

NATO Hosts Mock Debate for Local Students - ACT

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Twenty-eight Norfolk students participated in the Model NATO Challenge, a mock debate, hosted by NATO Allied Command Transformation. "The Model NATO Challenge is a great opportunity for a student to experience first-hand how a global crisis situation is truly handled by NATO nations as it unfolds" said Trish Carrier, Norfolk NATO Festival's Director.

Each student represented a differing NATO nation and debated a fictitious scenario. Competition was fierce as the winner of the debate was invited to the NATO Summit in Chicago; attended the World Affairs Council dinner where U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, made remarks; and won a scholarship to be applied to the school of their choice.

The debates were spirited and judging critical. Participants were evaluated on a number of criteria on a scale of one to ten. The overall scores were handed out and the winners were notified in April.

Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT), General, Stephane Abrial encouraged the students stating, "You're all winners already and this is a great experience in negotiation towards consensus-building, which I am sure will be a great part of your future professional lives."

The students expressed enthusiasm and enjoyed a unique, once in a lifetime experience. Michael Blaesing, Czech Republic student representative said he learned a great deal about the government and culture of the Czech Republic and how "the local transportation system there is much more advanced than and not as expensive as the one in the United States." Blaesing's sponsor, Lieutenant Colonel Gabriel Kovacs, the Czech Republic National Liaison Representative at Headquarters SACT said, "It was such a great honor to support such a diligent student, I admire his dedication and devotion to this event and I'm impressed with his broad range of knowledge concerning International governments."