GREEK DEFENCE NEWS DAILY

DEFEA 2025 SHOW DAILY

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DAY 3

Hellenic Air Force Modernization Program

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Hellenic Air Force, Modernizing for Strategic Edge

The Hellenic Air Force (HAF) has entered a critical phase of modernization and procurement to adapt to a rapidly evolving regional security environment, modernizing aging equipment, and enhancing interoperability with key allies. Greece's defense investments—spanning fifth-generation fighters, tactical transport aircraft, helicopters, early warning systems, and advanced air defenses—signal a robust commitment to maintaining operational readiness and reinforcing its role in NATO's southeastern flank.

F-35 Acquisition: A Leap into the Fifth Generation
At the heart of Greece's air procurement strategy lies its decision to join the F-35 Lightning II program. The U.S. State Department approved a Foreign Military Sale (FMS) of up to 40 F-35A aircraft in January 2024, a deal estimated at €8.6 billion. This marked a strategic shift, aligning the HAF with several other NATO and European air forces transitioning to fifth-generation platforms. Greece signed a Letter of Acceptance (LOA) for the first 20 F-35As on July 25, 2024. Deliveries are scheduled to begin in 2028, with the jets initially stationed in the U.S. for the training of Greek pilots and maintenance personnel. A follow-on order for another 20 aircraft is anticipated, allowing Greece to eventually field two full squadrons.

The F-35 program complements Greece's shift toward a network-centric air combat force, offering stealth, sensor fusion, and enhanced interoperability with allied air forces—a crucial capability as regional tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean persist.

F-16V Upgrades: Keeping the Workhorse Relevant
While preparing for the F-35's arrival, the HAF is actively upgrading its current fleet of F-16C/Ds. Out of over 100 aircraft in service, 84 are undergoing modernization to the F-16V "Viper" configuration. This variant includes AESA radar, upgraded avionics, and improved survivability—effectively extending the combat relevance of the F-16 well into the next decade.

In November 2024, a $160 million engine support package was approved by the U.S., further reinforcing Greece's commitment to keeping the F-16 fleet mission-capable. This dual-path strategy—retaining capable fourth-generation fighters while inducting fifth-generation platforms—ensures operational continuity during the transition.

Rafales and Legacy Fighters
In addition to the F-16s and F-35s, the HAF is operating 24 Dassault Rafale fighters—delivered in batches from 2021 to January 2025. This mix of new and second-hand aircraft adds considerable multirole firepower to the fleet.

With advanced sensors and the ability to carry cutting-edge weapons like the Meteor air-to-air missile, the Rafale gives Greece a technological edge over older regional rivals.

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Hellenic Ai Force's receipt of the 23rd from the 24th Rafale fighter jets ordered from the French company Dassault Aviation, marks a critical step in modernizing the Hellenic Air Force. With the deliveries concluding in January 2025, these state-of-the-art Dassault-built aircraft will increase Greece's Rafale fleet to 24 units, stationed at Tanagra Air Base near Athens.

The Rafales, ordered alongside three FDI frigates in March 2022, are set to play a pivotal role in Greece's defense capabilities. Their arrival underscores the nation's commitment to maintaining a technological edge, as they will serve as the most advanced aircraft in the Hellenic Air Force's arsenal until the introduction of 20 US-made F-35s, slated for delivery starting in 2028.

Hellenic Air Force is also evaluating the acquisition of an additional 12 Rafales, which would enable the formation of two tactical wings, each comprising 18 aircraft. This potential expansion reflects a strategic focus on enhancing air superiority and operational readiness in the region.

Meanwhile, the anticipated US approval of Greece's Letter of Acceptance (LOA) for the F-35 program signifies a broader push for diversified and cutting-edge capabilities within the Hellenic Armed Forces.

However, legacy aircraft such as the Mirage 2000-5 and aging McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantoms still form part of the force structure. Their eventual retirement will free up resources and personnel for newer platforms, particularly as F-35 deliveries begin.

Transport Aircraft: Critical Needs and Stopgap Measures

Greece’s transport fleet has faced persistent readiness issues. Despite having a paper fleet of eight C-27J Spartans and 15 C-130s (B and H variants), only a fraction of these are operational. This has impaired the nation’s ability to respond effectively to emergencies, such as wildfires and regional disaster relief efforts.

Pilot Training: A Modern Approach

In April 2021, Greece partnered with Israel’s Elbit Systems to create the International Flight Training Centre at the HAF’s 120 Air Training Wing in Kalamata. The program includes a modern training pipeline from Beechcraft T-6A Texan II turboprops to Leonardo M-346 jet trainers. The first cadets to complete training on the M-346 graduated in December 2024, signaling a major step forward in pilot quality and readiness.

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Airborne Early Warning and Control
The HAF operates four EMB-145H Erieye AEW&C aircraft, which play a vital role in airspace surveillance and battle management. These platforms are scheduled for upgrades to enhance radar capability, communications, and interoperability with NATO assets. AEW&C modernization is a high priority in Greece's defense roadmap.

Air and Missile Defense: Achilles' Shield
Greece is advancing plans to develop a comprehensive integrated air and missile defense system dubbed "Achilles' Shield," with a projected cost of $2 billion. The objective is to replace aging Russian systems and improve defense against aerial threats including drones, cruise missiles, and ballistic missiles.

Discussions are ongoing with Israel and Germany. Diehl Defence is proposing its IRIS-T SLS system to replace Greece's short-range Soviet-era systems (9K33 Osa-M and 9K331 Tor-M1). Meanwhile, Israel Aerospace Industries' Barak MX has emerged as the front-runner to replace Greece's I-HAWK and S-300PMU1 systems.

The Barak ER variant, with its extended range and modern radar integration, could offer a robust long-range defense layer, while the IRIS-T SLS and modernized PATRIOT batteries would form part of a multi-tiered air defense shield.

Greece's interest in acquiring Israeli-made air defense systems highlights its strategic push to bolster national security in the face of evolving regional threats. As part of its goal to develop a multi-layered air defense system, Greece aims to counter both enemy jets and low-level drones. Israel, with its extensive experience and advanced defense technologies, is well-positioned to meet Greece's requirements. Israel's defense industry offers a variety of air defense systems that cater to different threat levels. For example:

- Iron Dome (developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems) is a short-range system primarily designed to intercept rockets and small drones. This system is also set to incorporate laser air defenses, enhancing its capabilities.
- David's Sling, also from Rafael, is a medium-range system designed to intercept missiles at longer distances. It has already been sold to Finland and is well-suited for Greece's defense needs.
- The Spyder system, another offering from Rafael, is capable of defending against aircraft and a variety of other aerial threats.
- Arrow, an exoatmospheric defense system developed by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) in collaboration with the US, is designed for intercepting ballistic missiles at high altitudes. It has been sold to Germany, among others.

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EDGE

- Barak, another air defense system from IAI, provides an additional layer of protection against aerial threats.

- IAI's Elta division also manufactures air defense radars, which are integral to systems like Iron Dome. These radars have been sold to countries such as the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Other future procurement projects

The Hellenic Air Force plans to expand its arsenal with weapons such as the AIM-120D AMRAAM, AGM-158 JASSM (1,000 km range), Harpoons, Rampage, and SPICE. The Air Force is also exploring options for adding custom systems similar to those integrated by Israel, pending necessary approvals. The Hellenic Air Force is planning to adopt new active interference systems, including active decoys and GPS jammers, to enhance aerial warfare capabilities. Hellenic Airforce is also interest in acquiring four Boeing KC-135 Stratotankers from the U.S. in 2025, requesting that they be transferred directly without downtime in storage. He highlighted the operational benefits of tanker aircraft for longer-range missions, such as recent exercises in India.

Challenges and Strategic Implications

Despite impressive strides, Greece's procurement plans face challenges. Budget constraints, logistics, and the integration of new technologies require careful management. The simultaneous modernization of fighter fleets, transport aircraft, and air defense systems places considerable pressure on personnel and infrastructure.

However, these investments are strategically vital. They improve Greece's deterrence posture against regional adversaries and allow for deeper integration with NATO operations. The acquisition of F-35s, in particular, enhances strategic reach and intelligence-sharing capabilities.

Furthermore, with increasing instability in the Eastern Mediterranean and wider Middle East, a modernized HAF serves as a key pillar in Greece's national security strategy and European defense.

The Hellenic Air Force's modernization program reflects a comprehensive transformation effort aimed at reshaping its airpower for the 21st century. From acquiring fifth-generation fighters and new transport aircraft to enhancing air defenses and pilot training, Greece is making substantial investments in military readiness and resilience.

These moves not only safeguard national interests but also reinforce Greece's standing as a capable NATO ally and a stabilizing force in a volatile region. With continued political support, international cooperation, and sustained investment, HAF is poised to become one of the most advanced air forces in southeastern Europe.

Building a secure future together with Greece

Hall 4, stand A6

baesystems.com/defea

BAE SYSTEMS

Full-Spectrum Intelligence: Heron MK II Brings Integrated COMINT and ELINT to the Frontline

Real-time intelligence is crucial for maintaining strategic advantage in today's complex operational landscape. The Heron MK II, Israel Aerospace Industries' (IAI) latest Medium-Altitude Long-Endurance (MALE) UAV, integrates Communications Intelligence (COMINT) and Electronic Intelligence (ELINT) for advanced aerial surveillance. Built on extensive operational experience, it delivers high-value intelligence over long durations and vast areas.

Operational Success and Deployment

Greece acquired the Heron System for Maritime Surveillance after a three-year lease, demonstrating its tactical and strategic value. Greek operators use it for maritime patrols, benefiting from real-time data collection and dissemination through IAI's CRISP system, aiding swift decision-making across multiple command levels.

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Close Standoff Operations

Designed for "close standoff" missions, the Heron MK II flies near targets while staying outside high-threat zones, ensuring effective SIGINT collection without compromising safety. This flight profile allows for effective signals intelligence collection while minimizing risk to the asset. The Heron MK II operates as a networked system, distributing sensor data across multiple users, enhancing mission resilience.

Comprehensive Sensor Suite

The Heron MK II carries a comprehensive sensor suite, including COMINT, ELINT, electro-optical systems, and radar, providing 360-degree situational awareness up to 35,000 feet. This integration creates a cohesive intelligence picture, ideal for strategic missions such as wide-area maritime surveillance. For example, SIGINT sensors work alongside advanced long-range electro-optical cameras like the MOSP 5000 to cue visual investigations of targets detected electronically. This fusion of multiple sensors significantly improves detection, classification, and tracking in complex environments.

