

EJA shelves Asia-Pacific NetJets...

RAMON LOPEZ/TETERBORO

FINANCIAL TURMOIL and failure to gain flight clearances in a major market have forced Executive Jet Aviation (EJA) to shelve plans to extend its successful fractional-ownership programme to the Asia-Pacific region.

The Montvale, New Jersey-based firm was expected to extend its NetJets programme to the Far East by the middle of 1998 after launching a similar operation in the

Middle East in late 1997. Richard Santulli, EJA's chairman, says that plans to extend NetJets to the Far East are "on the back-burner" because of Asia's financial crisis and his failure to gain authority to fly inside China.

In November, Gulfstream Aerospace and a group of regional investors signed a letter of intent for the \$400 million purchase of up to 12 Gulfstream IV-SPs over the next six years for a Middle East fractional-ownership programme.

EJA agreed to manage the project, and Santulli hopes to sign a final contract with the investors soon.

Gulfstream says that a smaller aircraft is also envisioned for the Middle East operation. At that point, EJA may get more involved, says Santulli.

"You can't have a one-aircraft programme. You miss too much of the market with only the Gulfstream IV. You need at least two sizes of aircraft," he says.

■ EJA and Boeing Business Jets

soon expect to finalise their joint venture in which Boeing's \$34 million corporate aircraft becomes part of the NetJets programme. A "core" fleet of around four or five BBJs owned by the joint venture is still envisioned, but no orders will be placed and no shares in the aircraft will be sold until the interior configuration of BBJ has been determined. "Decisions on the interior have been more complicated than we ever dreamed," says Santulli. □

Dassault's supersonic programme advances

DASSAULT AVIATION'S efforts to launch a supersonic business jet (SSBJ) programme are beginning to take shape, according to company officials.

The French company says that the study, which may be concluded this year, does not represent a commitment to a supersonic aircraft project, but Bruno Revellin-Falcoz, vice-president for research and engineering, says: "We have reached a set of designs, and in the first quarter of 1998 we will exchange ideas with potential customers."

While details on the design remain sketchy, Revellin-Falcoz envisions a Mach 1.8 aircraft most likely powered by three non-afterburning engines derived from existing military or commercial turbofans. The eight-passenger aircraft, which would not be built before 2007, would be about the size of a Falcon 50EX. Revellin-Falcoz says that estimates for the development cost and aircraft price remain undetermined.

He says that Dassault Aviation would like to share the project with an industry partner, or even customers "with some experience in supersonic activities", says Revellin-Falcoz. Serge Dassault, the firm's chairman, sees a partnership with as many as two companies for SSBJ production.

Richard Santulli, Executive Jet Aviation chairman, says that it is his dream to operate SSBJs. "You can bet we would be the launch customers for a Falcon SST." □

...but sets its sights on additional Falcon 2000s

EXECUTIVE JET Aviation (EJA) could more than double its Dassault Falcon 2000 fleet by early in the next century, says the world's leading fractional-ownership company.

Dassault's \$500 million sale of 24 Falcon 2000 business jets to EJA is the single largest order for the transcontinental widebody aircraft to date (*Flight International*, 24 December - 6 January, 1998).

Richard Santulli, EJA's chairman, thinks that total orders will be

"far more significant than just 24 aircraft". Depending on market conditions, EJA envisions buying up to eight aircraft annually over the next "four, five or six years."

The Falcon 2000s will be used in the company's US NetJets fractional-ownership programme, but Santulli plans to hold discussions this month about Falcon 2000s for the NetJets Europe operation, which also now sells shares in Cessna Citation S/II and VII aircraft. The Falcon 50 and 900 may

also be considered, he indicates.

EJA will not receive any Falcon 2000s until 1999 as there are no aircraft available for delivery this year, although Santulli hopes to get early delivery of a demonstration aircraft. As it now stands, EJA will take delivery of seven Falcon 2000s in 1999 and a minimum of five per year thereafter. EJA's core fleet will total four Falcon 2000s. Santulli says that the Falcon 2000 fills a gap between the Citation X and Gulfstream IV business jets. □

ENAER creates Dutch assembly base for Eaglet

CHILE'S (ENAER) has set up a European company, based in the Netherlands, to market, redesign and assemble its Namcu (Eaglet) military two-seat composite light aircraft for the civil market.

EuroENAER is a joint venture between ENAER and Dutch Piper dealer Jan Van Toorn, who will also head the company. Production of the Eaglet, a competitor to the Diamond DA20 Katana, will begin in 1998 from the company's Den Helder factory in the Netherlands, and will be aimed at the European market. The deal has taken two years to assemble, having been announced in 1995.

The new Eaglet will have several changes. In particular the original Textron Lycoming 85kW (115hp) U235 engine will be replaced with an O-320-D2A, which will be derated to 110kW, and will give the aircraft a maxi-



ENAER hopes to find a civilian nest for its Eaglet

mum speed of 140kt (260km/h). Other significant design changes include a flap modification to reduce stall speed, improved cockpit layout and equipment, new crash-proof seats and attachments, redesigned elevators and fitting of lightning protection and wheel spats. Main airframe and other

component structures will be manufactured in Chile at ENAER's El Bosque, Santiago, factory, and shipped to Europe for assembly.

The \$120,000 Eaglet is scheduled to receive Dutch certification by the middle of this year, when an initial production batch of up to ten aircraft is anticipated. □