FUTURE AIR FORCE CONFERENCE 2025

Prague, 17–18 September

FINAL REPORT 2025

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Content

Organisers

UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE CZECH AIR FORCE

FUTURE FORCES FORUM is a not-for-profit organisation that is an integral part of the European defence and security community, organising trade fairs, conferences, and seminars for the defence and security sector. Its activities are based on in-depth research and the expertise of in-house specialists and external collaborators in the fields of defence policy, acquisition policy and strategy, and armed forces capability development.

DEFCON s.r.o. specializes in the supply of spare parts, modernization, service activities, and the training of pilots and ground personnel. An integral part of its operations is organising exhibitions and conferences for Czech entities both in the Czech Republic and abroad.

DALI Consulting provides a wide range of consulting, training, and organizational services. Our goal is to offer clients comprehensive and professional support across various disciplines. DALI Consulting is your trusted partner for effective solutions, growth support, and project implementation, with an emphasis on quality and professionalism.

Intro

Dear participants, partners, and attendees of the Future Air Force Conference 2025,

We are pleased to present the final report from the Future Air Force Conference 2025, which took place on September 17–18, 2025, in the pleasant surroundings of Prague's Grand Hotel International. This event provided a unique opportunity for commanders, representatives of the defense industry, and subject matter experts in the field of aviation to meet, share knowledge, and discuss visionary concepts for the future of the air forces.

We reflected on the key challenges and opportunities, particularly in the important area of aviation personnel training, that we face in a rapidly evolving world of technology and geopolitical change. The conference program included inspiring lectures, dynamic panel discussions, and practical demonstrations presenting innovations in aviation technology, strategic planning, and international cooperation.

We would like to thank all participants for their active involvement and valuable exchange of views, which made this event so successful. We believe that the ideas and conclusions formulated here will help us shape a clear vision for our future in aviation.

We look forward to further cooperation in 2026 and to monitoring the progress we will achieve in the coming years.

The organizing team
of the Future Air Force Conference 2025


CONFERENCE 2025

Opening remarks of the Czech Air Force Commander Major General Petr Čepelka

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, colleagues, and partners,

It is a great honor for me to welcome you to the third annual Future Air Force conference. Every year, we meet here with the same goal—to find ways to take our air force one step further. This event has become a fixture in the professional discussion about the future of aviation, and I am pleased that we are meeting here again – soldiers, air force subject matter experts, representatives of state administration, academia, and the defense industry. And I am convinced that now is the time when we must think more boldly than ever before.

Our air forces face challenges that know no boundaries or traditional divisions of roles. Future conflicts will be fast, complex, and relentless. Modern conflicts show that the key to success is flexibility, the ability to respond quickly, and the effective use of all available resources.

To achieve this, we must focus on three areas that this conference is going to cover:

Preparing air personnel for future operations

Training people. Technology is important, but people are crucial—pilots, operators, and technicians. We must give them not only knowledge but also the ability to think creatively, improvise, and cope with unexpected situations.

Our pilots and specialists must be prepared to face scenarios that we may not even be able to fully predict today. This requires not only a thorough knowledge of technology and procedures but also the ability to act independently, adapt, and cooperate across departments and with alliance partners.

Involving the defense industry in the training process

Cooperation with industry. It is not enough to simply buy new systems. Training and preparation must go hand in hand with technological development. Only then will our crews be ready to make full use of every new tool right from the start.

If we want to keep pace with technological developments, we must view industry and the military as partners from the very beginning. Only then can we ensure that training corresponds to what our soldiers will actually use in operations.

Use of unmanned systems – Manned-Unmanned Concept

Unmanned vehicles. These are no longer just an accessory. Unmanned systems have become an integral part of the modern battlefield. It is not only about reconnaissance or support for ground forces – a whole range of possibilities is opening up to increase our ability to act effectively, quickly, and with less risk to the lives of our people. They are force multipliers that give us eyes, ears, and capabilities in places where it would previously have been too risky to operate. Those who can integrate them gain a huge advantage.

Our strength will not rest solely on machines. It will rest on people who know how to work together, on partners who know how to listen, and on the courage to push boundaries. And this conference is a place where we can bring together ideas, experiences, and visions. I am convinced that this conference will help us find answers to the questions of how to connect these areas and use them to benefit the security of the Czech Republic and the entire Alliance.

Thank you for accepting the invitation, and I wish everyone an inspiring and open discussion.

Thank you for your attention.

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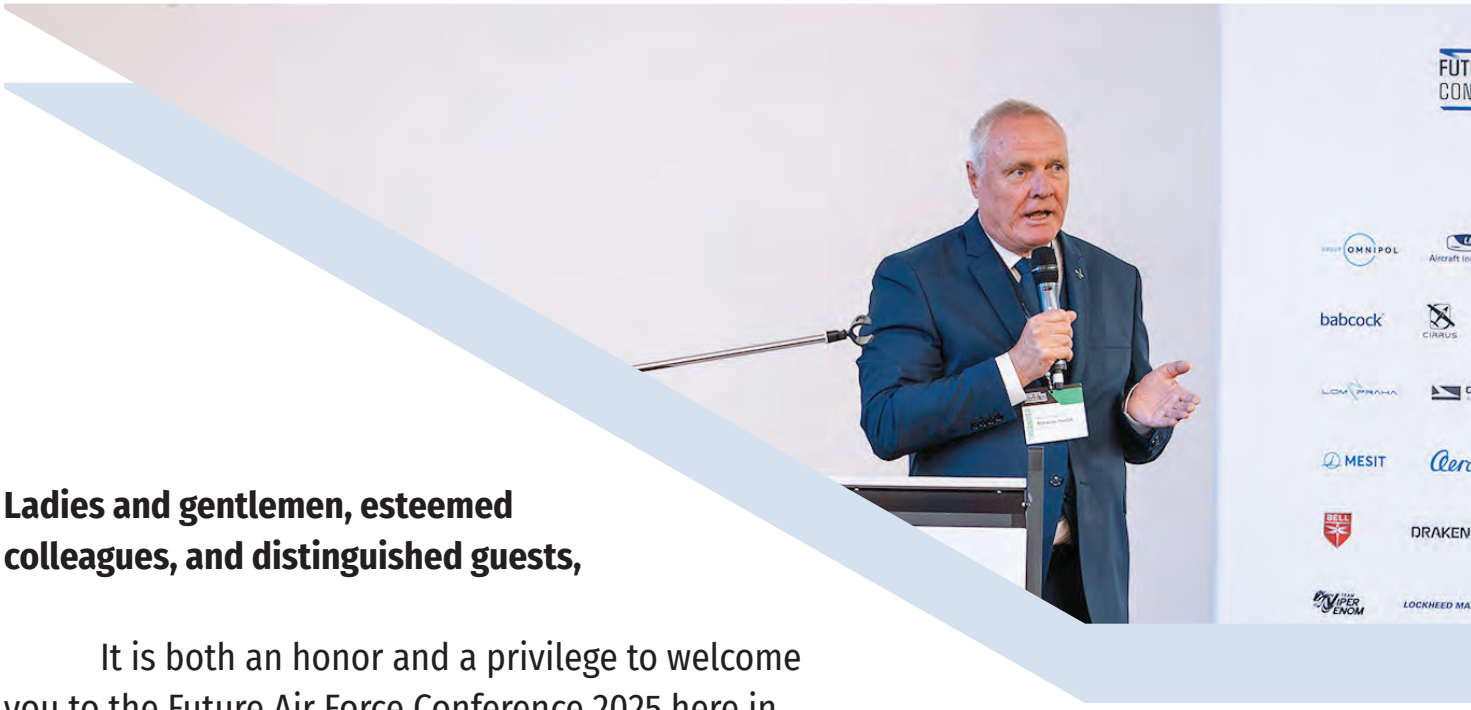
From the Chair



Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed colleagues, and distinguished guests,

It is both an honor and a privilege to welcome you to the Future Air Force Conference 2025 here in beautiful Prague. Over the past two days, we have come together as a diverse group of professionals, experts, and visionaries to explore critical advancements and strategies for shaping the future of airborne defense and military aviation.

As we navigate an era marked by rapid technological advancements and evolving geopolitical landscapes, the need for an agile, innovative, and forward-thinking air force has never been more pressing. This conference serves as a platform for us to share insights, challenge conventional thinking, and collaborate on solutions that will define the next chapter of aerial warfare.

Our agenda is filled with thought, maybe even provoking presentations and engaging discussions led by thought leaders and genuine subject matter experts in the field. We will delve into the implications of emerging technologies—such as unmanned systems and artificial intelligence—and of leadership for our air forces, as well as foster dialogue on international cooperation and strategic partnerships that are essential for ensuring global security.

Thank you for being here, and I look forward to the rich discussions and insights that are sure to emerge over the next two days.

Major General (ret) Bohuslav Dvořák
Chairman, Future Air Force 2025 Conference

Executive Summary

Aim of the conference

The Future Air Force Conference 2025 aims to foster a comprehensive dialogue among military leaders, policymakers, defense industry experts, and academic scholars regarding the evolving landscape of air power and its strategic implications in the coming years. This event is crucial, as it addresses pivotal advancements in technology, operational strategies, and geopolitical dynamics that directly impact the efficacy and readiness of air forces globally.

