

Exercise STEADFAST DUEL 2025 - Lessons on the Future Air C2 Concept

Report published 12 February 2026

In this factsheet you can read about some of the key findings in the JALLC's report on Exercise STEADFAST DUEL 2025 (STDU25) - Lessons on the Future Air Command and Control (C2) Concept. 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

Allied Command Air (AIRCOM) is developing a Future Air C2 Concept to optimize the delivery of air power while maintaining agility, speed, scalability, and survivability. Iterations of the Concept have been experimented at exercises since 2024. Exercise STDU25, conducted in October 2025, was the first occasion to experiment with the Concept in 24/7 operations and with the involvement of three Combined Air Operations Centres (CAOC) and was the most ambitious trialling of the Concept yet.

Overview

The aim of the exercise from an Air perspective was to refine critical C2 Roles, Responsibilities, and Authorities (RRA), as well as processes to support the continuous development and implementation of the Future Air C2 Concept. To support this effort, AIRCOM requested the JALLC to analyse the implementation of the Future Air C2 Concept during Exercise STDU25 to identify lessons that could contribute to its development and implementation. To fulfil this task, the JALLC project team reviewed relevant documents and engaged with AIRCOM to establish an understanding of the Future Air C2 Concept in its current state, identifying areas of interest for study.



Exercise STDU25 took place in October. Picture courtesy of the Joint Warfare Centre.

The project team then deployed simultaneously to three different locations during Exercise STDU25 to follow the entire development of the Air Tasking Order (ATO), observe Air related Battle Rhythm (BR) events, and interview key staff members.



Key Findings

This JALLC's Analysis Report presents the resulting JALLC observations, lessons, and recommendations related to the Future Air C2 Concept. It includes evidence that was either directly observed or collected via interviews of participants and exercise bodies' staff and considers the Future Air C2 Concept as it was specifically implemented during the Exercise STDU25.

The project team identified the following four areas that could potentially be leveraged to enhance the development of the Future Air C2 Concept and its implementation:

- **the Future Air C2 ATO development process:** the report proposes recommendations to improve and streamline the process and offers best practices to build on;
- **the Future Air C2 workforce:** the report proposes recommendations to enhance the readiness of personnel and the staffing of the Future Air C2 Concept;
- **adaptation of some key supporting elements:** the report provides recommendations related to the Communication & information System (CIS) and to the Air specific terminology used in Exercise STDU25; and finally
- the report provides recommendations to enhance the future trialling of next iterations of the Future Air C2 Concept.

For more examples of how the JALLC contributes to NATO Exercises through analysis of specific areas, browse our series of [Factsheets available on our website](#).

You can download a copy of the report from the JALLC Analysis Community of Interest in the classified version of the NLLP subject to access and appropriate security clearances.



Pictures courtesy of the [JWC](#), [AIRCOM](#), and [Joint Force Command Brunssum](#). Visit their websites for more information on Exercise STDU25 as well as NATO Air C2.