



A-10 Thunderbolt: earmarked for "low-intensity" CAS role

USAF revives A-10/ F-16 CAS proposal

The US Air Force has revived a plan to modify 600 Fairchild A-10s and Lockheed F-16s for the close air-support (CAS) mission. Congress had withheld funding for the programme until the US Department of Defense (DoD) had re-confirmed the Air Force's approach to performing the CAS mission in support of the Army.

The resurrected plan calls for 200 A-10s to be modified for the "low-intensity" CAS mission, plus 200 Block 30 F-16s for day CAS and 200 Block 40 F-16s for night CAS missions. The A-10s will receive only night-vision goggles (NVG) and compatible cockpit lighting, but the F-16s will be more heavily modified.

Lockheed says that it is under contract to price the modifications and expects to respond soon. Money to start the CAS modifications in 1997-8 was allocated in the fiscal year 1994 defence budget, but the Congressionally mandated DoD review of USAF plans has delayed the start of the programme.

The day-CAS F-16s will receive VHF anti-jam radios, an improved data modem, a laser spot-tracker and, possibly, a missile-approach warning system. The night-CAS F-16s will receive similar modifications and will carry the Martin Marietta-produced LANTIRN night-navigation and targeting-pod system, modified with a laser spot-tracker.

The night-CAS F-16s will be

drawn from around 240 LANTIRN-capable Block 40 aircraft in service.

The CAS mission will be performed in addition to the LANTIRN-equipped F-16s' interdiction role. □



Naval Flanker flight tests are nearly complete

Flanker poised for navy go-ahead

Four Sukhoi Su-27K Flankers are nearing completion of their Russian navy acceptance flight-test programme on the *Admiral Kuznetsov* carrier deployed in the Barents Sea.

Sukhoi already has a further 48 Su-27Ks on standby for the navy's initial operational capability approval, according to the newspaper *Izvestia*.

The fighter is expected to be designated the Su-33 once it has operational status.

Russian navy pilots are already being trained at Saki in the Crimea, where a mock-up of the flightdeck has been built

Australia orders missile decoy system

Australian defence manufacturer AWA Defence Industries (AWADI) has won a A\$23 million (\$17 million) contract from the Australian Government to produce the Active Missile Decoy (AMD) system, a hovering rocket-propelled anti-ship missile decoy system to protect ships from sea-skimming missiles.

Part of the contract will cover the development of a fire-control system to integrate the decoy system with ships' combat data systems.

The AMD is a ship-defence system developed jointly by Australia and the USA, based on a concept conceived originally by Australia's Defence Science and Technology Organisation.

AWADI won the contract on the basis of its previous experience with Project

Nulka, which involved the full-scale engineering development of the decoy. Sippican of the USA developed the electronic payload. □

Kuwait's warning system goes live

The Kuwait Early Warning System built by Hughes Aircraft is now being used to monitor Kuwaiti air space from the air-operations centre established near the country's main air force base.

In the future, data from the system's two air force radars and its Martin Marietta-built FPS-117 long-range air-surveillance radar, will be supplemented with a new balloon-borne low-altitude surveillance system along with a new long-range radar.

Apart from the air-operations centre, Hughes was also responsible for display consoles, operational software and communications equipment, as well as building the radar base and other sites. □

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE BELL TOLLS

The Israeli air force is planning to replace its Bell-212 helicopters with the Sikorsky Black Hawk. Deliveries of the first ten Black Hawks begin in September. The helicopters are secondhand aircraft previously operated by the US army and will initially be integrated into the Bell 212 squadron. Eventually they will replace the latter helicopter completely.

ASIAN MISTRAL

The Singapore navy has ordered the Matra Mistral infra-red-guided surface-to-air missile to replace anti-aircraft guns in the short-range air-defence role. The missiles will be fitted on each of the navy's six missile gun boats and also on its landing ships.