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Alenia Aermacchi: Italian Air Force's C-27J Spartan deployed to the Philippines for humanitarian assistance

An Italian Air Force's C-27J tactical transport aircraft has been deployed to Cebu Island in the Philippines, in support of international aid activities for those affected by Typhoon Haiyan.

The aircraft is engaged in transporting disaster relief material, equipment and emergency support personnel in Tacloban, Leyte and in Eastern Samar, the areas hardest hit by the typhoon that struck the Philippines in mid November.

The C-27J arrived on November 30, and immediately began transporting food, camp tents, medical equipment, water purifiers and "pillow tanks", which are inflatable reservoirs of 5000 litres capacity each. These missions effectively reinforce the characteristics of the C-27J: a large cabin capable of loading bulky and particularly heavy vehicles and pallets, capability to land and take off from/on unprepared or particularly short or damaged runways such as those in the region struck by the typhoon, and on-board availability of an APU (Auxiliary Power Unit), which allows the aircraft total operational autonomy to use the aircraft systems on ground and to start the engines with no need of ground power generation systems. This last point is key for an aircraft aimed at operating in disaster relief missions in remote areas, where there is no availability of ground equipment normally found at civil or military airports.

The C-27J can perform a variety of missions including transport of troops, goods and medicine, logistical re-supply, MEDEVAC, airdrop operations, paratroopers' launches, search and rescue (SAR), fire fighting, humanitarian assistance, and operations in support of homeland security.

The C-27J has been ordered by the Air Forces of Italy, Greece, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Romania, Morocco, the US, Mexico, Australia, an undisclosed African country and Peru, for a total of 76 airplanes.

About the C-27J

The C-27J is equipped with modern avionics and an efficient propulsion system (Rolls Royce AE2100-D2A, assuring a 4,650 SHP). The C-27J is capable of taking off from and landing on unprepared strips less than 500m. long, with maximum takeoff weight of 30,500kg; it can carry up to 60 equipped soldiers or up to 46 paratroopers, and in the air ambulance (MEDEVAC) version, 36 stretchers or 24 stretchers and two Patient Transport Support System (P.T.S.S.), with stretchers and stowage provisions for intensive care medical equipment and six medical assistants. The large cross section (2.60 meters high, 3.33 m wide) and high floor strength (4,900 kg/m load capability) allow heavy and large military equipment to be loaded.

Thanks to its APU - that allows to generate electrical and pneumatic energy to the aircraft's systems - the C-27J can re-start its engine in flight or start the engines on ground without any logistic support, allowing for operations in tactical scenarios and in the most remote airstrips, where the ground support systems are practically non-existing.

The C-27J has been specifically designed, developed and tested as a military aircraft, following military standards to assure the aircraft's robustness, reliability and performance.

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