

ACT, USJFCOM, collaborate at Global Commons conference - ACT

Written by Jacob Boyer, USJFCOM Public Affairs and ACT Public Affairs
Thursday, 01 July 2010 00:00

Leadership from NATO's Allied Command Transformation (ACT), U.S. Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) and the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense joined together in Virginia Beach, Va., this week for the "Cooperation and Conflict in the Commons" conference June 29-July 1.

The conference, sponsored by the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), the National Defense University Institute for National Strategic Studies, USJCOM's Joint Futures Group and ACT, provided an opportunity for senior leadership to address efforts to enable civil and military forces in the globally shared and ungoverned operating areas of outer space, international waters, airspace and cyberspace.

Featured speakers included James Soligan, ACT's Deputy Chief of Staff for Transformation; Dr. Kathleen Hicks, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans and Forces; and U.S. Navy Rear Admiral Lawrence Rice, USJFCOM Director of Strategy and Policy.

Daniel Oliver, NPS president, delivered the conference's opening remarks. He said the conference was imperative because of a recognized national and international need to ensure access to the global commons.

"Our goal is to better understand the nature and impact of cooperation and conflict dynamics within and among the commons where competing interests and motivations potentially threaten security and prosperity," Oliver said.

Through lectures, panel discussions and small working groups, participants explored how the global commons can be used as an organizing construct for national and defence strategies. The conference was framed around four questions and points of focus:

- How does the global commons paradigm alter the U.S.' strategic calculus?
- How will opponents and adversaries deny and/or disrupt the commons?
- How might the U.S. and its allies ensure the military use of the commons?
- How can a comprehensive approach - integrated government, commercial and military effort - assure access to the global commons?

Soligan kicked off the second day of the conference with a presentation on "Preparing the Alliance," where he talked about how NATO's strengths can help define and solve the complex challenges found in these spaces. He said that the power of NATO is its ability to provide standards accepted by its 28 Member Nations which are often adopted globally. NATO also can influence national decisions at a time in which countries have different priorities and fiscal restraints. He said he saw the conference as a way to discuss cooperation throughout these domains.

"The global commons are so diverse, but the real purpose of the conference is to talk about

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those common interface mechanisms that allow us to deal with those ungoverned spaces,” said Soligan. “How do we deal with places in which no one nation has territorial responsibilities?”

Collected results from the conference will be distributed to inform forward-looking documents, to include USJFCOM's Joint Operating Environment and NATO's Strategic Concept, as well as operations.