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FORTIETH ORDINARY SESSION

(Second Part)

The readiness and capabilities
of airforces in WEU member states

REPORT

submitted on behalf of the Defence Committee
by Mr. Hardy, Rapporteur

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in WEU member states*

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1. Adopted unanimously by the committee.

2. *Members of the committee: Mr. Baumel (Chairman); Mr. De Decker, Mrs. Baarveld-Schlaman (Vice-Chairmen); MM. Alloncle, Bianchi, Borderas, Briane, Brito, Cox, Dees, Dolazza, Dumont, Fernandes Marques, Hardy, Irmer, Jacquat, Kelchtermans, La Russa, Mrs. Lentz-Cornette, Mr. Marten, Lord Newall, MM. Parisi, Pécriaux, Petruccioli, Reis Leite, Scheer, Sir Dudley Smith, Mr. Sole Tura (Alternate: *Cuco*), Mrs. Soutendijk van Appeldoorn, Sir Keith Speed, MM. Steiner, Lopez Valdivielso (Alternate: *Lopez Henares*), Vazquez (Alternate: *Bolinaga*), Zierer.*

N.B. *The names of those taking part in the vote are printed in italics.*

Draft Recommendation
on the readiness and capabilities of airforces
in WEU member states

The Assembly,

- (i) Considering that WEU member states should review the national capability of their airforces to meet their obligations within the alliance and to provide a proper contribution to the exercise of international authority and humanitarian obligations;
- (ii) Recalling that, for member states, it is not enough to possess appropriate numbers of military aircraft since such numbers are of little use if the aircrews are not capable of current operational activity or if the aircraft themselves are not maintained in serviceable condition;
- (iii) Expressing concern about the quality and relevance of flight training and stressing that low-level flight training is necessary to sustain the possibility of operational survival;
- (iv) Drawing attention to the absence of, or inadequacy of, low-level flight training in a number of member states which fails to provide reasonable assurances that the nature and the scale of flight training in their airforces meets the standards to which they are committed;
- (v) Regretting possible shortcomings in logistic support capacity and the reliance upon civilian transport aircraft for military purposes especially where pursuit of peace in the service of humanitarian causes may require both aircrew and aircraft to be prepared to face a hostile environment, which testifies to the need, in the long term, to build a European military transport aircraft;
- (vi) Considering existing anxieties about the need for adequate air defence, in particular in terms of all-weather capability, air-to-air refuelling and reconnaissance and early warning in airforces of WEU member states;
- (vii) Considering that the aircraft in service in several member states are obsolescent thus extending the considerable range and variety of different types, there being, for instance, some thirteen different types of strike aircraft;
- (viii) Considering that rather more attention should be paid to making provision for adequate air-to-air refuelling in view of the increased capacity this might provide;
- (ix) Noting that the airforce exercise Purple Nova held in November 1994 under WEU auspices is an interesting development and trusting that further similar exercises will be held in order to assist co-operation between airforces of member states to enable them to develop further co-operative capacity in response to crises and international need,

RECOMMENDS THAT THE COUNCIL

1. Remind member states that more attention should be paid to the provision of sufficient military aircraft and aircrews capable of operations in support of international need and to ensuring that sufficient personnel are trained and employed to maintain the numbers of military aircraft which their commitment to the alliance requires;
2. Urge member states to recognise that whilst their services need to be operated efficiently, the defence of their realms and their obligation to both the alliance and the international community require the retention of a sufficient number of uniformed personnel to ensure that support as well as operational requirements can be permanently secured;
3. Pay close attention to the success of the recent airforce exercise Purple Nova with a view to extending such arrangements on a regular basis.

Draft Order

***on the readiness and capabilities of airforces
in WEU member states***

The Assembly,

- (i) Aware that, in the near future, further budget reductions in WEU member states may have a negative influence on their ability to respond to threats to European security;
- (ii) Stressing that WEU member states will increasingly need to support international stability or sustain the humanitarian cause for which they must have available the appropriate aircraft and personnel;
- (iii) Considering that opposition to training at low altitudes is at present leading to its prevention or inhibition and, as a consequence, to the diminishing quality of aircrew training,

INSTRUCTS ITS DEFENCE COMMITTEE

1. To meet representatives of the WEU Planning Cell in order to consider these matters and to provide an analysis of the conditions in airforces of WEU member states during 1996;
2. To monitor the response to the present report and to inform the Assembly of the state of national airforces during 1996.

