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gram and other avionics improvements. "Then and only then, we might eventually fill out that bathtub."

But the big "if," is that ton mile requirements are expected to increase. "What the latest analysis, to be released in September, will show is that we need to haul more than 49 million ton miles per day."

Druyun doesn't believe the day will ever come when the Air Force can concentrate on buying and flying a single airlifter.

"I still believe there needs to be a mix of airlifters," she said. "The C-17 fulfills a very special niche that we have. When you look at what needs to be hauled in a theater, then you really need a C-130J."

Druyun said they're trying to modernize the C-130 fleet and that they have the requirement to buy additional ones as well as the stretched versions of that aircraft.

Druyun's office has played a major role in encouraging our allies to procure or lease the C-17.

Charleston will play a key role in training Royal Air Force aircrews and maintenance personnel when they sign the lease for four aircraft sometime in September.

"We played a very central role and I had four visits to the British Ministry of Defense between October and

February. We formed a C-17 team for the sale or lease to the Brits. We basically went over there and said we would like to lease or sell you C-17s. We will allow you to use our training facilities and our flexible sustainment contract. We are going to open everything up that we have today in terms of our capability for the C-17 for the British government to tap into so that they don't have to set up this separate capability, which can really drive up the cost of acquiring that kind of capability. We were absolutely amazed that they took us up on our offer."

"Clearly coming out of Kosovo, when you look at Canada and Australia, they were not really able to play since they did not have the airlift capability. We are working today with the Canadian government and are beginning to work with the Australian government to be able to sell them some C-17s so they can have some of that airlift capability to participate with the various allies."

"We, the acquisition community, are also working with Boeing to see if we can begin to market the C-17 in Europe. The biggest challenge NATO would have is the issue of money since they are on a very tight budget."

"Interoperability is key when you go into any conflict and the C-17 fills a real niche marketplace for airlift and we are trying to take advantage of that. By taking advantage of that, I am able to bring down the cost of that airplane and keep the produc-

tion line open longer, and that is very important when you look at the long-term airlift needs of this country. It is important to us to have at least 10 to 15 aircraft produced per year which means a cheaper cost to the USAF as we fill out the needs identified in September."

Charleston has been busy preparing to bed-down the Special Operation Low Level mission next year. The base flew this mission with spe-

cially equipped C-141s until it was transferred to McGuire AFB, N.J. in April 1999.

"I think Charleston has a great airlift capability, now that they are picking up the SOLL mission for the special operations forces and that is coming back to Charleston from McGuire AFB," Druyun said. "I think that speaks to the importance in terms of the role that Charleston AFB will play in airlift."



courtesy photo

A flight crew member from the 437th Aircraft Generation Squadron prepares to launch a C-17A from Moron Air Base, Spain, in June. Darleen Druyun, principal deputy assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition and Management and a strong supporter of the C-17, visited Charleston and praised the aircraft's support of worldwide contingencies and operations.