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Advanced SIGINT Systems and AI Integration

IAI's ELTA group equips the Heron MK II with third-generation SIGINT systems, including the ELL-8385, ELI-8395 Tacsense, and ELK-7072. These systems offer rapid, wideband scanning from 20 MHz to 18 GHz. AI-driven processing enhances signal detection, classification, and analysis, enabling rapid extraction of actionable intelligence, such as ship identification through AIS signals and detection of covert push-to-talk communications. The systems handle dense electronic environments by designating radars and communications-based networks to create a visual map of the active situational picture. These insights are valuable in maritime domains, where detecting brief, low-power transmissions can signal illicit activity or emerging threats.

Scalable Intelligence

The Heron MK II can function as a standalone multi-sensor platform or as part of a distributed SIGINT architecture, wherein multiple UAVs share collection responsibilities and fuse data in real time. This distributed model provides optimal coverage over complex terrains and extended maritime zones while enhancing survivability and mission effectiveness. Following its operational success, Greece has shown interest to expanding its Heron fleet. The current system's capabilities meet tactical needs, while the new Heron MK II upgrade with ELINT/COMINT capabilities could enhance long-range strategic intelligence, supporting missions ranging from border security to counterterrorism and maritime route protection. SIGINT capabilities also enable the UAV to identify threats directed at itself and cue defensive measures for self-protection or to safeguard other friendly assets.

The Heron MK II represents a significant advancement in unmanned SIGINT operations. Real-time integration of COMINT, ELINT, radar, and visual intelligence sets the standard for unmanned strategic intelligence in today's contested airspaces.

Meet IAI's UAS experts at DEFEA 2025 – Hall 2 Booth C2 or contact us at info.malat@iai.co.il

Missionized Skyraider II Aircraft to Support Special Operations

L3Harris Technologies and Air Tractor have delivered the first missionized OA-1K Skyraider II aircraft to support U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command. The Skyraider II will help ensure special operations personnel can meet the needs of the National Defense Strategy and the joint force.

Special Operations Forces (SOF) will fly Skyraider II in various missions and will deliver close air support, precision strike, and armed intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. The aircraft's flexibility will allow SOF to counter adversaries across the spectrum of armed conflict. The Skyraider II's design also enables it to operate from rugged and remote airfields.

"The Skyraider II reflects L3Harris' commitment to delivering cost-effective, adaptable solutions that meet the evolving needs of the warfighter," said Jon Rambeau, President, Integrated Mission Systems, L3Harris. "By leveraging our team's innovation and expertise, we are providing special operations personnel with a versatile, mission-ready capability that supports operational requirements today and into the future."

"Air Tractor is thrilled to be a part of this program," said Jim Hirsch, President, Air Tractor, Inc. "We stand ready to meet the future needs and to ensure this airframe aligns with the expectations of U.S. Air Force Special Operations Command."

L3Harris is on track to deliver more follow-on aircraft. The Skyraider II is based on L3Harris' multi-mission OA-1 Sky Warden aircraft, which is tailorable to meet a variety of mission requirements for U.S. and allied operators.

Horizon's flight simulator

Flight simulators have become a critical component of helicopter pilot training, offering safe, cost-effective, and realistic environments to prepare for real-world challenges. Horizon, part of the EDGE Group and the largest independent helicopter flight training academy in the UAE, provides advanced simulator training to both commercial and defense aviation sectors. Their simulators include side-by-side seating, full instrument panels, and software capable of replicating over 24,000 airport environments. This enables both visual and instrument-based training, with accurate flight dynamics such as ground effect, auto-rotation, and translational lift.

Simulators cannot fully replace real helicopter flight experience, but they allow students to practice complex manoeuvres and emergency procedures without the risks associated with real-world flying. Instructors and students can train in a completely safe and controlled environment, practicing critical situations like engine failures and rotor malfunctions. In real helicopters, such training could be too dangerous for novices, but in a simulator, mistakes can be safely made and corrected until the student gains confidence and proficiency.

The main advantage of simulator training is safety. By removing real-world hazards, students are free to make errors, reset, and retry various scenarios, improving their technical knowledge and confidence. Simulator training also reduces costs associated with fuel, maintenance, and aircraft wear and tear.

Students can skip repetitive patterns like full approach circuits, saving both time and resources. This economic benefit is crucial as flight training becomes more expensive and helicopters become high-value assets

Simulators also help improve navigation skills, allowing students to experience varied and challenging scenarios without risk. Future pilots can experiment with different navigation techniques and routes in a safe, virtual environment, gaining familiarity with critical systems and operations.

Another important benefit is the development of muscle memory and technical skill retention. Through repetition in a simulator, students build responses to emergency situations and become more efficient at handling controls. This preparedness significantly reduces anxiety and hesitation in real flight emergencies.

Weather simulation is another key advantage. In traditional flight training, students are limited by the prevailing climate. Simulators remove that barrier, offering realistic training in a wide range of conditions—day or night, clear or stormy. This is especially useful for students in regions with consistent climates, like deserts, where exposure to varied weather is limited.

Simulators also enhance radio communication training. Pilots practice interacting with air traffic control and other aircraft, refining their procedural and situational awareness in a low-pressure setting.

Finally, simulators are ideal for training pilots in emergency response and combat scenarios, allowing them to rehearse critical drills such as engine fires or rapid descents without real-world danger. Overall, Horizon's flight simulator program is a cost-effective, safe, and environmentally friendly solution to training modern rotary-wing pilots. It helps students master a wide range of operational, navigational, and emergency procedures, making it a cornerstone of next-generation pilot training.

ADVANCED F-16 EW WITH VIPER SHIELD™

The only fully funded advanced electronic warfare system for the F-16 currently in production

The L3Harris Viper Shield all-digital EW system is designed for the F-16 Block 70/72 and previous F-16 blocks to maximize survivability and mission success against modern and evolving threats. Building on decades of industry-leading EW expertise, Viper Shield delivers state-of-the-art capabilities to detect and defeat enemy threats across the spectrum.

Developed in partnership with Lockheed Martin and the U.S. Air Force, the new AN/ALQ-254(V)1 Viper Shield will provide U.S. allies with cutting-edge counter-measures against sophisticated, ever-changing threats. This advanced EW system provides a virtual electronic shield around the aircraft, enabling warfighters to complete missions safely in increasingly complex battlespace scenarios.

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Diehl Defence's IRIS-T – Unrivalled Combat Performance

Diehl Defence's flagship IRIS-T (InfraRed Imaging System – Tail/Thrust Vector Controlled) is a state-of-the-art fire-and-forget short-range air-to-air missile with unrivalled close-in combat and intercept performance. The IRIS-T guided missile was initially developed as aircraft armament for air combat and has been in service since 2005. The combination of thrust vector and aerodynamic control provides the missile with extremely high agility. The imaging IR seeker head in conjunction with intelligent image processing is another technological leap. Predictive flight path tracking and lock-on-after-launch features enable the missile to engage targets even in the rear hemisphere. The target can be designated by all suitable aircraft sensors like the airborne radar or the pilot's helmet mounted display system. Overall, IRIS-T is characterized by exceptional maneuverability and agility as well as precise aim-point selection.

IRIS-T was jointly developed by European nations; the production is managed by Diehl Defence in cooperation with industrial partners from Greece, Spain, Italy, Sweden, and Norway. IRIS-T represents the backbone of European air forces in terms of infrared missiles used to protect their fighter jets.

IRIS-T is among the standard armament of the Eurofigther/Typhoon and Gripen and is integrated into the platforms F-16, Tornado, EF-18, KF-21 and F-5E. Thus it enhances the self-defence capability and survivability of the mentioned platforms.

IRIS-T is an absolute export success. Meanwhile, the air forces of 12 nations rely on the outstanding capabilities of IRIS-T.

Besides its role as aircraft armament, IRIS-T is also used as surface-to-air missile, e.g. in the ground-based air defence systems IRIS-T SLS (for object and short-range protection) and IRIS-T SLM for the medium range.

In December 2024, Diehl Defence and the German procurement agency BAAINBw signed a contract for the further development and series production of the IRIS-T Block II Overall Missile System. In addition to Germany as lead nation, presently also Sweden, Spain and Italy have joined the development program. The IRIS-T Block II contract marks an important milestone for the future of IRIS-T. The missile will be improved continuously and will continue to set benchmarks with new capabilities in its original air-to-air role. Thus, the future of IRIS-T is ensured by the multi-nations-developer-consortium.

Diehl Defence concentrates the Diehl Group's business activities in the fields of defence and security and is a leading system house of state-of-the-art air defence systems. As partner of the German Bundeswehr and international armed forces, Diehl Defence develops and delivers high-tech equipment in the fields of ground-based air defence, guided missiles, ammunition as well as training and protection. Diehl Defence generates annual sales of over 1.8 billion euros with more than 4,500 employees.

Combat Boat CB90 – built and delivered to navies all over the world

The CB90 is a versatile, fast and highly maneuverable vessel that has been used for years mainly for coastal defense, amphibious operations and the transport of troops and equipment, but also gets a larger role at sea and along the coast thanks to modifications. The added value of this boat lies in its robustness, speed and flexibility.

The CB90 is designed to carry out operations in waters where larger naval vessels cannot or can only operate to a limited extent. The design with a shallow draft and maximum speed over 40 knots makes it a powerful platform for rapid interventions, especially in areas that are difficult to reach. The CB90 is of particular importance to special forces because of its ability to operate quickly and quietly, both during the day and at night. The boat offers space for a significant number of troops and equipment, while its speed and maneuverability allow it to quickly attack, infiltrate enemy lines, withdraw or bring troops into or out of enemy territory. All this makes the CB90 a popular platform for special forces and for Marines worldwide.

Since the first CB90 was delivered in the aftermath of the Cold War, the vessel has proven to be flexible and easy to fit into the way of operating at that time. Current trends in maritime security and military operations show a shift towards the possibility of conflict in urban and coastal areas. There is an increasing demand for small, rapidly deployable units that can operate flexibly in different environments. The CB90 fits well with this trend due to its mobility, versatility and adaptability. There is also an increasing focus on multi-domain operations, where maritime, air and land operations must fit together seamlessly. The CB90 can quickly deploy troops, support attacks and cooperate with other maritime units, which increases interoperability.

