TECHNICAL: DEFENC E

USN/Lockheed talk Orion II

B-52s to loose tail guns?

Stinger in tail an

option for B-52
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he US Air Force is consider-
ing a General Dynamics
(GD) proposal to use an air-
launched version of the shoul-
der-launched Stinger surface-to-
air missile. The missile, called
Scorpion, to replace the turreted
20mm tail cannon of the Boeing
B-52 Stratofortress.
GD is reluctant to discuss the
programme but says it is await-
ing the Air Force's response to
an 18-month design study. Stra-
tegic Air Command, which op-
erates 232 B-52G/Hs, says the
proposal was unsolicited and
company-funded.
Company staff worked with
USAF aircrew and groundcrew
at the 7th Heavy Bombardment
Wing at Carswell AFB. GD's
Fort Worth plant and Carswell
AFB are neighbours, sharing the
same runways.
The aerospace company says:
"We have determined that it is
do-able, now it is up to the Air
Force to determine whether to
proceed."
The existing helicopter-borne
air-to-air version of Stinger is
very similar to the original unit,
but GD says for B-52 use, it
would have to be modified — at
least with a change of rocket
motor.

The USAF recently an-
nounced that it will retire its
B-52Gs, leaving only the B-52H
(of which 102 were built) in
service. The B-52H has a 20mm
Vulcan tailgun and an ALQ-153
pulse Doppler tail warning
radar as part of its countermea-
sures equipment. •

BY DOUGLAS BARRIE

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he US Navy and Lockheed
have held detailed discus-
sions to hammer out a baseline
configuration for a Lockheed
P-3C replacement — known by
the USN as the Orion II.

The US Navy is trying to
recoup some of the time lost on
its P-3C replacement pro-
gramme, caused by the cancella-
tion of the P-7A and by delays
in the Boeing Update IV mission
systems suite. Proposals are
needed by March for long-lead
funding for the programme.
Programme officials suggest
that a new-build airframe with
upgraded engines — either the
Allison T406 or the General
Electric T407 — and a glass
cockpit will form a key part of
the baseline proposal.
An engine upgrade is neces-
sary, says an industry official,
because of the relatively high

MTR390 makes

Panther testbed

flight debut
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he tri-national MTR390 en-
gine, powerplant for the
Franco-German Tiger anti-tank
helicopter, has flown for the
first time aboard an Aerospatiale
AS.565 Panther testbed. The
MTR390, a two-shaft power-
plant with full-authority digital
engine control, is produced
jointly by MTR members —
MTU, Turbomeca and Rolls-
Royce.
MTR was formed in 1989 to
design, develop and produce a
new turboshaft in the 950-
l,100kW (1,300-1,500shp)
power range.
There are 11 engines in the
test programme to date, includ-
ing three flight engines deliv-
ered for the Tiger prototype.
The engines have amassed
around 600 hours of bench and
ground running so far.
The two MTR390s have pow-
ered the Panther for a 55min
flight from Pau in southern
France.

downtime and operating costs
of the P-3C's Allison T-56s.
Considerable discussion has
also focused on the configura-
tion of the aircraft's glass cock-
pit and whether this is op-
timised for two or three crew.
The outcome of USN discus-
sions with Lockheed is being
watched closely by Germany
and the UK, both of which have
a requirement for an anti-
submarine warfare (ASW) air-
craft.

The UK is likely by the end
of the year to re-issue Staff
Requirement (Air) 420, thrown
into disarray by the cancellation
of the P-7, the prime contender
for the RAF's needs.
The Ministry of Defence
(MoD) intends to issue invita-
tions to tender for prime con-
tractors on the programme, sim-
ilar to the Mission Systems Inte-
gration approach adopted for
the first time on the Royal Navy

Tiger and MTR 90 combination gets

The twin-engined Tiger is
due to make its first flight in
April at Aerospatiale's Marig-
nane site, following its roll out
and completion of engine
ground runs at Ottobrunn, Ger-
many, last month.
Five prototype Tigers will
take part in the flight-test pro-
gramme, culminating in the de-
livery of the first production
aircraft in 1997.

EH101 Merlin ASW helicopter.
This would see a single con-
tractor — either an airframe
manufacturer or an avionics
company — take overall re-
sponsibility for the programme.
The MoD has identified sensor
and mission system integration
as the key area of risk.
Along with the Orion II, the
MoD is considering the Dassault
Atlantic ATL.2, extensively re-
working the Nimrod and it is
also looking at possible civil
developments, including the
Airbus A320.

Germany and the UK have
also held preliminary discus-
sions over "...harmonising re-
quirements"; a joint airframe
purchase would offer clear cost
advantages.
The UK is now expected to
buy 25 aircraft to replace the
36-strong Nimrod fleet. Origi-
nally, the MoD was looking at
a one-for-one replacement, but

•ady for first flight

MTR estimates initial engine
requirements will run to about
1,000 units including spares.
These will power up to 212
helicopters for the German
Army, 140 for the French Army
and a further 75 fighter-support
versions.

The Tiger is also being con-
sidered to meet the UK's
requirement for an attack
helicopter. •

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