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says the missile now has full 4,000m range if launched at lOOkt, and a 93 per cent success rate was achieved on a recent set of 15 test firings from a UH-1 and an AH-1 conducted with the US Army.
Because Tow is not powered through-out its flight some difficulties might have been anticipated with manoeuv-rability at maximum range. Hughes says that the ability to pull about 0-lg is needed to hit a 35kt target at maxi-mum range and that Tow can pull at least ten times that, probably about l'2g.
The company is talking to 15 countries about infantry and airborne Tow sales. Of these Germany probably has the biggest potential programme (perhaps £160 million) although Euro-

missile's Hot has tentatively been selected. Hughes does not believe that the door has been shut on Tow yet and has received a request for quota-tion from MBB for a sighting system for the attack variant of the B6105. Sfim, which has a roof-mounted sight for Hot, is now studying a "chin" installation while Hughes claims that its chin sight could be made com-patible with Hot as well as Tow. A final German decision is due next summer.

A preliminary decision by Britain on an anti-tank guided weapon for the Army's Westland Lynx may now be forthcoming next January, having been postponed from this January. Flight understands that a strong British team has made a detailed tech-

749

nical evaluation of Tow at Hughes within the past two months.
The geometry of the general-pur-pose Lynx makes it almost mandatory to have a roof sight, which Hughes says would cost "several million dollars" to develop for Tow but could be a worthwhile proposition in the context of a £40 million programme. With a total production of 70,000 Tow missiles, the price per round is between $3,000 and $3,500. Price of a 2X4-round system is between $200,000 and $250,000. Hughes has now amassed 800-900 airborne firings, a small number of these understood to have been at night with a prototype infra-red viewing system being in-vestigated for the proposed Advanced Attack Helicopter. C.M.G.

European Awac s interest growing
The offer by the USA of special
buying terms for the Boeing Awacs
(Airborne Warning and Control Sys-
tem) has increased European coun-
tries' interest in the aircraft and a Nato
special task group has been set up to investigate the possibility of a joint purchase. According to James Schles-inger, US Secretary of Defence, all 15 Nato countries were invited to par-ticipate but only seven are actively in-volved, including West Germany which is reported to have expressed particu-lar interest. France, though militarily not a Nato member, is taking an active part in the task group through alliance committee 224.

Exact details of the special terms are not known but Schlesinger has told a Senate Appropriations sub-committee that "a number of unique factors applied . . . with respect to Nato" and that the idea was simply to provide an inducement to procure "an admittedly expensive air-defence system which would eliminate the majority of operational deficiencies now encountered by Nadge." Nadge is essentially a medium- and high-altitude radar chain whereas Awacs is specif-ically designed for look-down overland purposes, detecting low-level targets.

The usual approach to US foreign military sales is to allocate a pro-rata share of non-recurring costs to each nation, based on total projected sales, but to add this on Awacs, says Schles-inger, "would destroy all chance of Nato considering this expensive acquisition." The Defence Secretary believes that the offer has "virtually eliminated" all other possible com-petitors for the Nato role except perhaps for the Grumman E-2C Hawk-eye which is being offered on the same pricing basis.

Meanwhile, the USAF is approaching the end of Phase IB of the Awacs programme, full-scale development. The formal systems integration demonstration which coupled the brassboard Westinghouse radar with at least one each of all the subsystems has been completed with all targets

met, the USAF told Flight recently. Some 700hr have been flown in this phase, twice as many as was originally anticipated. The USAF is now pre-paring its report before DSARC 3 (Defence Systems Acquisition Review Council) in December.
Although the production decision is the expected result of this meeting, the USAF is working effectively on a three-year lead time. The first of three DT&E (Development, Test & Evalua-tion) Awacs is due to be rolled out next spring with the other two being available before the end of next year. These aircraft will have the full plan-ned range of subsystems and consoles and effectively the production radar. The first example of this is expected to be ready by the time of DSARC 3 and, although functionally the same as the brassboard radar, will weigh just over half as much at about 7,5001b as a result of "repackaging" by Westing-house. Well over l,000hr of airborne operation has now been amassed on the radar, Flight learnt from USAF, and the DT&E phase will be used to develop tactics and check reliability and serviceability as well as perform-
ance.

During 45hr of Initial Operational Test & Evaluation (IOT&E) flying with USAF crews and Boeing techni-cal advisers, some tactics have already been explored and tests carried out to check compatibility with the US Navy's Tactical Data System and the Army's Hawk missile batteries. One exercise simulated a major air-defence engagement with an attacking force of F-15s, F-106s, F-5s and F-4s working in conjunction with air-borne and ground-based jammers trying to incapacitate the Awacs. The protective force consisted of F-15s and F-4s.

"All of the attackers were neutral-ised at ranges in excess of their air-to-air weapon capability," said the Awacs programme director Gen. A. Skantze. "In addition, successful simulated attacks against ground^ based jammers were completed by

Awacs-directed close air support air-craft."

The next major event for the test aeroplane is likely to be a demonstra-tion of ship detection and tracking, in conjunction with Nato requirements, to take place next spring in Europe. Some modifications will be made to improve maritime ability.
A so-called USAF Enhancement Study Group is now looking at possible improvements to the Awacs, particu-larly increasing command and control capacity by possibly adding a third mass memory drum, and is expected to report before DSARC 3. It remains to be seen whether the inevitable cost increases could be justified by USAF and approved by an ever more cost-conscious Congress. The Nato study group is also looking at possible modifications for its own special purposes.

What is hitting Awacs harder than anything now is, like nearly every other project, inflation. Flyaway and programme unit costs reported by USAF in June this year were about $40 million and $72 million respec-tively, but these have risen since. In spite of the brassboard testing being completed three to four months early and about $3 million under projected cost, the penalty is now being borne of working for too long with estimated inflation rates well below actual figures.

Awacs is the third priority project for the USAF after the B-l and F-15, and the whole programme, including R&D and production of 34 aeroplanes, is likely to run to between $2,500 million and $3,000 million depending on inflation and further developments. Fiscal 75 funding is $210 million for R&D ($220 million requested) and $405 million for production ($550 million requested). Production money covers only six aircraft instead of a planned 12 but the amount remains substantially higher than half that requested because it includes the first purchase of support and ground equipment. C.M.G.