Finally, there is an increasing need for ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) assets to monitor sea areas for illegal activities. The vessel has also proven itself on the high seas, for example when the Swedish navy took CB90s on a Dutch navy ship to Somali waters to combat piracy. The CB90 has not only been active in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean, CB90s also sail on the Amazon and in the Mediterranean Sea. Since Dockstavarvet delivered the first prototypes of the Combat Boat 90 H to the Swedish Navy in 1989, almost 300 CB90s have been built and delivered to navies all over the world.

In June 2024, the BALTOPS 24 multi-fight, multi-domain exercise took place in the Baltic Sea, bringing together units from 19 NATO nations. It was the first large-scale exercise in the area since Sweden joined NATO. During this exercise, the French Marines and soldiers from the French Army performed landings using Combat Boat CB90 along with different tests with the French Helicopter Carrier (PHA Mistral) and its well deck. This exercise highlighted the level of interoperability between the French and Swedish navies.

Unmanned combat aerial vehicle program kicks off as part of the Rafale F5 standard

France has initiated the development of a new unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) to complement the upcoming Rafale F5 fighter jet standard, with operational deployment anticipated by 2033. This announcement was made by Sébastien Lecornu, French Minister of the Armed Forces and Veterans Affairs on October 8, 2024, during a ceremony marking the 60th anniversary of the French Strategic Air Forces at Saint-Dizier Air Base, in the presence of General Jérôme Bellanger, Chief of Staff of the French Air and Space Force (AAE), and Éric Trappier, Chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation.

Key Features of the New UCAV

The forthcoming UCAV is designed to enhance the operational capabilities of the Rafale F5, incorporating:

- **Stealth Technology**: Ensuring reduced radar cross-section for improved survivability in contested environments.
- **Autonomous Control Systems**: Allowing for independent operations with an option for human oversight (man-in-the-loop).
- **Internal Payload Capacity**: Facilitating the carriage of weapons and sensors within the airframe to maintain a low radar profile.
- **Collaborative Combat Integration**: Designed to operate seamlessly alongside manned aircraft, enhancing mission flexibility and effectiveness.

“This stealth combat drone will contribute to the technological and operational superiority of the French Air Force by 2033. It is significant that it is being initiated today, as we mark the 60th anniversary of the Strategic Air Forces and the 90th anniversary of the Air and Space Force: in aeronautics — a highly complex field — the future has deep roots, and innovation is built on experience. Dassault Aviation and its partners are proud to serve the French Armed Forces and the French Defense Procurement Agency (DGA). Their renewed confidence honours and obliges us,” declared Éric Trappier.

This UAV will be complementary to the Rafale and suited to collaborative combat. It will incorporate stealth technologies, autonomous control (with man-in-the-loop), internal payload capacity, and more. It will be highly versatile and designed to evolve in line with future threats.

It will benefit from the achievements of the nEUROn* program, Europe’s first stealth UCAV demonstrator.

The Rafale F5 combined with the UCAV and their evolutions, like the Mirage IV in its times, will ensure France’s independence and capability superiority in the coming decades.

Intiated in 2003, the nEUROn program brought together the aeronautics resources of six European countries, with project management by Dassault Aviation. nEUROn completed its maiden flight in December 2012. More than 170 test flights have been conducted to date. The nEUROn program has lived up to all its promises in terms of performance levels, lead times and budget.

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DIAMONDS OF THE GREEK ECONOMY

DIAMONDS OF THE GREEK ECONOMY 2024

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The new role of the defence industry, HENSOLD has a Key role in Germany Europe

In times of profound geopolitical upheaval and structural economic challenges, a fundamental change is emerging in Germany and Europe. The realisation that national security must be shaped by one's own efforts, has ushered in a second turning point. From the perspective of the German security and defence industry, this transformation process is seen as an opportunity to combine innovative technologies, flexible production processes and strategic investments into a holistic concept. The focus is not only on military equipment, but also on creating sustainable economic impulses that strengthen the industrial base beyond the defence industry and open up new long-term perspectives.

Defence spending as an engine for economic recovery

Investment in the defence industry has a twofold effect: on the one hand, it ensures national and European defence capabilities, and on the other hand, it acts as an important economic factor.

Recent studies by leading German economic institutes show that every euro invested in this sector sustainably stimulates economic growth. This two-fold dividend – security and economic progress – is the engine of a new growth phase in which technological innovation, stable jobs and the transfer of know-how go hand in hand. HENSOLDT is at the forefront of this development, developing state-of-the-art sensor technology and digital defence solutions that go far beyond conventional defence equipment and thus significantly shape the future of the industry.

HENSOLDT is at the forefront of this development, developing state-of-the-art sensor technology and digital defence solutions that go far beyond conventional defence equipment and thus significantly shape the future of the industry.

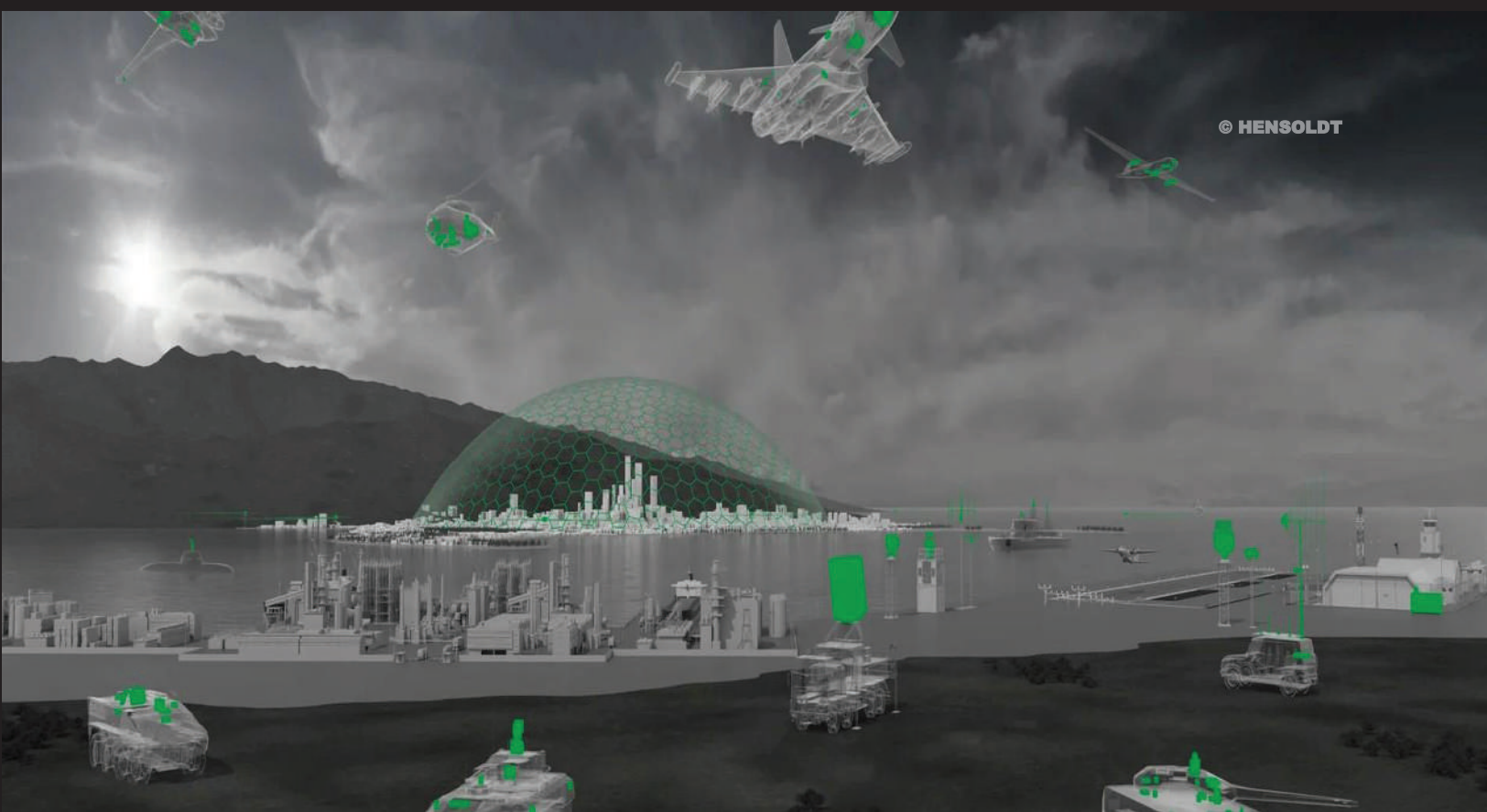
The change in procurement policy reflects the broader social and political upheaval. It marks a move away from procurement based on cash flow and towards needs-based, long-term investment plans that offer the industry predictability and reliability and expand the capabilities of the Bundeswehr in a targeted manner.

This is all the more important as digital technologies – keyword software-defined defence – are increasingly making it possible to link existing capabilities, roll out modernisations based on software and massively shorten development cycles.

Europe will not be able to achieve similar production volumes to the war economies in Russia and China, which already produce as much armaments in three months as the entire NATO in one year. Therefore, we have to counter the masses with more class. This requires smart and networked sensors, the fusion and distribution of data

and the targeted use of AI. After all, data is already as important as ammunition on the modern battlefield. At HENSOLDT, we have many years of extensive experience in the integration of AI and therefore want to become a pioneer in the field of software-defined defence.

This paradigm shift creates the framework within which companies like HENSOLDT can make strategic decisions and systematically expand their production capacities. Long-term perspectives make it possible not only to overcome short-term bottlenecks but also to invest sustainably in research, development and manufacturing. In this way, the defence industry becomes a stable pillar that strengthens both the security and the economic foundation of Germany and Europe.



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GREEK DEFENCE NEWS DAILY

DAY 3

DEFEA 2025 SHOW DAILY

LYNX KF41 – Next generation family of combat vehicles for Greece

The LYNX KF41 is the latest tracked combat vehicle introduced in service with NATO forces and its common used ammunition in 30x173mm calibre. Developed with the international market in mind, the vehicle ensures the desired modularity, the use of qualified, established components and assemblies, as well as the desirable involvement of the respective national industry.

The LYNX KF41 concept comprises a complete family of vehicles consisting of the common drive module and flexible mission modules in numerous variants. This allows each basic vehicle to be configured, for example, as an infantry fighting vehicle, a SKYRANGER air defence system or 120 mm turreted mortar systems to name just a few of the ten variants. The mission module can be changed between variants throughout the life of the platform. By making the drive module identical, this system significantly reduces lifecycle costs and also allows military users to adapt force structures or develop new capabilities in a short time to react to changes on the battlefield. Ultimately, the LYNX KF41 is characterized by high levels of survivability, mobility and combat power, as well as high growth potential, including in terms of total weight and power consumption.

