



## Brendan P. Rivers

- [Canadian Forces Acquiring UAVs](#)
- [ATFLIR Successfully Completes OPEVAL](#)
- [US Backs Resumption of Colombian Shoot-Down Policy](#)
- [Supplier Selected for FCS Unmanned Aerial System](#)
- [Rights to Naval USV Purchased](#)
- [Briefs](#)
- [Washington Report: Administration Seeks Compromise on "Buy American" Legislation](#)
- [Washington Report: M&S Awards Announced](#)

### Canadian Forces Acquiring UAVs

Canada's Department of National Defence announced August 7 that it would pay \$33.8 million to acquire four unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for use starting in October by Canadian forces in Afghanistan. Under the deal, Sagem (Paris, France), a French sub-contractor to Oerlikon Contraves (Saint-Jean-Sur-Richelieu, Quebec, Canada), will provide one system composed of four UAVs, two control stations, training, and support, with the option for Canada to acquire more at a later date.



Norbert Cyr, Oerlikon Contraves' director of corporate communications, said the UAVs able to fly as high as 20,000 feet at speeds of up to 80 knots, can remain in the air for to 12 hours, and offer a datalink range of 200 km. The aircraft's "orientable line-of-site payload," as Sagem calls it, consists of the Iris infrared sensor, plus a daytime camera. The control stations can potentially be used to operate more than one UAV at a time, but this capability probably will not be implemented with the system supplied to Canada, Cyr said.

Canadian forces were expected to begin using the UAVs in October as part of Operation Athena, which is Canada's contribution to the United Nations-authorized mission in Kabul, Afghanistan. Based on Sagem's Sperwer UAV the Canadian UAVs will be used to help the International Security Assistance Force conduct real-time aerial monitoring of operations near Kabul. Operation Athena began in August and was expected to run for 12 months with about 1,900 personnel to be deployed in each of two planned six-month stints.

Defence Minister John McCallum said that the UAVs should help make operations for troops in Afghanistan less risky, plus they will fulfill a commitment Canada made to NATO to obtain UAV capability by 2004. - **Ted McKenna**

## **ATFLIR Successfully Completes OPEVAL**

On September 5, the Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) announced that the ANASQ-228 Advanced Targeting Forward Looking Infrared (ATFLIR) pod had successfully completed its operational evaluation (OPEVAL), with fleet testers calling it "operationally effective and operationally suitable" and recommending the ATFLIR's introduction into the Navy's fleet of F/A-18 Hornets and Super Hornets (one of which is shown here). The OPEVAL tested the ATFLIR pod in a variety of tactical scenarios representing the operational environment. The majority of the testing focused on aspects such as reliability, maintainability, interoperability, and training. According to NAVAIR, all critical operation issues received the highest possible grade.



Following its successful completion of OPEVAL, the next step for the ATFLIR program is decision to enter into full-rate production, which, at press time, was scheduled for late September.

In related news, the Navy, on September 4, awarded Boeing a \$49.5-million contract for low-rate, initial production of the Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar for F/A-18E/F Super Hornet and E/A-18G electronic-attack aircraft. The contract calls for production of eight of the AN/APG-79 AESA radar systems. Production was expected to begin this month, with delivery of the first radar slated for early 2005.

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## **US Backs Resumption of Colombian Shoot-Down Policy**

On August 19, during a visit to Colombia, US Secretary of Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, said that the US supports the resumption in Colombia of a policy that allows Colombian fighter pilots to shoot down planes suspected of trafficking drugs. The policy was put on hold in Colombia and Peru (which had a similar policy, also backed by the US) after a Peruvian fighter shot down a private plane carrying US missionaries in 2001. A White House statement said that, since that incident, Colombia had "put in place appropriate procedures to protect against loss of innocent life."



Colombian drug trafficking has been linked to paramilitary groups on both sides of the political spectrum - the leftist Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and Ejercito de Liberación Nacional (ELN, the National Liberation Army) and the right-wing Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC, United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia), all three of which are designated as terrorist organizations by the US State Department.

Just as before, the US role in Colombian drug interdictions will consist of helping the South American country identify suspect planes. Coordinates from US and Colombian radar stations will be relayed to Colombian surveillance planes, which might then direct Fuer. Aerea Colombiana (FAC) jets to intercept. This time around, though, the US role in the interdictions will be run by the State Department, rather than the CIA. The surveillance planes will have at least one bilingual observer, most likely from the US, to communicate with radar operators and FAC commanders. Orders to shoot down a suspect aircraft now will come only from the commander of the FAC.

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## **Supplier Selected for FCS Unmanned Aerial System**

In early September, Northrop Grumman Integrated Systems (San Diego, CA) was chosen by the lead system integrators for the US Army's Future Combat System (FCS) program, Boeing and Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC), to develop and produce the FCS program's Class IV unmanned aerial system (UAS).



The Class IV UAS will be part of the FCS's tactical intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance, and targeting architecture, providing real-time imagery at the brigade level. It will be based on the Fire Scout VTUAV (shown here), currently being evaluated by the US Navy. The system has been in development and low-rate, initial production since 2000. The Fire Scout has successfully flown more than 75 test flights since May 2002, demonstrating its ability to take off, fly, navigate, and land autonomously, as well as collect imagery from its onboard sensor payload. Additional flight tests are planned for later this year to demonstrate other sensors and weapons targeting.

Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems (Baltimore, MD) sector has been selected to serve as the aerial-sensor integrator for the FCS program and will have responsibility for integrating the surveillance, reconnaissance, and target-acquisition systems on the UA

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### Rights to Naval USV Purchased

The watercraft that forms the basis for a current US Navy **← SPARTAN** unmanned surface vehicle (USV) trial will be acquired by Radix Marine (Silverdale, WA), the company announced on August 7. Radix said it paid Team One \$750,000 for the intellectual-property rights to the GB Challenger Class Craft, which it will own outright following a five-year capital lease.



The lifeboat found on many naval ships, the GB Challenger ranges in size from 7-16 m and is powered by twin 660-HP Caterpillar diesel engines that drive jet-propulsion units. International Maritime Platforms International, a Radix subsidiary, was previously selected to help adapt the watercraft for use in the US Navy **SPARTAN →** Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration (ACTD) of USVs.

In a paper describing the six-year, \$53-million **← Spartan →** ACTD, which should be completed between 2006 and 2007, the US Navy said USVs can help provide surveillance of battlespace activities both above and below the surface of the water, including scout out and even interdicting potential threats like small boats, as well as searching for mines. Gary Steigerwald, a spokesman for the Naval Undersea Warfare Center (Newport, RI), said that maybe four USVs will have been developed by the end of the demonstration.

As conceived by under the **← SPARTAN →** ACTD, which is also being sponsored by the US Army and the Republic of Singapore, the USVs are rigid-hull inflatable boats that are equipped with radar; video and infrared cameras; a navigation system; and tactical common datalink systems that ships, helicopters, ground stations, unmanned aerial vehicles, or other USVs would use to control the USV. Raytheon and Northrop Grumman are handling the integration of off-the-shelf technology that will allow the **← SPARTAN** vehicles to perform functions such as explosive detection, bottom-submarine detection and ocean-bottom mapping. - **Ted McKenna**

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