

Written by Robin Michelle Barnett, ACT PAO
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The NATO Allied Command Transformation (ACT) has been leading a Space working group that will provide much needed solutions to gaps in Collaborative Space support to NATO operations.

This group was established to address shortfalls identified in a 2010 COMISAF classified report concerning Collaborative Space support; these shortfalls were later confirmed in Libya in 2011 during Operation Unified Protector. Initially, in spring 2011, this working group had 9 NATO Nations Representatives while it has 35 today with NATO Space Organisations and Industry Representatives in addition. As a response to the deficiencies, this working group has quickly developed 3 products in a year-and-a-half: a handbook for Space users and two Collaborative Space Support training courses.

"Space is a key supporting element of NATO's three core tasks: Collective Defence, Crisis Management, and Co-Operative Security", said Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (DSACT) General Mieczysław Bieniek to an audience at the 15th Annual Space and Missile Defence Conference on 14 August in Huntsville, Alabama.

The industry conference theme was focused on Capabilities for a Global Defence; General Bieniek, as a keynote speaker addressed The Role of Space and Missile Defence to Providing Capabilities to the Warfighter in NATO.

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"Space and Ballistic Missile Defence will remain key priorities on NATO's agenda for the foreseeable future", said DSACT.

General Bieniek emphasized that "Space support is provided by National assets under National Command and Control".

"When space support to NATO missions is requested, one must always bear in mind that it will be a collaborative effort", stated DSACT.

Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) was also addressed in the keynote speech. According to DSACT, BMD is designed to protect the "warfighter, European populations and the National Critical Assets". While the current BMD capability is at the early stages "the Alliance is able to monitor, detect and report an attack, as well as engage an incoming ballistic missile", iterated DSACT.



He discussed collaborative BMD projects with industry as part of the NATO Framework for Collaborative Interaction. According to Bieniek, "industry has significant avenues for co-operation with NATO through ACT on a win-win basis in terms of mutual awareness with the goal being to deliver a robust BMD capability in the appropriate time".

"This is about transforming NATO, shaping Space and BMD as enablers for the warfighter of the future" said General Bieniek in closing remarks.

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Following the keynote speech, General Bieniek met with others including Congressman Brooks and LTG Richard Formica, Commanding General, USASMDC/ARSTRAT.