Enhancing the vehicle's flexibility, also the sub-systems of the Lynx KF41 are highly modular and adaptable. The Lynx KF41 features a digital backbone with a generic open architecture that allows easy integration of new mission systems, while the entire survivability system is modular and upgradable to allow the vehicle to cope with the highly adaptive threats faced on the battlefield.

The crew protection begins with smart subsystem integration by design. The Lynx KF41 platform maximizes inherent protection through compartmentation of the crew from normal vehicle hazards. All vulnerable components are integrated outside the crew compartment but still protected by armour and against CBRN threads.

The ballistic and mine protection packages can be easily exchanged, even in the field if needed, while the full spectrum of threats have been taken into account, including roof protection against cluster munitions. The Lynx KF41 with Rheinmetall's Lance turret has been

designed not only for passive and reactive systems, but also for an active protection system to defeat rocket-propelled grenades and antitank guided missiles.

When Lynx is configured, the Lance 2.0 turret is located symmetric in the centre of the vehicle. Lance 2.0 is a two-man turret equipped with an automatic cannon 30x173mm machine gun as the primary armament and provides decisive lethality, using Rheinmetall's Stabilised Electro-Optical Sighting System (SEOSS) panoramic commander and SEOSS sector gunner sights.

Both sighting systems are configured with a day and thermal imaging capability for continuous operations by day, night and adverse weather conditions. They each have an integral laser range finder to support both fire control accuracy and ability to 'point' to target for target information dissemination off-platform using its Battlefield Management System (BMS). This configuration provides the crew with a Hunter-Killer capability and, when a Remote Controlled Weapon Station (RCWS) is fitted, also with Killer-Killer capability. Lastly, the Lance 2.0 has two flexible mission pods that allow installation of a variety of sub-systems to give the turret a specialist capability. Examples of customer-selectable mission pods include dual ATGMs like EUROSPIKE non-line of sight strike loitering munitions, UAVs or an electronic warfare package.

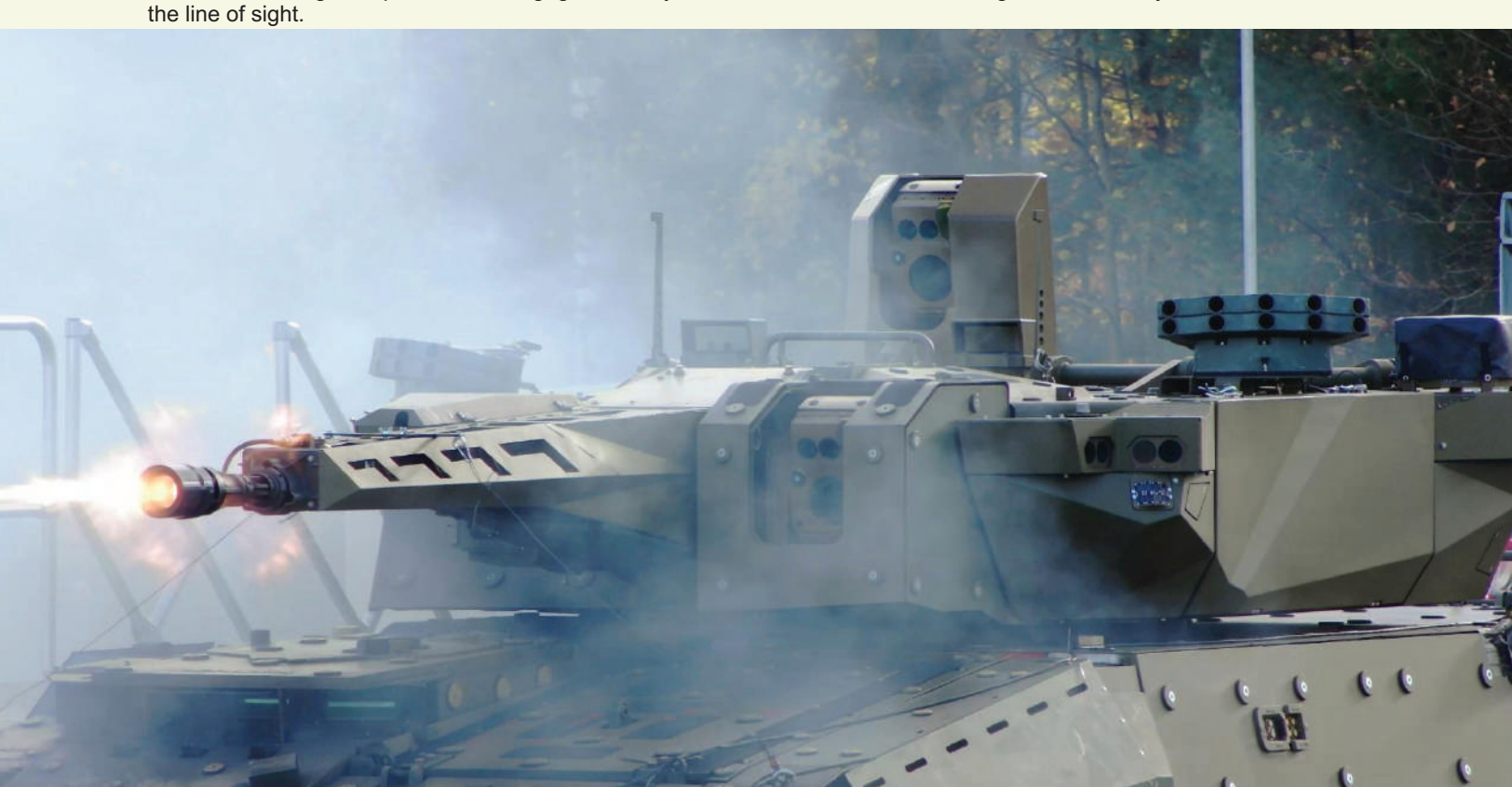
The Lance 2 turret has powerful sensor systems to fully exploit the capabilities of the associated next-generation 30mm programmable ammunition fired by its main MK30-2/ABM autocannon and the advanced Spike LR2 anti-tank missile system. This allows it to engage both symmetric and asymmetric threats in situation-adapted manner. LYNX KF41 and Lance 2 are fully digitized and based on the NATO Generic Vehicle Architecture (NGVA). This integrates the vehicle crew, dismounts and the vehicle itself into the digitized battle management system. Improved situational awareness capabilities enable rapid and highly automated target acquisition or target transfer. It also allows integration of multispectral reconnaissance systems, including drones and loitering munitions, for target acquisition and engagement beyond the line of sight.

The LYNX KF41 provides its crew with protection against the full threat spectrum, including improvised explosive devices (IEDs), mines, direct and indirect fire, cluster munitions and anti-tank guided weapons. With its high assertiveness and mobility, LYNX KF41 will enable forces to conduct complex military operations across the intensity spectrum in a variety of environments and against a wide range of threats.

The Lynx KF41 features an 850 kW (1140hp) engine and a battle proven Renk transmission. Because of a flexible suspension, the Lynx can be configured to carry various mission kits and survivability packages without compromising mobility. When configured for mounted combat operations with the Lance 2.0 turret and a survivability package suitable for peer-on-peer combat, the vehicle weighs approximately 44 tonnes. In this configuration it provides class leading mobility due the high power-to-weight ratio of 26 hp/t, while still leaving up to six tonnes of reserve payload for future growth.

Rheinmetall offers comprehensive industrial cooperation concepts with its partner country's domestic industry for the production of the LYNX KF41. The vehicle platform is a military-off-the-shelf solution and has already been contracted in Hungary. Within three years Hungary established its own LYNX production line. The introduction in other future user countries, such as the Ukraine or Italy, is planned for the near future. As Italy's final choice for the new tracked IFV, Rheinmetall is working to fulfil all the Italian operational requirements and a broad coproduction program with the Italian industry. Nevertheless, it is also one of two vehicle systems qualified and downselected in the United States for a final stage of a competition aimed at acquiring a replacement of the M2 Bradley IFV series (XM30 programme).

Because of its digitization and modern design, the LYNX KF41 can take on today's adversaries and offers upside potential against tomorrow's threats. The modular architecture allows reserves in terms of payload, electric propulsion and processing to seamlessly integrate further mission equipment into the vehicle or enable further variants within a single vehicle family.



Signature of the Rafale Marine contract for India

The Inter-Governmental Agreement between India and France has been signed today allowing the signature, in the presence of the Chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation, Éric Trappier, of the contract for India's acquisition of 26 Rafale Marine to equip the Indian Navy.

The Inter-Governmental Agreement between India and France has been signed today allowing the signature, in the presence of the Chairman and CEO of Dassault Aviation, Éric Trappier, of the contract for India's acquisition of 26 Rafale Marine to equip the Indian Navy.

This contract follows the announcement in July 2023 of the selection of the Rafale Marine, for which the Indian Navy will be the first user outside France, after an international consultation. It confirms the Indian authorities' satisfaction with the aircraft's capabilities and their desire to broaden the spectrum of its operational use. This new acquisition testifies to the importance of the strategic relationship between India and France and the recognition of the Rafale as an essential vector of national sovereignty. It honors Dassault Aviation's commitment to meeting the operational needs of the Indian Forces since the induction of the Toofany seven decades ago, and its determination, through its significant contribution to the 'Make in India' policy and the 'Skill India' initiative, to make its presence in India a success in the service of Indian interests.

The Rafale Marine will provide the Indian Armed Forces with state-of-the-art capabilities and the Indian Navy will benefit from the experience of the French Navy, which already operates this aircraft. Along with the 36 Rafale already in service with the Indian Air Force, the Rafale Marine will play an active role in guaranteeing national sovereignty and consolidating India's role as a major international player.

"On behalf of Dassault Aviation and its partners, I would like to thank the Indian authorities, with whom we have been working for more than 70 years, for their confidence in us and reaffirm our unwavering determination to stand by their side to contribute to India's expression of its sovereign power, its strategic challenges and its ambitious vision of the future," said Éric Trappier.

Over the last decades, air forces have always been the first military components engaged in all crises or conflicts, from the Falklands to the Gulf, from Bosnia to Kosovo, from Afghanistan to Libya, and more recently Mali, the Central African Republic, Iraq and Syria.

With over 10,000 military and civil aircraft delivered in more than 90 countries over the last century, Dassault Aviation has built up expertise recognized worldwide in the design, production, sale and support of all types of aircraft, ranging from the Rafale fighter to the high-end Falcon family of business jets, military drones and space systems. In 2024, sales amounted to € 6.2 billion. Dassault Aviation has 14,600 employees.

