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production, Sikorsky has won the most valuable contract in its history, with the US Army committed to purchasing a further 300 UH-60 Black Hawks over five years. Sikorsky has 'also been hoping to gain additional Black Hawk sales on the back of the Army's utility aircraft requirements study (UTARS). This long-running and somewhat tortuous programme has at-tracted the attention of many of the West's helicopter builders, since the winner would replace the Army's large fleet of Bell UH-ls. Unfortunately for
the manufacturers,
UTARS now also ap-
pears to have fallen
prey to budgetary
pressure. Despite a
considerable need to
replace its UH-ls, the
Army has parlously
little funding to do
this. It is now consid-
ering modifying a
smaller aircraft, such
as the Bell OH-58, to
meet the lighter end
of the utility require-
ment. It remains un-
clear how many more
Black Hawks the serv-
ice will be able to
obtain to fulfill the
heavy end of the
UTARS requirement.

Another Sikorsky
product which es-
caped the budget axe
is the H-53-series heavy transport heli-copter. The company is now proposing a modified H-53 to replace the US Army's Boeing Chinook transport helicopters, al-though Boeing's Advanced Chinook pro-posal is still the favourite.
The company is also looking at a growth derivative of its H-60 family, the S-92, which will be offered for both the military utility and maritime roles. Sikorsky is inves-tigating the military market for the S-92 and a launch decision is expected this year. One of the S-92's likely rivals, particularly
in the eyes of the US Navy, is the Bell/ Boeing V-22 tilt-rotor. Despite Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney's renowned opposi-tion to the programme, the manufacturing team and an energetic Congressional lobby have been slowly wearing down the objec-tions, and the tilt-rotor's development pro-gramme continues.
Cheney seems to have shifted his attitude towards technical arguments against the V-22, which Bell and Boeing have rebutted — apparently with considerable success. The US Navy and Marine Corps Boeing CH-46 Sea Knight transport helicopters, which the V-22 would succeed, need to be replaced. While Cheney may have mellowed slightly on the V-22, other options to supersede the Sea Knight are being exam-

ined, including a Boeing CH-47 variant.
A US military sale of the V-22 remains vital. Attempts to spark interest in the aircraft in Europe have proved singularly unsuccessful. Civil certification is also scarcely feasible unless the military puts in some credible flying hours on the design. Recognising that the V-22, despite all its efforts, may struggle to win even a US military order, Boeing has also discreetly been preparing back-up positions to try to ensure that it is selected to replace the

South Africa's Atlas CSH-2 Rooivalk will begin weapon system testing shortly

CH-46, irrespective of the V-22's fortunes. Possibilities for Boeing include re-starting CH-46 production, incorporating technol-ogy developed for the Model 360 demon-strator and the CH-47 programmes, or developing a maritime variant of the CH-47, which Cheney wants examined.

NOTAR WORK

McDonnell Douglas (MDC) continues to work on a military variant of its MD900 Explorer no-tail rotor (NOTAR) machine. Meanwhile, however, it is gearing up to re-manufacture its AH-64 to the Longbow Apache standard.
AH-64D development reached a mile-stone on 15 April, when the prototype aircraft flew for the first time at the company's Mesa headquarters in Arizona. The aircraft is one of four being produced with partners Westinghouse and Martin Marietta for the US Army under a 70-month development contract. The Army plans to remanufacture 227 AH-64As to the Long-bow configuration by adding a millimetre-wave radar and upgraded navigation, communication and weapon systems. A further 308 AH-64As will be converted to C standard, identical to the D but without the radar. A further 254 AH-64As will be upgraded to the B standard, but this, unlike

the AH-64C, will not have the Longbow radar option.
Overseas orders for about 100 AH-64s are expected to keep the production line open until the Longbow remanufacture pro-gramme begins low-rate initial production in March 1995.
Another pending US military helicopter programme is the US Army's requirement for a new training helicopter (NTH). A decision on the NTH programme is ex-pected by the end of this year, with both Schweizer and En-
strom hoping to pick
up the business.
Schweizer is bidding
with its Model 330
for the NTH, while
Enstrom is offering
the TH-28 version of
its Model 480.

In the light of less-
ening defence expen-
diture in their home
market, US manufac-
turers are paying par-
ticular attention to
overseas opportuni-
ties. Sikorsky hopes
to sell additional SH-
60 Seahawks to Aus-
tralia. South Korea
will also decide this
year whether to ex-
tend its SH-60 Black
Hawk co-production
programme by a fur-
ther 69 aircraft. Tur-
key has a utility-helicopter requirement for up to 200 aircraft, but has delayed its procurement decision. Sikorsky, with the Black Hawk, and Eurocopter, with the Super Puma, are generally regarded as the two leading contenders to pick up this sizeable contract.

A further Black Hawk sale is likely in Saudi Arabia, as part of the UK/Saudi Arabia Al Yamamah arms package. The programme led by British Aerospace, has Westland as a subcontractor. The latter would produce the Black Hawk under licence from Sikorsky if Saudi Arabia takes up its option for between 50 and 90 aircraft.

Sources close to the Al Yamamah agree-ment have indicated that the potential Black Hawk sale has been the source of some friction between BAe and Westland. The recent release of £1.5 billion by Saudi Arabia to fund part of the Al Yamamah II package is likely to herald the go-ahead for the Black Hawk order.

While Sikorsky has been looking to Westland for the Saudi Arabian order, McDonnell Douglas has been looking to the
UK manufacturer to help it secure the order
for the British Army's attack-helicopter re-
quirement. The request for information on
the programme was released recently, and
the Army requirement is believed to be

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