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Thales awarded Netherlands Digitised Soldier System contract

Within the framework of the Dutch Digitised Soldier System (D2S2) programme, the Netherlands' Ministry of Defence has awarded Thales a contract to develop and deliver prototype systems that will be the key components of the future digitised soldier system. These components will provide the Netherlands' infantry with a communications infrastructure to meet the exacting operational needs of their forces.

This contract includes soldier radios, a central processing computer with a unique user-friendly control unit and dedicated soldier and commander interactive displays.

The system will link with the Netherlands Army command & control battle management system. With this new capability, the soldier becomes a "personal network" integrated into the company chain of command. This enables the Netherlands' Armed Forces to increase the tempo of its operations and improve survivability by providing timely and accurate information to those who need it.

Key to the selection was Thales' open systems engineering approach enabling the Netherlands' Armed Forces to gain the maximum benefit from legacy equipments and benefit from future upgrades and changes in technology. This provides for a robust evolutionary capability that will benefit the defence organization in the long term.

Low weight and modularity will be key drivers in the development process to ensure that the systems are ideally suited to the new threats and operational requirements of the Netherlands' forces. Thales digitised suite of open-standard radios provides greater interoperability, which is critical to mission success in joint operations.

The development is a joint initiative of the Netherlands Ministry of Defence and Thales and will be performed in cooperation with TNO, the Netherlands' Organization for Applied Scientific Research. Prototype systems will be tested in 2005, with production units planned to go into service the following year.

This latest success reinforces Thales position as the world's leading soldier systems company. Thales is already contributing to major soldier modernisation programmes for NATO countries: in the United Kingdom, in Germany and in Norway.

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About Thales

Thales is an international electronics and systems group, serving defence, aerospace, services and security markets. The Group employs 61,500 people worldwide and generated revenues of 10.6 billion in 2003.

Press contacts:

THALES

Land & Joint Systems (France)

Aline Borne

Tel : +33 (1) 41 30 21 40

aline.borne@fr.thalesgroup.com

Land & Joint Systems (The Netherlands)

Claudia van Hall - Figueiredo

Tel: +31 35 52 48 318

claudia.vanhall@nl.thalesgroup.com

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