Explanatory Memorandum

(submitted by Mr. Hardy, Rapporteur)

I. Introduction

1. Political changes in Europe in recent years persuaded governments and people that defence expenditure could be reduced substantially and diverted to areas which commanded greater priority in the form of social provision and the reduction of taxation or the reduction of total public expenditure.
2. Until this drawing down of defence provision, a large part of the expenditure was incurred to face the possibility of east-west conflict either to respond to any aggression or to deter it. It is accepted that these dangers have diminished markedly.
3. Obviously, ministers must make a careful assessment of existing or emerging risks and threats to security and although at this stage governments have not yet entirely dismantled their capacity to respond to potential aggression within Europe, the available capacity to provide such response has been and is still being greatly reduced.
4. At the same time, it can be perceived that the cold war with all its perils did contribute to a greater degree of stability in Europe than we have witnessed in the last five years. The fact that for the first time in half a century there has been serious conflict in Europe recently may illustrate that instability.
5. Whilst one is hopeful that European and international effort will see peace achieved in former Yugoslavia and reduce the possibility of any conflict within Europe, it does seem reasonable to point out that the ability to effect such purposes may not be helped if there is little in the way of defence capacity readily available to reinforce political argument and underline diplomatic endeavour.
6. Unfortunately, instability and localised conflicts experienced in Europe have been accompanied by other crises elsewhere. The invasion of Kuwait and the horrors of Rwanda are but two examples and they illustrate the need for the exercise of international authority. After all, points of conflict do seem to increase remorselessly.
7. Perhaps few Europeans now believe that the United Nations is able to exercise effective and swift response to dreadful crises. Certainly, we seem to have little ground for confidence that the international community could be able to gua-

rantee international peace-making yet alone provide any real peace-keeping effort. But that capacity is desirable and its achievement does require the commitment of men and material from member states prepared to contribute to a particular cause at the behest of international authority.

8. Whatever the need for international and European effort may be, the exercise of international authority, the adequate support of the humanitarian cause, or the protection of endangered minorities, then our operational involvement is essential. That is being demonstrated in the skies over Northern Iraq, the Gulf and Bosnia today. These matters have considerable relevance for WEU and its member states for few other countries possess the aircraft and the skills to make such sustained operational activity possible. At the same time, both WEU itself and its member states might acknowledge that it is scarcely sensible for the exercise of international authority to be wholly dependent upon one state even if that be the superpower.

9. Inevitably, there will be groups and perhaps countries which balk at both the cost or even the principle of such involvement. However, if European countries are to support the case for international stability and the sustenance of the humanitarian cause, then it is both right and logical for them to accept that the capacity to respond to need must be available. It is therefore inherent in this report that I should offer an assessment of the contribution which member states are capable of making, both in regard to the security requirement within our alliance and in providing meaningful contribution in the international cause. That is the purpose of this report. What follows is my own assessment. I trust that it is not unrealistic.

II. The strength of airforces

10. The various national airforces possess a wide range of aircraft in both numbers and types. For the purposes of this report, I have listed only the strengths of aircraft which are in the combat/strike, reconnaissance, tanker and transport rôles possessed by each member state together with other directly relevant information including the total numbers of personnel engaged in these services (see tables hereafter).

