Lockheed Martin And Elbit Systems Team To Pursue Helicopter Upgrade Opportunities In Central Europe

U.S.-based Lockheed Martin and Elbit Systems Ltd, based in Israel, will jointly pursue helicopter modernization opportunities in Bulgaria as well as in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

Near term, the companies are teaming to pursue recently announced plans to upgrade Bulgaria's Mi-17 and Mi-24 helicopters to meet NATO standards. Bulgaria is planning to repair and modernize these aircraft by incorporating modern avionics and mission systems and extending the life of the helicopters. The Mi-24 helicopters' arms systems also will be upgraded.

"The agreement with Lockheed Martin creates a team with unparallel expertise and experience which will result in the most cost-effective proven solution for our customers" said Yoram Shmuely, corporate vice president and general manager of Elbit Systems' Airborne and Helmet Systems Division. "Our aim is to create strong relationships with Bulgarian defense industries to meet both domestic and export market requirements."

Lockheed Martin and Elbit Systems will perform the NATO compatibility and interoperability of the helicopter modernization contract, including NATO- restricted equipment.

"Our team offers low-risk, cost-effective solutions to meet NATO standards and interoperability requirements with proven products and systems for day, night and all-weather operations," said Scott Greene, acting general manager of Lockheed Martin's Aerospace Solutions in Owego, NY.

The two companies have extensive experience in the area of helicopter upgrades for customers worldwide. Lockheed Martin, a major systems integrator to NATO countries, recently integrated 44 anti-submarine Merlin helicopters for the British Royal Navy. Currently, it is integrating a common cockpit and other mission systems for the U.S. Navy's MH-60 helicopters. Elbit Systems has performed several major helicopter upgrades, of both western and eastern origin platforms, and its advanced avionics are currently operational onboard more than 4,000 helicopter platforms in the fleets of defense and civilian users worldwide.

The two companies intend to implement the modernization in cooperation with the original helicopter manufacturers and local industries.

Elbit Systems Ltd., based in Haifa, Israel, is engaged in a wide range of defense-related programs throughout the world. The company focuses on the upgrading of existing military platforms and developing new technologies for defense applications.

Headquartered in Bethesda, MD, Lockheed Martin employs about 130,000 people worldwide and is principally engaged in the research, design, development, manufacture and integration of advanced technology systems, products and services.

For additional information, visit our Web sites:

http://www.lockheedmartin.com/

http://www.elbit.co.il/

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