The contract, valued at approximately $7,4 billion, marks another milestone in the strategic partnership between the two countries and underscores India's ambitions to significantly expand its military presence in the Indian Ocean.

©Dassault Aviation – C. Cosmao

The deal includes 22 single-seat Rafale M jets for carrier operations and four twin-seat trainers for land-based training. These aircraft will be deployed aboard INS *Vikrant*, India's first indigenous aircraft carrier, which entered service in 2022.

The Rafale M was chosen over Boeing's F/A-18 Super Hornet after extensive evaluations, including successful ski-jump takeoff tests tailored to *Vikrant*'s design. With this acquisition, India becomes the first foreign operator of the Rafale M, originally developed for the French Navy. Delivery of the jets is expected to begin within four years, with full operational capability targeted by 2031.

The agreement includes state-of-the-art weapons such as Meteor beyond-visual-range air-to-air missiles and Exocet anti-ship missiles, along with a comprehensive maintenance and training package. This ensures not only operational readiness but also supports India's drive for technological self-reliance in defense.

Strategically, the deal enhances India's ability to project power in the Indian Ocean amid rising tensions and increased Chinese naval activity in the region. For France, the agreement strengthens its role as a key defense partner in Asia and supports its global security agenda.

The Rafale M order may be a prelude to further arms deals, including potential purchases of additional Rafale jets under India's MRFA program to replace aging fighter fleets. It also opens the door for greater industrial collaboration and possible technology transfers.

Overall, the contract marks a significant milestone in India's naval modernization and reflects its growing focus on maritime security and regional influence.

Rafale M TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

- Capable of carrier landing on 105m of runway
- Capable of being catapulted on 112m of runway
- A sea base serving its aircraft

MAIN ASSETS

- Omnirole fighter
- Long range of operation
- Safety of implementation
- Stability during approach phase

DIMENSIONS

- Empty weight: 11t
- Wingspan: 10,8m
- Height: 5,34m
- Length: 15,27m

INDUSTRIALISTS

Dassault aviation, Thalès, MBDA, Safran, Naval Group

Rafale marine © Katsuhiko TOKUNAGA

INTERVIEW WITH MARK BJORGEN, STORM EW TEAM LEAD AT BAE SYSTEMS AND FORMER U.S. AIR FORCE F-16 FIGHTER PILOT

Please explain why BAE Systems is developing a new EW Suite for F-16V.

The Storm EW™ spectrum warfare suite is designed to provide state-of-the-art offensive and defense electronic warfare capabilities, including 360-degree situational awareness and rapid response, enabling freedom of maneuver, self-protection, and combat capabilities for today's complex missions.

We produce the world's most advanced EW systems including those for F-35 and F-15E/EX. Storm EW brings proven advanced technology to additional aircraft. It is designed to be the high-performance and low-risk EW solution option for U.S. and ally/partner nations requirements.

Our Storm EW spectrum warfare suite is a platform-agnostic electronic warfare system that can be customized and integrated into multiple airborne platforms, including fixed-wing aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles, and guided missiles. Spectrum warfare suites were developed to provide an adaptable, platform-agnostic approach that makes adding advanced EW defense and attack capabilities more affordable and easier to field rapidly.

How does Storm EW address new threats?

The advanced Storm EW hardware architecture provides a platform for rapid software reprogramming of existing and new capabilities to counter emerging threats. The modular design enables rapid technology insertion, and the system permits third-party software and programming.

I've flown with legacy systems and watched the threats evolve. To retake the tactical advantage and win the next fight requires revolutionary technology. Storm EW suite is that electromagnetic game-changer and includes our best proven techniques to keep fourth-generation platforms relevant, survivable, and lethal well into the future.

As far as we know, Storm EW is based in the F-35A EW Suite. What is the commonality between the two EW Suites?

The Storm EW spectrum warfare suite is derived from two advanced, integrated electronic warfare system programs, and uses a proven common core architecture. The design provides a trusted hardware baseline that can be customized and integrated into multiple airborne platforms. By leveraging foundational hardware derived from advanced, combat-proven technology, we make the most of key investments in design and production capacity to rapidly drive mission capabilities to warfighters.

Storm EW suite utilizes a common core architecture. As a result, Hellenic Air Force F-16s equipped with Storm EW technology will have commonality with thousands of advanced fighter aircraft and multiple funded Programs of Record from across the globe. These synergies will have benefits across the lifecycle of the systems.

Can Storm EW work with modern AESA radars like SABR?

Yes. BAE Systems has successfully fielded multiple fighter EW systems integrated with Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radars. Specifically on the F-16, our AN/ALR-56M has been seamlessly integrated with the aircraft's AN/APG-83 Scalable Agile Beam Radar (SABR), achieving Initial Operation Capability in November 2021 after successful verification and validation tests with no degradation of operational capability. We will be using this same proven approach for Storm EW spectrum warfare suites.

Can you please explain the other advantages of Storm EW?

By leveraging mature, foundational hardware from advanced, combat-proven technology, we are building on investments in design and production capacity. The common architecture across platforms reduces engineering cost, optimizes life cycle cost, and lowers operational and sustainment expenses.

BAE Systems worked closely with its partners and customers to create a common architecture with shared components and configurable blocks that address a broad set of requirements, streamline the build process, and lower lifecycle costs.

One of the biggest advantages of Storm EW suites is the maturity of our approach, as we've already done the difficult EW development and extensive flight testing. With our EW hardware already in production and our capability already tested and flying today on combat aircraft, this removes years of risk and uncertainty.

Do you believe that Storm EW can face advanced air to air and surface to air threats?

Yes. Leveraging our advanced fighter EW experience and billions of dollars of investment in advanced fighter EW programs, this is the highest performance and lowest risk system that we could install into an F-16. As a result, we believe Storm EW systems will provide tactical advantage in highly contested airspace against even the most challenging surface and air threats.

US Space Force Selects L3Harris to Upgrade Space Domain Awareness Capabilities to Better Understand Space-Based Threats

© L3Harris Technologies

L3Harris Technologies has received the next contract option year from U.S. Space Force Space Systems Command to continue sustainment and modernization of ground system infrastructure for the nation's Space Domain Awareness (SDA) capabilities in support of the Space Force's space superiority mission.

The contract is in year six of 10 for the Maintenance of Space Situational Awareness Integrated Capabilities (MOSSAIC) program, which detects, tracks and identifies deep space objects to deliver surveillance information to military, civil and commercial users.

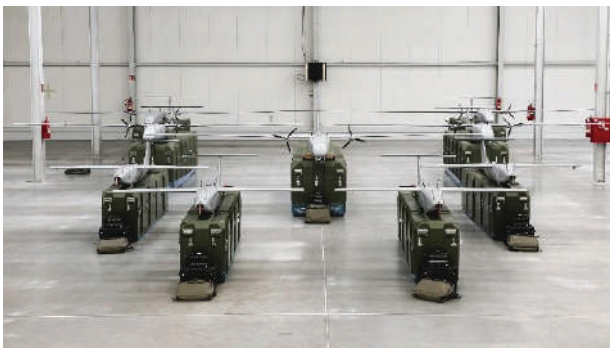
"L3Harris' work on the MOSSAIC program is a testament to our commitment of ensuring warfighters maintain a competitive edge in contested environments," said Ed Zoiss, President, Space and Airborne Systems, L3Harris. "Upgrading the MOSSAIC program enables the Space Force to better understand space-based threats."

The Space Force initially selected L3Harris for the MOSSAIC contract in 2020 to maintain and upgrade sensors and command and control systems, which provide timely and accurate data

L3Harris has served the Space Force and other agencies as a trusted partner for more than 30 years with differentiated SDA capabilities, technology, research and development, and services that keep U.S. Space Surveillance Network optical sensors and systems running with high reliability, availability and provide mission-critical capabilities to warfighters.

L3Harris Technologies is the Trusted Disruptor in the defense industry. With customers' mission-critical needs always in mind, our employees deliver end-to-end technology solutions connecting the space, air, land, sea, and cyber domains in the interest of national security.

GLADIUS Unmanned Reconnaissance and Strike System



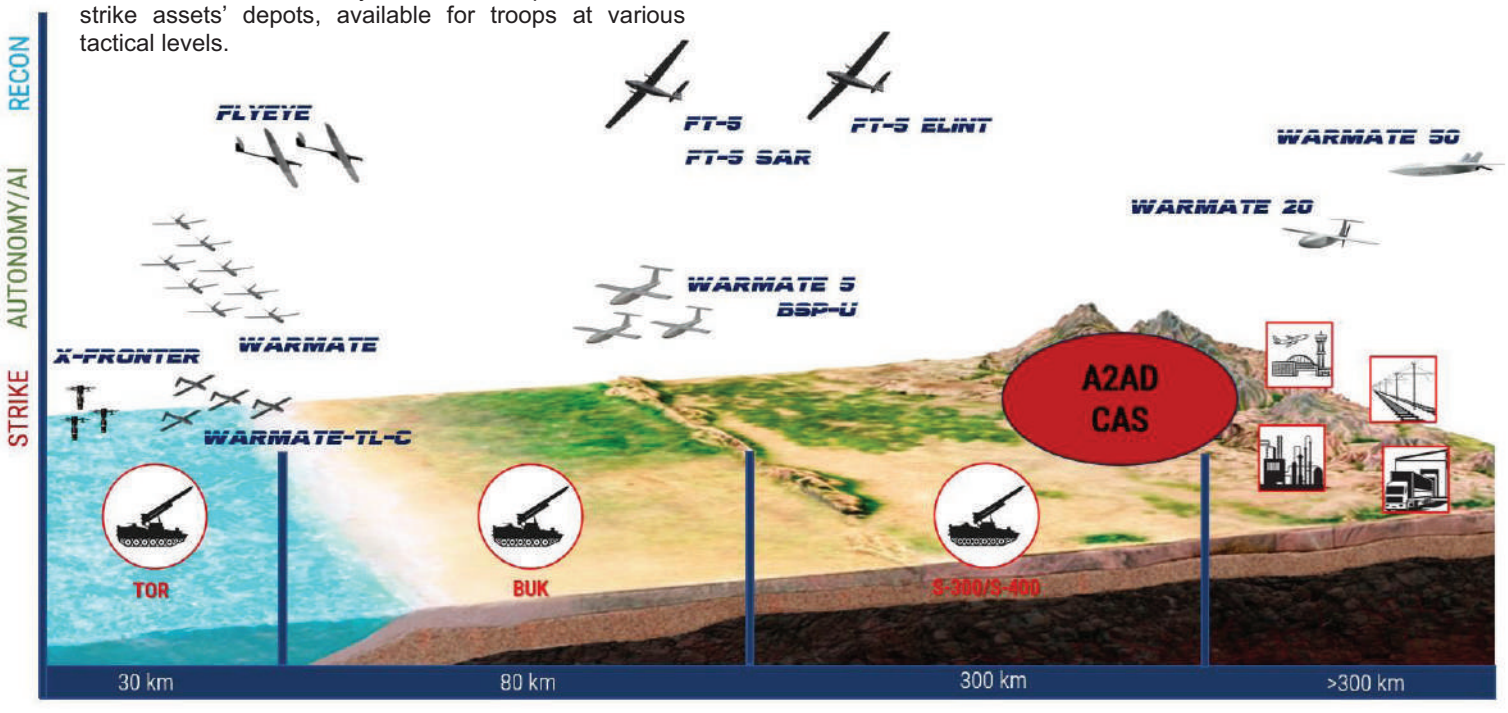
The GLADIUS system, an innovative search and strike complex enables fast, covert, and precise destruction at long distances. It is a rapid response unit comprising four key components: a sensor capability, a shooter capability, communication infrastructure and control software. The system has already been introduced to the Polish armed forces.

