

Information Sharing for Allied Air and Space Operations

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In this factsheet you can read about some of the key findings and proposed recommendations presented in the JALLC's latest report on Air & Space Information Sharing. Download a full copy of the report from the classified version of the NATO Lessons Learned Portal, or contact the JALLC to obtain a copy.*



Introduction

In warfare, the ability to rapidly collect, analyse, and disseminate information is a decisive factor to mission success. For NATO, a 32-Nation Alliance, effective information sharing is the foundation for operational cohesion and coordination, enables decision-making at all levels, and serves as the cross-cutting element to effective interoperability within the Alliance.

Overview

For Air and Space operations, effective information sharing underpins:

- Enhanced Situation Awareness. Near real-time data enables rapid threat detection and decision-making;
- Interoperable Operations. Standardized sharing ensures seamless coordination among multinational forces for missions such as air policing and air strikes;
- Deterrence and Defence. Immediate threat dissemination e.g., missile launches, presence of hostile aircraft) supports NATO's collective response; and
- Countering Emerging Threats. Enables joint responses to drones, cyberattacks, and hybrid warfare in air domain.

The topic of Information Sharing in NATO has been the subject of a number of studies over the years. However, with the introduction of Space as one of the new military domains, the JALLC was tasked to conduct an analysis study for Allied Air Command (AIRCOM) which focussed on information sharing relating to the conduct of Air and Space operations. In so doing, this study centred on AIRCOM's two main concerns that hamper effective information sharing: one is obtaining the right information relating to Nations' capabilities and operations plans; the other is on achieving effective information exchange to support Intel/ISR, targeting and multi-domain effects.



Key Findings

The report highlights several issues regarding the challenges to effective information sharing. Many of these challenges are not new and are well documented in the plethora of previous studies. However, this report serves as a reminder that, even in 2025, challenges to effective information sharing remain unresolved and, as such, could pose risk to NATO operations in general, and to Air and Space operations specifically. The report highlights that the challenges to effective information sharing in NATO include:

- National Caveats. Nations' concerns and lack of willingness to share sensitive information.
- Classification and Security Policies. Overly restrictive NATO and National policies delay or block information (and intelligence) sharing.
- Ad hoc procedures. Lack of coordination and standardization to request information from Nations.
- Lack of standardization. Large volumes of unstructured data formats complicate real-time analysis and automation of information exchange.
- Technological Asymmetry. Roll out of initiatives to improve and modernize NATO systems are inter-dependent. Different National systems and capabilities among Nations create disparities in data collection, processing, and sharing with NATO.

The report includes recommendations that could help AIRCOM to address some of these challenges. The report highlights that AIRCOM cannot address these challenges in isolation and advocates for SHAPE to support AIRCOM's effort in order to provide a pan-NATO approach to improve information sharing.

“ A network is only as strong as its weakest link. In NATO, that link cannot be reluctance to share ”

Admiral Rob Bauer. Former Chair of NATO Military Committee

Project Team

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