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Army Awards $43.5 Million Contract for Epirus' Upgraded Microwave Counter-Drone Systems

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The U.S. Army has awarded a $43.5 million contract to advanced defense technology firm Epirus for its next-generation Integrated Fires Protection Capability–High-Power Microwave (IFPC-HPM) systems. The investment reflects growing urgency to counter the rising threat of drone swarms on the modern battlefield.

Under the agreement, Epirus will deliver two IFPC-HPM Generation II systems, incorporating significant upgrades over earlier versions. According to the company, roughly 75 to 80 percent of the system's hardware has been redesigned, improving both performance and reliability in operational environments.

The IFPC-HPM platform builds on Epirus' Leonidas system, which uses high-powered microwave pulses to disable multiple uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) simultaneously. The Generation II variant reportedly doubles the range of its predecessor while boosting power output by more than 30 percent, all while maintaining a compact form factor. Each unit is equipped with nearly 800 pounds of lithium-polymer batteries, enabling around 30 minutes of autonomous firing capability.

Initial deployments of the first-generation systems have already occurred within U.S. Central Command and the Indo-Pacific region. While feedback from soldiers has been positive, users reportedly requested extended range and increased energy capacity, both of which are being addressed in this new version.

Field tests for the Generation II system are scheduled to begin in October 2025. Army officials are optimistic that the updated platform will meet deployment requirements and provide commanders with a flexible, low-cost alternative to traditional kinetic interceptors.

Epirus Chief Executive Officer Andy Lowery emphasized that the new systems represent a significant leap in functionality. The Generation II units will first be mounted on trailers, with future integration into wheeled and tracked vehicles expected by early 2026 to enhance battlefield mobility.

The company is also developing maritime and airborne variants. A naval version is set for testing by the U.S. Navy in August 2025, while a lightweight air-deployable model is being tailored for the U.S. Marine Corps.

The shift toward high-power microwave systems is part of the Pentagon's broader strategy to adopt more scalable, cost-efficient defenses against small drone threats. Unlike traditional missiles, Leonidas systems offer precision, software-defined targeting with minimal per-use cost, providing commanders with greater operational flexibility.

This latest contract signals a deeper commitment to directed energy weapons as a core component of the Army's evolving counter-UAS strategy and marks a pivotal step toward full-spectrum force protection.