As air power remains a cornerstone of modern military operations, it is imperative for commanders and leadership within air forces to stay ahead of emerging trends and threats. The conference provides a unique platform for participants to explore innovative solutions, share best practices, and gain insights into cutting-edge technologies such as autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, and next-generation aircraft. By attending, leaders can enhance their understanding of how these advancements can be integrated into their operational frameworks to improve mission success and ensure strategic superiority.

Furthermore, the event emphasizes the importance of international collaboration and information sharing. In an era where threats are often transnational, building alliances and partnerships is essential for effective deterrence and defense. Participants will have the opportunity to engage with their peers from around the world, share lessons learned, and discuss joint initiatives that can lead to enhanced interoperability and collective security.

Ultimately, the Future Air Force Conference 2025 seeks to empower air force commanders and leaders with the knowledge, tools, and networks needed to navigate the complexities of modern warfare and to lead their forces into future multi-domain operations characterized by rapid change and uncertainty. By guiding discussions on strategic vision, operational readiness, and technological integration, the conference aims to prepare air forces for the challenges of tomorrow, ensuring they remain formidable and resilient in a dynamic global security environment.

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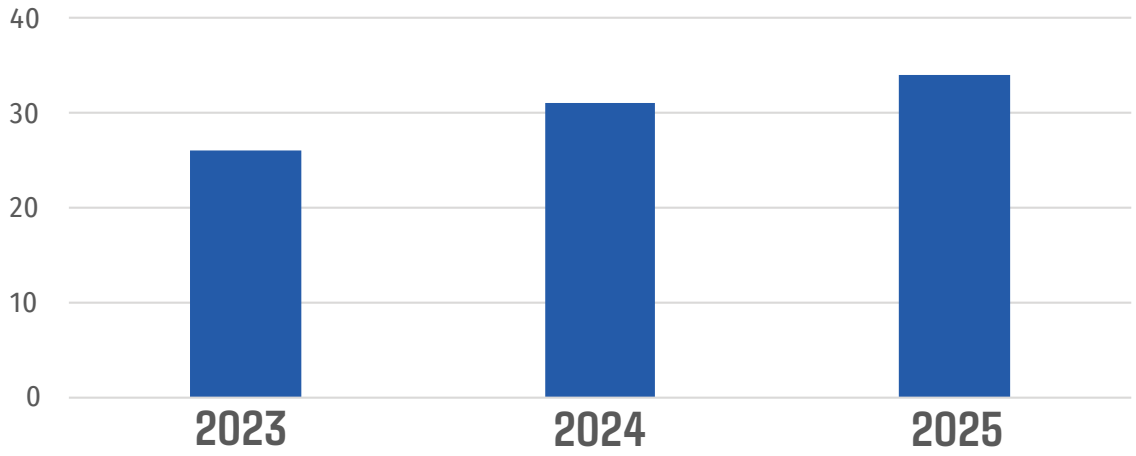
Participating Nations

Since its inception in 2023, the Future Air Force Conference has experienced steady and significant growth, both in scope and international participation. The number of represented nations has increased from 26 in 2022 to 33 this year, reflecting the event's expanding relevance and recognition within the global defence and AEROSPACE community. Each new edition has not only deepened cooperation among long-standing nations but also welcomed several nations participating for the first time, further enriching the exchange of perspectives, experiences, and innovative approaches to modern air power development and training. This growing diversity underscores the conference's role as a truly international platform for collaboration and knowledge-sharing among allied and partner air forces.

Participanting nations



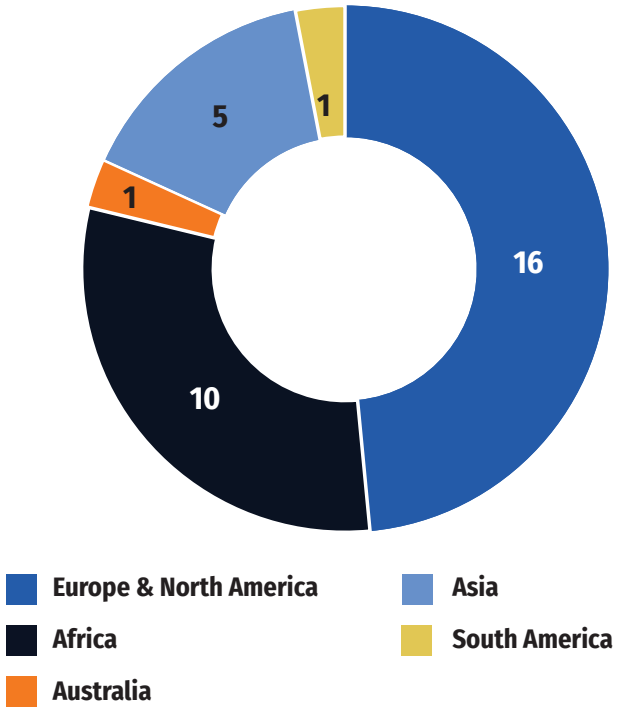
- ANGOLA
- AUSTRALIA
- CANADA
- COLOMBIA
- CONGO (DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC)
- CROATIA
- CZECHIA
- EGYPT
- ETHIOPIA
- FINLAND
- FRANCE
- GHANA
- GREECE
- HUNGARY
- INDIA
- INDONESIA
- ITALY
- JORDAN
- KENYA
- LITHUANIA
- NIGERIA
- PHILIPPINES
- POLAND
- SLOVAKIA
- SPAIN
- SWEDEN
- TANZANIA
- TURKEY
- UGANDA
- UNITED KINGDOM
- UNITED STATES
- UKRAINE
- ZAMBIA

Participating Organizations

- JOINT AIR POWER COMPETENCE CENTRE
- NATO FLIGHT TRAINING EUROPE

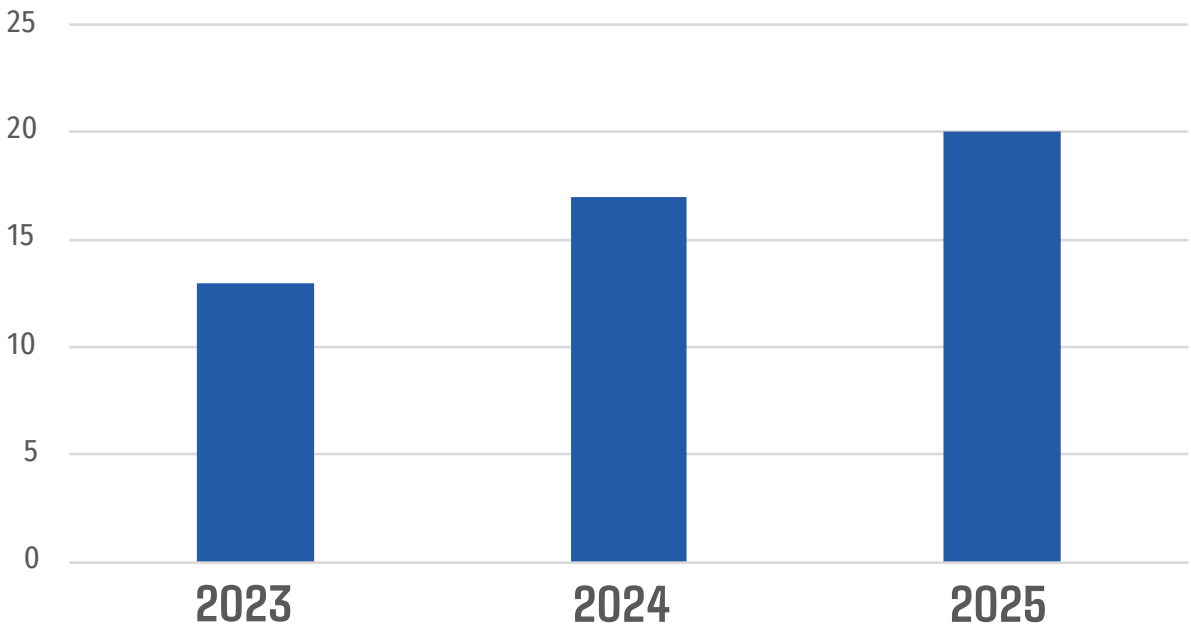
Participating Nations by Region

We are particularly glad that the participating nations now represent different continents, bringing with them diverse perspectives shaped by their unique security environments. This growing diversity not only enriches the discussions and exchange of best practices but also strengthens mutual understanding and cooperation in addressing the complex challenges of modern air power development and training.



Industrial Partners

An increasingly important aspect of the Future Air Force Conference is the strong participation and support from our defence industry partners, whose involvement has grown steadily each year. From a small group of pioneering companies (from conference point of view) in 2023, the conference now attracts a broad spectrum of industrial partners, including global leaders, innovative SMEs, and specialized technology providers. Their engagement not only enhances the conference's professional and technical depth but also fosters valuable interaction between military operators, policymakers, and industry innovators. This expanding industry presence demonstrates a shared commitment to advancing air force capabilities, promoting innovation, and building enduring partnerships that contribute to the modernization and readiness of allied and partner air forces.



