors of a potential threat, up to damaging or destroying it.

UK Dragonfire was awarded a GBP30 million contract for the LDW CDP in early 2017 after a rigorous competitive evaluation. The team capitalises on the strengths of all the companies involved, including Leonardo, QinetiQ, MBDA, Arke, BAE Systems, Marshall and GKN.

Notes to Editors:

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 (37.5%), BAE Systems (37.5%), and Leonardo (25%).

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