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JAPCC CONFERENCE 2007

"The Role of Joint Air Power in Expeditionary Security and Stability Operations"

The third annual conference hosted by NATO's Joint Air Power Competence Centre, held from 16th until 18th October 2007, was established to discuss "The Role of Joint Air Power in Expeditionary Security and Stability Operations". Nowadays expeditionary security and stability operations, as characterized for NATO by operations in Afghanistan and by coalition operations in Iraq, are a great challenge for air power. More than 200 high-ranking military officers and civilians delegates from NATO and other nations, academics from international universities and research centres and representatives of military industries came together to have an exchange of information and knowledge between the participants presenting the Alliance in regard to joint air power. This exchange should serve as a venue through which to examine avenues for cooperation and collaboration as NATO looks to current and future air power requirements in support of its forces in theatre.

The focus of the conference is to publish a paper providing a frame work for considering the role of Air Power in exploiting and achieving strategic objectives at the operational level through tactical success in contemporary joint expeditionary security and stability type operations. The intent is for the paper to inform and shape future development of Air concepts, doctrine and capabilities, primarily through the JAPCC's development of the Concepts for Alliance Joint Air and Space Operations (CAFJASO) and to inform the development of Allied Joint Doctrine for Air and Space Operations (AJP-3.3).

Opening Remarks and Keynotes to the Conference

The conference was opened by General William T. Hobbins (USAF), Commander, U.S. Air Forces Europe; as well as Commander, Air Component Command, Ramstein; and Director JAPCC. In his opening remarks, he underscored that air power has proven itself absolutely essential in modern warfare. From its emergence in the First World War and maturation in the second, air power has been a major contributor to the Joint Battle and is essential to winning in today's coalition battle space. The aim of this conference is to explore the many aspects of how that joint integration of air and space power in traditional warfare is best translated into a decisive edge in expeditionary security and stability operations. NATO is in the centre of just such an operation in Afghanistan during a time when these types of "mid-spectrum" asymmetrical conflicts do not appear to be lessening in number.

That is why the JAPCC is actively involved with joint coalition agencies throughout NATO and its partner nations to better integrate air and space power and thereby provide better support to security and stability operations, such as in Afghanistan.

Special Guest of Honour was the Commander, Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum, General Egon Ramms (GE Army). In his keynote he underlined that in military air theory, despite some updates in the 1990s, doctrine has stayed focused on a major inter-state conflict. Conflicts with non-state actors, known variously as small wars, Military Operations Other Than War, Low Intensity Conflict, and including Counter-Insurgency Operations, are now the prevalent form of warfare, and could remain so for the foreseeable future given the long war on global terrorism. Western armed forces, normally configured for conventional warfare, have often struggled to adapt to such unconventional operations. Hence the US Army and US Marine Corps have recently revised their counter-insurgency doctrine, and the US Air Force

revised its “Air Force Doctrine for Irregular Warfare”. Such conflicts are often viewed as land-centric but increasingly airmen will need to consider how the air environment can be exploited to facilitate – if not deliver – non-kinetic, cognitive effects, as well as more traditional kinetic effects.

Centers of Excellence like the JAPCC are NATO’s drivers for change and innovation. He pointed out as an important fact that the threat has changed, and the requirements to respond have changed. Technology, capabilities and environment have changed too. Now it is the job of the leaders of NATO transformation, to tie it all together and bring about the effects NATO needs in the new battle space to succeed. In Afghanistan, sophisticated IEDs are now the biggest killer of ISAF troops, but only a handful of nations have any counter-IED expertise, training or equipment. Suicide bombers are an increasing threat, but only a few nations can provide actionable intelligence to address that threat. We engage complex targets requiring precision and video surveillance, but again, only a few nations can deliver those capabilities.

The keynote address was followed by a presentation “NATO’S Allied Command Transformation” from Lieutenant General James N. Soligan, Deputy Chief of Staff Transformation HQ SACT, and another one named “Air Power in Expeditionary Security & Stability Operations” by Air Commodore Garfield Porter, Assistant Director Transformation JAPCC.

Panel Discussions

The JAPCC identified a number of problems concerning the “Role of Joint Air Power in Expeditionary Security and Stability Operations”. Therefore and as a part of the conference, four key areas were discussed in panels.

- Panel 1 – The Comprehensive Approach
- Panel 2 – Command & Control and Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance
- Panel 3 – Kinetic and Non-Kinetic Effects
- Panel 4 – The Role of Joint Air Power in Reconstruction and Development

These panel discussions concluded that air power has can offer a lot in tackling terrorist and insurgent threats, because there are no front lines, and ground forces cannot control the ground as deemed necessary to be successful in operations

As mentioned by Lieutenant General Friedrich W. Ploeger, Executive Director JAPCC, in his closing remarks, the aim of the conference was to exchange ideas and opinions on the role of air power in expeditionary security and stability operations. The panel discussions helped to focus JAPCC’s 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.

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

He underscored that JAPCC can play an important role in the transformation of NATO air and space power. As a result NATO should develop detailed policies and doctrines to guide the future development of joint air power and fully integrate them into future combined and joint operations.

The next JAPCC conference is planned to be conducted on 14-16 October 2008.

About JAPCC

The Mission of the JAPCC is to provide innovative and timely advice and subject matter expertise, both proactively and responsively, for the transformation of Joint Air and Space Power to the Alliance and Nations. Designated as a Centre of Excellence, with a strategic and operational level focus, JAPCC offers independent thought, analysis and solutions. The mandate is to examine all aspects of air and space power as pertain to NATO current and future requirements. The JAPCC is headed by a 4-star Director, General William T. Hobbins (USAF) and a 3-star Executive Director, Lieutenant General Friedrich W. Ploeger (GE AF). Established in January 2005, the JAPCC is supported today by 17 NATO nations.