Airbus would still receive government subsidies, directly or indirectly, however it were organised. As the Gatt negotiators try to reconcile their differences, Flosdorff calculates that in the past ten years his main competitors, Boeing and McDonnell Douglas, have received $23 billion in US Government funds of direct value to civil aircraft development—Nasa contracts, tax deferments, research allowances, and other help in addition to defence spending.

The A320 stretch, which would logically be designated -300, would require signifi-cant new investment. The objective is the part of the market which seems to be look-ing more and more at the Boeing 757. In the USA this efficient people-mover is attracting the attentions of American, United, USAir, and other majors as a 727 replacement. Fleet orders of 50 to 100 aircraft for each must be won by a 180-seater with a low seat-mile cost on short lhr-2hr sectors.

The A320 stretch would have 13 more fuselage frames, adding 30 seats, perhaps trading the A320-200's extra 1,000 n.m. (compared with the -100) for extra payload. Transatlantic full-passenger range would be beyond the A320. The 757 is just going into transatlantic service (with Monarch) certificated for extended-range twin operations (Etops). Power for the A320 stretch would be by "throttlepush" of the standard CFM56-5, says senior vp engineering Bernard Ziegler. It would retain the same diameter.

Boeing is offering the 757 to big new customers for a unit price of $27 million, according to Airbus salesmen. They are offering the A320-200 at $35 million, for which the customer gets a wider body and a 6 per cent lower fuel burn per seat. The extra width of the A320 cabin is a major sales point for Airbus salesmen.

Top left Ansett
will be the first
operator of the
A320-200, with its
distinctive wingtip
fences. Left Air
France received its
first A320 at the
end of March.
Above The A340's
downstairs bedroom
module

The greater spaciousness, including head-room and locker capacity, is positively apparent. The extra inches convert into wider seats or aisles, and the sculptured wall and ceiling lighting enhance the feel-ing of roominess. When Snecma and GE have traced and eliminated a low-frequency noise and vibration, on which British Airways has remarked, A320 cabin comfort will be top of the narrowbody league. Bin capacity is claimed to be 20 per cent more than the competition's.

Immediately after its well-publicised delivery flight to Gatwick, G-BUSB was flown back to Toulouse by its Airbus crew for about a fortnight's work on changes requested by British Airways, none of which, it is emphasised, are for safety reasons. B A is not a reluctant Airbus oper-ator, despite its 20-year abstinence from the European consortium's products and the fact that it has inherited rather than chosen the A320. At the delivery ceremony in Toulouse, Lord King said: "British Airways is proud to be an inaugural oper-ator of one of the most advanced airliners in the world, bringing new levels of service to our customers".

Ever since Rolls-Royce abandoned Airbus for Lockheed, and later went for Boeing, the consortium and its influential French supporters have never leaned over backwards to help the British engine company to remount. And the gap between Europe's biggest airline and Europe's premier airliner supplier has been wide. British Airways was not posi-tive about the A320 when it bought BCal and inherited an order for ten. The British press ran stories about the A320 being heavier and thirstier than promised. Airbus was furious: aviation gentlemen in mutual adversity stick together. At a meeting in Toulouse Pierson told Lord

King and Sir Colin Marshall, in so many words, "We can't go on like this. You must support the A320 wholeheartedly, and instruct your people to do so, or we will take the aircraft back. We have the customers."
From that moment on relations between the world's favourite airline and Europe's favourite airliner supplier were excellent. As French transport minister Jacques Douffiagues said at the delivery party: "Allow me to wish that this order may be followed in the years to come by orders for other aircraft of the airbus family". Pierson referred to "the ups and downs of a long courtship". British indus-try minister Paul Channon, without referring to the heavy Airbus losses of British Aerospace, rejoined in elegant impromptu French: "I hope that courtship does not lead to a liaison dangereuse".

Rolls-Royce now has its best chance since 1968 of catching an Airbus. Pierson recently visited Derby and posed for the camera in front of an RB.211-524, the engine which the new Rolls-Royce office in Toulouse is seriously proposing for the A300-600 and the A330. The five-nation IAE V.2500, in which the British engine company is a partner, is already on order for the A320, and would probably have been British Airways' choice if it had ordered A320s. This engine would proba-bly be favoured by BA for the A340, and for further A320s.

The V.2500's new compressor is due to be flight-tested in mid-October on the prototype A320. This aircraft is scheduled to start testing interim flight-standard V.2500s, slung from new pylons, in July. Meanwhile, the engine will have had its first flight installed in Pratt & Whitney's Boeing 720B testbed. Certification is on schedule for April 1989. IAE and Airbus have agreed that a new compressor is a common target. The initial modified compressor is a fallback in case of further problems.

The current A320 payload-range graph shows no more than the thickness of a line between the V.2500 and CFM56 versions. The V.2500's fuel burn is 5 per cent higher than originally estimated. But Rolls believes that Lufthansa's switch to the
competition is unlikely to be followed by
other customers because of the longer-
term potential of the V.2500's more
advanced core, including a 24:1 pressure
ratio from a ten-stage compressor. The

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