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## Army, Air Force Ready To Complete UAV Concept of Operations

By Ann Roosevelt

As soon as today, a meeting between the leaders of the Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) and Air Combat Command (ACC) could resolve a concept of operations for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in joint operations, according to a top Army general.

"We concluded there are some unique requirements in both the Army and Air Force that we need to accommodate but there are some overlapping requirements we ought to also take into consideration in terms of perhaps common platforms, certainly common training and certainly common hand-off procedures from one organization to another--probably some common ground station requirements that are common to both the Army and the Air Force," Army Gen. Scott Wallace told the Defense Writers Group yesterday.

The Sept. 26 meeting with Air Combat Command (ACC) Commander Air Force Gen. John Corley is likely to reach a common view of "what we think will solidify the concept of operations for presentation to the two chiefs of the Air Force and the Army when we have our next staff talks sometime right after the first of the year," Wallace said.

Early this year, UAVs were on the agenda for joint Army-Air Force staff talks. As a result, the two service chiefs charged Wallace and Corley with developing a UAV concept of operations exclusively focused on the operational level, consistent with the needs of the Army and the needs of the Air Force.

For more than a year, the two services had aired publicly, and at times heatedly, differences over which service would control UAVs, with the Air Force request to become executive agent ultimately rejected by the Pentagon and other services (Defense Daily, Sept. 18, 2007, April 3, 2007).

The Army recognizes that the Air Force probably has both the responsibility and requirement for strategic level UAVs, such as Global Hawk, produced by Northrop Grumman [NOC]. "We don't want to be in that business," Wallace said. As well, the Air

Force generally agrees that the Army has primacy for tactical level UAVs, like the Raven produced by AeroVironment [AVAV].

"Where the overlap occurs is in the Predator class, or ERMP class, or the Sky Warrior class of UAVs," he said.

Looking at common airframes is one of the areas of commonality that Wallace said that will be examined further (Defense Daily, May 3).

The two services have been looking at how to find efficiencies in their UAV programs. In April, Defense Department acquisition chief John Young began an effort to look at how to merge, then accelerate Army and Air Force UAV programs (Defense Daily, April 24).

In theater, the demand for UAVs continues to be "insatiable," Wallace said.

Since the Joint Force Commander is the ultimate authority on how to apportion UAV assets in theater--mostly pre-mission allocation--the Army and Air Force are working out how to deal with situations in flux during missions, he said.

"What we're concerned about is as the dynamics of the situation evolve, we have to have procedures in place for a mission that is originally designated to the Army but a higher Air Force priority comes up that we can transition that airframe--in flight and dynamically--to an Air Force requirement," Wallace said. This means that the techniques, procedures and mechanisms are in place so there would be a seamless transition from one service to another.

Additionally overlapping requirements and the ability to hand off platforms on the go increases the need for common ground stations and common training standards.

The UAV concept of operations is ultimately to provide the joint force commander a more effective and efficient capability.

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