



South Korea could opt for 24 Panavia Tornado ECRs from Germany

## Korean MoU revives option for Tornados

BY DOUGLAS BARRIE

Germany and South Korea are preparing a memorandum of understanding (MoU), to be signed later this year, clearing the way for the potential sale of 24 Panavia Tornado Electronic Combat Reconnaissance (ECR) aircraft.

According to well-placed sources, a South Korean defence ministry delegation will visit Bonn in May to sign the MoU. South Korea has a long-standing requirement for a "Wild Weasel"-type defence suppression aircraft. Alongside Tornado ECR variants, it has also looked at the McDonnell Douglas F-4G Phantom and Grumman EA-6B Prowler.

One high-level German source says: "The situation is not 100% clear yet, but there is a new chance. The ECR is an ideal complement to the Lockheed F-16. It would be a considerable force multiplier."

The possibility of an ECR purchase is being enhanced by a German air force offer to make Tornado Interdictor Strike (IDS) aircraft, which are being withdrawn from service, available for conversion, according to officials. The Italian air force is already undertaking

a similar modification to some of its IDS aircraft.

The South Korean requirement was previously to be met with new Tornado aircraft. Converting aircraft which the German air force would otherwise mothball reduces considerably the unit cost of the ECR aircraft.

The use of ex-German air force aircraft would also remove pressure for an immediate decision. A decision to use new Tornado airframes would be needed by the middle of this year to avoid a production gap of more than six months, following the completion of the latest Royal Saudi Air Force order. Texas Instruments is also understood to have been approached to ensure that it could produce the emitter-locator system which is fitted to the German ECR aircraft.

Deutsche Aerospace is carrying out a study into the South Korean requirement, although this is not expected to be completed until the third quarter of this year.

The defence German/Korean collaboration MoU is likely to cover, alongside any ECR deal, the Texas Instruments AGM-88 High Speed Anti-Radiation Missile. □

## Turkey/USA agree F-16C/D sale

Turkey and the USA have signed a letter of offer-and-acceptance covering a further 40 Lockheed F-16C/Ds, taking the number on order to 240.

The 40 additional aircraft will be co-produced by Turkey's TUSAS Aerospace Industries (TAI) for delivery in 1998. The order is worth \$600 million to Lockheed.

TAI is already producing F-16s, under the initial order for 160 aircraft placed in the mid-1980s. A second order, for 40 aircraft, was placed in March 1992. The Turkish air force has taken delivery of 136 F-16C/Ds so far, Lockheed says.

The Turkish follow-on order takes Lockheed Fort Worth's F-16 backlog to more than 600 aircraft. The company had planned to cut F-16 production from 16 a month in 1993 to five a month in 1994.

The company will now maintain deliveries at eight to ten a month for the rest of this year and cut production to four to five a month in 1995.

Deliveries of 40 F-16C/Ds to Greece and 150 F-16A/Bs to Taiwan will begin in 1996. Production for the US Air Force is scheduled to end in early 1997, with delivery of the last 12 F-16C/ds on order.

The service is studying a plan to trade-in 400 used F-16A/Bs for 100 new F-16C/Ds, with procurement re-starting in fiscal year 1997 and deliveries in 1999. □

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### TAIWAN LEASE

Taiwan is negotiating to lease an additional 50 Northrop T-38 trainers from the USA to fill the gap until deliveries of 150 Lockheed F-16s and 60 Dassault Mirage 2000-5s are due to begin in 1996. The USA has already agreed to lease 40 T-38s for three years, but the budget for the purchase has yet to be approved by Taiwan's parliament.

#### JSTARS SUPPORT

Pemco Aerospace has teamed with Boeing's Aerospace Operations subsidiary to bid for the logistic-support programme. The programme is associated with the US Air Force's Grumman E-8 Joint Surveillance Radar Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS). Boeing will lead the team, with Pemco Aerospace providing depot-maintenance expertise gained on the KC-135 and KC-10 programmes.

#### MATERIAL EVIDENCE

New materials used in the wing of the McDonnell Douglas (MDC) F-18E/F have passed live-fire tests, the company says. One test demonstrated the ability of new polyurethane fuel cells to withstand large armour-piercing rounds, while a second showed the new toughened-composite inner-wing skins to be as survivable as existing F-18 wing panels, according to MDC.

## Alenia opts for Franco/German axis

Alenia is to join with Deutsche Aerospace (DASA) and Aerospatiale to form a tactical-missile consortium, rather than become involved in the British Aerospace/Matra tie-up now being negotiated.

Nicolas Zalonis, general manager with Alenia's commercial department, says that "...before the end of the year, DASA, Alenia and Aerospatiale will tie up".

He adds: "We are looking to have a new company covering

all tactical-missile systems." This could see the EUROSAM consortium, of which Aerospatiale and Alenia are already members, move toward a joint-venture structure.

Despite intending to move into the Aerospatiale/DASA camp, Zalonis insists that the company still wishes to collaborate with BAe on a programme-by-programme basis.

Alenia has an agreement with BAe and Saab covering the proposed S225X advanced medium-range missile. □