Delegations of the
FUTURE AIR FORCE CONFERENCE 2025

EUROPE and NORTH AMERICA

CANADA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Colonel Daniel CONSTABLE
RCAF Director of Fighter Capability Transition

CROATIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Colonel Krešimir TAFRA
Head of Capabilities Development

FINLAND

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Brigadier General Aki Juhani PUUSTINEN
Chief of Staff

FRANCE

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Brigadier General Philippe SUHR
FCAS Project Operational Chief

GREECE

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Brigadier General Nikolaos NIKOLAOU
Chief of Staff Air Training Command

HUNGARY

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Brigadier General (ret) Albert SAFÁR
former Hungarian Chief of the Air Force

ITALY

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Colonel Giovanni Maria PASQUALUCCI
Training Branch Deputy Chief

LITHUANIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Major Valius URBONAS
Helicopter Flight Commander

POLAND

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Colonel Krzysztof „Kristof" SZYMANIEC
Deputy Wing Commander
3rd Airlift Wing

SLOVAKIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Colonel Tomáš PAVLÍK
Chief Engineer

SWEDEN

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Lieutenant Colonel Henrik GUSTAFSSON
Defence Attaché in Prague

USA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Colonel Thomas J. GRAHAM
Senior Defence Official and Defence Attache

UNITED KINGDOM

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:
Air Commodore Donal McGURK
Assistant Chief of Staff Plans
No. 11 Group

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General Virgínio António da CUNHA PINTO
Commander of the Air Force

DR CONGO

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Major General Bernard Kaliba TATY
Deputy Chief of Air Staff
for Operations and Intelligence

EGYPT

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Colonel Haitham Fouad SHADY
Defence Attaché Prague

ETHIOPIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Lieutenant General Yilma Merdassa GNAPA
Commander of the Air Force

GHANA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Air Commodore Kwabena Kissiadu Manukure ATIEMO
Air Officer Commanding
Tactical Command

KENYA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Brigadier Mohamud Salah FARAH
Commander Laikipia Air Base

NIGERIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Air Vice Marshal Iboro Harry ETUKUDO
Chief of Policy and Plans

TANZANIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Brigadier General Wema Laini SENZIA
Commander Air Force School
of Aviation

UGANDA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Lieutenant General Charles OKIDI
Commander of Air Force

ZAMBIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Major General Henry CHIWAYA
Deputy Air Force Commander
and Chief of Air Staff

Delegations of the
FUTURE AIR FORCE CONFERENCE 2025

ASIA

INDIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Air Marshal Parveen Keshav VOHRA
Commandant Indian Airforce Academy

INDONESIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Major Ichsan Wira SATYA
Deputy Defence Attaché

JORDAN

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Brigadier General Mohammed Fathi HIYASAT
Commander of the Air Force

PHILIPPINES

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Major General Jesus Nelson B. MORALES
Commander Air Education and Training Command

TÜRKIYE

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Major General Ertan UZUN
Chief of Operations

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Group Captain Scott WOODLAND
Air & Space Advisor

SOUTH AMERICA

COLOMBIA

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Major General Juan Jaime Martínez OSSA
Commander AEROSPACE Support Command

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

JOINT AIR POWER COMPETENCE CENTRE

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Colonel William BARKSDALE
5th Generation Aircraft Subject Matter Expert

NATO FLIGHT TRAINING EUROPE

HEAD OF 2025 DELEGATION:

Meirion ROSCOE
Technical Officer

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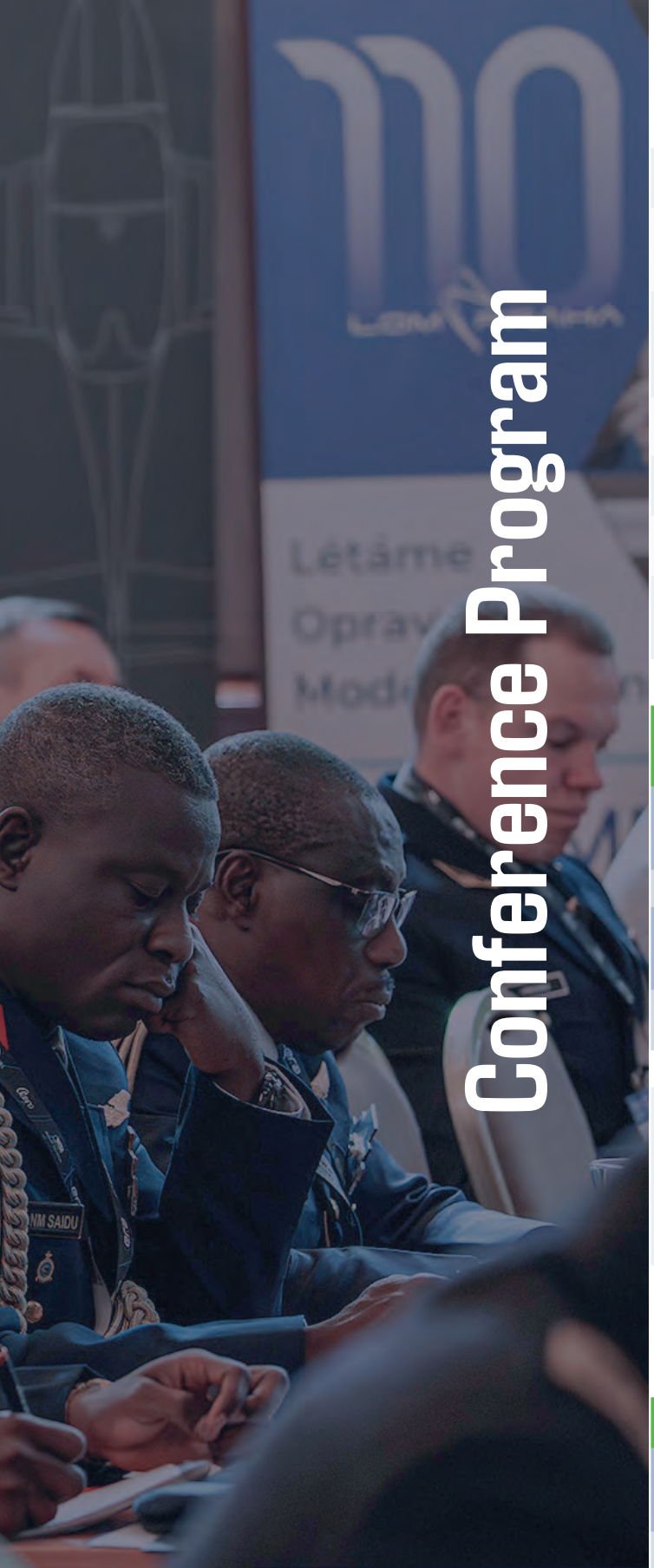


Conference Program

17 September
1st Conference Day

08.00 – 08.30	Registration & Coffee
08.30 – 08.40	**Welcome remarks** *FAF25 Chairman, MGEN (ret) Bohuslav Dvořák*
08.40 – 08.55	**Welcome remarks** *Commander of the Czech Air Force, MGEN Petr Čepelka*
08.55 – 09:00	**Welcome remarks** *President of OMNIPOL Group Mr Jiří Podpěra and President and CEO AERO Vodochody Mr Viktor Sotona*
09.00 – 09.20	*Draken Chief Growth officer Air Marshal (ret) Ian "Windy" Gale*
09.20 – 09.40	*JAPCC 5 th Gen Aircraft Expert COL William Barksdale, USAF*
09.40 – 10.20	**Panel discussion** *moderated by MGEN (ret) Bohuslav Dvořák*
10.20 – 10.40	**Industry presentation** *Conference Platinum partner OMNIPOL Group Mr Martin Sviták*
10.40 – 11.10	Coffee Break
1st Block	**Military Training in Information Age "Train the Mind, Master the Sky"**
11.10 – 11.30	**Keynote presentation** *FCAS Project Operational Chief BGEN Philippe Suhr, French Air and Space Force*
11.30 – 11.50	*Chief of Staff BGEN Aki Puustinen, Finish Air Force*
11.50 – 12.10	*Corporate Vice President and Regional Executive for Europe & Middle East LTGEN (ret) Joseph "Gus" Guastella, Northrop Grumann*
12.10 – 12.30	*Chief of Policy and Plans AVM Iboro Harry Etukudo, Nigerian Air Force*
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch Break
13.30 – 14.10	**Panel Discussion, Q&A** *moderated by BGEN (ret) Libor Štefánik* • *BGEN Philippe Suhr* • *BGEN Aki Puustinen* • *AVM Iboro Harry Etukudo* • *LTGEN (ret) Joseph "Gus" Guastella*
14.10 – 14.30	**Industry presentation** *Conference Diamond partner AERO Vodochody AEROSPACE, LVC Integration on L-39 Skyfox – Elevating Training to the Next Level - Mr Ondřej Koukol*
2nd Block	**Industry Engagement in Flying Training**
14.30 – 14.50	**Industry presentation** *Conference General Partner Draken Red Force, Mr Ian "Slim" Dyer*
14.50 – 15.10	**Industry presentation** *Conference General Partner Lockheed Martin, Mr Juan Gomez*
15.10 – 15.40	Coffee Break
15.40 – 16.00	**Industry presentation** *Conference Main Partner Babcock International, GEN (ret) Thierry Caspar-Fille-Lambie*
16.00 – 16.20	**BELL** Mr *Mike Johnson*
16.20 – 16.40	**Helicopter Alliance**
16.40 – 17.10	**Panel Discussion, Q&A**
17.10	**Closing Remarks of the First Conference Day** *by Conference Chairman, MGEN (ret) Bohuslav Dvořák*

Preparing the Air Force for Tomorrow's Battlespace – Opening panel

The future of airpower rests not only on advanced platforms and technologies but also on the skill, adaptability, and judgment of the pilots who operate them. As General Curtis LeMay once said, "At the end of the day, the effectiveness of airpower depends on the man, not the machine." This truth remains relevant as military aviation faces a rapidly changing environment marked by artificial intelligence, unmanned systems, and near-peer competition.

