



In parallel with the NATO Summit in Chicago, the Atlantic Council arranged a conference gathering Young Professionals and students from NATO and partner countries from across the globe, in Chicago.

This conference addressed all the issues relating to the NATO summit providing Young Professionals with the opportunity to discuss topical issues, through meetings and panels with the leaders gathered for the NATO summit. In addition the winner of the Norfolk NATO Festival's Model NATO event, Micheal Blaesings from Tallwood High School, took part in the first day.

The event opened with an address by the NATO Secretary General. He spoke about the key issues facing NATO today in advance of the discussion at the Summit, in particular the future stability of Afghanistan, Smart Defence, Missile Defence and the need to work more closely with NATO's network of partner countries around the globe.

The Secretary General stressed that in today's world, no nation and no continent can deal with the challenges of the 21st Century alone, as threats do not recognise borders or respect countries' sovereignty.

After an address by the Mayor of Chicago, the Young Professionals were engaged in a simulation which enabled them to take on the role of Permanent Representatives to NATO and

## Young Atlanticists Event - ACT

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the media. The scenario was based around piracy, cyber issues and terrorism. It gave the participants the opportunity to practical experience firsthand the art of diplomacy and negotiation – the essential elements required to reach consensus. The scenario was a continuation of the simulation run at an earlier [event](#) in Bratislava, Slovakia. After two hours of lively debate, the group was able to reach consensus and then pooled their resources to take limited military action to mitigate a simulated terrorist threat.

On completion of the simulation, Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, General Stephane Abrial addressed the group. He highlighted the era of globalisation and relating this to the importance of partnerships and the need for Smart Defence in this age of financial austerity. He spoke about emerging security challenges, including Cyber Defence and Strategic Surprise and summed up by stating "This Chicago Summit is once again an opportunity for our nations and so many of our partners to unite their efforts for a safer Euro-Atlantic region and a safer world".

Following SACT's speech a series of challenging questions relating to Smart Defence, Cyber and Missile Defence were posed by the audience, the session was excellently moderated by Anna Maria Barcikowska, a senior officer from Europe Defence Agency.

The Young Atlanticists Program run by the Atlantic Council is dedicated to identifying and connecting the next generation of leaders in the Atlantic community, and beyond.