

VAYU

IV/2020

Aerospace & Defence Review



**The Vigorous Dragon
Shaheen Air Exercises
Facing the Dragon**

**Metal Dragons
Flanker to Flanker
'Tigers' and 'Lions'**

The NATO Multinational MRTT Fleet



First A330 MRTTs arrive

In the Netherlands, the two McDonnell Douglas KDC-10 air-air-refueling aircraft are nearing the end of their operational life. One of the two KDC-10s was retired at the end of 2019 and the second KDC-10 will be retired at the end of 2020 or early 2021. These tanker aircraft will be replaced by the Airbus A330 Multi Role Tanker Transport (MRTT).

An international consortium, the *Multinational MRTT Unit (MMU)* will receive eight A330 MRTT aircraft, of which five will be based at Eindhoven AB in the Netherlands as their Main Operating Base and the remaining three aircraft based at Cologne Bonn Airport. These aircraft will become part of the NATO Multinational MRTT Fleet (MMF).

The MMU is multi-national, comprising the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Norway and the Czech Republic and every country will pay for and get a number of flying hours. The A330 MRTT is truly multirole besides its main role as tanker, these aircraft can be used in the passenger and cargo transport role, or in the MEDEVAC role and of the eight aircraft delivered, at least one A330 will be available in the MEDEVAC role.





Mixed flight line, with example of the A330 MRTT, KDC-10 and C-17 Globemaster III

The A330 MRTT aircraft will be able to refuel all NATO aircraft with a fixed boom for the F-15s, F-16s, F-35s; and two hose systems for refueling the Mirages, Rafales, Gripen and Eurofighters. This will make the A330 more flexible than the KDC-10s with only their boom.

At Eindhoven Air Base, the European Air Transport Command (EATC) fulfills a coordinating role in allocation of NATO resources regarding transport and air-refueling.

In mid-July 2020, the first A330 MRTT aircraft (with Dutch registration T-055) was officially delivered by Airbus and accepted by the MMU. One day later this first A330 MRTT (T-055) was flown from Getafe in Spain to Eindhoven in the Netherlands, and after landing, received the now traditional water-shower by the Eindhoven Fire Department. 🦋

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