AIRBUS UPDATE

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NEXT WEEK

We record the histories,
key personnel, and equip-
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• ' x our comprt I -
sive World Airline Direc-
tory, compiled by John
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David Velupillai looks at
two ma oi • isions facing
Europe for • its space
programme in the Nineties
—how to build on Space-
lab's achievements, and
what type of rocket should
succeed Ariane 4.

A3 20 revealed

Cyprus Airways is Airbus Industrie's latest A320 customer

Airbus Industrie's new "baby", the 150-seater A320 short/medium range airliner, will fly in February or March 1987 and will go into commercial service "early in 1988". The road to its launch has been a hard one, says execu-tive vice-president and general manager Roger Beteille, but now, he adds, "we just have to do it".

The hard road still lies ahead. The A3 20 will be the most extensive single package of new technology and new ideas to get airborne since the jet age came to the airlines, and Airbus has to see it through the certificators on time. The European manufacturing consortium is not hamstrung by having any of its own narrowbodies on which to base the design of a new machine, so it starts with a clean sheet of paper in designing the A320. DAVID LEARMOUNT and DAVID VELUPILLAI report from Toulouse.

The

airliner

market
Airbus estimates that orders
for 7,574 new airliners will be
placed between now and the
year 2002, in addition to those
700-odd aircraft on order but
not yet delivered. The com-
pany divides this market into
three broad sectors: short/
medium range single-aisle
3,356; short/medium range
twin-aisle 3,079; long range
(more than 5,000km) 1,139.

Airbus expects to sell 1,000
A320s into the 3,300-plus
market, but claims that it will
break even on sales of 600.
If an A320 had been avail-
able for delivery in 1982-83, it
would have cost $25 million,
says Airbus, compared with
the 737-300's $20 million.

Airbus plans to expand its
family of aircraft as rapidly as
possible to take advantage of
as much of this market as it
can. Hence, having launched
the A320, the company has
stated its impatience to go
ahead with the TA-11 or TA-9
as soon as it can obtain the
finance. Executive v-p Roger
Beteille says that technically
there would be no problem in
getting the TA-9 and TA-11
airborne by 1990, but
"financially it would be a
problem unless there was a
particularly strong recovery"
in the near future. "That is
why we talk of 1992", Beteille
says.

This particularly strong
recovery would mean a world
real GNP annual increase of
more than 3 per cent, which is
the figure on which the Airbus
forecasts are based. Airbus
also believes that "no new
technological development
will have a fundamental
impact on air traffic". What it
means by this is that people
will continue to travel despite'

the eventual widespread use
of electronic data transfer and
communications. Another
belief is that fuel will remain
available, its price growing at
the average GNP rate plus
about 1-5 per cent. Airbus
forecasts that airlines will
remain able to finance new
aircraft acquisition, and will
have to do so with passenger
traffic growth averaging 5-6
per cent over the next 20
years—therefore tripling by
the year 2002. But flight
frequencies will be

constrained by airport and
airway limitations, says
Airbus, and will be able to
grow only 2-4 per cent per
year. The latter is the
company's reason for its
strong faith in the need for the
TA-9, which is a stretched,
rewinged, new-technology
A300. By the end of this
century, Airbus believes,
North America's share of the
"Western" world's airline
traffic will have declined from
the 48 per cent of 1980 to 38
per cent.

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