The past has shown that failure to adapt training to new realities costs lives and battles. The future demands that military pilot training evolve at the pace of technological and operational change—preparing aviators not just to fly but to fight and win in environments we can barely imagine today.

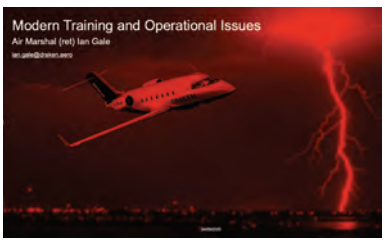
Key Note Speakers

Air Marshal (ret) Ian "Windy" GALE

Former Commander of Future warfighting plans, concepts, techniques and The Professional Military Education

Ian is the Chief Growth Officer for Draken, a global company providing Operational Readiness Training and other services to militaries and national security agencies worldwide. He recently completed a 35-year career as a Royal Air Force officer. With over 350 combat missions as a Tornado and Typhoon pilot and weapons instructor, Ian commanded at various levels, ran major procurement programs, and was the Assistant Chief of the Royal Air Force before his final role as the 3-Star commander of future warfighting plans, concepts, techniques, and the professional military education of all UK military and national security personnel. He was a board member of the UK Civil Aviation Authority, amongst others, and in his spare time is an active pilot, having previously performed at national-level AERObatics competitions.

Modern Training and Operational Issues



Presentation outlined Draken's strategic approach to advanced operational readiness training, with a focus on cost-effective, scalable solutions for modern warfare. Highlighting the European RED FLAG concept, Draken proposes delivering 80% of high-end training outcomes at just 20% of the cost by combining live and synthetic assets across air and electronic warfare domains. Core services include the Electronic Warfare Academy, JTAC training, and fighter pilot programs, each tailored to evolving mission needs and NATO standards. With integrated capabilities, global reach, and proven partnerships, Draken aims to redefine how nations prepare their warfighters to fight and win.

Colonel William BARKSDALE

Joint Air Power Competence Centre Subject Matter Expert 5th Generation Aviation

Colonel Will Barksdale was commissioned into the US Air Force in 2006 from Mississippi State University, graduated ENJJPT in 2007, held instructor pilot qualifications in both the T-38 and F-22, and has been involved in the production of 350 F-22 pilots. He has deployed to the Indo-Pacific region as part of theatre security packages and commanded both an aircraft maintenance and a fighter squadron. He is a graduate of Air Command and Staff College, Air War College, and holds a bachelor's degree in AEROSPACE Engineering as well as master's degrees in Airpower Art and Science, Military Operational Art and Science, and Strategic Studies. Colonel Barksdale is a Command Pilot with over 2,000 flight hours and is currently serving as the 5th Generation Aviation Subject Matter Expert at the Joint Air Power Competence Centre.

5th Generation aircraft – challenges and opportunities

The introduction of fifth-generation fighters into the Czech Republic's Air Forces demands a fresh, holistic look at airpower application. After a brief overview of the F-35 landscape in Europe, this presentation illuminated key differences in training airspace requirements, level of mission difficulty, and ways of thinking about risk. Concurrent with fifth-generation fighters, new weapons, and tactics are causing fighter formations to grow in size, along with intercept ranges required to kill and survive. These increased distances in both azimuth and range require significantly more airspace than earlier generations of fighters. Coupled with the need to maintain secrecy, these factors create a need for increased virtual training. This also hints at how the level of difficulty is changing: an anti-access area denial threat laydown that would have been impossible for previous-generation fighters is now almost certainly defeatable by fifth-generation fighters. This requires a mindset shift amongst commanders, planners, and fighter pilots alike. Alongside the change in level of difficulty, a new look at risk management and acceptance is necessary. The significant price of fifth-generation fighters enables their incredible capabilities, but the loss of even a single fighter imposes an enormous cost to blue forces.

1st Block: Military Training in Information Age "Train the Mind, Master the Sky"

History provides sobering lessons. During the early stages of the Korean War, U.S. pilots flying the F-80 Shooting Star found themselves at a disadvantage against the Soviet-built MiG-15. The gap was not just technological—it was also in training. Many American pilots had transitioned too quickly from propeller to jet aircraft without sufficient preparation, forcing rapid adaptations to tactics and training. Decades later, the Vietnam War exposed another gap: American aviators, despite flying superior platforms, suffered losses in air-to-air combat until the Navy created the famed "TOPGUN" program in 1969. This rigorous and realistic training initiative dramatically improved kill ratios and demonstrated that investment in pilot training could decisively alter combat outcomes.

Looking forward, the requirements for military pilot training must expand beyond technical proficiency in aircraft handling. Pilots must be trained to operate as part of integrated manned-unmanned teams, to manage overwhelming information flows, and to fight in highly contested environments where GPS, communications, and radar may be degraded. Former U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff General David Goldfein emphasized this shift when he stated, "The future of combat is not about platforms—it's about networks." Training must therefore prepare pilots to thrive in a system-of-systems fight, where adaptability, cognitive agility, and decision-making under uncertainty are just as critical as stick-and-rudder skills.

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In the **Red Force** ecosystem, these blend to generate the most realistic aggressor training environment possible, geared specifically to enhancing warfighting proficiency.

Discover how **Red Force** is transforming the future of warfighter training.

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Key Note Speakers

Brigadier General Philippe SUHR

Operational Chief of the French Future Air Combat System (FCAS) project

Brigadier General Philippe SUHR is a fighter pilot in the French Air and Space Force and has mainly flown the Mirage F1 CR (Recce Version) and the Rafale. He has been deployed in several military operations in the Middle East and Africa. He successively took the command of an Operational Test and Evaluation fighter squadron and a Forward Operating Air Base. Among several positions in the central administration in Paris, he notably headed the finances office of the air force's general staff and held roles in the areas of capability, operational, and financial management.

The Skies as a Battlefield

The development of the Next Generation Weapon System (NGWS) and the New Generation Fighter (NGF) represents a major step forward in modern military technology. This system includes various components—such as expendables, Remote Carriers (RCs), and recoverables—and is being developed jointly by Germany and France under the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) program. The integration of the Combat Cloud (CC) enhances the complementary efficiency and survivability of the NGWS by ensuring robust connectivity, network services, data security, and tactical operations.

Continuous modernization and sovereignty for deterrence are key priorities, alongside ensuring interoperability among allied forces. Training operators within the framework of this future system-of-systems is crucial, requiring the adaptation of training programs to include new skills and aptitudes. This includes mitigating constraints such as training with unmanned assets, managing airspaces, and generating realistic opposing forces.

Simulation plays a vital role in this training, with ground, embedded, large-scale distributed simulation, as well as Live, Virtual, and Constructive (LVC) training being essential components. The ongoing AI revolution will be fully integrated into crew training and daily exercises, optimizing curricula, creating and managing tactical scenarios, and providing decision support for trajectory management and threat handling.

The commissioning of the Rafale F5 and Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAV) marks the first step towards understanding and developing future needs. Despite advancements in unmanned technology, the necessity of manned flight remains, with considerations for using companion trainers and occasionally flying unmanned assets.

Brigadier General Aki Juhani PUUSTINEN

Chief of Staff of the Finnish Air Force

Fighter pilot *F/A-18. Born on May 24, 1972. Passed Pilot Reserve Officer's Course in 1993 and Military Academy Pilot Officer Course in 1997. Served as F/A-18 Sqn pilot, Chief of Tactics and Weapon Offr, Flight Comdr of Sqn 31 Karelia Air Wing (1997–2007), Senior Air Staff Offr Flight Ops HQ FAF (2008–2010), Assistant COS Ops Karelia Air Wing (2011–2013), Deputy Asst COS A5 Plans HQ FAF (2013-14), Air Chief Rep in Finnish Defence Command (2017–2018), Chief of Policy and Plans A5 HQ FAF (2018–2020), Comdr Karelia Air Wing (2021–2023), Deputy Chief of Plans and Policy Defence Command (2023–2024).*

Flight Training in the Information Age - "Train the Mind, Master the Sky

Military flight training in the Information Age is being fundamentally reshaped by the convergence of advanced technologies, cognitive science, and the operational demands of fifth-generation fighter aircraft. These platforms—equipped

F-35: ODSTRAŠENÍ JE JEDNOU Z JEHO NEJSILNĚJŠÍCH SCHOPNOSTÍ.

