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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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, Jacquet, Kelchtermans, La Russa, Mrs. Lentz-Cornette, Mr. Marten, Lord Newall, MM. Parisi, Pécriaux, Petruccioli, Reis Leite, Scheer, Sir Dudley Smith, Mr. Sole Tura (Alternate: Ciuco), 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 guarantee 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Air Defence</th>
<th>Strike</th>
<th>Air Defence/Strike (dual use)*</th>
<th>Reconnaissance</th>
<th>AWACS Early Warning</th>
<th>Transport*</th>
<th>Tanker/Transport*</th>
<th>Tanker</th>
<th>Maritime Patrol</th>
<th>Total number of personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>35 F-15</td>
<td>100 F-16</td>
<td>Mirage F-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>12 C-130</td>
<td>2 B-727</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>98 F-1</td>
<td>134 Jaguar</td>
<td>51 F-1 CR</td>
<td>4E-3 Sentry</td>
<td>12 C-130</td>
<td>71 C-160</td>
<td>2 A-310</td>
<td>4 DC-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>11 KC-135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>143 F-4</td>
<td>182 Tornado</td>
<td>36 Tornado</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 B-707</td>
<td>3 A-310</td>
<td>8S C-160</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14 Atlantic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>36 M2000</td>
<td>35 F-16</td>
<td>6 RF-5</td>
<td></td>
<td>15 C-130</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>99 F-104</td>
<td>70 Tornado</td>
<td>15 AMX</td>
<td>1 G-222 VS 12 PD-808</td>
<td>2 DC-9</td>
<td>12 C-130</td>
<td>44 G-222</td>
<td>2 B-707</td>
<td>18 Atlantic</td>
<td>73 000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>48 F-16</td>
<td>166 F-16</td>
<td>19 F-16</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 C-130</td>
<td>10 F-27</td>
<td>2 DC-10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>20 F-16</td>
<td>37 A-7</td>
<td>18 G-91</td>
<td>4 Falcons</td>
<td>6 C-130</td>
<td>3 DHC-6</td>
<td>6 P-3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7 900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>17 F-1</td>
<td>22 F-5</td>
<td>8 RF-4</td>
<td>2 Falcons</td>
<td>7 C-130</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 B-707</td>
<td>7 P-3</td>
<td></td>
<td>28 400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>146 F-16</td>
<td>146 F-16</td>
<td>37 F-4</td>
<td></td>
<td>13 C-130</td>
<td>19 C-160</td>
<td>13 CN-255</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56 800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>135 Tornado</td>
<td>98 Tornado</td>
<td>29 Tornado 7 Canberra 13 Jaguar</td>
<td>7 ESD Sentry 3 Nimrod</td>
<td>55 C-130</td>
<td>3 Tristar</td>
<td>6 Tristar 13 VC-10 5 C-130</td>
<td>26 Nimrod</td>
<td></td>
<td>72 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL AIRCRAFT</td>
<td>783</td>
<td>1 191</td>
<td>841 238</td>
<td>33 5 types</td>
<td>360 12 types</td>
<td>24 3 types</td>
<td>23 4 types</td>
<td>125 7 types</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
### Strength and inventory of national airforces

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

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