

Flight International welcomes letters on any aspect of the aerospace industry. Please write to:

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The opinions on this page do not necessarily represent those of the editor. Flight International cannot publish letters without name and address. Letters must be no more than 250 words in length.

**CRASHES****Exonerate the Chinook pilots**

I refer to the report of the crash-landing near Basra on 2 May 2003 of a Royal Air Force Chinook that, amongst others, was carrying Major General Robin Brims commander of the British Forces in Basra. Fuel pressure was reported as having collapsed, leading to the engines suddenly cutting out, while the aircraft was at 100 ft (30m). This caused the Chinook to nose dive into the ground, but extremely capable piloting narrowly averted disaster and the loss of all onboard.

This is an interesting parallel to the Chinook of the the same type that crashed on the Mull of Kintyre on 2 June 1994 for as yet unexplained reasons, when all onboard perished. Notwithstanding that the RAF's board of enquiry could not apportion blame, the pilots were accused of gross negligence by two senior RAF "reviewing officers" who were in direct line of command, hardly an unbiased situation. Five separate investigations over the years maintained that the cause of the accident cannot be established on the known facts and that the pilots cannot be blamed without "any doubt whatsoever", according to the RAF's very own rules. The pilots have not yet been exonerated.

Several possible causes for the Mull of Kintyre crash have been mooted, including electronic fuel control malfunctions, possibly caused by electromagnetic interference (EMI), particularly the effect of the powerful UK TETRA network mobile telephones used by public services and military personnel, for example, and the unadmitted suspicion that such a call was made to or from the aircraft at the time of the crash. Can anyone who was in the Basra Chinook crash-landing offer an assurance that no-one was using a portable communications device in the cabin?

Fairness, if nothing else, dictates that the Mull of Kintyre disaster should be given a fair hearing particularly in the wake of last year's Lords select committee finding that the pilots could not be blamed.

**Capt Ralph Kohn FRAeS**

Compiler of the Macdonald report (April 2000),  
Surrey, UK

**Protectionism?  
the USA is just  
as guilty**

Re Paul Lewis's article "USA blasts A400M engine choice" (*Flight International*, 13-19 May). For Mr Lieberman to call this blatant protectionism is typical of the USA kettle calling the European pot black.

If you fit any US equipment to a European military aircraft, the USA retains a veto on its export sales. Experience, time and time again, has shown that when the USA vetoes a European military aircraft sales bid, it then offers instead an all-US aircraft to the customer. THAT is "blatant protectionism".

The USA has tried every trick in the book to kill off the A400M programme – the disastrous Lockheed Martin C-130J option to existing C-130 customers, for example, plus endless pressure on the UK to purchase the Boeing C-17 instead of the A400M. This follows the experiences with the engine in the Gripen, the TI radar in the Tornado, economic pressure on Ger-

many to purchase the Boeing Hornet 2000 instead of the Eurofighter and, when that failed, the endless efforts to force Germany to select a US radar for the Eurofighter. All blatant USA protectionism.

Why aren't the USA's "tricks" more widely publicised? Why isn't the full justification for selecting a non-US engine for the A400M spelt out – cost is not the only selection criterion, especially if Europe wishes to retain independent export options.

**E G Stickley**  
Military Aircraft Spares  
Poole, UK

**Why no old  
Brits at Paris?**

So at the Paris air show celebrating the 100th anniversary of aviation not one single aircraft has been entered as being of British or UK origin?

What a sad, sad, reflection of how our country (and industry) has been led and managed over the last few years. (Or is this some ridiculous political act in regard to the French stance on the Iraq conflict?)

Furthermore, if Concorde is able to make a fly-past at the show I hope everybody watching reflects that for the first time in the history of civilisation a more rapid form of transport is being eliminated in favour of a slower one. Truly history in the making!

**Peter Johnson**  
Gloucester, UK

**Regional jets  
are just small**

It seems to me from your issue on regional aircraft (*Flight International* 13-19 May) that there is really no such thing as a regional jet or regional airline industry, merely small aircraft and bigger aircraft and those who can operate them profitably and those who cannot. In the USA, the existence of a separate regional industry seems to have nothing to do with the ordinary economics of the real world, and everything to do with labour relations. It is an entirely artificial creation, much as the whole notion of codeshares.

**Tony Kilbride**  
Newdigate, Surrey, UK

**15-22 June**

**Paris Air Show**  
Paris, France  
exposants@salon-du-bourget.fr  
www.paris-air-show.com

**19-22 June**

**Kehl Air Show**  
Kehl, Germany  
info@aero-club-kehl.de

**14-17 July**

**International Air & Space Symposium & Exhibition**  
Dayton, Ohio, USA  
Tel: +1 703 264 7530  
merries@aiaa.org  
www.aiaa.org/dayton2003

**18-20 July**

**Royal International Air Tattoo**  
RAF Fairford, UK  
www.airtattoo.intheuk.com

**19-24 August**

**MAKS Airshow**  
Moscow, Russia  
www.maks.ru

**30 August-1 September**

**Canadian International Airshow**  
Toronto, Canada  
admin@cias.org  
www.cias.org

**8-12 September**

**Aerospace Conference and Exhibition**  
Montreal, Canada  
Tel: +1 604 473 9664  
info@aerospace-na.com

**9-12 September**

**WAEA**  
Seattle, Washington, USA  
www.waea.org

**14-17 September**

**ACI-NA 12th Annual Conference**  
Tampa Bay, Florida, USA  
Tel: +1 202 293 8500 ext 3019  
apeters@aci-na.org

**28-30 September**

**Cargo Facts 2003**  
Seattle, Washington, USA  
Tel: +1 206 587 6537  
kkoch@cargo-facts.com

**7-9 October**

**NBAA**  
Orlando, Florida, USA  
Tel: +1 202 783-9000  
www.nbaa.org

**21-22 October**

**Aircraft Asset Management**  
New York, USA  
events@everestevents.co.uk

For a full list of events see  
www.flightinternational.com