F-35 LIGHTNING II

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Další informace

with stealth, sensor fusion, and real-time data sharing capabilities—require pilots to operate as both tactical aviators and information processors within a dynamic, networked battlespace. As a result, training must go beyond traditional live-flight methods to cultivate high-level cognitive competence, rapid decision-making, and multi-domain situational awareness. Central to this transformation is the integration of **Live-Virtual-Constructive (LVC) training** environments, which blend live aircraft operations, virtual simulation, and computer-generated forces into a unified, scalable training ecosystem for future multidomain warfare. LVC enables pilots to engage in complex, high-threat scenarios that would be impractical or cost-prohibitive to replicate using live assets alone. When paired with virtual and augmented reality (VR/XR), AI-driven adaptive learning, and real-time performance analytics, LVC provides an unprecedented level of realism, flexibility, and cognitive challenge, tailored to the demands of fifth-generation warfare and build up the core competencies required for the fighter pilots.

Lieutenant General (ret) Joseph "Gus" GUASTELLA

Corporate Vice President and Regional Executive
for Europe & Middle East, Northrop Grumann

Joseph "Gus" "Gus" Guastella is Corporate Vice President and Regional Executive for Europe & the Middle East for Northrop Grumman Corporation.
He is responsible for enabling the company's business development strategy across the two regions.

Prior to joining Northrop Grumman in 2023, "Gus" Guastella served as a Lieutenant General in the United States Air Force, most recently as Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations, where he was responsible for the development and execution of operations policy for all USAF personnel. In his 35-year USAF career, he served in a number of domestic and international leadership roles supporting large-scale air and space operations. "Gus" Guastella began his Air Force career as an F-16 pilot.

He holds a bachelor's degree in Astronautical Engineering from the U.S. Air Force Academy, a master's degree in AERO Science Technology from Embry Riddle University, as well as a master's degree in National Security Strategy from the National War College. "Gus" Guastella is fluent in German and currently serves as a Non-Resident Fellow at The Mitchell Institute for AEROSPACE Studies.

Training Challenges in the Information Age - Solutions and Modernization with Northrop Grumman

Current live training ranges are insufficient for fourth-generation (4th gen) and fifth-generation (5th gen) aircraft, particularly for mission sets such as Offensive Counter Air Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (OCA-SEAD). The limitations include inadequate airspace, outdated technologies, and fragmented threat simulation systems. Specifically, 5th gen aircraft, such as the F-35, require expansive airspace to effectively train in formation, but current ranges do not provide this capacity. Additionally, legacy 4th gen systems struggle to simulate modern peer threat environments, with limited fidelity in threat replication and outdated systems that require on-site personnel support. Security and electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) deconfliction issues further complicate training exercises near populated areas.
To address these challenges, Northrop Grumman is reimagining future training ranges. These future ranges should feature deployable, mobile, integrated threat environments with both high- and low-fidelity systems to replicate contested battlespaces. A consolidated Range Control Center (RCC) and secure, encrypted Multi-Level Security (MLS) architecture will enable seamless integration of live, virtual, and constructive (LVC) training. Additionally, consolidated EMS approvals will be essential for comprehensive electronic warfare, space, and cyber effects training. This integrated approach will enhance mission readiness for modern air forces.

Air Vice Marshal Harry ETUKUDO
Chief of Policy and Plans Nigerian Air Force

Air Vice Marshal Harry Etukudo graduated from the Nigerian Defence Academy and was commissioned on 19 Sept 1992. He is a trained aircraft engineer and transport pilot in the Nigerian Air Force. He has flown the Air Beetle aircraft, the Dornier-228 Turboprop aircraft, the Diamond-42 MPA and the King Air 350i aircraft. He has participated in various operations, e.g. Operation LAFIYA DOLE, Operation HADARIN DAJI, and Operation WHIRL STROKE in Nigeria.

He has also held the following significant positions: Chief of Air Operations – Headquarters, Africa-led Mission in Mali (AFISMA) January–June 2013. Deputy Chief of Air Operations – Headquarters, United Nations Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) July 2013 – June 2014. Air Officer Commanding Mobility Command, Nigerian Air Force from January 2022 – January 2023

Modernization And Future Capabilities Of The Nigerian Air Force: Strategic Insights And Operational Readiness

The presentation examined geostrategic factors that have negatively impacted Nigeria's national security. It also outlines the diverse security threats prevalent in the different regions of Nigeria and the corresponding air operations being conducted to counter these threats. Furthermore, the presentation highlights some challenges being faced by the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) in the conduct of air operations. Finally, the presenter discussed ongoing modernization efforts to address the challenges militating against the projection of airpower by the NAF.

2nd panel: Industry Engagement in Future Military Pilot Training - Agile Partnerships, Persistent Advantage

Training the next generation of military pilots is no longer just about perfecting stick-and-rudder skills. It is about preparing aircrew to operate in complex, contested environments where technology, adaptability, and rapid decision-making are as critical as flying itself.

Industry plays a decisive role in this transformation. From advanced simulators and AI-driven training aids to adaptive learning systems and immersive environments, the solutions emerging from the defense and AEROSPACE sectors are redefining how we think about readiness. Yet, innovation has a real impact only when it is aligned with operational needs and integrated effectively into training pipelines.

Industry Engagement panel examined how defense and industry can align more closely to accelerate innovation, close training gaps, and ensure future pilots are fully mission ready.

We were pleased to bring together leaders from across industry and defense to explore how collaboration can accelerate progress. We focused on what is working, where gaps remain, and how to ensure that the next generation of pilots are not only skilled aviators but also mission-ready operators in a rapidly changing battlespace.

OMNIPOL Group - Conference Platinum Partner

Martin Sviták
Chief Product Officer

Martin Sviták has been with OMNIPOL since 2023 and became the Chief Product Officer in 2025. He is responsible for guiding and developing the company's products to ensure market success and deliver value to customers. Prior to joining OMNIPOL, he held positions at the Czech Ministry of Defence owned company LOM Praha, Excalibur Group, and European Air Services.

Abstract

OMNIPOL a.s., a Czech industrial group founded in 1934, delivers advanced solutions across AEROSPACE, defense, and security sectors. With over 4,000 employees, including 400+ in R&D, the company is recognized globally for innovation, reliability, and engineering excellence. Its diverse portfolio includes aircraft development (L 410NG, L 39 SKYFOX), passive surveillance systems (VERA-NG, PLESS), tactical communication technologies, smart armored vehicles (Senator, Captain), and dual-use industrial solutions. Serving over 60 countries, OMNIPOL combines legacy expertise with modern design to meet the evolving needs of both military and civilian markets.

AERO Vodochody AEROSPACE - Conference Diamond Partner

Ondřej Koukol
Vice President for Product Strategy
at AERO Vodochody AEROSPACE

Ondřej Koukol has been working at AERO since 2024 as Vice President for Product Strategy. He is responsible for defining the company's product and service strategy as well as guiding its future development.

Abstract

AERO Vodochody AEROSPACE a.s. has successfully integrated the cutting-edge Live Virtual Constructive (LVC) system into the L-39 Skyfox platform. This innovation transforms pilot training by enabling immersive, scenario-based missions with dynamic virtual threats and adaptive challenges. The result: smarter, safer, and more cost-effective training in complex operational environments.

Draken - Conference General Partner

Ian "Slim" DYER

Director Business Development Electronic Attack

Ian (aka Slim) joined Draken in March 2024 as Director of Electronic Attack in the Business Development Team. Prior to this, he was in the Royal Air Force, holding a variety of operational, capability development, air safety assurance, and senior leadership and management roles during a 35-year career. As a Tornado GR1/4 navigator, Slim saw operational service in Turkey, Kuwait and Qatar, and in 2015 he served as Commanding Officer of 906 Expeditionary Air Wing in the United Arab Emirates.

He has also been an A2 Air Navigation Instructor, a fast jet Flight Test Navigator at MOD Boscombe Down, and the Tornado GR4 Requirements Manager.

Modern Training and operational Issues

The "Draken" concept refers to a type of aircraft designed for adversarial training and simulation, often originating from the Swedish Draken fighter jet. In military training contexts, such aircraft are used as "Red Air," representing opposing forces during exercises. The purpose of Red Air is to provide realistic combat scenarios for pilot training, allowing friendly forces (often referred to as "Blue Air") to practice tactics, engagements, and responses against an enemy. The Red Air concept emphasizes replicating various adversary tactics and capabilities to help aircrews develop situational awareness and adaptability. Utilizing platforms like the Draken enhances training by offering a cost-effective and versatile way to simulate threat environments, thereby improving the overall readiness and effectiveness of military forces.

Cirrus Aircraft CZ - Conference General Partner

Pedro RAPOSO

Fleet Sales Director for Europe, Middle East, and Africa at Cirrus Aircraft

Pedro Raposo is Fleet Sales Director for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa at Cirrus Aircraft, where he leads fleet strategy and market development across training organizations and government institutions. He holds a frozen Airline Transport Pilot License (ATPL), with Multi-Engine, Instrument, and Night ratings, along with MCC/JOC, Flight Instructor and AERObatics qualifications. Pedro began his career at BAE Systems/ Airbus UK as a Direct Entry Graduate, contributing to the A380 and A340-600 programs. He later joined Airbus España as Programme Manager on the A350XWB while completing an Executive MBA at IE Business School. As Executive Director for MRO at OGMA (Embraer Group), he oversaw the services portfolio across Commercial, Executive, and Defence aviation. He also served as a consultant with Oliver Wyman CAVOK, supporting aviation and AEROSPACE clients globally. With a background in AEROSPACE engineering and over 25 years of industry experience, Pedro brings a unique blend of technical, commercial, and operational insight to the evolving aviation landscape.

