



Vancouver Administration  
International de l'aéroport  
Airport international de  
Authority Vancouver



## News Release

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21 July 2005

### **First sale of QinetiQ debris detection system paves way for safer runways - Vancouver International Airport to install early 2006**

The runway debris detection radar system developed by QinetiQ in the wake of the Paris Concorde crash has been bought by Vancouver International Airport (YVR). Known as Tarsier, the system can detect small items of potentially dangerous debris on airports runways and is expected to be installed at YVR early next year.

The deal represents the first sale of a system which could potentially improve the safety of every major airport runway in the world. It is expected that Tarsier will also help reduce the estimated \$4 billion cost<sup>1</sup> of debris damage and delays faced by the global airline industry each year.

Four Tarsier radar units will be installed at YVR, covering the airport's north and south parallel runways, each of which is approximately three kilometres long. A display unit, providing the Airport Authority's operations team with an all-weather, round-the-clock runway picture, will be installed in YVR's Operations Centre.

Announcing the sale, Steve Brittan, Managing Director of QinetiQ Airport Radar said: "The installation of Tarsier will represent a step change in runway safety and we are delighted to be working with Vancouver International Airport as our first customer. To deliver an entirely new radar system only five years after being challenged to solve the important problem of runway debris is a considerable achievement. We are very excited by the potential of Tarsier to make a real difference to global airport safety and look forward to announcing further sales in the near future."

Hal Kruth, QinetiQ's Group Managing Director, Security and Dual Use, added: "Tarsier is a prime example of QinetiQ's approach to focus on solving customers' important problems. Tarsier has been developed with a very clear and simple purpose in mind – to improve airport safety and ultimately to save lives. We are growing QinetiQ's commercial business by



Tarsier on trial last year

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<sup>1</sup> As estimated by National Aerospace FOD (foreign objects and debris) Prevention, Inc. (NAFPI)

fast tracking advanced beeping technologies like Tarsier and we are confident that this approach will continue to bear fruit in coming years.”

Craig Richmond, Vancouver International Airport Authority’s Vice President of Airport Operations, said: “The purchase of the Tarsier system marks another exciting first for Vancouver, and underscores our commitment to safety. I don’t think you can overstate the benefits of having a system working around the clock in all conditions to help ensure our runways remain clear and safe, and Vancouver is proud to be a leader in this innovative technology.”

Debris on runways is an issue for both airports and airlines. The estimated worldwide annual cost of debris damage and delays is \$4 billion and, in rare cases, debris damage has been known to result in loss of life. A small strip of metal on the runway was a major contributory factor in the crash of Concorde flight AF4590 on 25 July 2000 as it left Paris Charles de Gaulle airport.

The Tarsier system was developed by QinetiQ (then DERA) following enquires from British Airports Authority (BAA), the British Airways Concorde fleet manager and Vancouver International Airport Authority in the wake of the Paris crash. The system, based on high-resolution millimetre wave radar, is able to detect small, potentially hazardous objects on a runway, to within an accuracy of three metres at a range of up to two kilometres. The system is also able to detect a range of different materials, including metal, plastic, glass, wood, fibreglass and animal remains.

Checking for debris is currently performed manually, which is time consuming, expensive and open to human error. It can take as long as 45 minutes to check a runway in between aircraft movements and this is particularly difficult in bad weather and at night. This can result in runway closures, delays in both arrival and departure slots and, most importantly, could potentially put passenger and staff safety at risk.

YVR hosted the first full trial of the Tarsier system at an international airport last summer. Potentially dangerous objects were detected and retrieved from the runway, by airport staff, in less than five minutes. A representative of the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) also attended the trial, resulting in a short trial at JFK airport in New York in November 2004. A further evaluation is expected in the United States later this year. Another extended trial was conducted at London’s Heathrow Airport in October 2004.

QinetiQ is actively pursuing other applications for its millimetre wave radar, including perimeter security, surface movement tracking, runway incursion and bird detection.

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## **Notes for Editors:**

### **Vancouver International Airport Authority**

- The Airport Authority is a community-based, not-for-profit organisation that operates Vancouver International Airport (YVR). The second largest international passenger gateway on North America's West Coast, YVR expects to welcome a record 16.4 million passengers in 2005. The Airport Authority is undertaking a \$1.4 billion capital programme that will ensure the airport meets the growing demand for air travel, and continues to be developed as a premier global gateway and economic generator for British Columbia.

### **QinetiQ**

- QinetiQ (pronounced ki' ne tik as in 'kinetic energy') is a leading global defence technology and security company. Founded in July 2001 from the majority of the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (DERA), the laboratories of the UK MOD, QinetiQ today has grown internationally, with 12,000 employees in the UK and US, many of them internationally acclaimed experts, providing government and commercial customers unparalleled resources to create, evaluate, test, and deliver technology based services, solutions and products.
- As part of its fast growing security business recently launched products include: Tarsier – a radar system that identifies debris on an airport runway; BorderWatch – which can see into vehicles to identify possible stowaways; The MillimetreWave Portal – a people screening system that can identify concealed weapons. Ferroguard – a man-portable metal detection system; and X-net – a system to stop vehicles being driven through checkpoints.
- QinetiQ has developed a significant overseas customer base and has established a US sales operation in Crystal City, Nr Washington DC to forge closer links with this potentially significant market. In September 2004 it also acquired the businesses of Foster-Miller Inc and Westar Aerospace & Defense Group. Both are wholly-owned subsidiaries of QinetiQ North America but remain autonomous, retaining their names, core management teams, employees and US facilities.
- The MOD holds a 56% stake in QinetiQ and in February 2003 confirmed The Carlyle Group, one of the world's leading private equity firms, as its strategic partner by taking a 31% stake. The balance is held by staff.

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