

NATO's Overarching theme is "SMART" for Exercise Steadfast Pinnacle 2011 - ACT

Written by U.S. Army Major Robin L. Ochoa
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Latvia, a NATO member since 2004, was the scene of the Steadfast Pinnacle and Pyramid Exercise 2011.

The annual exercise is built on fictitious scenarios that resemble likely real-world crisis situations and put commanders and senior staff members through real-life training to meet the demands of the ever-changing operational environment. During the exercise, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, Polish Army General Mieczysław Bieniek had the opportunity to visit and engage with senior officers and commanders whose activities were mostly driven by the newly developed Comprehensive Operations Planning Directive (COPD) and who were required to refine their skills to meet the complex operational environment.

"The aim of this exercise, conducted alongside Steadfast Pyramid, was to allow commanders and senior staff to develop additional skills that will enhance their effectiveness in leading their commands and staff during the planning and conduct of operations," said Bieniek.

At conclusion of the exercise Bieniek reemphasised the need for pooling and sharing of resources across the Alliance, in other words, echoing the NATO Secretary General's call for "Smart Defence".

"If there is an overarching observation I can make today it is that this exercise proved that the only way ahead for the Alliance and for all Nations is to be SMART about what we do and how

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we want to achieve it," Bieniek stated.

While in Latvia, Bieniek also had the opportunity to meet with Latvian Chief of Defence, Major General Raimonds Graube. They discussed the current and future situation of Latvian armed forces as well as cooperation with ACT, and NATO's way towards the NATO Summit in Chicago.

"Latvia fully supports capability development through Multinational Approaches and our interest in this approach is an active participation in logistics and training," said Graube. "For Latvia, pooling and sharing capabilities is crucial to its future prospects."

Bieniek then paid a visit to the Latvian National Armed Forces Joint Headquarters and Joint Operations Centre where he received a brief on the Latvian Defence Planning Process and Capability Development.

Graube stated, "We want to be a provider of capabilities to NATO, not only a user of them, NATO is created not only to defend Latvia, but to defend all NATO Members."

In a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Girts Valdis Kristovskis, Bieniek and Kristovskis discussed the Multinational Approach Task Force initiative and development of the Latvian Armed Forces.

"Latvia is interested in international cooperation in the area of capability building and involvement in the Multinational Approach projects," said Kristovskis.

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