

State Dept. Approves Possible Sale of AH-1Z Helicopters to Nigeria



Airman Kory Vogel signals an AH-1Z Viper on the flight deck of amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island (LHD 8), April 13. *U.S. NAVY / Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Nadia Lund*
WASHINGTON – The U.S. State Department has approved a possible Foreign Military Sale to Nigeria of 12 Bell AH-1Z attack helicopters and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$997 million, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency said in an April 14 release.

The sale would make Nigeria the third foreign nation to order the AH-1Z, the others being Bahrain and the Czech Republic. The main operator of the AH-1Z is the U.S. Marine Corps.

Nigeria has requested to buy 12 AH-1Z Viper attack helicopters as well as associated avionics, sensor systems, and spare engines and parts. The deal also includes 2,000 Advanced Precision Kill Weapon System (APKWS) guidance sections for 2.75-inch rockets.

The announcement said the possible sale also would include "tools and test equipment; technical data and publications; personnel training and training equipment; mission planning system; U.S. government and contractor engineering; technical, and logistics support services; U.S. government and contractor assistance and oversight of facilities construction to include the provisioning of plans, drawings and specifications."

"The proposed sale will better equip Nigeria to contribute to shared security objectives, promote regional stability and build interoperability with the U.S. and other Western partners," the announcement said. "This sale will be a major contribution to U.S. and Nigerian security goals. Nigeria will have no difficulty absorbing the equipment and services into its armed forces."

The principal contractors will be Bell Helicopter, Textron, of Fort Worth, Texas, and General Electric Co., of Lynn, Massachusetts.