

E-4B Modernization Program

The E-4B is a militarized Boeing 747-200 aircraft that provides a survivable national airborne operations center for senior leadership. The fleet of four aircraft, based at Offutt Air Force Base, Nebraska, contain multiple and redundant secure national and strategic communications systems along with computerized workstations and databases. The E-4B is a long-range aircraft with endurance supported by an in-flight air refueling capability.

The E-4B requires numerous improvements to maintain flight worthiness and improve command, control, and communications capabilities. The next near-term major improvement is a Block 1 modification and includes an Audio Infrastructure Update, Global Air Traffic Management compliance updates, and the Senior Leadership Communications System.

TEST & EVALUATION ACTIVITY

DOT&E reviewed a test concept to baseline current E-4B/national airborne operations center capabilities for those systems to be replaced by Block 1 modifications. This baseline will be used to compare the performance of the appropriate Block 1 modification systems.

A Test Plan Working Group and an Integrated Product Team have been established to develop the Test and Evaluation Master Plan.

Depot planning for the integration of a prototype Block 1 modification kit is nearing completion and the E-4B aircraft serving as the test bed was inducted into the modification facility November 4, 2003.

The Air Force initiated test planning for developmental testing and combined developmental and operational testing with the first on-aircraft test event scheduled for March 2004.

TEST & EVALUATION ASSESSMENT

The Block 1 modification test planning process will identify appropriate test events for early insight into developmental maturity and identify risks to a successful field development evaluation.

The E-4B program has not yet submitted a Command, Control, Computers, Communications, and Intelligence System Support Plan; consequently, joint interoperability information exchange requirements have not been developed for the E-4B platform. Definition of the information exchange requirements is needed to complete the baseline test and development of the Block 1 modification joint interoperability Critical Operational Issue and associated test planning and resolution. DOT&E will coordinate the preparation of this document with the Assistant Secretary of Defense/Network and Infrastructure Integration and the Joint Interoperability Test Command.

The Air Force Block 1 modification operational requirements document has not been completed. An approved requirements document is needed to complete the Test and Evaluation Master Plan. DOT&E has contacted the sponsoring command to ensure requirements, including key performance parameters, are identified.



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