

## German Luftwaffe Secures Baltic Airspace



Phantom in the Lithuanian Airspace (Source:German Luftwaffe/Archiv)

(Source: [www.luftwaffe.de](http://www.luftwaffe.de))

Šiauliai /Lithuania, 27 December 2011.

From 4 January 2012 on, NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission ensuring the integrity and security of the airspace above Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will again be accomplished by the Luftwaffe.

Germany is going to assume the task within the framework of the NATO Integrated Air Defence System (NATINADS) above the three Baltic States, taking over from Denmark. The Luftwaffe will execute the Baltic Air Policing mission until 27 April 2012 deploying F-4F Phantom fighter aircraft as a contingent led by Fighter Wing 71 "Richthofen" from Wittmund in the north of Germany.

### **Germany is a reliable ally**

During its enlargement in April 2004, NATO had committed itself to ensuring a comprehensive uniform standard of air surveillance and Air Policing across all its member States. Air Policing tasks over Slovenia e. g. are accomplished by Italy as a permanent task. For Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania the same task is executed in a sequence of coordinated contingents deployed from other member States under the NATO Baltic Air Policing (BAP) mission – on a rotational basis.

This NATO support is to ensure the required Air Policing capability as long as the supported States are building capabilities of their own in this field. This is the fifth time the Luftwaffe assumes the BAP task clearly reflecting that it is a reliable partner in multinational operations and fully accomplishes its contribution to NATO. Šiauliai air base in the north of Lithuania is again the venue for the Air Policing deployment.



A Phantom has landed at Siauliai Air Base (Source: German Luftwaffe/Michael Bertram)

## **Detailed planning**

This BAP mission has almost become a routine task for the Luftwaffe; however, it is being planned almost to the very detail. As a first step for this challenging project, site surveys were conducted to review and assess local conditions. The results provided the planning basis for the contingent to be deployed. Issues like accommodation, rations, aircraft parking, fuel supply and many others had to be sorted out. Back in northern Germany, this data was then used to calculate the volume of cargo for mission execution in Lithuania, required containers were procured and loaded. All in all, some 150 tons of material stuffed in 44 containers had to be shipped to Šiauliai by rail, sea, air and road transport.

## **A stock of spare parts is always required**

Among others, shipments included the so-called “6R package”. This odd name designates the stock of spare parts for an F-4F Phantom comprised of some 1,900 supply items that fit into nine containers. A deployment of this dimension means everything is needed from a small seal to a complete power pack, since all potential faults must be dealt with immediately. After all, permanent operational readiness is an absolute must during the deployment.

## **Timely, efficient planning**

Already on 27 December 2011, 45 members of the contingent deployed to Šiauliai to ensure a smooth handover by 4 January 2012. The main body deployed to Lithuania on 2 January 2012 and the contingent reached its full strength of about 100 members. The team from Wittmund is supported by various specialists from all over the German armed forces. E. g. the Air Force Ground Combat Support Regiment “Friesland” from Jever, also in northern Germany, provides fire fighters as augmentees. Forward Air Controllers from the Air Force tactical air command and control service deploy to the multinational Control and Reporting Centre at Kaunas, Lithuania, where they will augment technical staff from the three Baltic

States to generate and assess the air situational data and to provide command and control for the Quick Reaction Alert (Intercept) F-4F aircraft.

The Luftwaffe has carefully planned this deployment also enabling Fighter Wing 71 to take over a two-month deployment of their fighters to Iceland and provide effective surveillance of the airspace above this NATO member in the Atlantic.

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