

Testing delay forces Pentagon to shuffle F-22 procurement

THE US DEPARTMENT OF Defense (DoD) has forced the US Air Force to rejig the Lockheed Martin F-22A Raptor fighter programme in an attempt to accommodate flight test delays.

Flight testing scheduled originally to begin in May 1997 was delayed until six months September. The DoD is now proposing to use what were originally intended to be the first two low rate initial production (LRIP) aircraft as additional flight test aircraft to get the programme back on track.

The Pentagon move is in response to a March recommendation from the General Accounting Office (GAO) that the \$62.1 billion Raptor programme be delayed by a year because of the hold-ups in the flight test schedule.

Jacques Gansler, the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Technology, says that following the GAO recommendation would disrupt the programme and add an estimated \$4 billion to the final cost.

Gansler, however, does want at least 200h of flight testing LRIP is approved. "What we're trying to do is gain higher confidence in the product," he adds.

As a result, the two initial LRIP aircraft due for fiscal year 1999 production have been redesignated as "production representative test vehicles". The LRIP decision has been delayed by a year, until November 1999, when the Pentagon is scheduled to sign off on the first six production aircraft, which represent the fiscal year 2000 purchase.

Funding for engineering and manufacturing development of nine F-22s has been approved. The USAF is to buy 10, 16 and 24 F-22s in the three fiscal years 2001-3.

The Quadrennial Defense Review reduction shrank F-22 procurement from 438 aircraft to 339. Lockheed Martin and the USAF harbour ambitions of moving back towards the original procurement figure, so that the aircraft could also be used as a Boeing F-15E replacement. □

Partners re-arrange KTX-II schedule after budget cuts

PAUL LEWIS/SINGAPORE

SAMSUNG AEROSPACE and partner Lockheed Martin are examining ways of re-arranging KTX-II development work and funding schedules, in the wake of the South Korean Government's decision to slash the programme's first year budget.

The new administration of recently inaugurated President Kim Dae Jung has halved the initial year's allocation for the jet trainer/light combat aircraft to 40 billion Won (\$28 million).

The move has been prompted by wider cuts in the defence budget in the face of South Korea's recent economic crisis.

Seoul has asked Samsung and Lockheed Martin to adjust their initial payment schedule accordingly, but at the same time is keen to avoid any slippage in the overall timetable of the programme.

Flight testing of the first of four prototypes is due begin in 2000, with initial deliveries to the

Republic of Korea Air Force (RoKAF) following in 2005.

"We have no firm ideas yet how we will accommodate the shortage of funds, and keep the initial operational capability as planned... We're talking about moving some early workload to latter years," says a South Korean programme official.

In the meantime, Daewoo Heavy Industries is hoping to secure initial funding in 1999 to develop an armed forward air control (FAC) version of its KTX-1 turboprop basic trainer.

The RoKAF planning calls for the acquisition of around 20 FAC aircraft in 2003-4, but this will almost certainly be subject to the country's economy being revived.

The basic design of the armed KTX-1 drawn up by South Korea's Agency for Defence Development is understood to include provision for the installation of four underwing hardpoints for either auxiliary fuel tanks, rockets, bombs or cannon pods. The tandem seat cockpit

would also need to be fitted with a gunsight and weapons management system.

The RoKAF's outstanding FAC requirement continues to attract the interest of competing foreign manufacturers such as Pilatus, offering the PC-9, and Embraer, with the EMB-314 Super Tucano. The two aircraft had originally been contenders for a South Korean trainer order for 20 aircraft, at a time when the KTX-1 was suffering from early development problems.

It was the RoKAF's stipulation that the trainer must be capable of performing the FAC mission that generated considerable controversy over the potential Pilatus deal. This was because of Swiss laws which prohibit the sale of weapons to areas of tension (*Flight International*, 20-26 July, 1994).

This deal eventually collapsed, but competing suppliers continue to show interest in South Korea in the event of the KTX-1 programme once again faltering. □



Romania gets Shadow 600

AAI HAS DELIVERED six Shadow 600 unmanned air vehicles and their associated ground control station to Romania. The \$20 million contract was the first to be financed by the US Government's new Defence Export Loan Guarantee programme. AAI has sold Shadow 600 systems to another, undisclosed, country, believed to be Taiwan, and hopes to close two more sales by the end of this year.

Fortis pushes Il-76 to air force customers

UK AIRCRAFT broker Fortis Aviation has signed a broad agreement with the Tashkent Aircraft Production Factory (TAPO) to market the Ilyushin Il-76 to air force customers worldwide (*Flight International*, 16-22 July, 1997).

Jack Cunningham, managing director of the Stansted, UK-based company, says that the "...relationship is with the factory", not the Ilyushin design bureau. "We do not think we will accomplish civil sales," he says, although he adds that it has not been ruled out.

No sales have been finalised so far but "outline interest" has been shown by Indonesia and India in the Il-76, while Malaysia is interested in using the aircraft as a water-bomber.

The aircraft will be offered with Progress D-30 engines, but a Perm PS-90 option is a possibility. □