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Strategic Issues

NATO outsources additional airlift for Afghanistan

NATO has awarded a contract to Mesopotamia Group LLC for additional airlift for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

Joint Forces Command Brunssum, the mission's operational command, announced the contract, which is worth more than EUR26 million (USD37 million), on 20 December.

Under the contract, which was awarded on 13th December, Mesopotamia Group will undertake to airlift an average of 13,000 kg of cargo a day starting no later than 1 February using a mixture of fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft.

The company already operates a fleet of four Mi-8 MTV helicopters with five crews in Afghanistan through another company, Jingle Air Helicopter Cargo Services.

Jingle Air has provided tactical airlift in support of the US Army's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, which was deployed to eastern Afghanistan at the beginning of 2007.

The outsourced aircraft will not be involved in combat missions. NATO officers say outsourcing air transport frees scarce military airlift for security missions.

Source: Jane's Defence Weekly