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DARPA Selects Aurora for Vulture Program

Manassas, VA- April 14, 2008 - Aurora Flight Sciences announced today that it has been awarded a contract to develop a radical new aircraft that can stay aloft for up to five years. The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) made the award under a program known as "Vulture".

The objective of the Vulture program is to develop an aircraft capable of remaining on-station uninterrupted for over five years to perform intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR), and communication missions over an area of interest. The technology challenges include development of energy management and reliability technologies capable of allowing the aircraft to operate continuously for such extended durations. Vulture, in effect, will be a retaskable, persistent pseudo-satellite capability, in an aircraft package.

Aurora's design is called "Odysseus". The concept uses solar energy to power the aircraft during daylight, and stored solar energy to power the aircraft at night. The aircraft is designed to fly in the stratosphere throughout its mission.

Aurora's teammates on the program include BAE Systems, C.S. Draper Laboratories, and Sierra Nevada Corporation. BAE will focus on payloads, sensors, and concept of operations and employment. Draper Labs will develop the extremely high reliability electronics and control systems necessary to achieve such very long flights. Sierra Nevada Corporation is a specialist in autonomous refueling systems.

Aurora foresees a broad range of potential applications once Odysseus has been proven. Prime among these are global climate change research, weather monitoring, and regional-scale telecommunications.

About Aurora Flight Sciences

Aurora Flight Sciences designs and builds robotic aircraft and other advanced aerospace vehicles for scientific and military applications. Aurora is headquartered in Manassas, VA and operates production plants in Clarksburg, WV and Columbus, MS and a Research and Development Center in Cambridge, MA. To view recent press releases and more about Aurora please visit our web site at www.aurora.aero.

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