



SIKORSKY PLAYS UP IMPORTANCE OF ASIA-PACIFIC

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Sikorsky plans to place a greater emphasis on the **Asia-Pacific market**, where it sees opportunities for both its military and civilian ranges.

“The company recognises the importance of Asia, which is clearly a cornerstone as we rebalance from being a very US-centric company to looking at the international opportunities,” says the company’s regional director for Asia, Christophe Nurit.

“We really want to do more things to step up our presence here in Asia.”

Nurit made the comments at a press briefing in Singapore. The briefing was its first major media engagement in the region following Lockheed Martin’s recent acquisition of the helicopter manufacturer from United Technologies.

Nurit says the UH-60 Black Hawk and variants have proven to be very popular in the region. Nurit adds that the company is still in discussions with Indonesia for a long-mooted Blackhawk buy.

“The Indonesian army is still interested in Black Hawk,” he says. “We’ve had some good discussions with them and really enjoyed the ability to engage with them. There have been budget challenges in Indonesia, and this perhaps has driven the decision to delay the acquisition. The Black Hawk is the right aircraft for Indonesia. It’s not just the capability, but also the opportunity to

train alongside a very large fleet of Black Hawks globally.”

Sikorsky has had “some discussions” with Indonesian Aerospace (PTDI) about the potential for local production work.

Sikorsky is also likely interested in Singapore’s plans to replace its fleet of 32 Airbus Helicopters AS332/532 Super Puma/Cougar rotorcraft, although the company did not mention this requirement during the briefing. At the Sikorsky stand at the Imdex Asia 2015 naval show in Singapore, it displayed a model of its S-92 helicopter equipped for combat search and rescue (CSAR).

Nurit adds that although there has been definite softness in demand for large helicopters serving the oil and gas industry in the region owing to the collapse in energy prices. Sikorsky expects an eventual rebound, although growth rates may not be as healthy as in the past. Nonetheless, this should help demand for the S-92.

The company also sees more potential for its S-76 in the region, particularly in VIP and SAR roles.

Sikorsky will also expand its support footprint, with a new support centre somewhere in Southeast Asia. In March, it appointed Malaysia’s Mycopter Aviation Services to become Southeast Asia’s first authorised service centre for the S-76.

“We’re looking at opening additional centres to support our customers,” says Nurit. “We’re also looking at putting more parts on consignment into the region, and beefing up the infrastructure we have in Australia.”

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