In the past forty years NATO has failed to achieve overall co-ordination of the production of major equipment, despite some well-known projects, such as the F-16 fighter aircraft. This is not for lack of trying; from the beginning NATO made efforts to co-ordinate defence production in Western Europe. The Additional Military Production (AMP) programme of the Brussels Treaty Organisation of March 1949 was the first attempt in that direction. Aircraft orders took the biggest share of this programme. In NATO it was not until June 1952 that a concrete programme for co-production of aircraft was accepted. In both cases American military assistance played a significant role. It is argued here that US military assistance was helpful to initiate European production, but not a stimulus to achieve a co-ordinated production effort among the European countries.

THE EUROPEAN AIRCRAFT INDUSTRY AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

In aeronautics, jet-propulsion was a relatively new technology in design and manufacture in the 1940s. Although the USA gave priority to the development of her own jet-fighters and bombers, the British were the leading producers until the end of the 1950s. Gradually, the Americans were to catch up on the development of airframes and, later, on jet-engines as well. Except for the British industry, there was no aerospace industry of any importance in Europe. For that reason, the United Kingdom played a predominant role in the efforts to co-ordinate the production of aircraft.

In March 1949 the members of the Brussels Treaty Organisation accepted an additional military production programme of $600 million over the next two years. Orders for the aircraft industry
accounted for almost half of the AMP programme. This priority was in accordance with the decisions of the Ministers of Defence that tactical air forces had to be built up.\(^2\) Under the AMP programme, the production of jet-fighters in the United Kingdom increased. Moreover, France undertook to manufacture the British *Vampire* aircraft and Nene jet-engines, as well as to develop a fighter of its own design. A joint Benelux programme for the production of British Gloster *Meteors* was also executed, in which Belgium manufactured the engines, and the Netherlands was responsible for the production of the airframes.\(^3\) The United States expressed its willingness to render assistance to the AMP programme. Items requiring dollar payment, such as raw materials and machine tools, would be furnished by the USA.

In the end, American assistance did not come up to the high expectations of the Europeans.\(^4\) The procedure of requesting assistance and the following lengthy negotiations between the USA and the Western Union countries caused great delays. The AMP programme was not put into effect until 1950, while in some countries, where the military production had to start from scratch, the delay was even greater.\(^5\) In the course of time, the AMP programme was gradually incorporated into larger NATO programmes.

**NATO INSTITUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF DEFENCE PRODUCTION**

In NATO a Military Production and Supply Board (MPSB) was established in November 1949. It had to review the military supply situation, and to recommend means of increasing the available supplies. In the MPSB the member states were represented by a civil servant at the sub-ministerial level. The MPSB depended on the cooperation of both the member states and other organs within NATO for essential information. The military authorities, notably the Standing Group, had to provide the MPSB with information concerning basic military requirements. They also had to draw up a list of the types of equipment which were acceptable from a military point of view. The MPSB encountered difficulties in obtaining information from individual countries. Initially neither the United States nor the United Kingdom were willing to supply data on their production capacity to NATO bodies. The MPSB also thought the military authorities to be too slow in furnishing information.