

## ACT Engages with Future Leaders - ACT

Written by Tracy Cheasley, Strategic Issues and Engagement Branch, ACT  
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The Atlantic Council of the United States (ACUS), a Washington 'Think Tank' and an established partner of Headquarters Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (HQ SACT), organised a Young Atlanticists Summit in Bratislava, Slovakia, 11th - 13th April 2012. This Summit was conducted as part of the [GlobSec 2012 Global Security Forum](#) and was the first of two major events that ACUS is promoting and conducting in the run-up to the NATO Summit in Chicago 20th and 21st of May. Following the Bratislava Summit, a second event will take place in Chicago in parallel with the NATO Summit. Both events are being supported by NATO Headquarters' Public Diplomacy Division.



An understanding of the multi-faceted decision-making process required in a consensus based organisation was deemed necessary by ACUS - especially in today's complex security environment. In light of this, the Atlantic Council requested, through NATO HQ, that HQ SACT prepare and conduct two NATO Model Events for the [Young Atlanticists](#) in support of both events. On the 12th of April 2012, Allied Command Transformation conducted the first NATO Model Event Simulation for 35 pre-selected Young Atlanticists from NATO Member Nations and partner countries.

Previous to the event, each participant was assigned either a permanent representative role for a NATO country, or a News Media role. The Secretary General began the session by leading an emergency discussion in the North Atlantic Council (NAC, NATO's highest decision making body) on piracy. The question of what to do; how and when to act, was exacerbated by an emerging cyber-attack against a major European bank and financial group. Pressure increased on the Council members as they were confronted with simulated News Releases and interviews, prepared in reaction to NAC decisions by those playing the role of the media. Media participants were asked to critically analyse the actions (or lack thereof) taken by the NAC. The News Media added a significant layer of complexity and realism in a world globally connected by a 24/7 information-sharing technology where information is often misconstrued.

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From the very beginning, the participants showed a deep interest and knowledge in all topics. Key aspects covered during the debate were NATO's role in dealing with failing/failed states, how to do more in an age of austerity (i.e. 'Smart Defence'), the security implications of an Alliance less financially committed, and the applicability of the Washington Treaty's [Articles 4 and 5](#) in relation to cyber-attacks on NATO Member Nations.

The Young Professionals (Atlanticists to the core) departed Bratislava with a sense of accomplishment and great anticipation as they prepare to attend part II in Chicago.