

# MIDEAST REGIONAL MARKET

# BILL IRBY & JONATHAN DALRYMPLE



**Bill Irby, Senior Vice President and General Manager of Unmanned Systems, and Jonathan Dalrymple, Vice President Business Development of Marine & Land Systems, discuss the Mideast regional market.**

**Q: What are some of the political and economic forces driving sales of aerospace and defense products in the Mideast region?**

**Irby:** Countries including the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations continue to be focused on regional stabilization. With many nations actively involved in counterinsurgency conflicts, they and neighboring countries are prioritizing border security as well.

**Dalrymple:** Falling oil prices in the past several years have lengthened new procurement and modernization program cycles, but we see reemerging interest and emphasis on the highest-quality products for total life cycle value and the best mission outcomes.

**Q: How have these trends impacted regional vehicle requirements, and how is Marine & Land Systems responding?**

**Dalrymple:** Applications include direct fire, convoy, reconnaissance, command and control, ambulance and patrol. Our customers need vehicles that are proven in three key performance areas: survivability, mobility and lethality.

Our COMMANDO™ line of vehicles has been optimized based on more than 40 years of regional experience with customers including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Lebanon.

Hundreds of our vehicles are in use today throughout the region. We continue to innovate within the product line, currently investing in expanded lethality options including a 30-millimeter turret to deliver powerful effects over long ranges.

**Q: How do these trends impact regional customers' unmanned systems requirements?**

**Irby:** We are seeing renewed emphasis on high-quality systems with a long life cycle. For some time, we have observed many regional markets being inundated with low-cost offerings that drastically underperformed their performance claims. However, we know that the best unmanned systems put rigor into material selection, safety, and the most proficient data links and payloads. For example, our Group 2 system Aerosonde™ and Group 3 system Shadow® are proven over more than a million cumulative flight hours, each capable of carrying multiple mission payloads in a single flight. I believe that over time and use, customers have seen low-quality systems fail in all these areas, and entail significant sustainment and operational costs that offset any up-front cost savings.

**Q: Is this true on the vehicle side as well?**

**Dalrymple:** Yes, absolutely. We have customers around the world still using vehicles they procured from us in the 1970s and 1980s. The total value solution comes over time, when one considers training, sustainment and modernization as part of total system cost.

**Q: Unmanned Systems is the prime contractor for the U.S. Navy's first unmanned surface vehicle (USV) program of record. Is this technology applicable in the Mideast region?**

**Irby:** We are further maturing our Common Unmanned Surface Vehicle, or CUSV™, as part of the Navy's Unmanned Influence Sweep System program, for which it will primarily be used in mine countermeasure missions. As our GCC customers look to the Gulf as part of their holistic counterinsurgency and border security efforts, I foresee similar mission needs for USVs in the region. We developed the CUSV based on our proven unmanned command and control (C2) capabilities. As with other unmanned systems, USVs can conduct dangerous missions while keeping personnel at a safe standoff distance.

**Q: Why is unmanned C2 important?**

**Irby:** The most robust C2 systems create a multi-tiered squadron of unmanned aircraft systems, with common control from the smallest to largest. This operational concept has clear tactical benefits, but also has significant economic benefit in the areas of training and sustainment.

**Q: How else do support services such as training and sustainment create an operational advantage?**

**Dalrymple:** We deploy alongside our customers every day, around the world, conducting training and maintenance, after-action reviews and other services. This approach helps customers optimize the use of their systems so mission outcomes are improved.

**“We deploy alongside our customers every day ...”**

**Irby:** We offer an array of services from training and in-field support to turnkey, fee-for-service operations in which our operators and maintainers use our unmanned aircraft systems to deliver full-motion video by the hour when and where our customers need it. This kind of flexibility is the ultimate operational advantage.

**Q: To wrap up, how is Textron Systems staying close to customers in the region this year?**

**Irby:** We are looking forward to IDEX, which provides a tremendous opportunity for governments and the defense industry to come together, and plan to attend other key regional events throughout 2017. We maintain representatives across the GCC as well, to provide consistently high levels of support.

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**Dalrymple:** Events like IDEX also allow us to interact with local partners to discuss how we can best serve regional customers; for example, with coproduction to accelerate large-volume vehicle production, training and sustainment.

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