

HELLENIC AIR FORCE - 4TH AIR POWER CONFERENCE

Italian Air Force Chief Of Staff's speech on

“Key Enablers to Enhance Air Force Combat Capability”

Abstract

The speech held by the ITAF Chief of Staff will focus on the Italian perspective about the enablers for combat situations. During the presentation, he will go through the following Air Power key enablers:

- a. Air to Air Refueling (AAR) and Personnel Recovery (PR);
- b. Air Force Protection;
- c. Air Expeditionary Task Force – Combat Service Support;
- d. Remotely Piloted Air System (RPAS);
- e. Cyber – Electronic Warfare;
- f. Space;
- g. Strategic Communication.

During his speech, he will address to the C2 not just as an enabler, but as Air Power's vital element. The ITAF has invested a lot of energy to build a JFAC capability (now granting NATO Reaction Force - NRF) and to implement the new Air Command and Control System (ACCS). AAR increases the Air Power responsiveness and persistence, and it could offer successful options for basing. In this sector, Italy has invested in new platform such as the new tanker KC-767. PR is a key element for the fighting forces confidence and morale. ITAF demonstrated to contribute actively in this area by hosting the European Personnel Recovery Center (EPRC) in Poggio Renatico. The ability to collect, manage and share operational information to achieve Situational Awareness (SA) is becoming more and more important. ITAF can now better match these operational requirements with RPAS in the ISR missions' conduction, flying at medium level, ensuring long-range operations, and achieving high performance. Moreover, new domains (space, cyberspace and information) require new enablers. Air operations are getting more and more directly supported by net-enabled capabilities. Therefore, there is the need to enforce resilience and redundancy, and the ability to operate in degraded environments.

A disinformation campaign can undermine the Air Power credibility and legitimacy. STRATCOM is a key function. Air Power needs to improve the information domain during peacetime and in every operation, in order to pursue an effective Air Power narrative.

The Italian Chief of Staff will also mention the contribution of Air Power to Stability and Reconstruction operations, in particular in building partnership capacity. This is to show the relevance of Air Power, even in non-combat situation. Moreover, taking into account the Italian experience, he will discuss about the importance of the flight training that has a dual dimension (Afghanistan experience and training a better force for 5th gen. aircrafts).

In his closing notes, he will debate recent operations have demonstrated, once again, the importance of these enablers, providing Air Power's effectiveness and flexibility. Key enablers are essential not only for combat capabilities but also to reinforce Air Power's role in Stability and Reconstruction operations.