TRAC – Powering the Future of Military Flight Training

Air forces worldwide are rethinking how to prepare the next generation of pilots—balancing cost efficiency, safety, and readiness. Cirrus Aircraft brings a compelling solution: advanced training platforms that combine cutting-edge technology with unmatched safety systems. Featuring the Cirrus Airframe Parachute System (CAPS), electronic stability protection, and a fully integrated glass cockpit, Cirrus aircraft not only reduce training risk but also instill a safety-first culture from day one. These features translate directly into lower attrition rates, reduced downtime, and greater confidence among cadets and instructors alike. At the same time, Cirrus platforms mirror the avionics and systems found in frontline aircraft, creating a smoother, faster progression to advanced trainers and operational fleets. For procurement and training leaders, this means measurable savings, accelerated pilot pipelines, and enhanced capability. This presentation highlights how Cirrus aircraft align with the strategic objectives of modern air forces: building safer, more efficient, and future-ready training programs that deliver lasting value.

babcock™

Babcock delivers critical and vital aviation services to the civil and defence sectors.

In the defence sector, our skilled engineers, ground support staff and training instructors deliver military flying training, air station support and integrated engineering services to armies, navies, and air forces in Europe.

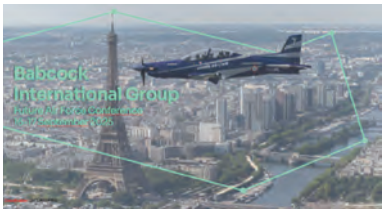
Our military customers trust us to support their air power requirements, allowing them to focus on their core mission. And we make their mission, our mission; ensuring that whatever the task discipline, talent and agility are at the heart of our operations, inspiring us to strive for excellence.

Babcock - Conference Main Partner

General (ret) Thierry CASPAR-FILLE-LAMBIE

General Thierry Caspar-Fille-Lambie has had a distinguished career in the French Air Force. He began his journey at the École de l'air on September 1, 1980, and went on to become a transport pilot, primarily flying the C160 "Transall" in the "Anjou" and "Béarn" squadron. Throughout his career, he participated in numerous international operations, including missions in the Balkans, Sarajevo, Bangui, Chad, Sinai, and the Persian Gulf. His operational expertise led him to various staff positions, such as the Air Force Inspection, the Permanent Council for Air Safety, and the Planning and Operations Center at the Armed Forces Headquarters. Promoted to General in 2007, he played an instrumental role in establishing the Air Force Command and later commanded French forces in Djibouti in 2009. In 2012, he became the Commander of Air Defense and Air Operations (CDAOA), overseeing operations during the launch of Operation Serval in Mali and coordinating air assets in the Central African Republic and Poland. After retiring from active service in 2015, he continued to contribute to defense as the Director General of Babcock International France and the Director of Publication for the Revue de la Défense Nationale. He also serves on the National Council of the Order of the Legion of Honor2. General Caspar-Fille-Lambie is a Commandeur of the Legion of Honor 2 and the National Order of Merit, and holds the AERONautics Medal and the Military Valor Cross with a silver star. He has logged over 6,500 flight hours and completed 124 combat missions.

Babcock – Capabilities in supporting 21st Century Air Force training



This presentation showcased Babcock International Group's comprehensive capabilities in supporting current and future air force training and operations. As Europe's largest provider of military flying training, Babcock delivers integrated, through-life support across all aviation domains—ranging from aircraft maintenance and base operations to full-spectrum pilot training. Key programs include F-AIR 21 for the French Air & Space Force, the UK's Light Aircraft Flying Task, and H160 SAR operations for the French Navy. With cutting-edge facilities such as the Babcock Flight Training Centre in Dijon and a versatile L-39C fleet, Babcock provides scalable training solutions including JTAC support, Red Air, and LVC integration. Looking ahead, Babcock is positioned to meet emerging needs with modular "aircraft-as-a-service" offerings, advanced LVC capabilities, and high-performance training systems designed for 5th-gen operational readiness.

Bell - Conference Main Partner

Colonel USMC (ret) Michael JOHNSON

Bell Chief Pilot

Colonel (ret) Johnson currently serves as the Bell Chief Pilot / Site Lead for the Czech Air Force H-1 Training Program. In this role, which he has held since November 2022, he oversees all pilot and maintenance training for Czech Air Force personnel at Namest Air Base since October 2023. Before joining Bell, Colonel (ret) Johnson served 28 years in the United States Marine Corps in a variety of roles, including squadron instructor pilot in the AH-1W/Z, Weapons School Instructor, Squadron Commanding Officer, and Air Group Commanding Officer. As Group Commander, Colonel (ret) Johnson oversaw initial pilot training for over 900 Marine Corps student pilots and 200 instructor pilots at introductory flight training in Pensacola, Florida. Colonel (ret) Johnson is a rated pilot and instructor in both rotary- and fixed-wing. He has accumulated over 4,300 flight hours in a variety of rotary- and fixed-wing aircraft, including more than 1,000 hours with night vision goggle hours and over 500 hours of combat time.

Bell H-1 training program for the Czech Air Force

This presentation outlines Bell's comprehensive H-1 Training Program designed to prepare Czech Air Force pilots and maintainers for full-spectrum operational readiness. Built on the U.S. Marine Corps pilot training syllabus, the program follows a "Train the Trainer" model delivered by former USMC Weapons School instructors. It includes classroom, simulator, and in-aircraft training across key mission sets—from terrain flight and NVG operations to ordnance delivery and multi-aircraft tactics. The maintenance program focuses on diagnostics, efficiency, and cost drivers using mixed-mode learning and industry-leading 3D tools. Bell's Advanced Maintenance Training Academy (AMTA) further equips Czech personnel with in-depth system-level knowledge to sustain readiness. Emphasizing NATO interoperability and multi-role capability, this training solution ensures that Czech forces receive world-class instruction on par with U.S. standards.

Helicopter Alliance - Conference Main Partner

Radim JANSA
Senior Sales manager

Radim Jansa works as a Senior Sales Manager at Helicopter Alliance and has been with the company since the very beginning in 2023. In his presentation, Mr. Jansa provides insights into how the modernization process of a divested Black Hawks works and how the six companies within the alliance collaborate.

Helicopter Aliance – Next Chapter in the Life of a Black Hawk

Be the next Chapter in the Life of a Black Hawk
Introducing an alliance of UH60 Black Hawk helicopter experts that connects people and cutting-edge modern technology. Helicopter Alliance covers the full life cycle of the Black Hawks including helicopter acquisition, modernization, delivery, support, training, and maintenance.

LOM PRAHA - Conference Main Partner

Colonel (ret) Jaroslav ŠPAČEK
CLV Pardubice Director

Director of the Centre of Flight Training (CLV) in Pardubice, has built a distinguished career in aviation, recently surpassing 5,000 flight hours across various helicopter types. His tenure at CLV Pardubice has been characterized by a steadfast commitment to nurturing the next generation of Czech aviators. Col. (ret) Špaček's extensive flight experience includes piloting a range of helicopters, notably the Mi-24. His leadership was instrumental in integrating the 331st Helicopter Squadron into the NATO Tiger Association, a testament to the high standards of training and operational excellence at CLV Pardubice. Under his direction since 2017, the centre has celebrated its 20th anniversary and continues to evolve, introducing modern training equipment and preparing pilots for advanced aircraft, such as the F-35 and H-1 helicopters. His achievements, including the prestigious Silver Tiger Trophy, underscore the global recognition of the expertise cultivated at CLV Pardubice.

L-39 Skyfox New era of advanced training in CLV Pardubice

This presentation, delivered by Colonel (ret) Jaroslav Špaček, Director of CLV, introduces the Czech Republic's advanced pilot training program built around the L-39NG platform. The program spans from elementary through lead-in fighter training, combining classroom instruction, simulators, and live flight training. Current capabilities include day/night operations, AERObatics, IFR navigation, formation flying, and tactical missions ranging from basic fighter maneuvers to strike tactics. Future developments integrate Live-Virtual-Constructive (LVC) training, advanced air-to-air and air-to-surface scenarios, missile employment, electronic warfare, and threat-representative adversary systems. With a phased progression from Elementary Flying Training (EFT) to Lead-In Fighter Training (LIFT) and specialized tactical courses, the L-39NG provides a modern, scalable pathway to prepare future combat-ready pilots while ensuring interoperability with both NATO and regional partners.

