

Cooperation and partnership

INTERVIEW WITH RAKESH SHARMA BSC MBA CPHYS MINSTP

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF ULTRA ELECTRONICS HOLDINGS PLC, UNITED KINGDOM



RAKESH SHARMA started his career as an electronic design engineer in 1983 and joined Dowty as a Chief Engineer in 1989. Following Ultra's formation in 1993 he held various positions from Marketing Director; Ultra's US based Operations Director; Managing Director of two UK businesses and then key divisional roles as Divisional Managing Director of Tactical & Sonar Systems and then Information & Power Systems. Appointed Chief Operating Officer in 2010 and joined the Board at that time. He became Chief Executive at the AGM in April 2011.

Could you provide an overview of Ultra Electronics?

Ultra Electronics (Ultra) is a group of 25 businesses based internationally, in the UK, US, Canada, Australia and the Middle East. The Group specialises in electronic, electro-mechanical and software solutions for the defence, security, transport and energy markets. With over 4,500 employees worldwide and an annual revenue exceeding £710 million, Ultra has demonstrated average year-on-year growth of more than 15 per cent for the past 10 years.

A primary, underpinning reason for this substantial growth is Ultra's approach to teaming and cooperation with other companies. We have a history of successfully delivering programmes through partnerships; our oldest business-to-business partnership has now been extant for over fifty years.

Part of Ultra's secret to success is that we do not aim to execute total systems delivery by ourselves or seek to re-invent technologies that already exist in the market. Instead, we proactively identify partners who have technologies that can be integrated and utilised within our systems to affordably deliver the highest capability solution to the customer.

How does your approach to teaming relate to Turkey?

Ultra made its first substantive offering for a Turkish programme in 2006, and I'm pleased to say that we were awarded a contract to supply a torpedo defence system for the MILGEM frigates. Through close working-relations with the Turkish systems integrator, we have gained a mutual respect of each other's engineering capabilities and technical knowledge. Notably, it was apparent that we shared the same core values, which I feel was a large factor in the programme's success.

As industrial relations have grown, so has our intent to involve Turkish industry within our systems solutions. Driven by the recognised advantages this approach brings. Ultra gains capable partners within a competitive, highly skilled Turkish engineering base, while Turkish industry gains new technology capabilities with the opportunity to develop Intellectual Property and Exploitation Rights in internationally attractive solutions. We term this approach "Technology Creation".

For example, within Ultra's contract for delivery of its fifth generation submarine torpedo defence system for Turkey's latest submarines, Turkish industry will

be responsible for a significant percentage of the engineering activities with Ultra responsible for the overall system design.

Could you explain your Technology Creation concept?

Ultra supports a basis of cooperation that, unlike traditional approaches such as Technology Transfer, provides partner companies with more than just the capabilities to create local alternatives to systems or solutions that already exist in the market place. Rather, it is the establishment and creation through joint development activities, of new and next-generation high-technology products where the Intellectual Property and Exploitation rights are shared between all the various partners.

For Technology Creation programmes, we do not target an individual domestic market; rather we aim to build partnerships capable of delivering solutions to the wider international market that will meet customer needs over the next decade or more. Our Turkish partners will become increasingly capable of maintaining and adapting the systems and solutions we have developed together within their domestic market, through the experience they have gained working with us.

How do you anticipate teaming developing over the coming years?

There are a significant number of international candidate opportunities for close cooperation between Ultra and Turkish Industry. We are now engaging with Turkish companies for the joint development and supply of major systems and solutions to the UK and these wider international customers. In many cases, there is no planned, equivalent procurement by Turkish authorities, which serves to demonstrate that Ultra is driven by partnership opportunities.

In what direction do you anticipate UK and Turkey defence relations heading over the medium term?

International relations between Turkey and the UK have been steadily becoming closer. There is a long history of trade and cooperation between our two countries. I expect defence and industrial relations to mirror this and for cooperation to increase between the companies. I am pleased that Ultra is one of the first to begin this journey.



partners for growth

A world leader in undersea warfare technology, Ultra Electronics offers an unrivalled range of naval solutions for airborne platforms, surface ships and submarines. Installed on over 350 international platforms, Ultra is renowned for providing high performance solutions worldwide. Ultra works with its partners to stimulate and support future design and development programmes, focused on maintaining a technical edge against tomorrow's threat.

With over 60 years international experience providing innovative solutions to the evolving undersea battlefield, Ultra has an extensive range of specialist and proven capabilities including:

- Surface and sub-surface ASW sonar systems
- Torpedo defence systems for ships and submarines
- Airborne sonobuoy acoustic processing suite
- Command and Control plus modular maritime combat support systems
- Secure data link and cryptographic communications
- Coastal, harbour, border and perimeter surveillance
- Electronic Warfare systems
- Onboard degaussing systems and impressed current cathodic protection
- Hybrid and cruise propulsion systems

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