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DEFENCE

British defence cuts
The British 1974-75 defence budget is to be cut by £178 million, it was announced in the House of Commons on December 17 by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Anthony Barber. The Chancellor was announcing total cuts of £1,200 million in public spend-ing in a budget made necessary by the economic and industrial crisis in Britain. The initial 1974-75 defence estimate was £3,418 million, which will now come down to £3,240 million, compared with £3,398 million for the current year.

No details are yet known of exactly how the savings are to be achieved, but it is expected that programmes affected will be indicated in the February Defence White Paper. It is also expected that the cuts in spending will come through extending the timescales of projects and slowing down building programmes rather than through outright cancellations in the defence field. One aircraft which may have its development stretched in time is the Hawker Siddeley Hawk. Various missile pro-jects and developments, including Seawolf, Sraam and the Undersea-Launched Guided Weapon (USGW) may suffer similarly although none will give rise to heavy spending in the next year or so.

If cuts are to be made solely in the equipment field, it seems likely that they will be more in national projects than in international collaborative ones. If, as Flight believes, money has already been allocated by the Royal Navy for the maritime version of the Harrier, this aircraft may

A Dormer Kiebitz drone, which is to be fitted with Decca RDL-2 passive electronic warfare equipment (see news story)

emerge unscathed after all, albeit after still further delay if the Vickers through-deck cruiser building pro-gramme is slowed down.

Australian Sea Kings reprieved
The Australian Government is to go ahead with the purchase of ten Westland Sea Kings, worth more than $A43 million with spares and support (see Flight for December 6, page 968). The Defence Minister, Mr Lance Barnard, last month ordered a review of the project to see whether the number could be reduced, but it has been decided that the order is too far advanced to allow any worthwhile savings.

French Harrier interest
The Chief of the French Naval Staff, Admiral Marc de Joybert, has gone on the record with a stated interest in the Advanced Harrier. Speaking at a dedi-cation ceremony for France's equiva-lent of Jane's Fighting Ships, Flottes de Combat, 1974, the admiral is re-ported as saying that, when the present aircraft carriers Foch and Clemenceau were replaced in the 1980s, the new ships would carry Ad-vanced Harriers. It is not clear whether Admiral Joybert visualises new aircraft carriers with catapults in the 1980s or vessels of the through-deck cruiser or Sea Control Ship type. The admiral's statement comes only a few weeks after trials and demon-strations of the Harrier aboard the helicopter carrier Jeanne d'Arc and the Foch.

RAF rescues

More than 200 people were rescued last year by the search-and-rescue Whirlwinds of RAF No 18 Group, Strike Command, 20 more than in 1972. A total of 403 SAR sorties were flown bv the flights maintained by 22 Sqn at Chivenor, Valley and Coltishall and by 202 Sqn at Leconfield, Ackling-ton, Leuchars and Lossiemouth. Activities are all co-ordinated by the two Rescue Co-ordination Centres at Mount Wise, Plymouth, and Pitrearie Castle, Edinburgh. In addition to rescues 139 medevacs were flown by the Whirlwinds in 1973.

Wilkinson trophy to Bruggen
The Wilkinson Battle of Britain Memorial Sword for 1973, the RAF's highest operational trophy, has been awarded to the strike fighter station at Bruggen, West Germany. The sword is awarded annually to the unit mak-ing the most valuable contribution to the development of operational tactics. Bruggen's entry took more than six months to prepare and concerned con-ventionally armed RAF attack air-craft. A combined effort of the air-crews and a number of the operational support staff of the Phantom wing, the paper is particularly applicable to attack aircraft flying as part of Nato and its conclusions are being studied by Nato staff for relevance to other air forces.

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Danish trainers
Three aircraft, as expected, are being considered by the Royal Danish Air Force as a new primary trainer, the Scottish Aviation Bulldog, the Saab-MFI.17 and the Aerospace Indus-tries of New Zealand CT/4 Airtrainer. The three companies presented docu-mentation on their aircraft to Den-mark by the deadline of December 17, following flying demonstrations during the past few months. The order, to re-place 26 Chipmunks, is expected to be for about 35 aircraft.

ECM on Kiebitz

Operational trials will soon be car-ried out with the Dornier Kiebitz drone carrying Decca RDL-2 passive electronic warfare equipment. The Kiebitz torque-free tip-drive rotor plat-form is tethered and the electronic countermeasures (ECM) data will be transmitted down through the cable, making the system practically immune from jamming.
The Decca RDL-2 consists of a high probability of interception display, automatic and visual pulse analysis, band and frequency measurement. These functions are all integral with the Kiebitz control unit which is mounted on the vehicle or in the ship from which the drone is being flown. Discussions are in hand with several armed services on the possible merits of this and active ECM equipment aboard the Kiebitz, and on the possi-bilities of installing Ferranti radar.

Lamp contractors
Thirteen companies are expected to send proposals to the US Navy by January 9 for the principal systems of the Mk 3 Light Airborne Multi-purpose System helicopter. They are General Dynamics, General Electric, Grumman, Honeywell, Hughes Air-craft, IBM, Litton, Lockheed-Cali-fornia, Bell, RCA, Sperry Rand, Rock-well and Westinghouse.
It seems that for the first time a main systems contractor will be chosen before the airframe contractor, largely because of the range of air-frames the Navy is now considering. These include, in addition to the Kaman H-2 and Westland/Aero-spatiale Lynx, the Boeing and Sikorsky Uttas proposals, the Hughes and Bell AAH projects and the Bell 214.

The systems contractor should be known during the spring and the equipment is due to be tested in a modified SH-2E before the end of the year. The airframe contractor may have been chosen by then. If the Navy chooses one of the larger, heavier air-frames, modifications to both ships and helicopters (to incorporate, e.g., folding rotor blades) will be neces-sary. The original Lamps weight specification was between 8,0001b and 9,0001b. At present, still only the Kaman and Westland helicopters are in the right bracket of those being considered.