

The Tribune, 2 March 2006

Lockheed-Martin offers new P3C Orions to Navy

New Delhi, March 1: US Aviation major Lockheed-Martin said on Saturday that it was offering the Indian Navy its upgraded spy plane P3C Orions with new wings and tail and was in frontline contention for the Navy's International tenders for eight maritime reconnaissance aircraft. Richard G. Kirkland, Vice-President, Maritime Surveillance Enterprises of Lockheed-Martin, told newsmen here, "We are in hot contention with our new P3C Orions, which have completely been refurbished with new wing-spans and tails to serve almost a life time of 20 years'. 'We are offering the Navy the choice of sensors and equipment to be placed onboard and the configuration it wants either for long-range maritime reconnaissance or anti- submarine mode', he said. The earlier US Government offer of leasing four P3C Orion spy planes had not gone through due to prohibitive support-costs, the Lockheed-Martin official said, adding that the company was sure it would be "extremely competitive" in the Navy's Request for Proposals (RFP) already floated. He, however, added that his company would be able deliver the planes in a short period.

BBC News, 21 March 2006

India defends submarine purchase

BBC News, March 21, 2006 India defends submarine purchase The Indian government has rejected opposition allegations of corruption in a \$2bn submarine deal with France. Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee told parliament there was "no irregularity" in the contract to buy six Scorpene submarines from two French firms. The deal was part of an agreement finalised during Indian PM Manmohan Singh's visit to France last September. The NDA has described the Scorpene deal as India's biggest defence scandal and has called for the contract to be scrapped. Defence Minister Mr Mukherjee strongly defended the deal, saying the Indian and French governments had for the first time signed integrity pacts to ensure complete transparency in defence deals. He said the agreement provided for safeguards, including cancelling the contract and stiff penalties if any party breached the contract terms.

The Times of India, 24 March 2006

Scorpene noise leaves Navy worried

The Times of India, March 24, 2006 Scorpene noise leaves Navy worried NEW DELHI: The brouhaha over the Scorpene submarine deal has the Navy running scared. It's keeping its fingers crossed that the already much-delayed project is not torpedoed since its ageing submarine fleet will be drastically depleted by the next decade. Naval HQ projections show India will be left with only nine out of its present fleet of 16 diesel-electric submarines (10 Russian Kilo-class, four German HDW and two Foxtrot) by 2012. The number will go down to five by 2014. This is a big worry since submarines, whether diesel-electric or nuclear-powered, are considered to be the most effective platform for second-strike capabilities. This is especially relevant for India, which has a declared "no first-use" policy for nuclear weapons. Moreover, both China and Pakistan are progressively building up their underwater arms.

The Hindu, 26 March 2006

Indian, French navies plan exercises from Monday

The Hindu, March 27, 2006 Indian, French navies plan exercises from Monday NEW DELHI: India and France will step up military interaction by fielding their aircraft carriers together for the first time in exercises off the west coast scheduled to begin on Monday. Some other 'firsts' of the exercises, besides the coordinated operation of INS Viraat and Charles de Gaulle, include firing on aerial targets, cross-deck operations by the Indian Navy's Sea Harrier aircraft from the deck of the Charles de Gaulle, and, participation by the Indian Air Force. The 'Varuna' series of exercises between the navies began in 2001 and has grown in scope and complexity over the years. Five Indian Navy surface combatants, one submarine, and different types of shore-based fixed-wing and rotary-wing aircraft will participate in the exercises. The Navy will field the guided-missile destroyer, Mumbai; the guided-missile frigates, Gomati and Betwa; the fleet-replenishment tanker, Aditya, and the submarine Shankul. The Indian Air Force will fly its Anglo-French origin Jaguar and Canberra aircraft. The French task force comprises the nuclear-propelled aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle (with its own air group), two guided missile

destroyers, a fleet replenishment tanker Somme, the nuclear-powered submarine Saphir, and, maritime patrol aircraft that will operate from Goa. In conformity with modern practice, the French task force has one Royal Navy frigate, HMS Lancaster, embedded within it. One of the major thrust areas will be 'DACT' (Dissimilar Air Combat) between the Sea Harrier aircraft taking off from the Viraat, and, the Rafale and Super Etendards of the Charles de Gaulle. Other aspects include fleet air defence, intermediate and advanced anti-submarine warfare), maritime interdiction operations), visit, board, search and seizure procedures and tactical manoeuvres.