

## Poland resurrects support for Iryda

AFTER STOPPING Polish defence ministry plans to buy about 40 secondhand Dassault/Dornier Alpha Jets from Germany, the Warsaw Government has redirected funds for the deal to support the PZL-Mielec Iryda jet trainer programme.

According to PZL-Mielec, three new Irydas in the M-93K configuration are now expected to be ordered, and the 12 aircraft already flying with the Polish air force pilot-training school at Deblin will be upgraded. The Government has made Pz142 million (\$16.6 million) available for this work.

The plan breathes new life into the Iryda programme, which would have been killed by the Alpha Jet purchase, threatening the future of Mielec by taking away 35% of its production work. Polish defence minister Zbigniew Okonski told parliament on 1 December that the Iryda was too expensive and did not meet air force needs, but was later overruled by premier Jozef Oleksy. Iryda chief designer Marek Potapowicz says that Okonski was "badly advised" by the military in his statements.

The first five I-22 Irydas — which were delivered to Deblin with twin 10kN (2,250lb)-thrust PZL-5 turbojets and were later found to be underpowered — are now to be refitted with 15kN IL K-15s, bringing them up to M-93K standard. An avionics upgrade — criticised earlier by the Polish defence ministry as too expensive — is also to be carried out.

No avionics supplier has formally been announced, although Mielec has carried out an extensive evaluation of a package from SAGEM, and says that the military has completed its evaluation of avionics options. Sources close to the manufacturer now say that AlliedSignal, Elbit, Israel Aircraft Industries, Rockwell-Collins and Sextant Avionique have also been pushing their own proposals.

The avionics and engine upgrades are to be carried out in 1996, says Potapowicz. A further aerodynamic upgrade, including the addition of new high-lift devices is now planned for 1997. □

# BaE drops helicopter bid

DOUGLAS BARRIE/LONDON

BRITISH AEROSPACE has abandoned its bid for a £300 million (\$460 million) UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) contract to establish and support a tri-service helicopter training school.

BaE had intended to link with McAlpine in offering the MoD a mix of up to 50 Eurocopter AS350 Ecureuil and AS365 Dauphins to meet the Defence Helicopter Flying Training School (DHFTS) requirement.

BaE says: "We could not make a sensible business case for the programme, so we did not put in

a final bid."

The MoD is pulling together army, navy and air force helicopter flying training at the same time as it puts the package out to "contractorisation". The Aerospatiale Gazelle and Westland Wessex helicopters are also to be replaced.

BaE's bid, based around Eurocopter helicopters, was in part intended to support its failed tender to meet the army's attack-helicopter programme with the Eurocopter Tiger.

The MoD has received bids from Hunting, teamed with Bond, and Shorts to set up and support the DHFTS. Sources suggest that

bidders are offering both compliant and non-compliant bids, with the latter up to 40% cheaper than the former.

The compliant bids are likely to be based on a mix of the single-engined Bell 206s and Ecureuils, and twin-engined Bell 412s and Eurocopter EC135s. The MoD requires up to 40 single- and 12 twin-engine helicopters.

Non-compliant bids which are considerably less expensive are likely to have also been submitted, say sources. These are thought to be based on either the Schweizer 330 or Enstrom TH-28 single-engined turboshaft helicopters. □

## US Air Force launches T-38 upgrade

GRAHAM WARWICK/ATLANTA

NINE TEAMS are expected to respond to the US Air Force's 14 December request for proposals to upgrade the Northrop T-38 advanced trainer. The \$700 million avionics upgrade programme (AUP) is intended to keep the T-38 in service until 2020.

Under the AUP, the T-38 cockpit will be upgraded to be representative of front-line USAF fighters, introducing a head-up display as the primary flight reference and adding multi-function head-down displays. The global-positioning system will be introduced, and other changes made to improve reliability, maintainability and availability.

A 36-month engineering- and manufacturing-development is expected to be awarded in July, under which two prototype upgraded T-38s will be produced and tested. Production options will cover the upgrade of a further 425 T-38s between 1999 and 2004.

The winning team will also supply aircrew training-devices for the upgraded T-38, and provide contractor support of the aircraft and devices.

The T-38 AUP is of particular significance to companies with designs on the F-5-upgrade market. While McDonnell Douglas has

teamed with Israel Aircraft Industries' Lahav division, which has F-5 upgrade experience, Northrop Grumman has teamed with EFW, a US subsidiary of Israel's Elbit, which has also upgraded F-5s. Singapore Aerospace, which has F-5-upgrade experience, plans to bid through its US subsidiary Mobile Aerospace, a commercial-aircraft maintenance centre.

The competition has also attracted experienced system integrators, including Harris and Loral, as well as established upgrade contractors, such as Chrysler Technologies, Lockheed Martin, Rockwell and Tracor (which is teamed with Sierra Technologies, the only company which has experience of upgrading T-38s). □



The T-38 is heading for 2020

### T38 UPGRADE BIDDERS

Prime	Team
Chrysler Technologies	Honeywell (avionics), Camber (training devices),
Airborne Systems	AAI/ESI (logistic support)
Harris	FlightSafety (training devices), Dee Howard (installation), Boeing (logistic support)
Lockheed Martin	AlliedSignal (avionics)
Loral Federal Systems	Loral Quintron (training devices), DynCorp (installation)
McDonnell Douglas	Israel Aircraft Industries ("major subcontractor")
Mobile Aerospace	AlliedSignal (avionics), Dual (training devices)
(Singapore Aerospace)	
Northrop Grumman	EFW (avionics) Hughes Training (training devices)
Rockwell International	Flight Visions (head-up display) UNC Lear Siegler Chesapeake Raytheon Aerospace
Tracor	Sierra Technologies (avionics) Northrop Grumman (training devices)