

Joint Air and Space Power Conference 2005

JAPCC Executive Director's Closing Remarks

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

As we wrap up, I just want to take a few minutes to pull some key points from what has been a most interesting Conference.

Before I do that, let me first pay a special thank you to our Conference speakers, Panel Chairmen and Panel Members. 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 environment, academia and industry. This breadth of support has given us an excellent platform for our Conference and I think we are all agreed that it has stimulated good discussion on a broad range of subjects.

So, where do we go from here? These are perhaps some of the key points that we identified:

- We need to address the growing capability gap between lead nations and new or slower nations.
- And as we address the gap, the need to transform exists not just within NATO as a whole but also nationally to lessen the gap.
- Some specific areas NATO needs to focus on and address to remain relevant are Space, Near-Space, Virtual Joint Mission Rehearsal, and the rapidly evolving role of the UAV.
- We also need to reassess NATO exercise requirements and objectives from a truly joint perspective.
- Interoperability remains an area where much work remains to be done and we also need to develop a new relationship with our industry partners.
- EBAO is an important area in need of much development. In particular, we need to broaden it to include joint considerations and also to include other governmental and non-governmental actors.
- Many areas of doctrine need updating. If such documents are to be useful in support of current operations, there is also a need to speed up the NATO doctrine development process.
- We need to do more to tackle the weak areas that still exist within NATO Air: in particular, Strategic Air Lift, heavy helicopter lift, and areas such as logistics and force protection. To pay for these in an era of dwindling budgets, we need a new focus on things like role specialisation, plus the removal of excess or redundant capabilities.

Bottom line for this Conference was a unanimity that air and space 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. I think we were also agreed of the importance of continuing to convince others, not just ourselves, of the utility of air and space power.

Bottom line for the JAPCC is that this Conference seems to confirm that most aspects of the JAPCC programme of work for 2006 are focused in the right areas. However, you have given us food for thought on one or two 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 power.