

Written evidence submitted by CTA International

Introduction

CTA International (CTAI) is a 50:50 joint venture company between BAE Systems plc and Nexter Systems. CTAI was formed in 1994, and was set up to design, develop and manufacture the Cased Telescoped Armament System (CTAS). This highly innovative and capable system has demonstrated its higher performance when compared to other medium calibre systems. CTAI is based in Bourges in Central France, and directly employs a skilled workforce of nearly 100 drawn from capabilities within both BAE Systems and Nexter as well as working with many more individuals and groups across the supply chain. In addition to the supply of the CTAS, we are proud to support both the UK and French forces with training and in-service support of their systems.

Context

In 2008, the jointly developed 40CT weapon and ammunition were mandated for the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) for use on the Ajax and Warrior Capability Sustainment Programme (CSP) vehicles. At the same time the French Direction General de l'Armement (DGA) mandated the integration of the complete CTAS, including weapon and ammunition, onto the Jaguar vehicle.

In 2015, the MoD ordered 515 40CT weapons, and the first cannon was delivered in February 2016. All of the 477 weapons delivered to-date have been provided ahead of schedule and in line with the build standard specification agreed at contract signature in 2015. CTA International's customer for the provision of weapons and spare parts is the UK MoD. The design build standard of the weapon has only had minor changes since contract signature in 2015.

CTA International is submitting this written evidence to the House of Commons Defence Select Committee in order to provide the Committee with appropriate context and understanding of our role in delivering the weapons systems for Ajax ahead of the one-off evidence session on Tuesday 20th July 2021.

The scope of supply from CTA International to the UK Ministry of Defence was limited to the gun, and did not include the accompanying electronic control unit or ammunition handling system as supplied to the French DGA for Jaguar. The CTAI weapon used in the Ajax programme is supplied as Government Furnished Equipment to vehicle Prime.

CTA International's role in Ajax programme

CTA International has ensured that all entry-into-service spares and tooling for all 515 cannons have been delivered, with a small quantity of remaining spare barrels and breech assemblies due to be delivered ahead of schedule in Q1 2022. The total quantity of spare parts delivered to-date is circa 2,500 items, with all items accepted by the UK MoD. In anticipation of any unforeseen circumstances that may lead to shortages and to ensure a robust supply chain, all major components have been double-sourced at CTA International's expense. In addition, any issues identified during the production phase are addressed and mitigated as they arise.

The success of CTA International's production contract performance has been recognised by the UK MoD customer and described as "an exceptional effort".

Background to weapon capability

The CT40 weapon delivers an armour piercing capability that can overmatch any other medium calibre weapon, defeating 140mm of rolled homogenous armour (RHA) at 1,500m.

The design of the CT40 is centred around a stabilised turret and, unlike other medium calibre weapons, is compatible with the type of advanced fire control system typically found on Main Battle Tanks; this design also increases accuracy when firing on the move.

The CT40 weapon also provides greater value for money in certain situations. For example, four 30mm rounds would need to be fired in order to achieve the effect of one CT40 High Explosive round; and no amount of 30mm rounds would achieve the effect of the CT40 armour piercing munition. In addition, the user is able to seamlessly and instantly switch between munition natures, thanks to the innovative and intelligent ammunition handling system, meaning multiple natures of link-less cased telescoped ammunition can be loaded ahead of use.

The current suite of CT40 munitions includes four natures, with further rounds in development, including counter-drone (e.g. loitering munition).

The CT40 weapon is a modern, sealed unit, requiring lubrication only every 500 rounds fired and inspection once per year. Conventional medium calibre systems require a far more intensive maintenance regime.

The CT40 weapon has been successfully integrated into the Jaguar vehicle for French and Belgian forces and has recently been selected by the French Navy for their equivalent of the Royal Navy's Fleet Solid Support programme.

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