

## Singapore looks beyond F-16C/Ds

THE REPUBLIC OF Singapore Air Force (RSAF) has begun to study its fighter requirement beyond the Lockheed Martin F-16C/Ds now on order, with a tentative in-service date for its future combat aircraft planned for between 2005 and 2010.

Several European and US manufacturers are keen to address the RSAF's future fighter needs. France's Dassault, displaying its Rafale fighter at Asian Aerospace '96, is understood to be planning to fly the RSAF chief of staff in the aircraft after the show.

Lockheed Martin, McDonnell Douglas (MDC) and Eurofighter are also likely to brief the RSAF on their respective projects in the near future.

The replacement timeframe may be advanced by an earlier-than-expected need to replace the RSAF's Northrop F-5E/Fs and MDC A-4SUs.

A planned F-5 avionics upgrade has been extensively delayed by integration and performance problems, which are only now being resolved. The final decision on whether to conduct the upgrade is expected shortly.

The air force's A-4s, meanwhile, must undergo an extensive structural upgrade at Singapore Aerospace to extend the aircraft's operational life. The re-engined A-4s are suffering from a higher-than-expected fatigue-life usage.

The RSAF is also likely to be briefed by MDC on the F-18E/F and F-18C/D modification programme. This would effectively see the F-18E cockpit fitted in the F-18C airframe.

Senior MDC officials also see an F-18C variant as being a likely contender for any requirement from Indonesia to replace its F-16A/Bs.

Lockheed Martin's strategy in sustaining its customer base beyond the F-16 is now based upon it winning in the Pentagon's Joint Strike Technology programme. □

# China poised for first executive air charters

CHINA IS TO GET its first Western-style executive air-charter service in a deal which will link Bombardier Aerospace, Global Aviation and China Southern Airlines.

Swiss-based Global Aviation is setting up a fixed-base operation (FBO) in Zhuhai using aircraft leased from Bombardier companies Canadair and Learjet. The site, the home of China Southern, is close to Hong Kong and in the heart of one of the fastest-growing regions of China.

Five aircraft are involved initially — two Learjet 31AERs, a Learjet 35A and 36A and a Canadair 601-3A-ER. A Learjet 55 is to be added later. The aircraft will be Swiss registered and crewed. The service starts later this month.

Global Aviation, which has been operating in Asia since 1988, with an FBO in Singapore, believes that there will be strong demand from companies seeking to move



Global's canadair 601 is bound for new Chinese venture

around China without falling foul of the country's creaking transport system. China Southern will be providing full support for the Global Aviation operation, including helping to overcome highly restrictive procedures now limiting private-aircraft operation in the country.

Maurice Amon, co-chairman at Global, says that if Zhuhai is a

success, then it will set up a second FBO, probably in Beijing.

■ Bombardier Aerospace is establishing an office in Beijing to help support and promote the company's aircraft activities in China. Bombardier Aerospace president Robert Brown says that the move will also help the company explore items such as collaboration and co-production. □

## IAE steps up V2500 campaign

INTERNATIONAL AERO Engines (IAE) is engaged in around 30 active sales campaigns and, in 1996, it hopes to equal or exceed 1995's record sales effort when V2500 orders worth more than \$1.6 billion were taken.

"We are active right around the Pacific rim in 1996 and we see that more accentuated around the world," says IAE president and chief executive Barry Eccleston. "We see Europe being very active in the charter market and the leasing business is very active. Four or five deals are very close to being concluded within the next two to three weeks." The company adds that a further 25 campaigns are "in the wings."

Intense regional efforts in the Pacific rim are being focused on campaigns in China, India, Japan, Korea, Macau and Taiwan.

"Of the top eight airlines in China, more than half are looking at 150-seaters," adds Eccleston. Versions of the engine power the McDonnell Douglas MD-90, while the V2500 is an option on the Airbus A319, A320 and A321. In total, 207 aircraft have been delivered and 1,600 engines worth \$10 billion have been ordered.

IAE claims to enjoy an increasingly dominant position in the Asia-Pacific market, saying that "...in terms of the region's fleet, V2500 engines are selected for 53 A320s, 26 A321s and 65 MD-90s". It adds: "V2500-powered airliners total 144, compared with CFM's 78, while the region has 17 V2500 customers against its rival's six."

■ BWIA has chosen the V2500 to power two A321-100s to be leased from International Lease Finance in June and October 1996. □

## Russians sign avionics deal

AVIACOR, THE SAMARA-based manufacturer of the Tupolev Tu-154M, has formed a strategic alliance with Honeywell, covering the use of the US avionics-maker's equipment on the Russian manufacturer's aircraft.

The agreement, which was signed at Asian Aerospace '96, specifies potential programmes for the installation of Honeywell's integrated avionics, flight-management systems, satellite communications and collision-avoidance and global-positioning systems.

"Our first step is to determine the applicability of Honeywell equipment to new and retrofit aircraft that will be produced by Aviacor," says Honeywell Business and Commuter Aviation Systems vice-president Mike Smith. □