



The Senior Officers' Panel during the opening session.

Image credit: ITEC

This is where real-world coalitions will be prepared!

Building Partnership Capacity was the topic of a very well attended session by Bob Kean, Program Manager for NATO/Multi-National M&S, US Joint Forces Command/JWFC, USA. The session presented future concepts, proven principles and lessons learned related to global distributed partner training. Dan Gardner, Director, Readiness & Training, Office of the Secretary of Defense, USA gave a remarkable talk on Overcoming National Demarcations in Building Partnership Capacity & Interoperability. "What we are doing now is that we are training like we operate, which is much more than fighting," said Gardner. "This is one of my principle messages I want people to take away from today."

130 companies had set up their stands at Stockholmsmässan, 36 of them newcomers to ITEC. A number of European players left their hardware at home. "Instead we brought with us comfortable chairs," said one Central Europe-based booth captain. "Of course we love to showcase our products, but even more important are serious talks with our customers, which we find here at ITEC." Many smaller businesses found a stage in the "booth-to-booth" show business to explore opportunities for their niche products and services.

Six months after I/ITSEC one can hardly expect to find anything really new! Gaming technology used in and for operations training was a topic at both the conference and in the exhibition hall. Still tagged with the attribute "serious" - to distinguish it from mere arcade amusements - gaming technology is making great strides in entering lecture halls and government computers. Value-for-money solutions; retain and reuse existing features, integrate available assets into state-of-the-art set-ups without too much overall system degradation; less effort for the system for the benefit of the system's actual intended purpose, that was what the professionals attracted to the stands.

Next year, its 20th anniversary, ITEC will be held in Brussels, Belgium, 12-14 May 2009, under the lead of its new owner Clarion Events Limited. www.itec.org

In the Land of the Vikings

ITEC 2008, Stockholm, 10-12 June, was the best ITEC ever. Walter F. Ullrich reports.

A successful show: on the second day more visitors had already entered than during the entire record-breaking Cologne ITEC. There are many people to thank for this: Reed Exhibitions, ITEC's organiser, ETSA, as conference manager, and the Conference Committee. Above all, the Swedish Armed Forces and industry did a great job in preparing and carrying out ITEC 2008.

The opening session - the Senior Officers' Panel - played to a full house. The panel, Admiral Luciano Zappata, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, Italian Navy; Major General Andrew Kennett, Director General Training Support UK; Major General Pertti Salminen, Rector of The National Defence University, Finland; Dr James Blake, Army Simulation, Training & Instrumentation Command, USA; and Johan Ohlson, President, Saab Training Systems, under the chair of the Senior Host, Major General Michael Moore, Chief of Development, Swedish Armed Forces HQ, Sweden, addressed their concerns. The consensus was that future training will need to adopt a much more comprehensive approach, encompassing the full spectrum of operations.

Conference Chairman Paul Newman, Head Modelling & Simulation Coordination Office, NATO Research Technology Agency, France, put together an ambitious programme. Topics included training transformation, life-long learning, education and new technologies, and new issues such as training in the live environment and common military skills. The new one-day "Modelling, Simulation and Training for Beginners Tutorial" held the Monday before ITEC started was a great success. Such tutorials are in demand, as government organisations increasingly have to consider S&T aspects in their decision-making. "We have listened to your comments," Paul Newman said.

A main reason Stockholm was chosen as the venue is the 'Partnership of Peace Exercise VIKING 08'. Sweden will be at the heart of this ambitious multinational training and simulation event. The demonstration of the Persistent Partner Training and Simulation Network (P2SN) - the future Swedish and US network - was the major exhibition event. P2SN will be the permanent hub where partners share capabilities for the benefit of education and training, all in the spirit of the Joint National Training Capability.