



FACT SHEET



MDA FACT SHEET

MEDIUM EXTENDED AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

Medium Extended Air Defense System (MEADS) program is a transatlantic cooperative effort between the United States, Germany, and Italy to develop an air and missile defense system that is tactically mobile and transportable. It will be capable of countering tactical ballistic missiles and air-breathing threats, including cruise missiles. MEADS will improve the limited area defense of vital assets, both civilian and military, as well as provide capability to move with and protect the maneuver forces.

The MEADS will defend troops and fixed assets from short range ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and other air breathing threats such as aircraft or unmanned aerial vehicles. MEADS role in the ballistic missile defense architecture will be to bridge the gap between man portable systems like the Stinger and the higher levels of the missile defense structure like the Theater High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system while providing continuous coverage for rapidly advancing maneuver forces.

The MEADS will also help U.S. forces work in conjunction with the forces of our allies. Since the U.S., Germany and Italy are planning to co-develop and use MEADS, its commonality of system design will contribute to the interoperability of U.S. and allied forces.

DESCRIPTION

The MEADS will be a mobile surface to air missile (SAM) system designed to provide a lower tier defense for troops and installations against a sophisticated suite of threats. Mounted on a wheeled vehicle, MEADS will use a multicaster vertical launcher to protect and launch its interceptors. The MEADS will have advanced radars to provide 360-degree coverage. The MEADS missile will be hit-to-kill, will destroy Theater Ballistic Missiles (TBM's), and have a lethality-enhanced warhead for use against air breathing targets. Initially MEADS will employ the PAC-3 missile as its interceptor. All components will be linked to state of the art communications and will have access to a broad range of sensors from other systems and services.

The MEADS will use a distributed/netted architecture and module components that will allow a MEADS unit to be task-organized and configured according to the expected threat and planned tactics. These abilities will ensure that MEADS is part of the overall Air Defense/Theater Missile Defense architecture and compatible with other Army, joint, and allied systems. The system is also designed to decrease U.S. strategic lift requirements for theater missile defense systems.



ADVANTAGES

The MEADS international nature gives the program a high potential to promote interoperability of U.S. and allied forces and to help trans-Atlantic defense cooperation. In turn, this could reinforce good relations between the U.S. and Europe. Indeed, MEADS reaffirms the United States' commitment to stay involved in European security affairs and could spark a renaissance in trans-Atlantic cooperation.

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ELEMENTS

The MEADS project will pass through three phases: Product Definition/Validation (PD/V), Design and Development (D&D), and Production. The MEADS is currently in the first stage, PD/V. The objective of PD/V is to produce a system specification, a primary end item specification document, and a cooperative program plan for the common development and production of MEADS. The participating countries will negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding for each of these phases.

Should the decision be made to allocate resources to move MEADS through to the Production phase, low rate initial production could start in 2009. Following operational test and evaluation of these initial systems, MEADS could enter full rate production. The first MEADS units could reach the field as early as 2012.

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