

Basildon, 10 April 2013

Selex ES selected to provide “see through the hull” VigilX system in Australia

Selex ES, a Finmeccanica company, has had its VigilX enhanced vision system formally selected by the Australian Defence Science & Technology Organisation (DSTO) as part of a contract for evaluation of an integrated solution for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) for operation of helicopters in Degraded Visual Environments (DVE). The contract, which will be primed by Rheinmetall Simulation Australia Pty Ltd, is a consequence of a grant awarded under the DSTO Capability and Technology Demonstrator programme with a view to trialling and potentially acquiring the system for the ADF’s Army and Navy’s helicopter fleets.

VigilX brings together feeds from multiple cameras situated around an aircraft to create a single integrated panoramic image that is displayed on the crew’s helmet-mounted displays. It provides the aircrew with an all-direction view of the outside environment, allowing them to ‘see through the hull’ of the aircraft. The system improves flight safety and, via a combination of camera types supplemented by 3D conformal symbology, allows platforms to operate at any time 24/7, even in degraded visual environments caused by darkness, sand, dust, heavy rain and sea spray.

This kind of capability will greatly improve the situational awareness of crews and in turn their ability to carry out missions successfully. As Major Ryan Maher of the Australian Department of Defence’s Capability Development Group says, “The Australian Defence Force sees the development of Degraded Visual Environment capabilities as being crucial to increasing aircrew safety and survivability in the hazardous missions carried out by the military. Additionally, this technology will provide aircrew with a distinct tactical advantage on the battlefield”.

The contract builds on previous successful trials in the US with the Army’s Black Hawk helicopter and with the UK Armed Forces on the Lynx helicopter. It paves the way for potential use in the ADF’s helicopter fleets with the VigilX being suitable for the Tiger, Chinook and MRH90 helicopters operated by the Australian Army as well as the MRH90s and MH-60Rs flown by the Australian Navy.

Notes to editors

In this programme Selex ES will be integrating the Hellas LADAR product into the VigilX system via a subcontract placed on CASSIDIAN. VigilX utilizes a combination of infrared (IR), low light (LL) and visible band (TV) cameras to allow optimum performance under all flying conditions. The system supports simultaneous and independent interrogation of the outside environment by multiple crew members. The ultra-low latency of VigilX allows it to operate with modern helmet-mounted display (HMD) systems, in addition to head-up displays (HUD) and cockpit multi-functional displays (MFDs).