



Raytheon Poised to Make Second Run at Unmanned Platform Market

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Raytheon Missile Systems is poised to make its first major run at the unmanned aircraft platform market since the late-1990s, with new systems aimed for military and civil markets, a company executive says.

Until recently, Raytheon was content to approach the unmanned vehicles market as a systems supplier, having lost a bid in 1998 to build the US Air Force's original unmanned combat air vehicle. But the company has recently partnered Swift Engineering to offer the KillerBee for the US Navy/Marine Corps Tier II small tactical unmanned aircraft systems requirement, which has a nearly \$150 million budget.

Raytheon also is building at least nine Cobra testbed aircraft, with its five currently operational aircraft having amassed hundreds of flying hours serving a range of government and commercial clients.

With KillerBee, Raytheon would serve as the prime contractor as well as offer its Universal Control Station, says director for unmanned systems Don Newman. The KillerBee was originally being offered for the Tier II contract by Northrop Grumman Electronic Systems, which withdrew from the programme late in 2006.

Meanwhile, Raytheon is also studying an internal proposal to build a 1.5-scale version of the Cobra vehicle with a 4.6m (15ft) wingspan, Newman says, with the company seeking to be positioned to capture the US commercial market for unmanned aircraft after regulatory issues are resolved. "The growth for the unmanned aircraft business is going to be in the commercial market," he believes.