Russians inspect British MLS

A four-man Russian delegation completed an extensive inspection of the British-sponsored microwave landing system (MLS) on December 6 (see Flight for December 4, page 878). The team was headed by Mr M. T. Kuznetsov, the USSR delegate on the Icao All Weather Operations Panel (AWOP) which is currently assessing the various MLS contenders for a system to replace ILS in the 1980s.

The Russians were shown the extensive results of the mandatory trials required in the Icao submission. These were obtained by the Royal Aircraft Establishment from the Plessey-developed Doppler MLS.

Although the delegation declined the offer of a demonstration flight (and in any case the weather was unacceptably poor on the day of the proposed flight) it was able to see the ground and airborne MLS equipment both in the field and at Plessey’s development factory at Cowes, Isle of Wight.

The standard short-range navigation aids in the Soviet Union already employ mechanical scanning-beam techniques and the party admitted that the Time Reference Scanning Beam (TRS) MLS contender being submitted by the US is preferable. However, Mr Kuznetsov emphasised to the British CAA that the Russians welcomed the opportunity to contribute to an objective assessment of the competing systems.

The five MLS submissions to Icao, sponsored by the UK, US, Germany, France and Australia, are being assessed by a special working group (Working Group A) set up within Icao. Three meetings of WGA have been held, and now that the technical submissions have had the taint of the group is moving towards a final choice. Three further meetings will take place early next year, and by the summer the group should have drafted a recommendation to the Icao AWOP meeting scheduled to be held in Montreal next September.

This meeting will report to an All Weather Operations Divisional meeting late in 1977, and a “final decision meeting” is due in 1978.

The 131 member countries represented in Icao will be very much guided in their deliberations by the 11-man AWOP. Of these five represent the MLS-submitting countries, three represent professional bodies and the remaining two are from Holland and the USSR. If the AWOP is to come to a majority decision, therefore, as to the technically superior system, some of the “committed” nationals will almost certainly have to change their minds.

Mr Charles B. Henderson has been elected vice-president of Atlantic Research.

Mr George Stone has been appointed a director of Bowthorpe Hellermann.

Mr J. A. Airey has been appointed sales director of Hawker Siddeley Dynamics from January 1.

Mr J. Lovkay has been appointed division vice-president electronic systems for the Hamilton Standard division of United Technologies.

ADB, the Belgian airfield-lighting manufacturer, has opened an office at 11 Manor Rd, Wallington, Surrey. The manager is Mr W. D. Dickinson.

Mr Maurice R. Dahn has been appointed vice-president and general manager of Rockwell’s Information Systems Centre in succession to Mr Fred J. Knapper, who is retiring from the corporation.

Aviation & General Insurance will become manager for Pearl Assurance’s aviation risks attaching on or after January 1. Mr C. R. Jeffs, underwriter and manager of the former company, has been appointed aviation underwriter of the latter.