

USA advances KTX-II MoU

THE US GOVERNMENT is expected shortly to forward a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to South Korea, covering the proposed joint development of the Samsung KTX-II advanced trainer/light-combat aircraft.

It is understood that the Pentagon's Defence Security Assistance Agency has finished drafting the MoU. It is planned to present the document to the South Korean Government for review before the end of September.

Signature of the MoU will clear the way for Lockheed Martin to finalise a collaborative agreement with Samsung Aerospace.

The two companies recently concluded a provisional teaming arrangement and are hoping to begin full-scale development of the tandem-seat supersonic KTX-II in January 1997 (*Flight International*, 21-27 August, P5).

It had originally been planned to start development of the KTX-II earlier this year, but teaming disagreements and escalation in costs pushed back launch by 12 months. An interim bridging agreement with Lockheed Martin, designed to keep preliminary design work going, expires in December.

The South Korean Government is withholding a final decision on launching the KTX-II programme until the MoU is agreed. Seoul is seeking reassurances from Washington on the transfer of technology and the export of KTX-II aircraft to third countries.

The USA is unlikely to give South Korean industry full access to key technology areas, such as flight-control software, but it will look favourably at the export of aircraft to certain prescribed countries, suggests an industry source.

■ The South Korean ministry of national defence is understood tentatively to have approved a follow-on purchase of 13 Westland Super Lynx naval helicopters.

South Korea's navy has opted for a second batch of Super Lynx, after considering competing proposals from Sikorsky and Kaman of the S-70B Seahawk and re-manufactured SH-2G Super SeaSprite, respectively. □

FLA critical report looms

DOUGLAS BARRIE/TOULOUSE

THE FATE OF the European Future Large Aircraft (FLA) could be sealed later this month when a French Government committee submits its report on funding its air force's military air-transport requirement.

The committee was set up earlier this year in the wake of the French Government's decision not to provide development funding for the FLA.

In spite of the funding block, France, along with Germany, signed the European Staff Requirement for the FLA in August: the UK is also expected to sign the document shortly.

France's funding decision stalled the project at a political level, and Aerospatiale's proposal to divide development funding equally between industry and government was unacceptable to the defence ministry, which wanted development to be paid for by industry.

Sources close to the project suggest that the interest on the finance required by French industry doubled the projected cost of the aircraft for the French air force. Airbus Industrie is quoting a unit cost of \$75 million, including amortising the development costs, on a 300-plus production run. Final assembly would be carried out at Toulouse.

What the committee will propose remains unclear, although Airbus Industrie, the FLA project manager, still believes that an eleventh-hour solution can be reached to rescue the programme.

Many of the industrial stumbling blocks on the programme have been resolved. British Aerospace and Daimler-Benz Aerospace had been vying for development of the wing, but Andy Lewis, FLA commercial director, now says that "...Germany will be involved in a joint design team with BAE". He adds that it will be "a composite hybrid wing". BAE had

been advocating using conventional wing materials, with DASA pushing a composite approach.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding the future of the programme, Airbus has been pressing ahead with definition of the programme, which, according to Lewis, would see "...the first flight of the FLA 60 months after the launch of the programme".

The participating nations have also been supplied with a detailed document on the proposed 12-month work package "...leading up to the programme launch", according to Lewis.

An advanced turboprop engine would also be selected within the same timeframe by the proposed Airbus Military Company (AMC), which was due to have been unveiled at the Farnborough show, but the launch has been postponed.

AlliedSignal, BMW Rolls-Royce, and Snecma/MTU/Fiat are offering high-speed turboprop designs for the FLA. □

Straight and true, Israel's Arrow struck 'ballistic' target

INITIAL ANALYSIS of the first Israeli-developed Arrow 2 anti-tactical ballistic-missile test indicates that the vehicle hit a target which simulated the behaviour of a ballistic missile.

Senior programme sources confirm that all indications are that "...metal hit metal" when the

interceptor destroyed the target over the Mediterranean.

The homing sensors of the Arrow 2 are designed to acquire the target and bring the interceptor with the range of the missile's fragmentation warhead.

Initial results from the test suggested a very close pass, but, when

the data were further processed, the results were indicative of a kinetic kill.

"This amazing result may create high expectations in the next tests. This is a problem, but the fact is that the interceptor hit the target like a well-aimed bullet," the programme source says. □



High-visibility F-18E prepared for test

MCDONNELL DOUGLAS F-18E SUPER Hornet prototype number four has been painted in a high-visibility scheme in preparation for high-angle-of-attack tests at the US Naval Air Warfare Centre at Patuxent River, Maryland. The F-18F two-seater, meanwhile, underwent its first catapult launch on 6 August.