

# Malaysia signs UK defence deal

Malaysia has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) covering the purchase of British defence equipment estimated to be worth in excess of £1 billion over 15 years.

Details are still to be finalised, but the deal is expected to include 12 Tornado air defence variants, British Aerospace Rapier and Shorts Javelin air-defence missiles, two GEC-Marconi Martello air-defence radars, and an ex-Royal Navy Oberon-class submarine.

The Tornados will be purchased to complement rather than replace Northrop F-5Es currently in service with the Royal Malaysian Air Force. The projected acquisitions will "considerably enhance Malaysia's defence capability," according to the joint communique released by the two governments.

The MoU provides for co-operation and technology transfer arrangements between the industries of both countries. Malaysia already has sufficient capability to support its own air force, but wants to upgrade its facilities and strengthen its defence industrial base. Nevertheless a large element of barter, including oil, is believed to form the basis of the MoU.

Only a few years ago trade relations between Malaysia and the UK were at an all-time low. Much of the credit for the defence deal has been attributed to the close working relationship between Malaysian prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Britain's Margaret Thatcher.

The fate of a US bid to sell eight General Dynamics F-16A/Bs to Malaysia is still unclear. US Congress has not objected to the estimated \$230 million deal, but as yet no letter of offer acceptance has been received from Malaysia.

General Dynamics was hoping that Malaysia would become its fourth major south-east Asian F-16 sale, having already supplied Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand, and still does not rule out an F-16 purchase by the country.



*A Royal Air Force Tornado F.3 of 29(F) Sqn overflies a Malaysian village during joint exercises with the Royal Malaysian Air Force*

## Ireland confirms UK overflights

The existence of an agreement between the British and Irish governments, allowing military incursions into each other's airspace in the campaign against the Provisional IRA, has been confirmed by the Irish Prime Minister.

Confirmation that such an agreement has, in fact, existed "for a long time" came in a formal statement issued from Mr Haughey's office on September 28, only a day after the Northern Ireland Office Minister—who only recently arrived in Belfast and was thought to have been unaware of the subject's sensitivity—volunteered at a press brief-

ing that an overflight agreement was in force.

Hitherto, Dublin's Department of External Affairs has invariably announced "investigations" and lodged "protests" whenever British military incursions into the Republic's airspace were noted.

"Arrangements have existed for a long time for aircraft of one jurisdiction to fly, with permission and subject to strict controls, for short distances into the other jurisdiction to help in dealing with specific incidents or suspect explosive devices," the statement said.

## Hawker bids to update RAAFF-111

Hawker de Havilland (HDH) has joined forces with Rockwell International to compete for the Royal Australian Air Force's F-111C avionics update programme. Rockwell was responsible for the original F-111 avionics integration.

HDH believes that teaming with Rockwell will be more complementary than two airframe manufacturers bidding together, as with the Aerospace Technologies of Australia and General Dynamics' F-111 update team.

The agreement was jointly announced by Rockwell's Autonetics Electronics Systems president, J. A. McLuckey, and HDH's managing director, J. B. Hattersley. The executives issued a joint statement saying, "The teaming has been agreed upon after a careful examination by both partners of other options. We concluded that the complementary experience and capabilities of Rockwell and HDH were best suited to providing the Royal Australian Air Force with an optimised, highly cost-effective update for its F-111C strike force."

Rockwell International's Autonetics Sensors and Aircraft Systems Division has completed the design, development, and integration of the United States Air Force F-111D. The division acts as the USAF's independent verification and validation contractor, offering technical evaluation and advice on the F-111A/E avionics modernisation programme.

HDH Victoria is the company's lead division for the F-111C update, and has considerable experience with systems integration and aircraft modification. For example, HDH Victoria carried out the integration of AQS-901 sonics processors for Barra sonobuoys into RAAF P-3Cs, and is involved in the modification of RAAF Boeing 707s to tanker configuration.

The memorandum of understanding signed by the two companies also includes teaming on other projects. Prospective areas for co-operation include further RAAF aircraft updates, and development in the fields of artificial intelligence and knowledge-based systems.