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LOM PRAHA SOE

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Conference Program

18 September
2nd Conference Day

08.00 – 08.55		Registration & Coffee
08.55 – 09.00		**Welcome remarks** *by Conference Chairman MGEN (ret) Bohuslav Dvořák*
09.00 – 10.00		**Commander's View Panel Discussion** *moderated MGEN (ret) Bohuslav Dvořák* • *BGEN Aki Juhani Puustinen, Finish Air Force* • *MGEN Jesus Nelson B Morales, Philippine Air Force* • *BGEN Enrique Fernandez Ambel, Spanish Air Force* • *ACDRE Kwabena Kissiadu Manukure Atiemo, Ghana Air Force*
10.00- 10.20		**Industry presentation** *Conference General Partner Lockheed Martin Industry presentation – Mr Juan Gomez*
10.20 – 11.00		Coffee Break
11.00 – 11.20		**Industry Presentation** *Conference Diamond partner TRL SPACE, Mr Jiří Janoušek, Mr Petr Boháček*
3rd Block		**Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T)**
11.20 – 11.40		***Distinguished guest*** General (ret) Tod D. Wolters USAF
11.40 – 12.00		*Air Commodore Donal McGurk, Royal Air Force*
12.00 – 12.20		**FCAS, Synergy between Pilots and UAV Operators** *COL Giovanni Pasqualucci, Italian Air Force*
12.20 – 12.40		**The Phoenix Pod – a modular, multi-mission system** *CEO SiNAB Pty Ltd Mr Tony Landners*
12.40 – 13.00		**NFTE, Building flying training capacity across the alliance** *NFTE Technical Officer Mr Meirion Roscoe, NFTE*
13.00 – 14.00		Lunch Break
14.00 – 14.20		*Col. (ret) Jaroslav Špaček Director CLV, LOM PRAHA*
15.10 – 15.20		**Closing Remarks of the Conference** *by Commander of the Czech Air Force MGEN Petr Čepelka*
15.20 - 15.30		**Closing Remarks of the Conference** *by Chairman MGEN (ret) Bohuslav Dvořák*
15.30 – 17.00		**Glass of Wine** *Conference Closing Event*

18 September 2nd Conference Day

Future of Air Force – Insights from Military Leaders

As a regular part of the Future Air Force Conference, we have included a panel discussion of Air Force commanders and senior officials who shape the future of the Air Force and contribute to the development of key operational capabilities within their countries' air forces.

The panel does not follow a strictly defined agenda, nor does it have pre-determined content. Its purpose is to create a space for the free exchange of views among the panelists. The discussion focuses on the main challenges facing individual air forces in a dynamically changing security environment.

We are very pleased that the Commander's View panel has become an integral, very popular, and highly sought-after part of the conference program. As in previous years, this year's panel focused on the following key topics:

- **Technological Innovations**
- **International Cooperation and Alliance Security**
- **Economy and Financing**
- **Air Operations and Strategy**
- **Security Challenges and Threats**
- **Education and Training**
  - » What are the key skills that future pilots and command structures will need?
  - » How are military aviation training programs changing?
  - » How is the promotion of diversity and inclusion reflected in different air forces around the world?

Lockheed Martin - Conference General Partner

Mr. Juan GOMEZ

Lockheed Martin Program Management and Business Development Leader

Juan Gomez is a program management and business development leader with over 20 years in the AEROSPACE and defense industry. At Lockheed Martin Skunk Works®, he partners with end users to capture operational feedback and translate it into engineering solutions, helping shape next-generation UAS capabilities. His career spans the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East, where he has driven the development of unmanned systems and ISR. Juan is passionate about technology and bridging innovation with operational needs.

Transformation at the speed of Technology

Air forces worldwide are undergoing a period of transformation to integrate new technologies at the speed of relevance. Central to this is manned–unmanned teaming (MUM-T), a shift that demands more than new platforms — it requires trust in autonomy, realistic simulation, adaptable training, and open architectures.

Success will depend on preparing operators, creating simulation environments that accelerate learning, and deploying tools that enable seamless cooperation between manned and unmanned systems. Building confidence in both people and machines is as decisive as the technology itself. Industry is experiencing a parallel transformation. At Lockheed Martin, this means iterating faster, scaling effectively, and aligning solutions to operational needs — being ahead of ready so warfighters can stay ahead in the fight.

The presentation explored how trust, training, and technology together unlock the future potential of MUM-T and shape the next generation of operators and systems.

Manned-Unmanned Teaming – The Next Era of Airpower

The future of air combat will not be defined by manned or unmanned systems alone, but by how effectively they work together. Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T) is reshaping the way modern air forces approach missions, force design, and operational tempo. By combining the judgment, adaptability, and leadership of human pilots with the persistence, reach, and scalability of autonomous systems, MUM-T promises to deliver a force that is more agile, more lethal, and more resilient.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) have revolutionized military operations. These autonomous or remotely piloted aircraft offer precision strikes, persistent surveillance, and reduced risk to human lives. Their adaptability, cost-effectiveness, and strategic flexibility make them indispensable assets in contemporary conflicts.

For the Air Force of the future, this concept is not just about technology—it's about doctrine, trust, and integration: how to align tactics, training, and command structures to make manned and unmanned platforms fight as one; what roles autonomy and artificial intelligence will play; how we ensure reliability and control in contested environments; and, critically, how this shift will affect procurement, partnerships, and the speed at which we adapt.

This panel brought together leaders and innovators at the forefront of MUM-T to explore these questions. Together, we have examined how manned-unmanned teams can transform airpower and what it will take to turn today's experiments into tomorrow's operational reality.

TRL Drones - Conference Diamond Partner

Mr Jiří JANOUŠEK, Mr Petr BOHÁČEK

Beyond the Cockpit: ISR & Air Defense with Uncrewed Systems

Uncrewed systems are no longer an add-on—they have become an important part of networked combat. They deliver affordable reach, persistent ISR, an interconnected common operating picture, and a new layer of air defense that remains effective even when EW fails. The presentation examines the economics of deployment, compares platform capabilities, and demonstrates why modern training for pilots and operators is the essential elements that holds the whole solution together.

Key Note Speakers

Air Commodore Donal McGURK BEng BSc MA RAF

Assistant Chief of Staff Plans - 11 Group

Air Commodore Donal McGurk BEng BSc MA RAF is an experienced Royal Air Force officer with a distinguished operational and command record. After earning an engineering degree from the University of Warwick, he joined the RAF and trained as a helicopter navigator. Early in his career, he flew the Wessex HC2 in Northern Ireland and Cyprus before transitioning to the Sea King HAR3 in the Search and Rescue role, operating across the UK and the Falklands.

Promoted to Squadron Leader in 2006, he commanded E Flight 202 Squadron and later deployed to Afghanistan as a Task Force Air Advisor. His expertise in strategic planning was further applied during his time at HQ Air Command for the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review, and as leader of the RAF's Air Safety Assurance Team.

Following promotion to Wing Commander, McGurk held key posts including Air Safety Manager at Joint Helicopter Command and Commanding Officer of Operations Wing at RAF Benson, where he also served as Deputy Puma Force Commander and deployed again to Afghanistan. As a Group Captain, he led RAF Odiham and the UK Chinook Force, overseeing global deployments in response to crises, including the Russia-Ukraine conflict. In 2023, he became Military Assistant Head of the Iran Campaign Team at the MOD, playing a key role during the Israel-Gaza crisis.

Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T)

Air Commodore Donal McGurk presented an overview of **Manned-Unmanned Teaming (MUM-T)**, highlighting the collaborative use of crewed and uncrewed systems to enhance military effectiveness. As part of the UK's 2025 Security and Defence Review, the RAF is shifting toward greater autonomy and AI adoption to keep pace with rapid technological change and evolving threats. The presentation explores the opportunities and challenges of integrating advanced technologies—such as robotics, machine learning, and directed energy weapons—within current operational frameworks. Case studies, including Storm Shroud and Chinook-FPV drone collaboration, illustrate real-world applications and limitations, shaped by human capacity, ethical constraints, and legacy systems. The central message: innovation must match or outpace adversaries in an increasingly complex battlespace.

Colonel Giovanni Maria PASQUALUCCI

Present appointment – Training Branch Deputy Chief

Instructor Pilot SF-260, MB-339 and T6. Born on March 19, 1980, in Castel di Sangro, he joined the Air Force Academy in 1998 and completed pilot training at Sheppard AFB (USA) in 2004. He served from 2004 to 2009 with the 15th SAR Wg in Rimini, flying various types of helicopters in Rescue Operations. From 2009 to 2010, he was an Instructor at the Air Force Academy and became Phase I and II Instructor Pilot (IP) at the 70th Training Wg in Latina in 2011. He was assigned as IP at Sheppard AFB (USA) from 2014 to 2018, flying with international students at the ENJJPT (SF-260, MB- 339 and T-6). In 2021, he attended the Italian Warfare College and served as SO for "pilot training policy" at AEROSPACE Planning Department of the ItAF Air Staff. Since July 2023, he has served as Deputy Chief of the Training & Exercise Branch at the AEROSPACE Planning Department of the ItAF Air Staff. He is an Instructor Pilot with over 3,500 flying hours.

FCAS Synergy between Pilots and UAV Operators

The integration of manned and unmanned platforms represents a revolutionary shift in the way the air force will operate in future multidomain operations. Colonel Pasqualucci addressed key operational assumptions and provides real-world examples of UAV integration in current combat environment. Special attention has been given to emerging concept such as Collaborative Combat Aircraft and swarming technologies from Italian Air Force perspective.

