ASIAN AEROSPACE '88 REPORT

Boeing forecasts sharp fleet growth

Boeing predicts that passenger numbers flying in the Orient will double to 40 million per year by 1990, with continued growth creating a demand for 773 new commercial transports by the end of the century.

With four major powers, the USA, the Soviet Union, China, and Japan, all with political influence or interest in the region, the sales battle is going to be keenly fought, says Tom Craig, Boeing Commercial Airplane’s marketing director.

About half the new aircraft to be delivered, some 321, will be long-range types seating more than 185 passengers, but a significant number, 184, will operate over short-to-medium ranges and will be in the 125-185 seat category, Craig expects.

Remaining deliveries will be divided about equally between short-to-medium range types seating under 125 passengers and long-range aircraft seating 185 or more.

The forecast demand would take the fleet in the region to 1,221 aircraft, up from 717 late last year, allowing for 269 retirements, mainly of aircraft with the most extreme range and seating capacity.

While Boeing’s forecast is based on the market in 16 countries, all between 7hr and 10hr behind Greenwich Mean Time, and includes China, British Aerospace revealed a forecast for the Pacific Basin, which excludes China.

Capacity will grow almost 7 per cent annually until 2005, according to Charles Masefield, deputy managing director of BAE’s civil aircraft division. Regional widebodies will be the fastest growing sector, with capacity expanding at 9 per cent annually.

There will be purchases of more than 300 turbine-powered aircraft alone. One hundred of them will be small and pressurised, seating fewer than 20, some replacing unpressurised types now in service. Along with the trend to pressurisation will come a move to increased seating capacity, says Masefield.

He sees a healthy demand for jets such as the Bae146 and Airbus Industrie A320, but expects that carriers will also buy “substantial” numbers of elderly used aircraft unable to meet new noise restrictions in the USA and Europe.

Boeing’s Craig sees a stimulus to twin-engined jet aircraft operations in the region coming from possible US Federal Aviation Administration legislation, which he expects late this year, permitting operations with up to three hours flying time from approved airport on one engine. The current two-hour rule creates a no-go area in the mid-Pacific, but the extra hour would be a green light for services between the US West Coast and Hawaii, he predicts.

Agusta urges co-operation on Singapore

Agusta has urged Singapore to join in development of an improved S.211 trainer, or see the project go to another south-east Asian country.

Negotiations with Singapore Aircraft Industries (SAI) have founded on “financial conditions”, says Agusta. The Italian company was ready to sign a deal at the 1987 Paris Air Show, but failed to do so. Last-minute concessions made by Agusta “were not sufficient”, says chairman Raffaello Teti.

At stake is joint development of a “stretched” version of the S.211 basic trainer. Singapore was launch customer for the turbofan-powered aircraft, and SAI assembled the 30 trainers locally. The S.211 “Mk2” modifications include a strengthened wing and an uprated engine.

Singapore needs an advanced trainer to fill the gap between the S.211 and its updated A-4s and new F-16s. “We have to co-operate with Singapore, not just sell,” said Teti. Agusta also values Singapore’s central position, and proposes that aircraft sold in the region be built by SAI.

Agusta is unwilling to take “financial conditions”, says chairman Raffaello Teti.

Meanwhile, Aermacchi, privately run while Agusta is state-controlled, was hopeful of demonstrating its competing MB.339C trainer/attack aircraft to the Singaporeans during the show.

F-16 sparks engine fight

Battle has been joined between General Electric and Pratt & Whitney to supply the engine for Japan’s extensively modified F-16, the SX-3.

The two companies are offering powerplants developed under the US Air Force’s improved performance engine (IPE) programme: the General Electric F110-129 and Pratt & Whitney F100-229, both rated at 29,0001b thrust.

SX-3 engine prime contractor IHI has requested details of both engine proposals, and Pratt & Whitney officials were headed for Japan immediately after the show. A decision is expected in the second half of this year.

A competition is already under way in South Korea, where the F-16 is one of two contenders for the 130-aircraft F-X requirement. Competing to power the F-16 are the current GE F110-100 and the P&W F100-220.

If, as expected, the F-X decision is delayed into 1989, however, it will become an “IPE contest” pitting the latest versions of the F100 and F110 against each other. This will suit Pratt & Whitney, because previous contests have gone to GE, owing to the F110’s higher thrust. The F100 IPE has “thrust parity” with the F110.