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Introduction to Part B: Technologies for Optical Countermeasures

This was the twelfth time we have held this conference, conducted over two days, and offered a range of papers pertinent to Electro-Optical and Infrared Countermeasures. As in the past, we also held our panel discussion debating the topic of "IRCM – Back to the Future". This discussion is very popular and caused some very interesting discussion, especially when the topic of "where do we move from here and how do we get there given technology and cost constraints" was raised.

This year's conference had five sessions, which focused upon Aircraft Protection, Laser Technology, and Atmospheric, Platform, and Signature Effects. There were two exceptional papers in the keynote session, which addressed "Semiconductor Lasers for DIRCM" and "Advancement in High Power MIR Sources." In the following sessions there were invited presentations covering Pre-emptive DIRCM System Architectures, Helicopter Rotor Downwash Effects, and High Energy Laser Propagation Effects. Of particular interest was our session on, "Atmospheric and External Platform Effects upon Laser Propagation." Here we had two excellent papers dealing with "Experimental and Numerical Analysis of Propagation of High-Energy Beams," and "Helicopter Engine Exhaust Rotor Downwash Effects on Laser Beams." Both of these papers deal with what we get at the end of the propagation chain once rotor downwash effects, atmospheric propagation effects, and absorption and scattering take their toll on our otherwise perfect beam emanating from our system.

We wish to thank all of the presenters for delivering an outstanding conference; moreover, we also thank the Programme Committee for their continued support and willingness to chair the various sessions, which is also appreciated by SPIE. The chairmen encouraged the audience to consider topics for discussion at next year's conference and symposium, which will be held in Edinburgh, Scotland.

David H. Titterton
Robert J. Grasso
Mark A. Richardson