

NATO Airlift Management Programme Evolution

FROM IDENTIFYING THE NEED

1999 – Defence Capability Initiatives

During the Washington Summit in April, NATO countries agreed to 58 Defence Capability Initiatives (DCIs), aimed to improve interoperability among the forces of the member states and remedy the Alliance's most critical operational capability shortfalls. The DCIs included specific initiatives addressing shortfalls in the areas of **deployability and mobility (DM)** of allied forces. Two of those are:

DM -2 – Describing the need for co-operative and shared use of sea and air lift.

DM -5 – Describing the need of acquiring multinationally owned or leased sea and airlift assets for rapid deployment.

The European Council's Helsinki meeting in December adopted the Helsinki Headline Goal. The Headline Goal of creating a 60,000-strong European Rapid Reaction Force by 2003 became subsequently a major incentive for European nations to increase the deployability and mobility of their forces.

2002- Prague Capabilities Commitment

At the Prague Summit, NATO countries made firm political commitments to improve capabilities with an emphasis on greater collaboration among the members and on increased cooperation and interoperability with the European Union.

The Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) was coordinated with the European Union's efforts to improve its capabilities.

As the NATO Response Force (NRF) came into being and NATO operations and humanitarian missions increased, the need for extra transportation assets became more stringent.

SALIS (Strategic Airlift Interim Solution) would be the product of Germany's lead in developing a viable and guaranteed access airlift capability until national capabilities were expected to become available.



Jaap de Hoop Scheffer
NATO Secretary General, 2004- 2009

“The Strategic Airlift Capability initiative will help address NATO’s -- and Europe’s -- critical shortfall in strategic airlift. This capability will support our current operations, including in Afghanistan, and will be a pillar of the Alliance’s long-term transformation.”

TO TAKING ACTION

2006

Mr. Marshall Billingslea, Assistant Secretary General (ASG) Defence Investment Division (DI), having responsibility for developing Alliance’s capabilities, began an exploration of a business case for a more permanent solution that would provide nations with sorely needed strategic transportation assets.

The Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) initiative was first announced in September, and hailed at the November 2006 NATO Summit in Riga.

On 12 September 2006, several NATO countries publicly released a Letter of Intent (LOI) to launch contract negotiations for a **NATO Strategic Airlift Capability (NSAC)** partnership, with the purpose of commonly acquiring and operating an outsize cargo capability.



Subsequently, two PfP nations joined the consortium, while four NATO nations pulled out. The initiative changed name to **Strategic Airlift Capability** and evolved to the current twelve members.

2007

The North Atlantic Council (NAC) approved the **Charter** of a new NATO Procurement, Logistics or Service Organisation (NPLSO), thus authorizing the establishment of the NATO Airlift Management Organisation and its executive body, the NATO Airlift Management Agency.

NAMO was designed to execute an Airlift Management Program to acquire, manage, and sustain three Boeing C-17 Globemaster III aircraft and other related assets on behalf of the twelve SAC nations, through the NATO Airlift Management Agency (NAMA).

WWI ace Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker (US)

“Aviation is proof that, given the will, we have the capacity to achieve the impossible”

2008

The NAMO Charter entered into effect in September 2008, upon signature of the **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** by all twelve SAC nations, confirming their participation in the Strategic Airlift Capability (SAC) Program, to acquire, manage, sustain, and operate the fleet of three strategic transport aircraft.



Sept 2008 Brussels.
Signature of the SAC MOU

In October 2008, the NATO Airlift Management Agency formally started its activity in Capellen, Luxembourg, under the leadership of a Norwegian General Manager, Mr Gunnar Borch, and a Hungarian Deputy General Manager, Mr Laszlo Szarvas.

2009

July marked the arrival of **SAC 01** at Pápa Air Base, Hungary and the activation of the Heavy Airlift Wing (HAW), the multinational military structure that operates the SAC aircraft on behalf of the SAC participating nations.

September saw the arrival of **SAC 02** at Pápa Air Base, Hungary, and the first SAC flight in support of ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) to Afghanistan.

In October, **SAC 03** landed at Pápa Air Base, Hungary.



2010

HAW executed three humanitarian relief missions to Haiti, in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake, transporting equipment, material, and aid workers contributed by several SAC nations. The first mission was conducted on 18 Jan, less than one week after the disaster.

From March to April 2010, the SAC C-17 long-range cargo jets executed numerous sorties in support of the Afghanistan surge.

In May 2010, the former Commander of the Heavy Airlift Wing, Col John Zazworsky (US), declared **Initial Operational Capability**.

In 7 April 2012, the HAW reached the milestone of 7000 flight hours.

Mr Tommy Dunehew
C-17 Program Manager, Boeing International

“SAC’s commitment to the C-17 is yet another example of the value the C-17 has to international customers.”