

Discussing the future of NATO

Written by Sebastian Bley
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Under the overall theme "the Lisbon Summit – military implications and the way ahead" the Allied Command Operations (ACO), in partnership with the Allied Command Transformation (ACT), organised the seminar and study exercise "Allied Reach 2011", held at the National Defence Academy of the Polish Armed Forces in Warsaw from 8 to 11 May 2011.

"Allied Reach 2011", hosted by Poland, was a valuable opportunity for NATO's senior commanders headed by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) Admiral James G. Stavridis and Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) General Stéphane Abrial, partners and different associated stakeholders to analyze, discuss and to contribute to the ongoing process of implementing the Alliance's new Strategic Concept. Among the honourable guests was also the Commander of the Multinational Corps Northeast Lieutenant General Rainer Korff.

The exercise started with the opening addresses by SACEUR and SACT, in which they underlined the unique possibility to discuss NATO's future with the senior commanders and partners. From the Host Nation's side, the Minister of Polish Defence Mr Bogdan Klich addressed the participants and stressed the importance of developing NATO after the Lisbon Summit. He also stated that NATO has proved to be the biggest and most capable military alliance in the world.

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Then, the Chairman of the Military Council Admiral Gianpaolo di Paola and other senior leaders of NATO and partners briefed the participants of the "Allied Reach" on the ongoing development and topics, such as "complex crisis environment and multiple stakeholders" as well as future "Emerging Security Challenges", which served as a fine lead-in to the following discussions and workshops.



For the study phase of the exercise, the participants were divided in 6 different syndicates which were headed by senior commanders of the NATO Command Structure. The syndicates dealt with the most recent topics following the Lisbon Summit including the Missile Defence, the Comprehensive Approach, the challenges of the ongoing NATO Structure Review and NATO approach to "Partners". The MNC NE Commander took part in the syndicate which focused on better cooperation for mutual benefits among NATO partners.

On the last day of the exercise, each syndicate presented their findings from the discussions and provided the agreed recommendations for the way ahead to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE).

Finally, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation General Mieczysław Bieniek and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe Sir Richard Shirreff closed the exercise with special thanks for hospitality and outstanding support provided by Poland, the Host Nation. They also invited all participants for the Allied Reach 2012 exercise.