

DASA and GEC aim to settle DASS dilemma

ANDRZEJ JEZIORSKI/ULM

SENIOR DASA AND GEC-Marconi officials were due to have met at the end of May in an effort to head off an industrial dispute over Germany's purchase of a defensive-aids subsystem (DASS) for the Eurofighter EF2000 combat aircraft.

DASA is concerned that the German defence ministry's intention to buy an off-the-shelf DASS for the EF2000 threatens the country's industrial capability in electronic warfare.

DASA's airborne systems division has been developing its own, reduced-specification DASS for the German air force's EF2000s since Germany withdrew from the EURODASS consortium in 1992, hoping to save money.

Bonn, however, now wants to procure the EURODASS system, but this does not involve any German industrial participation, says DASA airborne systems vice-president Manfred Jacobsen.

Jacobsen was to meet representatives of EURODASS lead company GEC-Marconi Defence Systems at the end of May, hoping to negotiate German workshare in the verification and test phase of the joint pro-



DASA's latest towed radar decoy has changed since the flight-test model

gramme. Failing that, DASA will continue to fight in favour of its own alternative system.

DASA has invested tens of millions of deutschemarks in the development of its towed radar-decoy, electro-optical missile-approach warner and radar-warning receiver (RWR). The RWR is a joint proposal with Litton, and is the same as the upgraded receiver now being proposed for Germany's Panavia Tornado fleet.

A request for quotations on the Tornado RWR upgrade is expected this year. DASA's towed radar decoy is to undergo further flight trials this year, following tests in 1994 with a larger version of the device towed behind a Learjet.

Initial flight trials of a dummy system will confirm the unit's aero-

dynamic performance, while a fully operational decoy will be tested towards the year's end.

The decoy, to be deployed either from a Tornado underwing pod or from the wingtip of an EF2000, would be towed about 100m (330ft) behind the aircraft, protecting it from radar-guided missiles. The decoy can also be deployed by transport aircraft.

The fast-jet towed radar-decoy would be recovered by parachute after deployment, while on transport aircraft it would be winched in and out as necessary.

DASA claims that if Germany abandons the national DASS programme, it will look for export customers and partner companies to allow it to continue its towed-decoy work. □

Frigate hold-ups threaten Brunei BAe Hawk order

BRUNEI'S long-awaited order for ten British Aerospace Hawk 100/200s is threatened by delay because of hold-ups in finalising its new frigate programme.

The tiny oil-rich kingdom was understood to be close to placing an order for six Hawk 100s and four single-seat -200s, after a visit by the Royal Air Force's Red Arrows aerobatic team this year.

The Royal Brunei Armed Force's (RBAF) limited procurement system has since become embroiled in a purchase of three 95m frigates from GEC-Marconi's Yarrow shipyard in the UK. Intense competition among system suppliers is holding up the finalisation of the ships' configuration.

Some key decisions need to be taken before the deal can proceed, including the warships' weapons fit. BAe is offering the vertical launch Seawolf surface-to-air missile system, but is facing competition from Raytheon, offering its larger RIM-7M VL Sea Sparrow.

A surface-to-surface anti-ship missile is also to be selected, with the McDonnell Douglas RGM-84 Harpoon and Aerospatiale MM.40 Exocet in contention.

Until many of these issues are resolved, key defence planning personnel will not be free to manage a second major procurement programme, delaying completion of the Hawk deal, say sources.

Decisions are also pending on other programmes, such as the RBAF Air Wing's purchase of three CN-235 maritime-patrol aircraft (MPA) from Indonesia's IPTN.

A single CN-235 utility has been ordered for training, and Argo-System has been selected as the MPA's integrator, but the radar, forward-looking infra-red imager (FLIR), electronic-support measures and identification-friend-or-foe systems have yet to be selected.

Candidates for the radar contract are the GEC-Marconi Seaspray, Thomson-CSF Ocean Master and Texas Instrument APS-134 (LW). GEC-Marconi is also offering its multi-role turret FLIR against Smiths Industries' FLIR-2000. □



Valmet flies first Finnish-assembled F-18

Valmet Aviation Industries has flown the first of 57 Finnish-assembled McDonnell Douglas (MDC) F-18Cs, with deliveries to begin in September and to continue until August 2000. MDC has already delivered all seven two-seat F-18Ds to the Finnish air force.