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Alenia Aeronautica, a Finmeccanica company, announced today that it is evaluating the feasibility of an aircraft for the Italian Air Force to support National Special Forces Operations.

The Italian Defence has decided to launch the so called Pretorian Programme, as a special version of the C-27J, in order to analyse potential technical solutions for providing weapons and integrated weapon systems, Communications Intelligence (COMINT), EO/IR Sensor (Electro optical/Infra-red) to the C-27J Aircraft, as existing platform.

“The ‘Pretorian’ Programme has all the potentialities to attract the interest on the main world markets” – Giuseppe Giordo, Alenia Aeronautica’s CEO and Responsible for Finmeccanica’s Aeronautics Sector, said.

Mr. Giordo then added that “to produce the special version of the C-27J, Alenia Aeronautica will seek international Partners and explore all the business opportunities that may arise”.

The C-27J Spartan is the best seller in the tactical transport airlifter’s category. The C-27J is a twin-engine turboprop aircraft with state-of-the-art technology in avionics, propulsion and other on-board systems. It provides high performances, high cost effectiveness, extreme operating flexibility and best performances among other aircraft of its class in all weather conditions and offers interoperability with heavier airlifters.

The C-27J is capable of taking off from and landing on unprepared strips, less-than-500 m. long, with maximum take-off weight of 30,500 kg; it may carry up to 60 equipped soldiers or up to 46 paratroopers and, in the air ambulance version, 36 stretchers and 6 medical assistants.

The large cross section (2.60 meters high, 3.33 metres wide) and high floor strength (4,900 kg/m load capability) allow heavy and large complete military equipment to be loaded. The C-27J can, for example, transport fighter and transport aircraft engines, such as C-130, Eurofighter Typhoon, F-16 and Mirage 2000, directly on their normal engine dollies without further special equipment.

The C-27J has been ordered by the air forces of Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, Morocco and by the U.S. Air Force for a total of 79 airplanes. The aircraft has also been selected by Slovakia.