

ACT Countering Hybrid Threats Task Force identifies future challenges - ACT

Written by U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Carla Burdt
Thursday, 05 May 2011 10:21



The Final Report of the Allied Command Transformation (ACT) Multiple Futures Project (MFP) highlighted the scale and complexity of conventional and non-conventional future threats facing NATO.

In response to MFP, the International Military Staff (IMS) directed that the Bi-Strategic Commands (Bi-SC) commence development of an overarching Concept for the NATO Military Contribution to Countering Hybrid Threats (MCCHT).



The draft MCCHT Capstone Concept was completed in August 2010. It articulates the unique challenges posed by current and future hybrid threats and explains why these challenges may require NATO to adapt its strategy, structure and capabilities accordingly. It discusses both a general approach for dealing with hybrid threats as well as a framework for the Alliance to deliver an effective response. The paper also suggests broader implications for NATO's military component.

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The draft CHT concept work has informed the development of the new Strategic Concept, further CHT analysis and maturation will support its implementation.

“The CHT Integrated Project Team (IPT) was established in early 2009 and subsequently developed a detailed campaign plan to assess both hybrid threats and the broader challenges facing NATO within the emerging security environment,” said Royal Marine Lieutenant Colonel Richard Hills, IPT Lead Concept Developer. “Between 2009 –2010 a number of ACT led international workshops were held to both focus the key analysis and better inform the development of the concept. The workshops included a broad range of participants from NATO and non NATO organisations.”



The CHT Concept asserts that hybrid threats involve any adversaries (including states, rogue states, non-state actors or terrorist organisations) who may employ a combination of actions in an increasingly unconstrained operating environment in order to achieve their aims.

While not a new problem, the interconnectedness of the globalised environment now makes hybrid threats a far more significant challenge for the Alliance and its interests, whether encountered within national territory, in operational theatres or across non-physical domains. Hybrid threats will apply pressure across the entire spectrum of conflict, with action that may originate between the boundaries artificially separating its constituents. They may consist of a combination of every aspect of warfare and compound the activities of multiple actors.

“The draft concept also asserts that NATO’s role in managing the emerging security

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environment will invariably be a supporting one. The Alliance needs to develop its understanding of how it can cooperate with other organisations and stakeholders to both deter potential threats and mitigate their impact,” said Hills.

ACT with principal support from USJFCOM Joint Irregular Warfare Centre (JIWC), will conduct a Counter Hybrid Threats Experiment May 9-13 in Tallinn, Estonia. Its primary purpose will be to explore and discuss the key implications of the new draft concept and develop with other international stakeholders an understanding of potential approaches in addressing the likely challenge areas. The event has generated interest and attendance from a significant number of non-NATO organisations (academic centres, businesses and international bodies).



Hills explained, “One of the key outcomes of the event will be clear recommendations to NATO’s Political and Military leadership of what the organisation must do to support the international community in tackling the array of potential hybrid challenges. The results will feed directly into the further development and refinement of the CHT Concept Paper with the aim to potentially produce a more informed draft, by late 2011. This will then potentially inform the development of higher level Political/Military paper. In turn, this may also be supported by a further CHT Experiment in 2012.”

For more information about the Countering Hybrid Threats Experiment visit [the Experiment Portal](#)