

16/04/1997

## Aerospace allies

THE MALAYSIAN aerospace industry is experiencing dramatic growth across the board in manufacturing and servicing. New airlines are taking to the skies, and the industry is acquiring new aerospace and other related technology.

Malaysia Airlines (MAS), the national carrier, recently purchased 15 Boeing 777s and 10 747-400 Jumbo jets. There are four other regional carriers as well. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad inaugurated MA Aerotechnologies in May last year signalling Malaysia's intent to enter the aerospace component manufacturing field as the first step towards complete aircraft production. After the successful launch of the Hughes-designed and -built MEASAT earlier this year, plans are underway for the development and launch of a Malaysian-built micro satellite in the future.

An area of growing importance for the country is aircraft maintenance. This offers the opportunity to establish an expanded regional maintenance facility to serve the national carrier, and to attract business from the growing number of airlines operating in the region. There is a capability for depot level servicing of C-130 aircraft as well as for heavy engine repair and refurbishment. Malaysia Airlines has recently opened an academy and has signed a memorandum of understanding with Aerospace Training Canada International in the fields of aviation training and the transfer of aerospace technology.

Perhaps the most ambitious project undertaken to date by the Malaysian government is the mammoth development of the new Kuala Lumpur International Airport. The airport is intended to be the transportation hub of the region, and is considered a vital infrastructure development to propel Malaysia into developed nation status by the year 2020.

The process of building the international credibility of Malaysia's aerospace industry can be facilitated by taking advantage of collaborations between Malaysian firms and export oriented companies and schools. Bell Helicopter Textron Canada and the Canadian High Commission sponsored a composite material technology symposium in Kuala Lumpur in May last year, with participation by Concordia University and FRE Composites to demonstrate the types of technology that might be transferred through a developing partnership between the two countries.

Other Canadian companies currently active in Malaysia include CAE Electronics, Oerlikon Aerospace, Canac/Microtel and Bombardier. The Malaysian Maritime Patrol aircraft programme continues to attract Canadian interest, and the Bombardier CL 415 remains a strong contender for one of the platform types for the surveillance aircraft.

Canadian firms wanting to market aerospace and defence products into Malaysia and the Pacific Rim region, must consider direct participation in the Langkawi International Maritime & Aerospace (LIMA) Exhibition '97. This showcase is Malaysia's premier airshow. Increased involvement by a wider spectrum of Canadian companies will be actively promoted by LIMA '97.

To a nation that looks upon the aerospace sector as the next engine of growth along the path toward Vision 2020, technology transfer and training will be the watchwords for success for aspiring commercial ventures.

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