

The Action Plan

Services of the High Commission. Close attention is and will continue to be paid to current and future procurement plans in this sector, and Canadian producers with relevant capabilities known to the High Commission will continue to be alerted to specific opportunities in bidding with the Ministry of Defence.

The High Commission will build up its expertise in procurement in the aerospace sector to the level existing in the defence sector. The High Commission will continue to assist Canadian firms in identifying potential partners and will provide introductions both to British companies and to the offices of the MoD and its research facilities. The High Commission will continue to coordinate general information on the major players in the British market with respect to their product range, financial position, and technological expertise.

Market Access. The primary market access irritant is the U.K. policy of industrial participation, or offsets. Given that the implications of this policy are not fixed in practice, we will continue to dialogue with the MoD on its application, in order to ensure that it is mitigated wherever possible. Canadian suppliers facing offset undertakings will be provided with advice based on our ongoing experience.

A second market access concern is the issue of certification. In order to simplify the task of Canadian suppliers wishing to certify their equipment to European standards, we propose to collect sources of detailed information on this topic as well as references to organizations able to provide practical advice and assistance.

Market Promotion. Success in supplying the U.K. aerospace and defence sectors requires a long-term effort in terms of establishing a name for one's company and product, and establishing the necessary relationships with U.K. prime contractors and the offices of the Ministry of Defence. A key method for carrying this out remains the sector-specific trade shows that take place in Britain. Most of these are not large events, but they are very select in terms of the audience they attract, both from the U.K. and from abroad, resulting in high-quality contacts.

Information and assistance will continue to be available with respect to some of the key trade shows for the aerospace and defence sectors. The central trade show is "Farnborough International," which takes place bi-annually in September of even-numbered years, and alternates with the Paris Air Show as the major international marketing event for the civil and military aerospace sectors. For the helicopter community, "Helitech" takes place bi-annually in September of odd-numbered years, which is the same timing as "IMDEX" for the naval defence sector. For the army, finally, "Battlefield Systems International" is held bi-annually in June of even-numbered years.

The High Commission will coordinate Canadian participation in the International Maritime Defence Exhibition (IMDEX) and in Helitech, both of which are scheduled for the fall of 1997. The High Commission will also work jointly with the American Embassy in London to promote Airshow Canada as North America's premier aerospace event, and will aim to have a number of British exhibitors at Abbotsford.

Linking the status of the High Commission to the image of a company can be very useful in opening doors in the defence industry. The High Commission will again host a series of seminars in its public facilities and cooperate in inviting carefully chosen contacts to these occasions.

Within the High Commission is the Canadian Defence Liaison Staff (CDLS). The service advisors are often highly knowledgeable about specific MoD equipment programs under development. As well, their objective comment on Canadian equipment used by the Canadian Forces has been of invaluable assistance to many exporters.

Finally, the specific efforts of Canadian companies to make their mark in the British market will be supplemented by an intensified effort on the part of the High Commission to provide general information on Canadian capabilities to the MoD, its research facilities, and the major U.K. companies active in the aerospace and defence sectors.