11. I had hoped to include the numbers of aircrew and of these the numbers who could be des-

Strength and inventory of national airforces

Country	Air Defence	Strike	Air Defence /Strike (dual use) ¹	Recon-naissance	AWACS Early Warning	Transport ²	Tanker/Transport ³	Tanker	Maritime Patrol	Total number of personnel
Belgium.....	35 F-16		100 F-16	Mirage F-5	—	12 C-130 2 B-727	—	—	—	12 100
France ⁴	98 F-1 132 M-2000	134 Jaguar 93 M-2000 N & D 37 M F-1 CT		51 F-1 CR	4E-3 F Sentry	12 C-130 71 C-160 2 A-310 4 DC-8		11 KC-135	16 Atlantic 9 Atlantic 5 Gardian	89 800 (incl. 33 300 conscripts)
Germany.....	143 F-4 20 MiG 29	182 Tornado		36 Tornado		4 B-707 3 A-310 85 C-160			14 Atlantic (navy)	82 900 (incl. 24 600 conscripts)
Greece ⁴	36 M2000	92 A-7 72 F-5 54 F-4 78 F-104	35 F-16 26 F-1	6 RF-5 10 RF-4		15 C-130				26 800 (incl. 14 400 conscripts)
Italy ⁴	99 F-104	70 Tornado 54 AMX 58 G-91		15 AMX	1 G-222 VS 12 PD-808	2 DC-9 12 C-130 44 G-222		2 B-707	18 Atlantic (navy)	73 000 (incl. 25 000 conscripts)
Netherlands.....			166 F-16	19 F-16		2 C-130 10 F-27		2 DC-10	2 F-27 M 13 P-3 C	16 220
Norway.....	48 F-16		15 F-5			6 C-130 3 DHC-6			6 P-3	7 900 (incl. 4 000 conscripts)
Portugal ⁴	20 F-16	37 A-7 26 G-91		18 G-91	4 Falcons	6 C-130			6 P-3	11 000 (incl. 1 800 conscripts)
Spain ⁴	17 F-1	22 F-5 30 F-1	70 F-18	8 RF-4 11 RF-5	2 Falcons	7 C-130		3 B-707 5 KC-130	7 P-3 3 F-27	28 400 (incl. 12 000 conscripts)
Turkey.....			146 F-16 149 F-4 134 F-5	37 F-4		13 C-130 19 C-160 13 CN-235				56 800 (incl. 28 700 conscripts)
United Kingdom.....	135 Tornado F-3	98 Tornado 54 Jaguar 50 Harrier		29 Tornado 7 Canberra 13 Jaguar	7 ESD Sentry 3 Nimrod	55 C-130 3 Tristar	6 Tristar 13 VC-10 5 C-130		26 Nimrod	72 500
TOTAL AIRCRAFT.....	783 7 types	1 191 13 types	841 5 types	238 10 types	33 5 types	360 12 types	24 3 types	23 4 types	125 7 types	

1. In several forces dual use strike/air defence is unstated but available.
2. Does not include smaller transport/communications aircraft.

3. Dual use transport/air-to-air refuelling may be available but not listed.
4. States which did not respond.

5

Strength and inventory of national airforces ¹

	Airforce	Avg. annual flying hours	Fighter ground attack	Interceptor	Reconnaissance	Transport	Helicopters
Belgium.....	12 100	165 (combat pilots)	4 sqn	2 sqn	1 sqn	2 sqn	5
France.....	89 800	180 (fighter/FGA pilots)	9 sqn	9 sqn	2 sqn	20 sqn	137
Germany.....	82 900	150 (Tornado aircrews)	8 sqn	7 sqn	–	4 sqn	130
Greece	26 800	–	6 sqn	10 sqn	1 sqn	3 sqn	22
Italy	73 300	–	8 sqn	7 sqn	1 sqn	3 sqn	122
Netherlands	9 000	180 (F-16 aircrews)	8 sqn	1 sqn	1 sqn	1 sqn	54
Norway.....	7 900	–	4 sqn	1 sqn	–	2 sqn	34
Portugal	11 000	–	4 sqn	–	–	4 sqn	31
Spain	28 400	180 (EF-18/Mirage F-1) 165 (F-5)	4 sqn	8 sqn	–	7 sqn	51
Turkey	56 800	–	14 sqn	6 sqn	2 sqn	6 sqn	173
United Kingdom.....	75 700	220 (FGA)	5 sqn (FGA/Bomber) 6 sqn	6 sqn	2 sqn	5 sqn	186

1. Source: IISS Military Balance 1994.

cribed as "current", i.e. fully capable of immediate involvement in operational activity, but this information is not included since adequate response was not received in time. Had the necessary request been dispatched earlier, then this important aspect of the matter could have been very usefully included.

12. The Assembly might care to note that the Rapporteur felt it to be essential to avoid reliance on published reference since, in a number of cases at least, the open record available may not reveal an entirely accurate picture for reduction in strength has been made in several services since such works were published.

