US Army Focusing on Air-Launched Expendables Vehicle Designs

The US Army's Combat Capabilities Development Command (CCDC) is seeking proposals from companies to conduct configurations, trades and analyses (CTA) for its nascent Air-Launched Effect (ALE) Science and Technology (S&T) program. Under the ALE concept, the Army wants to develop a family of small, attritable unmanned air systems that can be deployed by manned helicopter, such as the Future Airborne Reconnaissance Aircraft (FARA). The ALE platforms will fly out ahead of the manned aircraft, provide ISR information to the FARA via datalinks and engage targets with kinetic and non-kinetic weapons. The FARA and ALE will work together in a manned-unmanned teaming paradigm.

As described in the solicitation, "The synergistic effect of the ecosystem enables the penetration and dis-integration of an adversary's Anti-Access Area Denial (A2AD) environment, which is comprised of an Integrated Air Defense System (IADS), Integrated Fires Complex (IFC), and electronic warfare (EW) systems. ALE must be able to detect, identify, locate, report (DILR), and deliver lethal and non-lethal effects against threats across multiple scenarios and domains in a constantly changing Operational Environment (OE). ALE will provide RSTA and organic extension/standoff to the FARA ecosystem, using supporting Long Range Precision Fires (LRPF) to deliver effects against peer threat IADS, IFC, and electronic warfare (EW) systems."

The CCDC's Aviation and Missile Center (AvMC), Technology Development Directorate – Aviation (TDD-A) is soliciting the proposals for the ALE CTA effort. According to the solicitation, the focus of the CTA work is to identify key ALE

aircraft design trades, including dash airspeed, stowed volume, and propulsion type. A separate series of trade analyses is looking at ALE payload types.

The solicitation number is W911W6-21-R-0014, and proposals are due by September 13. This is a small-business set aside effort. The contracting point of contact is Brian Cosgriff, +1 (757) 878-2306, e-mail brian.m.cosgriff.civ@mail.mil. — *J. Knowles*