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UTC Aerospace Systems MS-177 sensor completes first flight test on Global Hawk

April 13, 2017 by Loren Blinde Leave a Comment

The U.S. military will soon be able to see airborne images at a greater distance and with greater clarity than ever before now that UTC Aerospace Systems, a unit of United Technologies Corp., has successfully completed the first flight test of its new MS-177 long-range, multi-spectral imaging (MSI) sensor on the Northrop Grumman RQ-4B Global Hawk Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS). The test was held on February 8 at Northrop Grumman's Palmdale, California, facility, the company announced April 12.

With the Global Hawk flight complete, MS-177 will now commence a six-month integration, testing and qualification phase before official fielding in late 2017. The flight test was the first step forward in the MS-177 Family of Systems (FoS) roadmap that includes multi-spectral imaging, hyperspectral imaging and customer unique mission capable variants.

"As the most advanced imaging sensor of its kind, the MS-177 is a game-changer in airborne surveillance," said Kevin Raftery, vice president of ISR and Space Systems at UTC Aerospace Systems. "During its first flight on Global Hawk, MS-177 demonstrated its ability to take the aircraft's imaging capabilities to a new level in terms of coverage area, quality and accuracy. The success of the first MS-177 flight test is a testament to the strong collaboration on this effort between UTC Aerospace Systems, Northrop Grumman and the U.S. Air Force. It embodies our commitment to helping our customers produce aircraft that are more intelligent, more electric and more integrated."

In service, the MS-177 FoS sensor will provide better image resolution over a longer range and greater coverage area per hour than any other Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) sensor in the U.S. military inventory. It will also be able to operate from multiple ISR platforms, satisfying military requirements for both land and maritime missions.

UTC Aerospace Systems was contracted by the U.S. Air Force in 2016 to support the integration, testing and fielding of the baseline MS-177 sensor variant on Global Hawk. MS-177 has already completed successful flight demonstrations on the E-8C JSTARS aircraft in 2010 and from a High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) UAS in 2016. The next variant, the MS-177A sensor system, will be fielded on Global Hawk in late 2019.

Source: UTC Aerospace Systems