

# Lockheed Martin speeds up co-operative talks with Airbus

**L**OCKHEED MARTIN'S protracted discussions with Airbus Industrie and its partner companies on co-operation are gathering pace. At Paris, the US company and Aerospatiale Matra announced an agreement to pursue a stake in the new Korean Aerospace Industries and confirmed they are still discussing partnerships on tanker/transport and large military aircraft programmes.

"I need a partner to tap the market to replace KC-135s," says Micky Blackwell, LM Aeronautics president. "I would hate to let Boeing have a free ride on a 400-plus aircraft market."

Blackwell says talks started five years ago have begun to be more productive. "The temperature is beginning to rise a bit," he says.

"Airbus management is supportive of the talks. In the near future—the next two years—we should conclude a deal or decide to go our separate ways," Blackwell says.

Lockheed Martin has given up trying to influence the design of the

Airbus Military A400M tactical transport to allow it to be adapted for the US market. "The aircraft is a direct competitor for our C-130J," he says.

But the company is still interested in eventually fitting a swept wing and turbofans to the European aircraft to meet US market requirements. "There is an opportunity for an aircraft between the C-130J and the [Boeing] C-17, with a swept wing and fans and costing \$80-100 million," he says.

Blackwell says any co-operation with Airbus and/or its partners is

likely to start in a minor way. Although Lockheed Martin would like eventually to use the A340 as the basis for a KC-135 replacement, initially it will co-operate with Aerospatiale Matra to pursue worldwide opportunities for tanker modifications of other Airbus aircraft, starting with a tie-up aimed at entering the UK tanker competition.

Tom Burbage, president of LM Aeronautical Systems, says the company remains interested in becoming involved in aerostructures work for Airbus, but Blackwell cautions that any work package would have to be worth at least \$1 billion to be worthwhile. Lockheed Martin has previously talked about becoming a partner in the A3XX programme.

Burbage says the company is hopeful of securing interim orders for the C-130J from at least some of the countries considering the A400M. These include France, an existing C-130 operator, which could be interested in 25 aircraft. □

## Hurel-Dubois finds customer for new thrust reverser

**H**UREL-DUBOIS has secured the launch order for its novel Papillion thrust reverser design after being selected to equip the Pratt & Whitney PW6000 on the Airbus A318.

Hurel-Dubois has been subcontracted to provide the thrust-reverser to nacelle specialist Aircell, which itself has been selected to supply the entire system on the PW6000-powered A318. The whole deal for the A318 is worth a potential \$750 million to Aircell.

A 50/50 joint venture between Airbus Industrie and Hispano-Suiza, Aircell was launched last year to supply nacelles for the Rolls-Royce Trent 500 on the A340-500/600.

The PW6000 deal represents the first application for Hurel-Dubois' Papillion thrust-reverser, which is designed to be cheaper, lighter and more reliable than existing systems and requiring fewer components.

The design is aimed at under-wing-mounted engines, with two horizontal plane doors reversing the flow of bypass air. □

