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Soviet super carrier confirmed
HEAD of the Soviet Navy Admiral
Sergei Gorshkov has confirmed that
the Soviet Union is building a nuclear-
powered aircraft carrier. The ship is
thought to be similar in size to USS Forrestal, which displaces 78,000 tons fully loaded and carries about 85 air-craft. The Soviet Navy already has two 43,000-ton carriers, Kiev and Minsk, at sea and is building two
more.

It seems unlikely that the Yakovlev Forger VTOL aircraft which equip the smaller carriers will be sufficient for the new vessel. The Soviet Union has admitted that the Forger is a first generation aircraft and is far from ideal. But there is no sign of any new VTOL developments.
A large carrier would require a mix of attack and fighter aircraft as well as supply and anti-submarine air-craft. The latter role, is now carried out by Kamov Hormone helicopters. But helicopters would not have suffi-

cient range to supply a large carrier operating at sea.
The Soviet Union may be develop-ing conventional carrier-based aircraft, relying on steam catapults and arres-tor wires. One of the three new proto-types spotted by US satellite last year may be destined for the carrier or may have a dual carrier- and land-based capability. The aircraft sighted on test resemble the F-14, F-18 and A-10. The last type, designated Bam-J, is unlikely to have a sea-borne appli-cation.
The first aircraft, Bam-K, is a vari-able geometry fighter believed to be in the 60,0001b class and thought to be a follow-on to the MiG-25. The second aircraft, Bam-L, is a 25,0001b-class aircraft thought to be from the Sukhoi bureau and strikingly similar in appearance to the F-18. Neither of these types could be developed for carrier use.

The variable geometry Bam-K

Boeing ALCM completes planned impact

A BOEING air-launched cruise missile
(ALCM) completed its eighth flight
and first planned impact on December
18. The missile was launched from a
B-52G over the Utah test and training range and hit the ground as if attack-

ing a target. The AGM-68B missile has only two flights left to complete the fly-off with the General Dynamics AGM-10 8 Tomahawk. The rival missile has three flights remaining. Each ALCM has failed three times.

Government collapse stalls Canadian fighter choice
SELECTION of a new fighter for the
Canadian Armed Forces 'is unlikely
to take place before the country's
general election on February 18. A
vote of no confidence in the present Conservative Government has been lodged in the Canadian Parliament. Outgoing Prime Minister Joe Clark has indicated that he will make no

major decisions bejtween now and the February general election.
Both the Conservative and the previous Liberal governments short-listed the same two aircraft—-the General Dynamics F-16 and the McDonnel l Douglas F-18A. The C$2,340 million fighter choice should not, therefore; be an election issue.

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DEFENCE

would be ideally suited to carrier coditions, as a slow approach speed c be achieved with wings swept foward. As the Soviet Union has n
experience with steam catapult Bam-K may be too heavy. In this ca

the lighter Bam-L could be a multrole fighter in the style of the F/A-18 The requirements of carrier opertion—mainly the high descent rate
experienced on pitching seas—dictat a hefty undercarriage. A land-bas

aircraft could not operate from a carier. But, as the F-4 and A-7 prove,
carrier-capable aircraft can perfor effectively from land.

Lack of funds

hits USAFE

INFLATION, shortages and additiona duties have forced the US Air Forc

in Europe (USAFE) to cut back opertions. Gen John Pauly, Commander USAFE, has told a Congressional sucommittee that, unless the project
operation and maintenance (O&M funding is increased, "USAFE will b forced to take drastic steps to redu costs" in 1980.

Last year's O&M funding, $446 million, was only $13 million up on 197
and was insufficient, Pauly say USAFE was unable to operate thr electronic security command statio — BAF Chicksands, San Vito (Italy an Iraklion (Crete). Participation i nearly all Nato exercises was droppe Squadron exchanges were cancel and weapons training for F-lll an F-15 crews eliminated.
Activation of the A-10 forward-operating locations in Germany h been delayed. Training of F-4G Wi Weasel defence suppression crews been curtailed. Munitions have n

been moved close enough to the acraft for rearming in a conflict. Fo

1980, USAFE would like to cure "

critical shortage of rapid runwayrepair capability in the UK," Pauly
says, although this will be eased moving a Bed Horse engineerin squadron to BAF Wethersfield.

Pauly is asking for the 1980 opertion and maintenance budget to raised from $510 million to $635 milion. Part of the problem is inflatio
— amounting to 21 per cent overall— "due primarily to the exceptionall high inflation in Turkey and othe southern region bases," according Pauly. Without extra funds, Gen Pau says USAFE's readiness moment will dissipate and the Nato allies wi sense decreasing support from the U