



# CC-Air Ramstein

Allied Air Component Command Headquarters Ramstein

Public Information Office



## Press Release

### Turkish Air Force deploys F 16 Fighter Jets for Air Policing of Baltic States



On 31 March 2006 the Turkish Air Force started to provide Quick Reaction Alert (Interceptors) assets to the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for a period of three months. For this purpose Turkey deployed four F-16 interceptors from Turkish Air Base Bandirma to the Lithuanian town of Siauliai. The team involves about 100 members of the Turkish Air Force, who will be stationed in Lithuania for this period. To mark the assignment of the Turkish aircraft to a

NATO command, a transfer of authority ceremony was conducted in Siauliai on 31 March 2006.

Since April 2004, the Lithuanian town hosts guest aircraft from NATO member countries rotating every three months ensuring the protection under the NATO Integrated Air Defence System also includes the Baltic countries. The support of NATO allies is required as long as the new NATO member countries do not meet the technical and logistic prerequisites to ensure the integrity of their airspace using their own assets. Until end of March 2006, Polish MiG 29 aircraft furnished the QRA(I) assets for the three countries on Baltic Sea.

QRA(I) aircraft are as old as NATO. In the past they were to muster a first resistance against a potential attack by the Warsaw Pact forces. Instead of focusing on a surprise attack launched by a massive military force, the NATO Integrated Air Defence System has meanwhile been geared more intensively towards an airborne terrorist attack. Time and again the QRA(I) have been activated because the civilian Air Traffic Control has lost radio contact to an aircraft. In this situation the QRA(I) pilot has to locate and identify the suspicious aircraft and – if possible – to try and help establish a proper radio link. In almost every instance the doubtful cases turned out to be harmless, and often the fighter aircraft were able to return to their airfield before they even established visual contact with the erroneous airspace intruder.

EDITORIAL STAFF:

CC-Air HQ Ramstein, Public Information Office  
Ramstein Air Base , Bldg 313  
66877 Ramstein – Miesenbach  
[www.airramstein.nato.int](http://www.airramstein.nato.int)

Tel.: 06371/402060 or 402063  
Fax: 06371/401093  
e-mail: [pio@airnorth.nato.int](mailto:pio@airnorth.nato.int)