THE SPECTRUM GROUP

Col Michael Press, USAF, Ret.

Teams: Civil Aviation, Defense & Aerospace, International, M&A Support and Due Diligence

Expertise Areas

- Foreign Military Sales (FMS) & Direct Commercial Sales (DCS)
- FMS & DCS Offset Programs
- Air, Space, and Maritime Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance (ISR)
- General Aviation and Business Jet Markets
- Strategic Business Development, M&A, and Due Diligence

Professional Experience

Colonel Press supports clients across the defense, aerospace, aviation, and government relations sectors. He brings deep expertise in foreign military sales (FMS), international direct commercial sales (DCS), aviation innovation, strategic market capture, and business transformation in the aerospace industry and U.S. Air Force (USAF). He has led major aviation and defense initiatives for U.S. and international government and private sector clients, leveraging his extensive experience in combat aviation, program management, and M&A.

Prior to joining The SPECTRUM Group, Colonel Press served as CEO of Eclipse Aerospace Inc. (EAI), OEM manufacturer of the Eclipse 550 very light jet (VLJ). When EAI faced bankruptcy, he led the capture of a $40M purchase, then negotiated a $40M investment from Sikorsky Aircraft. This was then used as a Blackhawk offset to establish an Eclipse 550 co-production factory with a Sikorsky subsidiary in Poland. Colonel Press also revived the Eclipse 550 jet program from corporate shutdown to FAA-certified delivery. Earlier, as founder of SPJets Aircraft, he built the world's largest brokerage for VLJs and orchestrated more than 250 aircraft sales.

Colonel Press served as Senior Director, Business Development and as F-35 Deputy Program Manager at Northrop Grumman (NG). There, he developed and facilitated the large-scale NG BQM-74 drone attacks that were successfully deployed against Iraqi air defenses in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Colonel Press's 24-year USAF career culminated in his serving as FMS Regional Director for Asia and Europe for the Secretary of the Air Force, where he served as lead executive on F-16, F-15, AWACS, and other multi-billion-dollar defense program sales and contracts with NATO allies and Asian nation partners. Earlier, as a fighter pilot, he flew 450 combat missions in Vietnam before helping start the USAF "Top Gun" school, Red Flag, where he flew Russian MiG aircraft during USAF and U.S. Navy tactics development and testing.

Key Positions

- CEO and Board Member, Eclipse Aerospace Inc.
- Senior Director, Business Development, Northrop Grumman
- F-35 Deputy Program Manager, Northrop Grumman
- Founder and Owner, SPJets Aircraft
- Director, Foreign Military Sales (Asia and Europe), Secretary of the Air Force

Education

- Graduate, National War College
- Graduate, Defense Security Cooperation University
- M.M.S., Army Command and General Staff College
- B.S., University of Oregon

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