

The Role of Joint Air Power – JAPCC Conference 2007

Lieutenant General Friedrich W. Ploeger's Closing Remarks

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now that we have reached the end of the conference, I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of you for your valuable contributions. The aim of the conference was to exchange ideas and opinions on the role of air power in expeditionary security and stability operations.

Let me pay a special thank you to our conference speakers, moderator and panellists. I think we have been really fortunate to have attracted the high calibre individuals that we did and they were invaluable, not only in giving us the views of airmen, but also from the land and maritime environment, academia and industry. This breadth of support has given us an excellent platform for our conference. I think we all agree that it has stimulated good discussion on a broad range of subjects. The panel discussions helped us to focus our thoughts on the conference theme and will motivate and enable us to refine the JAPCC conceptual paper, which apparently has the potential of filling a current void in NATO. We have just heard what the moderator had to say and I can assure you that we listened carefully to his assessment. My project team will analyse the outcome of this conference in order to identify the golden nuggets and to turn them into a concept of high standards. If we succeed, we can contribute quite a lot to the relevance of air and space power in NATO.

My thanks also go to the folks that made it happen, namely our own organising team, and the external supporting organisations.

Bottom line for this conference was a unanimity that air power remains very relevant, but that it needs to continue to evolve and transform. As a conference, I believe there was a good deal of agreement on the main topics and capabilities that NATO now needs to tackle.

Bottom line for the JAPCC is that this conference seems to confirm that most aspects of the JAPCC programme of work for 2007 are focused in the right areas. However, you have given us food for thought some new topics, together with thoughts on the relative priorities of our current projects. I am most grateful for your contributions in these areas and for your recognition that JAPCC can play an important role in the transformation of NATO air and space power.

The JAPCC is also very grateful for the financial contributions and I believe that we could offer real value for little money. When I recall the engaged discussion during the icebreaker, lunch and dinner, I can say that the so-called networking must have been a great success.

May I now direct your attention to the JAPCC conference in 2008? We plan to hold the conference on 14-16 October 2008.

The overall conference theme will be "Joint Air Power and Decision Superiority in the 21st Century."

Decision Superiority is one of NATO's Transformational Goals; and Information Superiority and the NATO Network Enabled Capabilities (NNEC) are the underpinning objective areas necessary to achieve the goal of Decision Superiority. During the conference we intend to put the spotlight on the capabilities required in these areas related to air and space in the joint environment.

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Our next conference will help to answer what network and platform capabilities are required to allow for better situational awareness at all levels of command to achieve decision superiority and which battle management strategies are to be applied for effective use of air power.

Both NATO and the nations continue to develop new technology and tools within the NNEC framework to improve situational awareness, which is the basis for better decisions. However, the management of air power assets should be adjusted to meet the new requirements of joint operations and incorporate the new capabilities of battle management systems and air platforms like the NATO E3 fleet. In addition, NATO should further exploit the use of space assets which have an ever increasing important role in today's operations. Dynamic processes are key for an efficient and effective use of airspace in response to the demands of agile and flexible missions.

You have received a flyer with the conference theme and date today as a reminder to mark it on your calendar. Please ensure that your colleagues are also invited to the next JAPCC conference. I hope we will all meet and discuss this very important issue for air power at this venue.

Until then, the entire JAPCC team wishes you a safe trip to your next destination and a very successful future.

Auf Wiedersehen at the JAPCC Conference next year!