Situational awareness, precise and quick data transmission along with security and reliability in the most extreme conditions are crucial on the contemporary battlefield. The GLADIUS is a unique Polish solution for the Anti-Access/Area Denial penetration. The system is a combination of communication hardware, vehicles, unmanned aircraft systems, and control software that allows for observation and combat UASs to operate together.

The GLADIUS system comprises of the swarm of unmanned aerial systems, synchronized in terms of communication and data transmission, to accomplish the most challenging combat missions. This allows the armed force to complete the mission without necessarily risking the lives of its soldiers. The solution is integrated with the TOPAZ Integrated Combat Management System. The surveillance systems combined with the swarm of loitering munition is capable of saturation attacks of important targets. In addition, the system is fully operational in a GPS-disrupted or GPS-spoofed environment.

GLADIUS is a combination of the combat proven solutions, already inducted to the Poland's Armed Forces and other armies, such as the FLYEYE reconnaissance Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), and WARMATE Loitering Munitions family, complemented by a multirole tactical FT-5 UAVs**.** The system allows to produce aerial strike assets' depots, available for troops at various tactical levels.

The GLADIUS system enables the end-user to rapidly identify targets and launch strikes based on real-time information. The system provides 'sensor to shooter' capabilities and a fast reaction response to identified threats. The central concept of the GLADIUS system is that data obtained from the reconnaissance system can be used to select targets for, and improve the strike capabilities of the loitering munitions. The system is based on several vehicles, which include reconnaissance-and-command vehicles, strike vehicles with integrated launchers for loitering munition system, as well as ammunition and logistics vehicles.

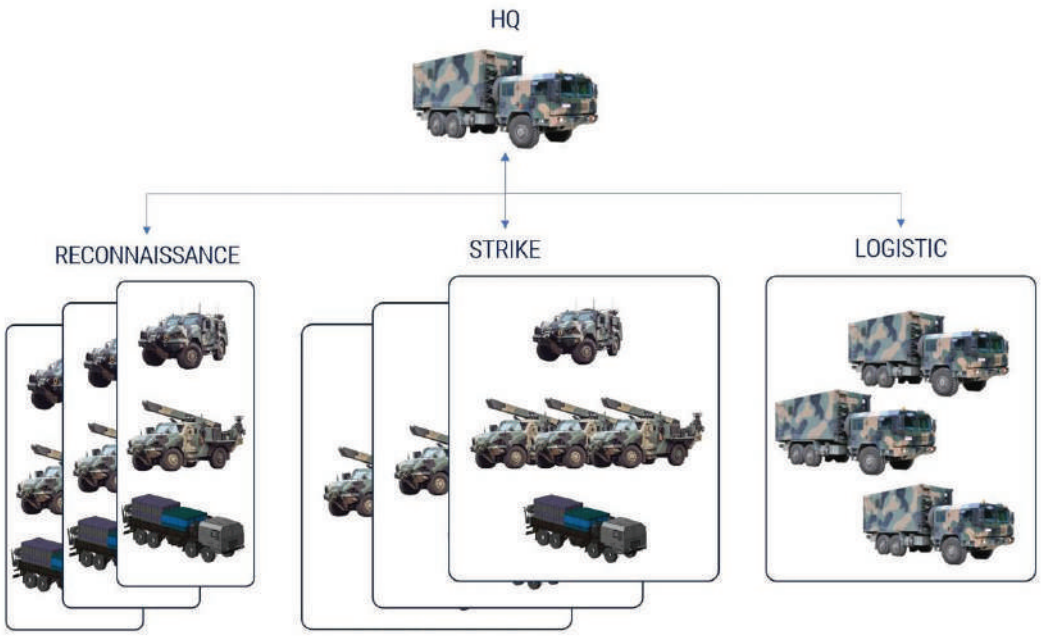


The GLADIUS system integrates the UAVs for reconnaissance missions (equipped with various sensors for detection and tracking of objects in the visible and radio-electronic emission bands, such as FT-5 IMINT, SAR and ELINT variants), UAVs for strike missions, which can carry various types of warheads, including HE, HEFI or HEAT warheads (Warmate 5, 10 or 20) with command, launcher and support vehicles. The GLADIUS system software package manages the flow of information between the different operatives, vehicles and aerial platforms. The system can be offered in a variety of different configurations depending on the requirements of the end user.

The reconnaissance UAVs and loitering munitions can be deployed either by dismounted soldiers, operating in small squads, or from armoured vehicles. GLADIUS is managed by a commander located at a command post, usually a vehicle. The choice of both operator and technical vehicles (i.e. FT-5 transport and trailer ramps) are highly individual and depend on the user's preferences.

The battery modules of the GLADIUS unmanned search and strike system are designed for precise targeting and for conducting aerial reconnaissance. The role of the system effectors is played by loitering munitions, integrated with the C4I TOPAZ system used by the Polish Armed Forces. The battery module also includes: launcher vehicles, command vehicles, ammunition vehicles, maintenance vehicles, other vehicles and a reserve of strike UAVs. Part of the GLADIUS system is EYEQ Tactical Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance System.

The EYEQ is an AI-based system designed for real-time detection, identification, and classification of military objects. It combines proprietary software and edge computing modules developed entirely by WB GROUP. The modules come as Air-mounted in UAVs and Land-placed in military vehicles. The devices allow automatic analysis of detected objects based on video stream generated data by optoelectronic surveillance, reconnaissance or targeting systems. Both variants may be integrated with battlefield management or fire-control systems via any communications system.



US Air Force Completes First Flight of L3Harris Viper Shield Electronic Warfare System

The L3Harris Technologies all-digital electronic warfare (EW) suite, Viper Shield™, has completed its first flight in a single-seat Block 70 F-16 operated by the 412th Test Wing at Edwards Air Force Base, California.

Viper Shield provides the most advanced EW capability to F-16 fighter fleets for six international partners.

"This flight launches the latest capability enhancement for the F-16 and our warfighters. The Viper Shield system combined with a Block 70 airframe creates a leap in capability compared to the traditional Block 50 Viper I grew up flying," said Maj. Anthony Pipe, F-16 Experimental Test Pilot, U.S. Air Force. "The EW advancements this system brings will ensure pilots flying these aircraft continue to make it home."

The flight included a series of risk reduction tests related to the mission computer and other avionic subsystems compatibility, as well as interoperability with the APG-83 active electronically scanned array (AESA) fire control radar.

"Our building block approach to test hardware and software in labs, demonstrate functionality in dense radio frequency environments and validate the EW system on the ground prepared us for Viper Shield's successful first flight," said Ed Zoiss, President, Space and Airborne Systems, L3Harris. "With this milestone, we are ready to continue flight testing and deliver systems in late 2025 as Viper Shield is the only advanced EW solution that is funded and in active production for international F-16 partners."

Viper Shield is a low-risk, low-cost system that counters modern radar threats with immediate detection and advanced jamming responses to disrupt the adversary's kill chain. Unlike other EW system providers, Viper Shield will integrate across all F-16 Blocks with minimal modifications to the aircraft, and it is fully configurable with both the current Mission Modular Computer and the Next Generation Mission Computer.

L3Harris Technologies is the Trusted Disruptor in the defense industry. With customers' mission-critical needs always in mind, our employees deliver end-to-end technology solutions connecting the space, air, land, sea and cyber domains in the interest of national security. Visit L3Harris.com for more information.

L3Harris' all-digital electronic warfare suite, Viper Shield™, completed its first flight in a single-seat Block 70 F-16 operated by the 412th Test Wing at Edwards Air Force Base, California. ©Photo courtesy of Lockheed Martin

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Under the Auspices

ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ ΑΜΥΝΑΣ

Growing Strategic Independence Pushes Europe Toward Sixth-Gen Fighter Development

Mounting political and strategic concerns over U.S. control of the F-35 fighter jet program—exacerbated by former President Donald Trump's renewed criticisms of NATO and foreign policy shifts—have accelerated European ambitions to develop their own sixth-generation fighter aircraft. As tensions within NATO deepen, especially over defense autonomy and spending, many European nations and Canada are reevaluating their reliance on American military technology and considering investing in homegrown alternatives.

At the center of this unease is the F-35 Lightning II, developed by Lockheed Martin, which is currently the only fifth-generation fighter jet available to Western allies. Despite its advanced stealth and combat capabilities, the F-35's dependence on American software support, mission data, and upgrade access has raised questions about operational sovereignty. These concerns were inflamed by widespread reports of an alleged "kill switch" embedded in the aircraft's systems, which would theoretically allow the U.S. to disable or limit the functionality of F-35s operated by foreign militaries. While experts have dismissed the idea of a literal kill switch, they acknowledge that the U.S. retains considerable leverage through its control of updates, maintenance, and mission systems.

Canada, which had committed to buying 88 F-35s, has paused procurement, citing geopolitical uncertainties. Similarly, Portugal has voiced hesitations, saying it must reassess the value and risks of purchasing the American jets in the context of shifting alliances. These concerns reflect a broader anxiety that American foreign policy, particularly under Trump, may be too unpredictable or self-serving for allies to trust fully. Trump's warm stance toward Russia and his past threats to reduce U.S. support for NATO have only heightened these fears.

