WORLD NEWS

BIH to shed one in five
ABERDEEN

British International Heli-
copters (BIH) is to shed up to
100 of its 500 managers and
workers because of the
continuing downturn in
offshore support work. Most
of the redundancies are
expected to be at the main
Aberdeen base, where 340 are
employed. Other UK bases are
at Sumburgh (in the Shetland
Islands), Beccles (Suffolk),
and Penzance (Cornwall), and
overseas bases are in India
and China.

BIH blames the redun-
dancies on the reduced
offshore exploration and
allied helicopter-support work
which have followed the oil
price slump. However, the loss
of a BIH Boeing Vertol
Chinook last November has
contributed to difficulties,
general manager Kit Cham-
bers admits.

Ariane hitch:

no delay
PARIS

Arianespace still plans to
launch the next Ariane rocket
before the end of June, despite
a last-minute switch of third
stage engines during accept-
ance tests at SEP.

During preparation of the
final acceptance test on
March 25, a failure in hand-
ling of the vacuum chamber
induced an abnormal loading
on one of the engine sub-
assemblies. "In order to pre-
vent any risk, a decision was
made to remove this engine
from the test stand, and not to
use it for the next flight," says
Arianespace and SEP.
The next engine was imme-
diately transferred to the test
stand, and the acceptance test
sequence began on June 30.
"Under these conditions
Flight 19 remains scheduled
before the end of June,"
Arianespace and SEP add.
• The head of the alleged
Ariane spy ring is claimed by
French police officials to be
the second air attache at the
Soviet Embassy in Paris,
Valeri Konorov.

Konorov has been impli-
cated, together with six other
Soviet diplomats, by several
members of the alleged spy
ring dismantled on March 17
by the French counter-
espionage service. Five people
were arrested: three French-
men, a Soviet-born woman,
and a Romanian-born
woman.

The names of the Soviet air
attache and his fellow diplo-
mats have been given to the
French foreign ministry. It is
not yet known whether the
Soviet diplomats will be
expelled from France.
The five arrested are
accused of spying on Ariane
engine manufacturer SEP,
and of passing information on
cryogenic rocket engines to a
foreign power (these pages
last week).

Gales damage airship
LONDON

Hurricane-force winds have
damaged an Airship Indus-
tries Skyship 600, delaying by
several weeks the start of
airship sight-seeing flights
over London.

The airship was moored
outside at Cardington,
Bedfordshire, late last week,
when winds gusting to 83kt
forced Airship Industries'
staff to deflate the non-rigid
envelope to avoid damage. In
the process the airship's skin
tore, allowing £15,000-worth
of helium to escape.
The craft would have been
safe outside in the forecast
48kt winds, the company
says. Sightseeing trips will
begin after repairs.

Soviets

agree to overflights
LONDON ~

The Soviet Union has signed
an air services agreement
with the UK which permits
nonstop flights from London
to Tokyo over the trans-
Siberian route.
British Airways (BA) and
British Caledonian (BCal)
will compete on the route,
each with two direct flights a

week and one flight a week via
Moscow. These are in addi-
tion to existing daily flights to
Moscow.
Aeroflot is to increase its
services to four a week on
the London-Moscow-Tokyo
route, with the option of
flying the larger 11-76
freighter three times a week
instead of the 11-62. Provision
has also been made for BA
and Aeroflot to operate once
a week each on a new
route between Moscow and
Manchester.

BCal is starting services on
May 31, with its direct flights
leaving on Sundays and
Fridays. BA's direct flights
leave on Thursdays and
Saturdays starting on June 4.

UK sets

fire standards
LONDON

The UK Civil Aviation Auth-
ority (CAA) has announced
that fire-resistant cabin
fittings must be installed on
new and refurbished passen-
ger aircraft by 1988.
The new regulations cover
ceiling and wall panels,
partitions, storage compart-
ments, and outer surfaces of
galleys; they are in addition to
the more stringent rules for
seating materials introduced
last year.
The standards have been in
preparation for some time,
but the CAA could not enforce
them until suitable materials
such as phenolic resin became
available.
All new aircraft on the UK
register and those that have
been substantially refur-
bished will have to comply
with the first phase of new
rules by August 20, 1988, and
with a second, higher, stan-
dard by 1990.
The standard for materials
fitted to new or refurbished
aircraft up to 1990 states that
total heat release in the first 2
min of a fire should not exceed

lOOkW per m2

and at peak
heat release rate it should not

exceed lOOkW per m2

per min.
After 1990 the limit is reduced

to 65kW per m2

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Materials made from phen-
olic resin-based glassfibre will
meet the highest standard.
Plastics like ABS, PVC, and
some epoxy glassfibre are
banned on new and refitted
aircraft from 1988.

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NEXT WEEK

Competition is now a way
of life for US military
engine manufacturers, but
one that can take many
different forms. Graham
Warwick reports.

London companies want a
City heliport, but local resi-
dents do not. Alan Post-
lethwaite assesses the
chances of success for the
latest heliport proposals.

How well equipped and
trained are airlines to
handle passengers' medical
problems in flight? Julia
Hayley looks at the wide
range of standards in an
area where rules are few.

Harry Hopkins considers
the pros and cons of reduc-
ing the vertical separation
of airliners above flight
level 290.

Snecma has new chief

PARIS

General Bernard Capillon,
former French Air Force chief
of staff, is expected to become
the new president and
director-general of Snecma,
the French state-owned aero
engine manufacturer.
A formal announcement of
the appointment was expec-
ted on April 1. Capillon will
succeed Jacques Benichou,
who continues as chairman of
Gifas, the French industry
association.

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