

# Air Power: the next 20-30 Years

## The Age of Gripen NG

*Air Vice-Marshal Professor R A Mason, University of Birmingham*

*Linköping 23<sup>d</sup> April 2008*

**assumptions**

**air power roles**

**command of the air**

**an uncertain future.but**

**Three confident assumptions :**

1. Armed force will be used in disputes worldwide.

*we must defend our homeland and protect our interests*











1. *Armed force will be used in disputes,*
2. The media everywhere will be an instrument of war, *manipulated, impossible to avoid, impossible to control, directed at the will of the enemy*





- 1. Armed force will be used in disputes,*
- 2. The media everywhere will be an instrument*
- 3. Air power will retain its advantages**

*Reach*

*Speed*

*Freedom from ground obstacles*

*Different targets*

*Enabling sea and land operations*

*future wars may not necessarily resemble those of today*

**Intervention and asymmetric response**

**Humanitarian considerations**

**Political constraints**

**US presence**

a wide spectrum of future conflict:

Against irregular forces (guerrillas, insurgents, terrorists)

Between government “conventional” forces

*or any combination of the above, at the same  
time*

# Features at the low end of the spectrum: insurgency

<b>No air war</b>	among the people	no front lines			
fleeting, mobile targets	small units	<b>media exposure</b>			
joint service	low intensity				

# air power is *our* asymmetric advantage

Precise attack

Deep attack, interdiction

Close fire support

Sanctuary denial

Concentration denial

Surveillance

Reconnaissance

Deterrence

Encouragement

Airlift:

access

mobility

ambush

insertion

supply

casualty evacuation

aid the civil power

# inter-state war

			high intensity, EW	air defences	air combat
			large numbers	many targets	Joint Service
			battle	SSMs	media exposure

in high intensity operations:

No friendly operations can be successful on land,  
at sea or in the air, if **the enemy** has command of  
the air

# In the future, everything is possible

			high intensity, EW	air defences	air combat
			many different targets	large numbers	Joint Service
media exposure	among the people	Joint Service	battle	SSM	media exposure
fleeting, mobile targets	small units	no front lines			
no air war	low intensity				

**The greater the uncertainty about the future, the greater the need for flexibility to provide or enable many options.**

# the multi-role fighter has that flexibility

## Provides:

Command of the air:

*(Counter air, AD, SEAD)*

Deep attack, interdiction

Close fire support

Sanctuary Denial

Concentration denial

Surveillance

Reconnaissance

Deterrence

Encouragement

## Enables:

UAVs

net centric C3

IFR

land and sea operations

access

mobility

ambush

insertion

supply

reinforcement

casualty evacuation

aid the civil power

**In sum:**

**Future warfare will take many forms.**

**Command of the air will be essential to enable or enhance all operations**

**If neglected, it will be very difficult to recover**

**The multi-role fighter will be indispensable to defence and force projection**