13. It should also be understood that statements simply conveying aircraft strengths could be misleading. If such aircraft were inadequately maintained then the numbers which are readily available could be very much less than in services where maintenance is satisfactory and availability of spares is significant. The same comment could be applied to aircrew. If training and flying hours have been limited then availability is very much affected. Both the quality and nature of the flying is also relevant. If such flights are made to avoid complex manoeuvres and highest speeds then that training is less relevant and the Assembly should not assume that the military capacity is quite so great as mere numbers might suggest. With these reservations in mind, it would be appropriate for relevant information about the position in each member state to be considered.

14. It should be noted that these lists may not offer an accurate assessment of serviceability of aircraft or competence and currency of aircrew.

15. There do seem to be grounds to believe that the quality of aircrew training might be questionable, for example, where training at low altitudes is prevented or inhibited then there are grounds to question capabilities and it is suggested that this may be further considered in the report which is recommended for one of the part sessions in 1997. It does seem questionable that some airforces lack relevant experience.

16. A further note of caution is expressed in regard to the accessibility and stocks of spare parts. There is some anxiety that supplies of this kind may not always be readily available if extensive need arose. No doubt this matter could be further considered in the suggested follow-up report.

17. It could also be noted that the inventory of aircraft types within some member states reveals a considerable range stretching from ancient to modern.

18. Certain anxieties may develop not least in regard to air-to-air refuelling capacity since such provision enables range and operational duration to be effectively extended.

III. Demands

19. Substantial demands have been placed upon and met by some WEU member states' air forces. This is illustrated by the experience of the United Kingdom's airforce.

20. In order to maintain adequate levels of experience, substantial participation in NATO exercises continues. Between April 1993 and March 1994, the Royal Air Force took part in thirty NATO exercises and thirty bilateral exercises with other partner states.

21. Locations of these exercises varied. Forty-two were in Europe but exercises also took place in Alaska, Canada, the Middle East, the Caribbean, Belize and Australia.

22. Such exercises are essential parts of training and help to fulfil the need for co-operation between member states' airforces.

23. That co-operation is necessary in the fulfilment of obligations as with Operation Warden which commenced in September 1991 and involves the continuing commitment as part of the international force engaged in the policing of Northern Iraq under the terms of the agreement made after the Gulf conflict. The Royal Air Force has flown over 3 000 sorties and well over 6 000 hours in this theatre.

24. Operation Jural began in August 1992 in supervision of the air exclusion zone over southern Iraq (south of latitude 32 N). Well over 6 000 hours have been flown by the Royal Air Force detachments with around 2 500 sorties.

25. Operation Cheshire describes the large number of flights made by RAF Hercules aircraft carrying supplies in the humanitarian relief of Sarajevo. This effort began in July 1992 and thousands of sorties have been flown in addition to many others to various airfields in former Yugoslavia.

26. Operation Sharp Guard – the monitoring of activities over and around former Yugoslavia involved the deployment of E-3D and Nimrod aircraft of the RAF from July 1992.

27. Operation Deny Flight followed Sharp Guard and involves the enforcement of the no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina. RAF Tornado F3 and Jaguar combat aircraft and VC10 and Tristar tankers have been deployed since this responsibility commenced in April 1993. The Jaguar and Tornado sorties involved in this exercise approach 2 000 hours.

28. During the last two years, every type of operational aircraft in the RAF has been committed to operations and these demands must have required more flying hours than were previously authorised or anticipated.

29. These additional strains may provide emphasis not only of the need for adequate stores, supply and maintenance programmes but they underline the necessity of a programme of replacement aircraft for both operational and logistic purposes.

30. It is interesting that as this report is being completed exercise Purple Nova is underway. This involves aircraft from France, Portugal, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The command centre is at joint headquarters, Northwood. It may be the first formal WEU air exercise.


IV. Conclusions

31. I would have preferred to have submitted a fuller and more detailed report. Unfortunately, the brief questionnaire I compiled in December 1993

was not sent out until late spring and then it omitted a question concerning the numbers of aircrew regarded as "current" – the numbers readily available for operational flying in the particular aircraft type.

32. It is also unfortunate that as late as early November, as I write this, a number of member states have not yet provided the necessary information. As far as these countries are concerned the information listed is that available from public sources, information which the Rapporteur considers may be a little out of date, since during the present year a number of member states have effected significant cuts in provision or proposed reduction in relevant areas of expenditure.

33. Again, it would be appropriate for a further report to be prepared in due course. This could allow the Assembly to consider the actual reality of

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