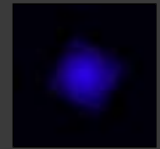


Spain Orders Taurus Missiles

October 19 2005 at 7:35 AM

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Spain Orders Taurus Missiles

Posted 19-Oct-2005 04:59



EADS reports that the Spanish SENER company, acting as the prime contractor for Spain's Taurus program, has contracted for 43 operational Taurus KEPD 350 medium-range precision attack cruise missiles, plus mission planning and support for weapons integration with Spain's EA-18A* Hornets and Eurofighter aircraft. The contract award was based on the decision taken by the Spanish Council of Ministers in June 2005.

Costs for this finalized deal were not mentioned - but DID can provide some guidance in this area, as well as insights into the Taurus missiles themselves, their key competitors on the international market, and the new export opportunities this contract may create for EADS/LFK.

While cost figures were not given for the Spanish contract, a target unit price of \$675,000 has been reported for Taurus; integration and related services would add additional costs, which would depend on the specific deal worked out between the parties. Given the importance of furthering KEPD 350 integration with additional platforms beyond Germany's Tornados IDS aircraft, however, Spain was in a good position to negotiate a favourable deal.

As LFK's Managing Director Werner Kaltenecker noted:

"Being the first export customer, Spain is of enormous strategic importance to us because through the integration of Taurus KEPD 350 onto the Spanish F-18s chances open up for us to export the system to further user nations such as Finland and Canada. Furthermore, Spain will thus become Germany's partner in the task of integrating Taurus KEPD 350 onto Eurofighter."

Sweden has already expressed interest in the Taurus system for its JAS-39

Gripen 4th generation fighters. Other countries operating the F/A-18 besides Canada and Finland include Australia, Kuwait, Malaysia, and Switzerland, and the USA's possible cancellation of the JASSM program would make the Taurus KEPD 350 their default option for medium-range precision attack.

The Eurofighter, meanwhile, has mostly been sold or strongly offered to countries that have already bought the competing MBDA Storm Shadow/Scalp EG missile: Britain, France, Italy, and Greece. Barring additional Eurofighter contracts from other countries, Austria's 18 Eurofighters would appear to be Taurus GmbH's only export opportunities on that front.

Within these fields of opportunity, the Taurus is a competitive product. Taurus' price tag is more expensive than Lockheed's troubled JASSM program may be, but significantly less expensive than MBDA's \$1+ million Storm Shadow/Scalp EG missile with increased stealth features. Germany withdrew from the program that spawned the Storm Shadow in 1996, and signed a contract in March 1998, with Dasa's LFK (now EADS/LFK) to develop the Taurus. Taurus Systems GmbH was then formed to manage the program, with Dasa/LFK owning 2/3 of the shares and Bofors Missiles (now Saab Bofors Dynamics AB) owning 1/3.

Taurus employs the standard western cruise missile suite of redundant navigation systems, including GPS/INS guidance plus terrain matching and target recognition using a camera-based system. eDefense reports that CEP accuracy achieved is about 10m without digital target recognition and on the order of only a few meters with IIR target identification.

Key differences between the Taurus and Storm Shadow reportedly include:

Slightly more low-level maneuverability on the Taurus.

Moderate stealth design features but no expensive, heavy, and R&D intensive radar-absorbing materials on the Taurus.

More space for fuel on the Taurus to extend effective range to around 350km, vs. 250km for the Storm Shadow.

Imaging-infrared (IIR) guidance only in the Taurus missile's terminal attack phase.

An EADS/TDW MEPHISTO (Multi-Effect Penetrator High Sophisticated and Target Optimized) tandem warhead rather than the Storm Shadow's BAE Systems BROACH (Bomb Royal Ordnance Augmenting CHarge) used on the Storm Shadow and AGM-154 JSOW-C, and tested on the Tomahawk CALCM.

Like the Storm Shadow, current versions of Taurus lack a datalink, which means targeting cannot be changed after launch. These may be included in future versions, and there have also been reports that genuine all-weather capability may also be provided by combining imaging-infrared and

millimeter-wave terminal guidance.

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