Mr. Tony LANDERS

CEO SiNAB Pty Ltd

Mr Landers is a respected professional with more than thirty years of experience in engineering, business development and leadership roles within the Australian and international defense and AEROSPACE industries. He is highly customer-focused, with a proven record of developing and implementing successful business strategies. He is the founder and CEO of SiNAB Pty Ltd and the creator of the Phoenix Pod.

The Phoenix Pod – a modular, multi-mission system

SiNAB Pty Ltd presents the Phoenix Pod: a modular, multi-mission electro-optical system designed to enhance both training realism and operational effectiveness. Compact and requiring no modifications to the host platform, the Phoenix Pod equips aircraft such as the L-39NG Skyfox, L-159, Textron T-6C, BAE Hawk, and light transports with advanced ISR, target acquisition, and JTAC training capabilities in a fraction of the time and cost of legacy systems.

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TEAM VIPER VENOM

Meirion ROSCOE

NATO Flight Training Europe (NFTE) – Technical Officer

An aviator by profession, Meirion served for 20 years in the Royal Air Force, flying the Tornado GR1/GR4 and Hawk TMk1 as a QFI and JFAC Instructor, before moving to industry as an instructor in the synthetic environment with BAES. He has accumulated over 4,000 instructional hours across all environments. In 2014, he took up the role of General Manager for Ascent Flight Training at RAF Valley, responsible for the output of Basic Flying Training and Advanced Jet Training. He has also worked in non-defense sectors, holding the position of COO of a healthcare company during the COVID-19 pandemic. Most recently, he was Head of Solutions for Babcock International, a business winning and development role covering an area from Sweden to the Eastern Mediterranean. He is currently part of the NFTE team based at NSPA Luxembourg, applying his knowledge and experience in designing, delivering, and operating flying training systems to enable member nations to maximize their current and future training potential.

NFTE – Future of International Cooperation

This presentation explores how the **NATO Flying Training Europe (NFTE)** initiative is expanding flying training capacity across the Alliance. It outlines the mechanisms used to coordinate and harmonize a network of national training campuses, enabling greater interoperability and resource efficiency. A key focus is the integration of certified Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) into the NFTE framework, ensuring training remains aligned with modern operational demands and technological advancements.

A Surprise That Brought the Audience to Its Feet

General Tod WALTERS

One of the most powerful moments of the entire event was the appearance of General Tod D. Walters, former SACEUR. His presence had not been announced in advance, and when he took the stage, the hall immediately fell silent. In his speech,

General Walters reminded the audience that "air superiority is a fundamental condition for success in modern conflict", emphasizing that the alliance must keep pace with technological developments and the changing tactics of its adversaries.

His words left a strong impression on the audience—not only because of the weight of his former position, but also because of the clarity and directness of his message.

Tod Daniel Wolters is a retired United States Air Force four-star general, who last served as Commander of U.S. European Command and concurrently as NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). He previously served as Commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe and U.S. Air Forces Africa. He assumed his capstone assignment at the European Command in Germany on May 2, 2019 and at the Allied Command in Belgium on May 3, 2019.

General Wolters is a command pilot with more than 5,000 flying hours in the F-15C, F-22, OV-10, T-38, and A-10 aircraft.

Industry Day

A Premiere That Sets the Bar High

The biggest innovation of this year's conference was **Industry Day**, a new feature that for the first time gave the defense industry space to showcase the latest technologies and systems, from advanced sensors and drones to electronic warfare systems, not only through presentations, but also through static and flight demonstrations.

Ing. Jiří Protiva

I am very pleased that LOM PRAHA was able to host Industry Day, which is part of the Future Air Conference 2025.

This format was met with an extremely positive response, as participants appreciated the opportunity to combine theoretical discussion with practical demonstrations of capabilities. AERO Vodochody and LOM PRAHA made their debut, providing a comprehensive demonstration of Live Virtual Constructive training. LVC training is an advanced approach to simulation and training of armed forces, combining elements of real training (in this case demonstrated by the L-39 Skyfox training aircraft), virtual training (L-39 Skyfox simulator), and a constructive environment. This system allows units to train together in realistic scenarios, even if the participants are located in different places and environments.

Participants widely agreed that “the combination of expert discussion and practical demonstrations gives Industry Day a whole new dimension.” The response was overwhelmingly positive, suggesting that this format is likely to become an integral part of future editions.

Industry Day showed that the future of the air force cannot be shaped without close cooperation between the military and industry.

Brigadier General Petr Tománek
Deputy Czech Air Force Commander

The LVC training demonstration at Industry Day confirmed that we are heading in the right direction. The combination of simulation technologies and real flying shows that our pilots will be at a level that meets our pilot training requirements for the 21st century.

Networking with Added Value

Icebreaker hosted by Team Viper Venom

The introductory Icebreaker has become a traditional event within the conference, providing participants with the opportunity to meet informally and get to know each other before the official start. This year, the Icebreaker was sponsored by Viper Venom, one of the main partners of the conference.

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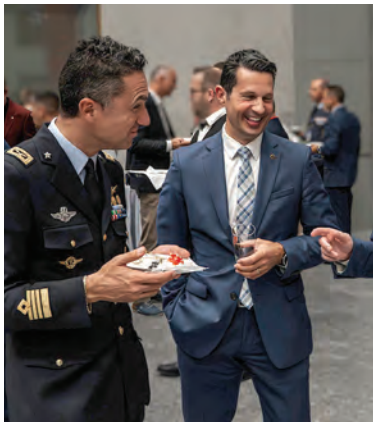

The accompanying program was also a strong point of the conference. The highlight was a gala evening at the Military History Institute. The historical backdrop and the participation of key representatives of the Ministry of Defense and the Czech Air Force Command underscored the festive nature of the event and created an environment where formal discussions naturally turned into personal conversations and informal networking.

During the gala evening, participants were treated to a guided tour of the exhibition on the Czech defense industry between the two world wars. This period was chosen deliberately. Firstly, it illustrated a period in Czechoslovakia's history when 8 to 12 percent of GDP was spent on defense. Secondly, the organizers wanted to showcase the extensive capabilities of the Czech defense industry as a superpower of sorts in the field of armaments.

NATO Days

As part of further networking, after the conference itself, many delegations took the advantage to visit the biggest security show in Europe - NATO Days & Czech Air Force Days in Ostrava, Czech Republic. Meetings were held with many important guests, including the President of the Czech Republic, Petr Pavel, the Chief of the General Staff of the Czech Republic, Army General Karel Řehka, and many others. These meetings added another dimension to the visit, enriching it with interesting opinions and discussions.

Conference Message

The Future Air Force Conference 2025 clearly showed that it is not merely a series of lectures and panel discussions, but a platform where military experience, alliance perspective, and industrial innovation converge. It creates a space where concrete visions and real projects are born.

With participants from across the world, prestigious guests, and the successful premiere of Industry Day, the conference has taken another step forward—affirming that discussions about the future of the air force are taking place right here in Prague.

This year's Future Air Force Conference has thus confirmed its position as one of the most important professional platforms of its kind, connecting military, alliance, and industrial partners with the aim of finding common solutions for the future of air forces.

Chairman's Closing Remarks

Future Air Force Conference: When the Whole World Looks to the Future of Aviation

This year, the Future Air Force Conference was attended by nearly 200 experts and representatives from 34 countries across the globe, as well as representatives from NATO, namely the Joint Air Power Competence Center (JAPCC) and NATO Flight Training Europe (NFTE). The conference thus reaffirmed its international significance and ability to attract key figures from the aviation and defense sectors.

Over the course of two days, more than 20 presentations were delivered, addressing current and future challenges in the development of air force capabilities, interoperability among air forces—both within and beyond the Alliance—and technological innovation. Alongside senior air force officials and experts in aviation personnel training, representatives of the defense industry also took the floor to familiarize participants with ways to make aviation training more effective. It was clear that the discussions were not limited to theory. The presentations drew on firsthand experience from recent operations, offering practical insights into the transformation of air forces, the integration of new technologies, and the implementation of organizational changes required by the current security situation.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere thanks to all our partners, without whom the conference would not have been possible, to all presenters, and of course to all participants—many of whom travelled from the other side of the globe to join us in Prague.

We warmly invite you to the fourth annual Future Air Force Conference, where we will strive to raise the bar even higher.

See you in 2026!

Conference Impressions

Tod Walters – former SACEUR

The topics are fantastic, and this is a conference that allows all participants to learn and gain insight into what other companies and air forces from other countries are thinking. All of these discussions allow participants to be better and more prepared for future operations.

Commander of Ugandian Air Force Lieutenant General Charles Okidi

So much technology is changing, and that is a very new experience for us as a developing country. We face similar problems and come here to seek solutions and partnerships.

Colonel William Barksdale – JAPCC

The proliferation of UAVs is the culmination of many cutting-edge technologies that have been developed over many years and are now coming to fruition. The use of UAVs is perhaps the greatest challenge for current and future air force leadership in the 21st century security environment.

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Armed UAV Operations & Training
Combat drone integration, mission readiness, and operator training concepts.

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We are looking forward to welcoming you to the Future Air Force Conference 2026!

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