

Global defence brands eyeing fresh alliances with Brunei

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AT LEAST four big names in the global defence and security industry are eyeing Brunei for collaboration and partnership opportunities to help enhance local capabilities and expertise in defence and security.

These are Raytheon International Inc, a global provider of airborne identification, friend or foe (IFF) systems, ST Engineering, a group with capabilities ranging from aerospace to land systems, Harris Corporation and Thales.

US-based Raytheon, which has provided Brunei with IFF systems, is looking forward to teaming agreements with the sultanate, according to Raymond B Corrigan, country manager for Singapore and Brunei.

The airborne IFF system enables military and national interrogation systems to distinguish friendly aircraft, vehicles, or forces, and to determine their bearing and range from the interrogator.

"We are looking towards the future for teaming agreements, with local Bruneian companies, also looking at industrial corporations where the local companies can (provide) value added services to the work we will do in Brunei," he said in an interview with The Brunei Times. Potential areas currently in discussion include providing repair facilities, training and logistics support.

The country manager added that Raytheon's products and services are not limited to the defence ministry. Being also a leader in homeland security, Raytheon can have a role in the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Prime Minister's office in their security roles, he said.

ST Engineering, a company based in Singapore, hopes to develop its relationship with Brunei further by building on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed at the Singapore Airshow last week.

"We look at Brunei as a customer with strong relevance," said Patrick Choy, executive vice president of international marketing at ST Engineering. "When you look at both countries, in size and population ... we are all going through the 'growing up' (phase) through the value chain and with what we have gone through in the past 40 years we can cut short the learning curve and help Brunei grow," he added.

The new MoU between ST Kinetics, a company of ST Engineering, and Royal Brunei Technical Services allows both parties to work together in vehicle maintenance excellence, with RBTS tapping into ST Kinetics expertise.

Last year, ST Kinetics secured between \$40 million and \$50 million in sales of Ultimax light machine-guns.

ST Engineering is a global, integrated engineering group with capabilities spanning the aerospace, electronics, marine, and land systems sectors.

An old partner of Brunei's defence and security industry is Harris Corporation which has been in Brunei for over 20 years. It recently won a \$25-million contract to provide tactical communications to the Royal Brunei Armed Forces.

"We want to look at other parts of work in the Brunei forces, such as in areas of Command, Control, Communications, Computing and Intelligence (C4I) systems and helping them in the joint operations centre ... we see that we will be working in partnership with Brunei now, for at least 15 to 20 years," said Alan P Callaghan, managing director of the Asia Pacific branch of Harris Corporation.

The Thales Group, a world leader in mission-critical information systems for the aerospace, defence and security markets, is not new to Brunei's defence industry either.

"We have no set plans, but we are trying to see collaboration in areas of unmanned air vehicles systems. It is important that we do not just provide solutions in Brunei, but we have to make sure there is expertise in the country where they maintain its capability. There is no success story yet ... but we are moving towards it," said Bruce Wright, head of export sales and marketing of Thales' Aerospace Division.

Source: The Brunei Times