Nato-Ankara: the new era of European defense between drones and missile systems

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The synergy between Nato and the industrial sector is consolidated through a series of new agreements covering key strategic sectors, such as intelligence, air defense, missile systems, satellite systems, and drones. Below are the main contracts and agreements formalized during the Defence Industry Forum, held on the sidelines of the Nato summit in Ankara.

AIR DEFENSE: AIRBUS

Belgium, Croatia, France, Poland, Spain, Turkey, and the United Kingdom have launched a joint air defense initiative that paves the way for the creation of a multinational fleet centered on the Airbus A400M military aircraft. The initiative is based on a resource-sharing strategy and aims to enhance strategic airlift and aerial refueling capabilities at both the Nato and national levels. Alongside the agreement for the A400M fleet, the Atlantic Alliance announced the entry of Finland as a new member of the MRTT multirole tanker fleet.

MISSILES: LOCKHEED WITH RHEINMETALL

Rheinmetall has signed a memorandum of understanding with the American Lockheed Martin to establish a joint venture aimed at producing Atacms missile systems in Europe, specifically in Germany. The partnership aims to lay the foundations for a European hub for the production, integration, and distribution of long-range guided missiles to Nato forces and allies. The missiles will be manufactured at Rheinmetall's Unterluss plant in Germany, while Lockheed Martin will continue to manage the existing Atacms production line in Arkansas during the transition phase.

DRONES: NORTHROP GRUMMAN

Denmark, Finland, Germany, and Norway have announced the purchase of up to five Northrop Grumman MQ-4C Triton unmanned aircraft, intended to strengthen Nato's ground surveillance force. Specifically designed for maritime surveillance, these aircraft can sustain 24-hour flights at altitudes above 15 km. Equipped with long-range sensors, they will enhance the Allies' ability to promptly detect threats, protect maritime communication lines, and support operations in challenging regions, such as the Arctic and the far North. The new aircraft will complement Nato's Alliance Ground Surveillance fleet, which operates from the Sigonella airbase in Italy.

WARNING SYSTEMS: SAAB REPLACES BOEING

During the Defence Industry Forum, on the sidelines of the Nato summit in Ankara, 11 allies announced the joint purchase of up to 10 Saab GlobalEye aircraft, which will constitute Nato's new Awacs (Airborne Warning and Control System). The decision represents a significant step in modernizing the Alliance's air surveillance and early warning capabilities by replacing part of the now obsolete Boeing E-3 fleet. The GlobalEye system will provide advanced and multi-domain surveillance over air, land, and sea from a single platform. It will enable more effective detection and tracking of complex threats, including drone swarms, ballistic missiles, and cruise missiles. The aircraft will enhance situational awareness and support Nato operations.

TANKS: PATRIA GROUP

Finland, Norway, and Latvia have signed a declaration of intent to cooperate in the development and potential joint acquisition of Patria Trackx tracked vehicles from the Finnish aerospace group Patria. The governments' announced goal is to share information on the further

development of the Patria Trackx, a new generation armored vehicle, and on the results of field tests, allowing participating countries to evaluate potential joint acquisitions of the vehicle and common development projects.

SATELLITES: OVZON

Ovzon, a Swedish satellite communications company, has secured an order worth 40 million Swedish crowns (approximately 4.14 million dollars) from an undisclosed Nato member state. Half of the order's value, announced in conjunction with the Nato summit in Ankara, concerns the Swedish company's mobile satellite terminals, which will be delivered between the third and fourth quarters of 2026.