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Thales AESA RBE2 radar validated on Rafale

Thales has announced that the production model AESA RBE2 radar with active electronically scanned array antenna has been validated on the Rafale omnirole combat aircraft. Following a comprehensive programme of flight tests conducted between September and December 2010 with the AESA RBE2 on the Rafale, Dassault Aviation confirmed that all aspects of the radar's performance comply with the technical specifications of the 'Roadmap' contract, awarded by the French defence procurement agency (DGA).

The success of this test campaign is a further endorsement of Thales's European leadership in airborne radar.

This latest major milestone confirms the AESA RBE2 radar's high level of maturity. The AESA RBE2 with active array will give the Rafale a number of key advantages:

- Extended range for compatibility with the latest generation long range missiles and ability to detect low-signature targets
- Higher module reliability for reduced cost of ownership (no maintenance required on the active array for 10 years)
- Extended waveform agility, making it possible to acquire submetric synthetic aperture (SAR) imagery while increasing the radar's resistance to jamming

With the AESA RBE2's performance now validated, in line with the contract schedule, Thales will begin series production of equipment for installation on the aircraft under Tranche 4 of the Rafale programme. The Tranche 4 aircraft were ordered by the DGA in 2009 and will be delivered by Dassault Aviation to the French Air Force from 2013.

The Rafale will then become the only European combat aircraft to benefit from the operational advantages of AESA radar technology. The Rafale's undisputed superiority is recognised around the world and is a key differentiator in today's highly competitive markets.

About Thales

Thales is a global technology leader for the Defence & Security and the Aerospace & Transport markets. In 2009, the company generated revenues of €12.9 billion with 68,000 employees in 50 countries. With its 22,500 engineers and researchers, Thales has a unique capability to design, develop and deploy equipment, systems and services that meet the most complex security requirements. Thales has an exceptional international footprint, with operations around the world working with customers as local partners. www.thalesgroup.com

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