The situation in Ukraine has further illustrated the perils of over-reliance on U.S. military support. When the U.S. temporarily suspended military aid and intelligence sharing to pressure Kyiv into negotiations with Russia, European leaders saw firsthand the risks of strategic dependency. This episode served as a cautionary tale, especially for countries considering purchasing expensive, U.S.-controlled weapons systems like the F-35 or the future F-47 fighter.

In response, European countries are increasing defense budgets and prioritizing self-sufficiency in military production and planning. Two major sixth-generation fighter jet programs are currently in the works in Europe: the **Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP)**, a collaboration between the United Kingdom, Italy, and Japan; and the **Future Combat Air System (FCAS)**, spearheaded by France, Germany, and Spain. These programs aim to deliver next-generation fighters with advanced stealth, automation, and modular weapon systems by the mid-2030s or 2040s. Both initiatives emphasize operational independence, allowing participating nations to make critical decisions without foreign interference.

©Lockheed Martin- F-35

GCAP, in particular, has been framed as a political and strategic counterbalance to the F-35. It is designed to ensure that each nation involved retains full control over how the aircraft are deployed and maintained. The U.K. has made clear that it will preserve “freedom of action” with the F-35, but the political and industrial motivation behind GCAP is to eliminate future dependence altogether. Over 3,500 people are already working on the project in the U.K., and the door remains open to additional partners—though integrating new entrants could slow development.

Meanwhile, the United States continues to push ahead with its **Next Generation Air Dominance (NGAD)** program. Trump recently revealed the F-47, a sixth-generation manned aircraft described as the centerpiece of this initiative. Marketed as “the most lethal aircraft ever built,” the F-47 would be offered to allies in a “toned-down” version—10 percent less capable than the U.S. variant. This open admission that foreign buyers will receive inferior versions of American weapons further undermined trust among allies, with some military officials and analysts warning it signals a fundamental shift in the U.S.’ defense export strategy.

Some former European senior air force officers argued that if nations already feel uneasy about the F-35, the F-47 could represent an even greater risk of operational dependence and restricted capability. This view is increasingly common among NATO members who believe Europe should prioritize its own sixth-generation platforms over buying into an expensive, U.S.-controlled future aircraft. Though Lockheed Martin maintains that the F-35 remains the “cornerstone” of modern defense for 20 nations, European defense leaders are now more actively pushing to close capability gaps previously filled by the U.S. Air defense, ISR (intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance), and electronic warfare are considered top priorities.

Now, in the face of geopolitical upheaval and reduced trust in American consistency, Europe is preparing to fill these gaps itself. Countries are looking at alternatives to American systems such as the Patriot missile defense system—opting instead to consider homegrown or European solutions like the German IRIS-T. Observers argue this strategic shift is not about severing ties with the U.S. but about building resilience and independence. Europe's approach is to diversify suppliers, collaborate on technology development, and ensure sovereignty over how critical defense systems are used.

Nevertheless, the F-35 controversy has become a symbol of broader NATO challenges. The U.S. has long criticized allies for not spending enough on defense. European nations accept that spending has been insufficient but are resistant to arbitrary targets. Instead, efforts are underway to more strategically assess where investment is needed and to coordinate joint industrial and military programs. which that support might waver or be used as leverage.

In conclusion, the political tensions surrounding the F-35 have catalyzed a broader European defense awakening. Sixth-generation fighter programs like GCAP and FCAS are no longer just technological endeavors—they are strategic necessities in an era of uncertain American commitment. While the U.S. remains a key NATO partner, Europe is making clear moves to reduce reliance on American platforms and enhance its own defense sovereignty, ensuring it can act independently in future geopolitical crises.

GREEK DEFENCE NEWS DAILY

DAY 3

DEFEA 2025 SHOW DAILY

Conclusion of Exercise “Iniochos 2025”

On Friday, April 11, 2025, the multinational air exercise “Iniochos 2025” concluded. The exercise commenced on Monday, March 31, 2025. The main hosting unit of the Exercise was Andravida Air Base, from where nearly all the fighter aircraft of the foreign contingents operated, while the majority of the Hellenic Air Force (HAF) fighter jets operated from the 116 Combat Wing. “Iniochos 2025” marked the largest participation of air forces since the establishment of the exercise as an INVITEX (Invitation Exercise), with a total of 12 countries actively participating. Specifically, the participating nations were:

- France with Mirage 2000
- India with Su-30
- Israel with G-550
- Italy with Tornado
- Montenegro with Bell 412
- Poland with F-16
- Qatar with F-15
- Slovenia with PC-9
- Spain with F/A-18 Hornet
- United Arab Emirates with Mirage 2000-9
- United States of America with F-16, KC-46 & KC-135
- Greece with all types of HAF fighter jets, helicopters, transport, and training aircraft

1300 sorties were conducted throughout the Athens FIR during the exercise.

Additionally, units from the Hellenic Army, the Hellenic Navy, and the Special Warfare Command contributed significantly to the creation of complex and realistic operational scenarios. Furthermore, Bahrain, Cyprus, and Slovakia participated as observer nations. Throughout «Iniochos 2025», all types of air missions were executed in a high-tempo, day-and-night operational environment, covering the full spectrum of modern air operations within complex and realistic scenarios. Concurrently, missions were also carried out using the Tactical Simulators of F-16 aircraft at the Operational Synthetic Training Squadron of the Hellenic Air Tactics Center, expanding the exercise into the digital domain.

SUBSEA CRAFT UNVEILS 'MARS' USV CAPABILITY

British advanced maritime technology company SubSea Craft (SSC) has unveiled a new Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) capability, MARS, marking the company's second product offering following the success of its VICTA diver delivery platform. Taken from concept to on the water in only 100 days, MARS offers a low-signature, mission-configurable design to maximise autonomy, survivability and operational disruption in contested environments.

Its launch comes at a time of growing international demand for USV capabilities – something SSC has sought to respond to at pace to address the evolving requirements of the UK and its allies in distributed maritime operations. MARS encompasses the latest innovations in USV technology, with multi-role applications for a variety of force objectives including:

- Wingman support to minimise risk to manned deployments and provide a force multiplying effect at the vanguard of the fleet.
- Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities including long-range surveillance to increase the recognised maritime picture in environments with degraded communications.
- Multi-domain payloads and modular integration, allowing for both kinetic and non-kinetic effects on target. This includes the integration of Anduril's ALTIUS.

Following its manufacture in the UK, MARS has undergone extensive testing and validation with AUKUS partners, including open water tests with the Australian Maritime College – which signed an R&D partnership with SSC in 2023.

The company has a growing series of multi-domain platforms offering high configurability, autonomy and ease of maintenance and MARS is a continuation of this, using the same open architecture digital control system as SSC's dual-domain craft, VICTA.

Camilla Martin, CEO of SubSea Craft, said: "There is a clear global need for the responsive development of advanced maritime platforms that can meet evolving force requirements and objectives.

"At SubSea Craft we are proud to be representing the UK on the international stage in creating scalable technologies. These can be built and serviced in-country to boost both domestic maritime capabilities and the agility of our allies.

"The development of MARS represents another milestone on our international journey. Having been developed in the UK, tested in Australia and the US, we have been able to showcase our ongoing dedication to AUKUS objectives of interoperability and technological synergy between nations."

Penny Mordaunt, Chair of SubSea Craft and Former UK Secretary of State for Defence, said: "MARS has emerged as a disruptive force for the modern battlespace. Its successful testing following an impressive turnaround from its ideation is testament to SubSea Craft's cutting-edge approach to accelerated research, development and delivery."

MARS will be showcased on Stand 2709 at SOF Week 2025 in Tampa, Florida, Stand A28 at DEFEA in Athens, Greece and Stand A-120 DSEI 2025 in London, UK.

SubSea Craft is a UK-based advanced maritime technology company focused on delivering cutting-edge solutions that address the evolving challenges of modern naval operations. The company specialises in developing innovative, future-proof platforms that enhance operational capabilities in surface, sub-surface, and unmanned domains

By focusing on next-generation maritime technology, SubSea Craft aims to create a sustainable innovation ecosystem through global partnerships, ensuring it remains ready for future challenges.

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Rain and Sikorsky Test Advanced Aerial Firefighting Technologies Using Autonomous Black Hawk® Helicopter

On April 24, 2025, in Hesperia, California, Sikorsky, a Lockheed Martin company, and Rain, a pioneer in wildfire suppression technology, jointly demonstrated advanced aerial firefighting capabilities using an autonomous Black Hawk® helicopter. This groundbreaking test integrated Sikorsky's MATRIX™ flight autonomy system with Rain's wildfire mission autonomy software to execute live fire

suppression exercises in wildfire-prone terrain. The test was conducted in collaboration with the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District, which created live fire scenarios using burning brush piles and propane fires at an altitude of 3,300 feet and in wind gusts up to 30 knots (35 mph).

The helicopter, a modified Black Hawk equipped with fly-by-wire controls, onboard thermal and vision cameras, and satellite datalink, was remotely operated using a tablet-based system provided by Rain. The system enabled ground operators to autonomously assign tasks such as locating water sources, hovering to fill the water bucket, identifying fire zones using thermal sensors, creating suppression plans, and executing precise water drops. These steps were accomplished while streaming live sensor data and video to the operators for real-time decision-making. This test marked the first California-based, live-fire demonstration of Sikorsky and Rain's integrated systems.

The helicopter flew for a total of 24 hours over two weeks, showcasing both fully autonomous and optionally piloted operations, with transitions between modes depending on the environmental and mission conditions. The demonstrations were observed by officials from CAL FIRE, Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA), the U.S. Forest Service, and others. One key aspect of the test included communication interoperability between the autonomous Black Hawk and a crewed OCFA Sikorsky S-76 command helicopter. This joint operation validated the autonomous aircraft's ability to function effectively in a manned airspace environment, reinforcing its potential value in initial wildfire attack missions.

According to Chief Dan Munsey of the San Bernardino County Fire District, this innovation adds crucial flexibility and capacity to firefighting operations. The autonomous systems provide faster response times and reduce risks for human pilots by enabling early-stage wildfire suppression in hazardous or remote areasThe demonstration is part of Rain's broader mission to equip existing military and civilian aircraft with smart autonomy for rapid wildfire response. Rain, headquartered in Alameda, California, is committed to supporting fire agencies by deploying intelligent, autonomous aircraft systems that can be prepositioned for quick reaction to ignitions.

