DEFENCE

MBB

bids to

Belgium

BRUSSELS

With Belgium set to
announce its airmobility heli-
copter choice in the first
months of this year,
competition is intense. The
Belgian Army requires 46
helicopters, of which 28
must be equipped for anti-
tank missions. The remainder
will fulfil reconnaissance,
liaison, and light transport
roles.

MBB has entered the
competition with three
options based on its two heli-
copter types, the BO105 and
the larger BK117.
The first option comprises
28 BKll7HAs in the anti-
tank role, each carrying eight
missile launchers, and 18
BKll7HOs in the reconnais-
sance/observation role. Alter-
natively, the 28 BK117HAs
can be combined with 18
BOl05HOs. The third option,
based on the German Army's
formula, comprises 28
BOl05HAs, each with six
missile launchers, and 18
BOl05HOs for reconnais-
sance and liaison.

The choice between HOT
and TOW as the anti-tank
weapon with which to equip
these helicopters is left to the
Belgian Army, integration of
TOW with the BO105 and
BK117 forming part of
MBB's offset package.
Cost varies, with the option
chosen, from BFr6,000
million (£75 million) for an
all-BKH7 force to BFr4,500
million (£56 million) for an
all-BOl05 force. MBB is
offering 100 per cent offset to
meet Belgium's requirement.
This represents 2-5 million
manhours for Belgian indus-
try. Of the offset, 41 per cent
is direct, i.e. involves work on
the helicopters chosen, and
59 per cent is indirect, includ-
ing work on Tornado, Airbus,
and various space pro-
grammes.

Among the offset proposals
is development of a joint
Belgian-German helicopter
hunter, a version of the
BO 105 armed with twin

FLIGHT International, 7 January 1984

The container ship Astronomer has been renamed RFA Reliant. The 27,867-ton vessel has been converted to a helicopter carrier capable of operating five Royal Navy Sea Kings using Arapaho equipment leased from the US Navy. Reliant will relieve HMS Fearless off Lebanon

20mm cannon. Belgian indus-
try would become single-
source suppliers for future
MBB helicopter sales to
Canada, Denmark, the Neth-
erlands, and Switzerland.
Aerospatiale is also offering
several options, and offsets
worth BFr8,000 million (£100
million). The options involve
SA.365M Dauphin 2s, equip-
ped for night or day anti-tank,
AS.355M Ecure'uils, and
SA.342L Gazelles.

Agusta's offer, said to be
worth BFrl2,000 million
(£150 million), of which £125
million would be returned as
offsets, revolves around vari-
ous combinations of its anti-
tank A129, multirole A109,
and AB412 utility transport.
Bell and Sikorsky have not
detailed their bids. Westland,
however, is offering 100 per
cent offset on 28 Lynx 3s to
meet the anti-tank require-
ment, leaving Belgium to
make up the balance with a
lighter type.

Sweden

selects TOW

STOCKHOLM

A derivative of Saab-Scania's
Helios roof-mounted sight
has been selected for
Sweden's future anti-tank
helicopters. The sight forms
part of Helitow, a weapon
system using TOW anti-tank
missiles. The type of helicop-
ter to be equipped with the
system has yet to be decided.
A SKr90 million (£7-8
million) Helitow contract has
been awarded to Saab Instru-
ments. The company will be
prime contractor in a team
that comprises Pilkington PE
(sight optics), Emerson Elec-
tric (TOW missile launchers,
launch and guidance electron-
ics), and Saab Training
Systems (laser missile simu-
lator).

Thailand

wants F-16s

BANGKOK

Thailand has asked the
Pentagon for permission to
buy 16 General Dynamics F-
16s. The USA has responded
positively, says Thailand's
Foreign Minister Air Chief
Marshal Siddhi Savetsila.
The F-16s are required to
counter the threat posed by
Soviet-supplied MiG-23 Flog-
gers in Vietnam. Delivery
would begin in 1987.

Westland

proposes
Australian

industry
CANBERRA

Competition between West-
land and Sikorsky to win a
Royal Australian Navy
contract for a new frigate-
based helicopter has
intensified. In an attempt to
clinch the deal Westland has
offered Australia's Govern-
ment the chance of setting up
a local helicopter industry.
The company's vice-
chairman, Sir John Treacher,
made the new proposal in a
recent visit to Canberra,
hoping to give Westland's
Navy Lynx 3 the edge over
the Sikorsky SH-60B
Seahawk.

Westland's latest offer is
reported to be in response to
fears that the RAN was show-
ing a slight preference for the
Seahawk. If taken up, Aus-
tralia could become involved
in the production of Lynx and
Westland 30 helicopters. The
right to sell Westland prod-
ucts in Asia and the Pacific
region might also be offered to
Australia.

Westland says that the
competition for the RAN
contract is now at its most
intense. Response to the new
proposal has been fairly
favourable, the company says,
but no conclusions have been
reached. Westland believes
that Australia could support a
helicopter industry if local
suppliers and sufficient
customers in the region could
be found.