



The Complete Facts on the A-29 Super Tucano and the LAS Contract

On February 27, 2013, the U.S. Air Force awarded the contract for its Light Air Support (LAS) program to Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC) to supply 20 Embraer A-29 Super Tucano aircraft, as well as ground-based training devices, pilot and maintenance training, and logistical support. The LAS program will support the development of an indigenous air force in Afghanistan. As such, it is a vital element of U.S. Afghan strategy and is key to the United States' successful withdrawal from the region. Here are some important facts about the competition and the aircraft that competed for the contract.

The LAS Competition

The two main contenders for the LAS contract were Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC), which teamed with Embraer Defense and Security (Embraer) to provide the A-29 Super Tucano light attack aircraft, and Beechcraft Corporation (formerly Hawker Beechcraft Company), which offered the AT-6, a prototype aircraft based on its T-6 Trainer.

This is the second time the Air Force conducted this competition. In late December 2011, the Air Force awarded the LAS contract to SNC having earlier disqualified Beechcraft for failure to adequately correct deficiencies in its proposal and because its plane was found technically deficient and presented "unacceptable mission capability risk." However, as a result of a lawsuit filed by Beechcraft and a subsequent internal Air Force investigation, the contract was set aside and in the spring of 2012 the Air Force reopened the competition and issued a revised Request for Proposal.

SNC and the A-29 Super Tucano are the Logical Choice for the LAS Mission

SNC offered the low-risk, fully-developed solution the Air Force sought for Afghanistan, where time is short and the need is urgent.

Unlike the AT-6, the A-29's operational capabilities are fully known and demonstrated. The aircraft is in-service with nine air forces around the world, performing light air support, training and security missions on a daily basis. All developmental and production issues already have been worked out, greatly reducing the risk of production and delivery delays. The performance records of prime contractor SNC and partner Embraer are equally strong and proven. In contrast, in the year since the Air Force originally selected SNC for its LAS mission, Beechcraft went through bankruptcy reorganization.

Job Creation

In all, this LAS contract will support more than 1,400 American jobs, reflecting both the large U.S. supplier base – more than 100 companies – that will be involved in providing parts and services for the LAS contract and new jobs being created by SNC and Embraer. The A-29 Super Tucano for the LAS contract is being built in Jacksonville, Fla. In March, Embraer cut the ribbon on a new production facility

there, creating new high-tech jobs and adding to the 1,200 people Embraer currently employs in the United States. New jobs at SNC will add to its U.S. workforce of 2,500 people.

Whether awarded to SNC or Beechcraft, the LAS contract will support roughly the same number of jobs. Only SNC and Embraer are creating new jobs in the United States.

No new jobs will be created in Brazil as a result of the LAS contract.

It is also important to point out that the AT-6 is not currently in production and does not presently support any U.S. manufacturing jobs at Beechcraft or at supplier companies. Claims of jobs lost simply aren't true.

American Made

The A-29 Super Tucano for the LAS contract will be built in Jacksonville, Fla., at a new production facility. Embraer is investing millions of dollars in upgrading and bringing the facility on-line.

Embraer's Super Tucano aircraft is substantially sourced from U.S. parts – the version for the LAS contract and the hundreds of others in use around the world. Indeed, each year, Embraer purchases more than \$2 billion in American-made components across all of its aircraft programs from U.S. suppliers, supporting some 7,000 U.S. jobs. That's twice as many people as Beechcraft employs in Kansas and more than the company's total employment worldwide.

Purchasing from Beechcraft would not mean a 100 percent U.S.-made aircraft, as parts for that aircraft come from non-U.S. companies as well. Additionally, Beechcraft in recent years has closed U.S. facilities and moved certain fabrication and production operations to Mexico. This shift has reduced its U.S. workforce and local investment.

Embraer has had operations in the United States for 30 years, and in the past three years, the company has opened a production facility and customer center for its Executive Jet Division and broken ground on a major new engineering and design facility – each bringing outside investment and jobs to the United States and the state of Florida.

Combat Proven

In the year since the Air Force first selected the A-29 Super Tucano for its LAS program, the A-29 has gone into service with three more militaries around the world. Today, militaries in nine countries – Angola, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Indonesia and Mauritania – rely on the A-29 Super Tucano for their light air support, training and security missions. The aircraft is on order with Guatemala and Senegal. In contrast, the Beechcraft AT-6 still is not in production and has not been tested in real operational missions.

The popularity of the A-29 Super Tucano is due to its capabilities and track record in difficult environments, as well as its low cost of operation and ownership (84 percent fleet availability; 99 percent fleet mission effectiveness). In the Latin American countries that were first to adopt the aircraft, political leaders credit it with helping to topple illegal organizations and control a variety of other threats.

The more than 170 A-29 Super Tucanos currently in service have logged over 180,000 flight hours, including 28,000 combat hours.

State of the Art Technology

The A-29 Super Tucano employs state-of-the-art technology, including advanced electronic, electro-optic, infrared and laser system technologies, as well as secure radio systems with data links and unrivalled munitions capacity. The A-29 Super Tucano has the open design architecture required to keep pace with next generation avionics, communications and weapons systems. The AT-6 is at the end of its growth curve.

Enhanced Weapons Integration

The A-29 Super Tucano is certified for more than 130 external weapons configurations and has the highest munitions load in its class (1,550 Kg/3,417 lb). Embraer, manufacturer of the A-29 Super Tucano, recently entered into an agreement with Boeing to provide weapons integration for the Super Tucano, further enhancing its capabilities and ensuring its ability to meet the future needs of its customers. Beechcraft in 2012 continued the process of testing and certifying the munitions capability of the AT-6.