

## Strategic Airlift Interim Solution (SALIS)



**NATO member countries have pooled their resources to charter special aircraft that give the Alliance the capability to transport heavy equipment across the globe by air.**

The multinational airlift consortium is chartering six Antonov An-124-100 transport aircraft, which are capable of handling 'outsize' (unusually large) cargo.

The Russian and Ukrainian Antonov aircraft are being used as an interim solution to meet shortfalls in the Alliance's strategic airlift capabilities, pending deliveries of Airbus A400M aircraft. This is why the project is called SALIS - Strategic Airlift Interim Solution.

The consortium includes 16 NATO nations (Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, the United Kingdom) and two Partner nations (Finland and Sweden).

This is one of two complementary initiatives aimed at providing NATO with strategic airlift capabilities. The other is the Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC), under which ten NATO countries plus two Partner countries have purchased three Boeing C-17 transport aircraft.

### **Components**

The SALIS contract provides two Antonov An-124-100 aircraft on full-time charter, two more on six days' notice and another two on nine days' notice. The countries have committed to using the aircraft for a minimum of 2000 flying hours per year.

A single Antonov An-124-100 can carry up to 120 tons of cargo. NATO has used Antonovs in the past to transport troops to and from Afghanistan, deliver aid to the victims of the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, and airlift African Union peacekeepers in and out of Darfur.

### **Evolution**

During their annual Spring meeting in Brussels in June 2003, NATO Ministers of Defence signed letters of intent on strategic air- and sealift. Eleven nations signed the letter of intent on airlift: Canada, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal and Turkey. At the June 2004 Istanbul Summit, Defence Ministers of 15 countries signed a memorandum of understanding to achieve an operational airlift capacity for outsize cargo by 2005, using up to six Antonov An-124-100 transport aircraft. In addition, the Defence Ministers of Bulgaria and Romania signed a letter of intent to join the consortium.

On 23 January 2006, the 15 countries signed a contract with Ruslan SALIS GmbH, a subsidiary of the Russian company Volga Dnepr, based in Leipzig.

On 23 March 2006, the 15 original signatories were joined by Sweden at a special ceremony in Leipzig to mark the entry into force of the multinational contract. The contract's initial duration was for three years but this has now been extended until 31 December 2010 and can be further extended until 31 December 2012. Finland and Poland have also now joined the SALIS programme.

Volga-Dnepr and Ukraine's ADB provide the SALIS aircraft and also provide AN-124-100 aircraft to support the Afghanistan mission, with weekly sorties from Germany to Afghanistan and back, under contractual arrangements with the Allied Movement Coordination Centre at Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe.

## **Mechanisms**

Strategic airlift co-ordination is carried out by the SALIS Co-ordination Cell collocated with the Movement Coordination Centre Europe (MCCE) in Eindhoven, the Netherlands.

Source: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_50106.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50106.htm)  
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