HEADLINES

Russia disputes Ukraine's armament claim

BY ALEXANDER VELOVICH
IN MOSCOW

R

ussian military commanders
believe that the newly-
independent Ukraine is trying to
retain a large number of conven-
tional arms which are based on
its territory, partly in order to
sell the surplus to Third World
countries for hard currency.
About 70 billion Roubles (the-
oretically $41 billion) would be
needed just to keep the
Ukraine's forces operational, and
it is thought unlikely that the
republic could foot the bill.
Ukraine president Leonid
Kravchuk is adamant, however,
that the money will be found,
saying: "Guaranteeing real and
long-term independence of the
state will be my main task, not
the welfare of the population."
Maj Gen Georgiy Zhivitsa,
head of the Ukraine armed
forces, says: "Ukraine claims
rights for all units, equipment
and arms of the three military
districts on its territory, exclud-
ing strategic missiles and long-
range aviation, but including the
whole Black Sea Fleet, which
does not have strategic ships or
units." The Black Sea Fleet has
about 65 major warships and 21

Strategic Tu-160 Blackjacks remain under central control

submarines. The number of
forces personnel in the Ukraine
is about 470,000.
A delegation from the former
USSR defence ministry conduct-
ing negotiations in Kiev, led by
Col Gen Boris Pyankov, has
offered to divide the disputed
forces, allowing Ukraine to re-
tain half, the other half being
assigned to the joint forces of
the Commonwealth of Inde-
pendent States (CIS) — a for-
mula agreed by eight of the 11
CIS member states in Minsk on
30 December. Ukraine, Azer-
baijan and Moldova did not sign

the accord, under which the
non-strategic joint CIS forces
would be stationed in the mem-
ber states but under joint central
command. The republican ar-

mies would be commanded by
the republican governments.
The armed forces of the for-
mer USSR will continue to exist
until March, under Air Marshal
Evgeniy Shaposhnikov, former
USSR Defence Minister and act-
ing Commander-in-Chief of the
CIS Armed Forces.
• The release of nuclear weap-
ons will be agreed by the presi-
dent of Russia with the consent
of the presidents of Byeloruss,
Kazakhstan and Ukraine and
after consultation with the other
CIS heads of state. The agree-
ment, signed by all 11 states,
sets conditions for nuclear weap-
ons in Ukraine, which will "...re-
main under the joint strategic
forces command for dismantling
by the end of 1994, including
dismantling of tactical nuclear
arms before 1 July, 1992". •

Falcons face threat of grounding G

rounding of Dassault Fal-
con business jets powered
by the latest version of Garrett's
TFE731 turbofan has been rec-
ommended by the engine
manufacturer after two engines
had suffered in-flight gearbox
failures.

The grounding is precaution-
ary and affects fewer than 20
re-engined Falcon 20 twinjets
and Falcon 900B trijets powered
by the TFE731-5B, says Garrett.
On 17 December, 1991, a
TFE731-5B was shut down in
flight by the crew of a European-
based Falcon 900. On stripping
down the engine, Garrett found
that a sun gear, which provides
the input to the planetary fan-
drive gearbox, had fractured.
The engine had recently been
converted by Garrett from
TFE731-5A to -5B standard, and

had logged 7h in the new config-
uration. The A to B conversion
increases thrust from 20kN
(4,5001b) to 21.1kN, and in-
volves changing the gears driv-
ing the fan.
On 27 December, 1991, the
crew of the same Falcon 900
shut down a second engine in
flight. This engine had also been
converted from -5A to -5B speci-
fication, and had logged 8h in its
new configuration. Garrett says
that preliminary indications sug-
gest a gearbox failure.
Garrett has recommended that
operators of TFE731-5B-pow-
ered Falcons do not use their
aircraft until the company has
examined all three engines from
the Falcon 900, which will prob-
ably be later in January. Garrett
says the fleet comprises a mix of
new and converted -5Bs. •

USAir agrees in principle

to operate Trump Shuttle
U

SAir has reached an agree-
ment in principle to operate
the Trump Shuttle for up to ten
years, with an option to buy
after five years. Northwest Air-
lines reached a similar agree-
ment in July 1991, but dropped
out after failing to strike a deal
with unions on operating the
former Eastern Air Lines shuttle
service linking New York, Wash-
ington DC and Boston.
USAir hopes to begin operat-
ing the Trump Shuttle as early
as February. Under the agree-
ment, the airline will pay $16
million for the operating rights
and an option to buy 40% of the
airline. Banks which loaned de-
veloper Donald Trump $370
million to buy the Shuttle from
Eastern in 1989 would own the
remaining 60%.
The Trump deal is the latest
in a series of moves which
strengthens Pittsburgh-based
USAir's presence in the north-
eastern USA. In 1991, the airline
bought the former Eastern hub
at Philadelphia from Midway
Airlines for $67.5 million; in
November, it reached an agree-

ment to buy the former Eastern
terminal at New York's LaGuar-
dia Airport from Continental
Airlines for $61 million; and, in
December, it agreed to buy
Trans World Airlines' routes to
London from Baltimore and

Philadelphia for $50 million.
The Continental deal, if ap-
proved by the bankruptcy court
overseeing that airline's reorgan-
isation, will give USAir addi-
tional slots at both LaGuardia
and Washington National, where
it is already the dominant car-
rier. The renamed USAir Shuttle
will increase that dominance and
bring the airline into direct com-
petition with the Delta Shuttle,
which Delta Air Lines acquired
from Pan American World Air-
ways in 1991 for $139 million.
USAir hopes that it will begin
serving the former Trans Work'.
Airlines routes on 1 March. A
present, the airline operates to
London only from its Charlotte
North Carolina, hub. TWA re
tains only one London route
from its St Louis base, having
sold three to American Airline
in 1991 for $445 million.

6 FLIGHT INTERNATIONAL 8 - 14 January, 19S