Predator C - Avenger - Military Aircraft Drone

Aviation Week & Space Technology reports that "a new, reduced-signature, unmanned aircraft ? the long-rumored, 20-hr.-endurance, pure-jet Predator C Avenger ? has emerged from General Atomics Aeronautical Systems' workshops after a 3½-year gestation period paced by massive growth in UAV production and the use of unmanned designs in combat."

It is reported to carry 3000 lbs of total payload, primarily 500-lb. bombs with a GBU-38 JDAM tail kit and laser guidance.

Pratt & Whitney developed the engines and has developed an S-shaped exhaust that offers protection from radar observation and provides cooling to reduce the IR signature. With a 41-foot long fuselage and 66-foot wingspan, the Avenger aircraft can achieve an airspeed of at least 400 kt or higher and its operational altitude is up to 60,000 ft. Aircraft sensors will include a GA-ASI Lynx® Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) and various Electro-optical/Infrared (EO/IR) camera systems. A system based on Lockheed Martin's F-35 FLIR is currently being evaluated, as well as an in-house full-motion video sensor. A pure reconnaissance version will be capable of carrying a wide-area surveillance system internally for special mission applications.

Aviation Week reports that the Avenger has the capbility to be launched and retrieved from an aircraft carrier

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