Supported in part by a PG&E research and development grant, the test represents a major step forward in integrating autonomy into firefighting aviation. As the technology matures, the combination of MATRIX and Rain systems is expected to empower incident commanders with more effective tools for protecting communities, property, and natural resources from increasingly frequent and intense wildfires. The 324-gallon Bambi Bucket attached to a 40-ft line allowed the aircraft to perform multiple water drops from a nearby 189,000-gallon water tank provided by Wildfire Water Solutions.

Main topics

- Aerial Firefighting
- Firefighting aircrafts and helicopters
- Wildland Fire Management
- Management and command of fire operations in urban buildings
- Firefighting simulation & Training
- Liquid fire extinguisher and Firefighting foams
- Early Warning Firefighting System
- UAV to improve situational awareness in Fire Fighting
- Firefighting drones
- Firefighting Vehicles
- Off-road forest firefighting vehicles
- Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus
- Firefighter Protective Clothing
- Torch that stretches light across dark, hazardous environments
- Fire Fighting Vessels

2026 Athens International Firefighting Conference

4-5 March 2026, War Museum, Athens, Greece

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Saab transponder sets new standard for global maritime

Saab has achieved major breakthroughs in maritime communication with its VDES (VHF Data Exchange System) transponder aboard the Ymir-1 satellite. For the first time, global coverage with reliable data reception and transmission to and from vessels is being delivered.

Launched in November 2023, the Swedish-built satellite equipped with Saab's R6 VDES Payload has tested and developed the next generation of the Automatic Identification System (AIS), which all ships use to communicate their position, speed, course, and other vital data. In partnership with AAC Clyde Space, ORBCOMM -- and partly funded by The Swedish Transport Administration -- the satellite has performed several tests, providing valuable contribution to the development of the international VDES standard.

The R6 VDES Payload onboard Ymir-1 has demonstrated its remarkable capabilities such as consistently detecting over 60,000 unique vessels per day and ability to send navigational warning alarms to vessels to demonstrate the VDES services. This achievement establishes the R6 VDES Payload as a new benchmark for global AIS reception and VDES performance.

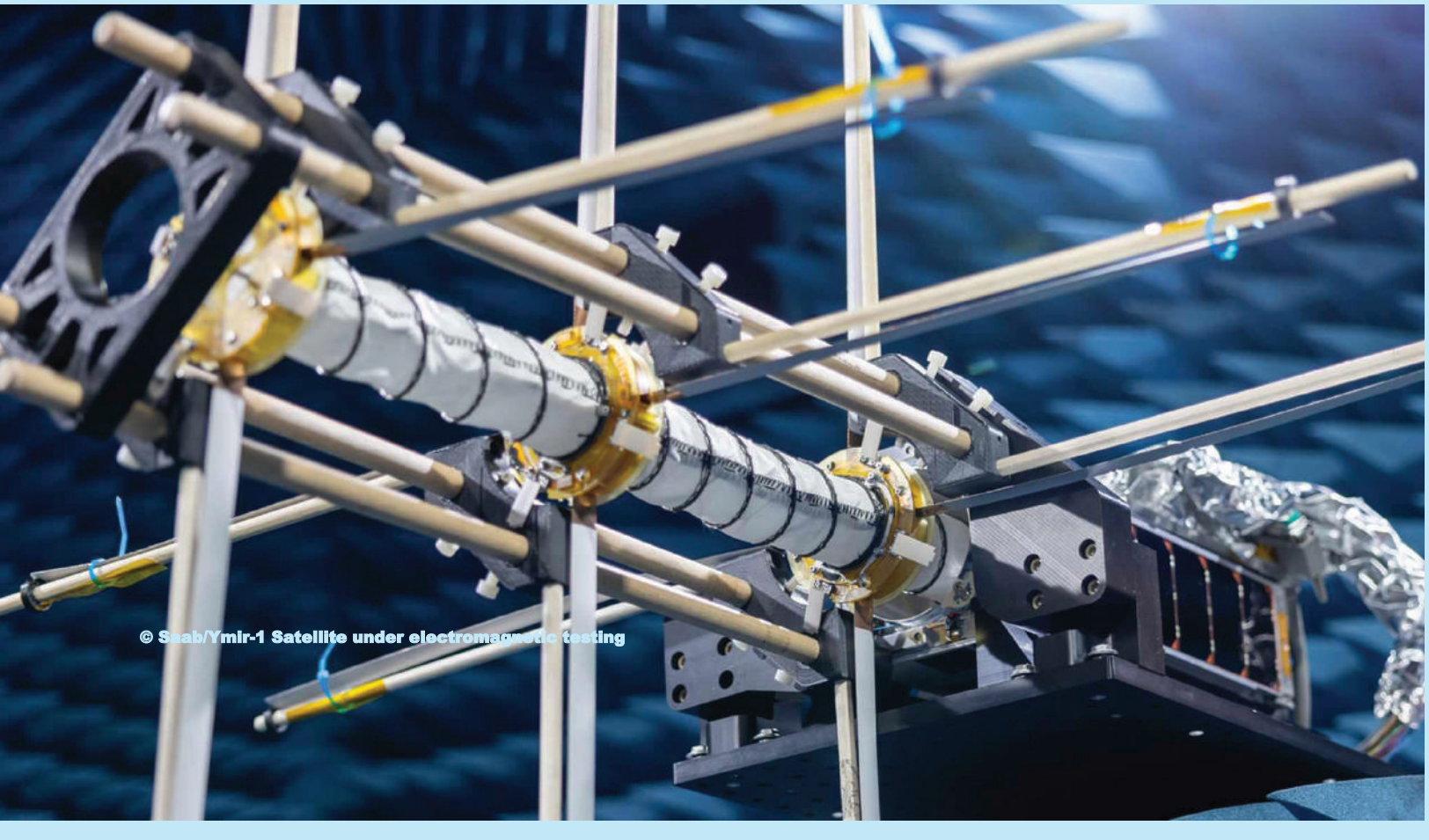
"We are incredibly proud of the R6 VDES Payload's performance onboard Ymir-1," says Johanna Gustafsson, CEO of Saab TransponderTech. "This technology not only supports all AIS messages but also enables two-way communication, paving the way for safer and more reliable maritime operations and sets a new global standard for maritime communication."

The primary catalyst for VDES is the limited capacity of today's AIS system, unable to cope with growing traffic congestion and alarming security issues. With space-based VDES, capacity will significantly increase, enabling secure communication via satellites and providing global coverage, as opposed to previous systems which are confined to the coastline.

VDES represents a technological leap forward in maritime communication, providing ships with affordable capability of real-time data exchange. This will allow ships to optimize routes based on advanced prediction algorithms, saving fuel and contributing to a more sustainable future.

"It's been quite a journey", says Andreas Fredmer, Project Manager Ymir-1, "Seeing us take our ideas to reality, then watching it all launch into space and hope it works out, quite nerve wrecking as you can imagine. We have learned a lot from these past years building our satellite and payload and I am really grateful to my project team that made it all possible and to the Swedish Transport Administration for their support that got us off the ground."

With these excellent results the project now moves to a close having showed incredible performance and innovative engineering to bring terrestrial technology to a satellite platform that benefits maritime safety and sustainability. The three companies will continue to operate Ymir-1 and perform VDES testing on behalf of interested parties around the world.



© Saab/Ymir-1 Satellite under electromagnetic testing

Modernizing TAURUS for the Bundeswehr

The Bundeswehr and TAURUS Systems GmbH (a joint venture between MBDA and SAAB) have signed a contract for the maintenance and modernization of the TAURUS stand-off weapon system. The measures will ensure the weapon's operational readiness until at least 2045.

A central component of the contract is the comprehensive modernization of TAURUS cruise missiles used by German armed forces. In addition to maintenance, the system will receive technological upgrades to meet the increasing demands placed on modern weapon systems.

The Bundeswehr is strengthening its stand-off weapons capability with the measures commissioned. TAURUS is a key element of the German Air Force and NATO. The air-to-surface missile enables the German Air Force to overcome enemy air defence systems from a safe distance, minimizing the risks to pilots and platforms. With a range of over 500 kilometres and high precision, TAURUS makes an important contribution to deterrence and to national and allied defence.

SCORPION Days 2025

SCORPION Days 2025 marks a decade since the launch of the SCORPION program, showcasing the transformation of the French Army's land capabilities. Held in Canjuers, the event highlights the delivery of 723 GRIFFON, 296 SERVAL, and 91 JAGUAR vehicles, with tactical demonstrations and operational feedback forums attended by international delegations.

Industrial partner KNDS France has tripled production capacity, aiming for 450 vehicles annually. The GRIFFON fleet now includes six variants, such as the MEPAC mortar and Medical Evacuation models. All vehicles are integrated with the SCORPION Combat Information System (SICS) for real-time battlefield digitization. The program’s evolution includes new satellite-compatible communication systems and vehicle upgrades from deployments in the Sahel and Eastern Europe. Notably, the 6th Light Armored Brigade is now fully “SCORPIONized.”

Key milestones include qualification of JAGUAR’s R2 standard with mobile fire capability, SERVAL variant expansion for counter-drone and air defense roles, and delivery of upgraded Leclerc tanks. Belgium’s CaMo program is also progressing with upcoming GRIFFON and JAGUAR deliveries. SCORPION Days offers a strategic forum on doctrinal shifts, digitized operations, interoperability, and logistics, reinforcing France’s modernization efforts and global defense partnerships.

Saab receives order for TAURUS KEPD 350 sub-components

Saab has received an order for maintenance and modernization of the cruise missile TAURUS KEPD 350. The order value is SEK 1.7 billion and the contract period is 2025-2035.The order includes significant system upgrades and modernization to the German Air Force's TAURUS missiles as well as a ten-year life cycle maintenance. Saab received the order from the German prime contractor TAURUS Systems, a joint venture between MBDA Germany and Saab. The initial order was placed by Germany's defence procurement office (BAAINBw) to TAURUS Systems. "TAURUS KEPD 350 enables the user to defeat targets at long ranges required for the most demanding air operations. The latest upgrades will provide the German Air Force with significant improvements," says Görgen Johansson, Head of Saab's business area Dynamics.

© SAAB- TAURUS KEPD 350 on aircraft

TAURUS KEPD 350 is an air-launched cruise missile with a range of more than 500 km used to defeat static ground-based targets.

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Aeromaritime communications system of the German F125 class frigates have demonstrated exceptional reliability during their worldwide deployment as part of the INDO-PACIFIC Deployment (IPD) 2024.

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