



# PARTNERSHIPS 360 SYMPOSIUM

## 2024 REPORT



PARTNERSHIPS  
IN THE AGE OF  
**HYBRID**  
CHALLENGES







NATO  
+  
OTAN

**NATO  
Partnerships 360  
Symposium**

Sarajevo,  
Bosnia and Herzegovina  
22-24 October 2024







*"At Allied Command Transformation, and our sister Command Allied Command Operations, we enhance the capabilities of partner nation's forces. This partnership network strengthens security outside NATO territory, which makes NATO itself safer. At the Partnerships 360 Symposium, we use the opportunity to strengthen our work with our partners and position our Alliance to defend and deter any and all aggressors. We are stronger together."*

Rear Admiral Placido Torresi, Deputy Chief of Staff for  
Multi-Domain Force Development



# INTRODUCTION



With the generous support of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division (PASP) of the NATO International Staff and Allied Command Transformation (ACT) co-organized the fifth edition of the civil-military "Partnerships 360 Symposium" in Sarajevo on 22-24 October 2024. The theme of this year's symposium was **"Partnerships in the Age of Hybrid Challenges."**

The goal was to strengthen the partnership community and improve the coherence, cohesion, and unity of effort among the Alliance and its partners through open exchange of ideas, opportunities, and challenges. It also aimed to deepen the understanding of the global security environment, inform new concepts, and explore trends and needs most relevant to NATO partners and their relationship with the Alliance.

A record 265 participants took part in this event. They included participants from 54 Allied and partner nations, as well as the NATO Military Commands, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, NATO Centres of Excellence, the European Union (EU), the African Union (AU), the Organization for Security

Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and academia.

The programme of the symposium kicked off on the evening of 22 October with an icebreaker session hosted by Mr Josip Brkic, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On the morning of 23 October, Ms Borjana Kristo, Chair of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Mr Elmedin Konakovic, Minister Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina; Mr Javier Colomina, acting-Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy and RADM Placido Torresi, Deputy Chief of Staff for Multi-Domain Force Development at ACT jointly inaugurated the symposium.

During the symposium, a number of key themes emerged:

- NATO's involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been a cornerstone for transforming the country's defense institutions, stabilizing the region, and fostering peace and cooperation in the Western Balkans through its Open Door policy.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina hosting the Symposium symbolizes its



- progress since the Dayton Peace Agreement, reflecting its commitment to peace, Euro-Atlantic integration, and the modernization of its military, which has proven effective in responding to recent crises with NATO's support.
- The 75th Anniversary Summit emphasized transatlantic unity and enduring partnerships, highlighting the need for enhanced cooperation to counter evolving hybrid threats targeting democratic institutions and societies.
  - Strengthening partners' armed forces through modernized training, advanced technologies, and innovative tactics not only enhances their resilience but also fortifies NATO's collective security and deters threats to democratic foundations.
  - NATO's partnerships and engagement have played a key role in stabilizing the Western Balkans, but continued progress requires overcoming external influences and fostering reconciliation and cooperation among regional countries.
  - Hybrid threats, such as cyberattacks, disinformation, and economic coercion, are increasingly used by states like Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) to disrupt societies and undermine democratic institutions.
  - To combat hybrid threats, NATO and its partners must adopt a comprehensive strategy focused on monitoring, exposing, and acting through enhanced cooperation, transparency, legislative reforms, and media literacy.
  - Effectively responding to hostile information threats requires a selective, risk-based approach, focusing on long-term resilience through partnerships with industry and civil society, legislative updates, and comprehensive public diplomacy strategies, rather than reactive crisis communication alone.
  - NATO must strengthen intelligence sharing, streamline coordination with partners, and focus on proactive narrative strategies to maintain cognitive advantage over adversaries while enhancing long-term capacity building efforts through aligned political will, timely delivery, and sustainable partner ownership, all while preserving the NATO brand.
  - To counter hybrid and cognitive warfare tactics effectively, NATO must integrate all the available tools (diplomatic, information, military, economic) into its strategic planning, enhance coordination through its Multi-Domain Operations framework, and collaborate closely with the private sector, leveraging lessons learned from conflicts like Ukraine.
  - NATO's partnerships, strengthened by recent accessions and shaped by shared security challenges, are crucial in addressing complex global threats like hybrid warfare, particularly from Russia and China. Continued collaboration with partners, including support for Ukraine and regional stability, will guide NATO's strategic direction in an increasingly contested world.



# OPENING SESSION



## Speakers:

- Ms Borjana KRISTO, Chairwoman of the Council of Ministers, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BIH)
- Mr Elmedin KONAKOVIC, Minister Foreign Affairs, BIH
- Mr Javier COLOMINA, Acting Assistant Secretary General Political Affairs and Security Policy, NATO HQ
- RADM Placido TORRESI, Deputy Chief of Staff for Multi Domain Force Development, HQ SACT

## Speakers noted that:

- Bosnia and Herzegovina has been considered a success as NATO's first out-of-area operation, highlighting the country's transformation of its defense and security institutions.
- NATO's Open Door policy has been instrumental in stabilizing the Western Balkans and fostering trust.
- External destabilizing efforts, particularly from Russia, continue to pose challenges, necessitating sustained cooperation to address these complex issues.
- The symbolism of Bosnia and Herzegovina hosting the Symposium nearly three decades after the Dayton Peace Agreement has reaffirmed the country's commitment to peace and Euro-Atlantic integration.
- NATO's support has been crucial in modernizing the country's military, with the response to recent floods showcasing the strength and effectiveness of NATO partnership.
- NATO's efforts to enhance the capabilities of partner nations' armed forces to increase resilience and deter threats are considered very important.
- There is a clear need to enhance NATO's capacity to withstand, adapt to, and recover from hybrid challenges, therefore cooperation with partners is essential.
- NATO needs to modernize its training, explore new technologies, and develop new strategies to maintain operational superiority in a competitive global environment.





## Panel Discussion: The Western Balkans – A Region Showcasing the Versatility of NATO Partnerships and the Success of Integration

The Western Balkans is a region of strategic importance for the Alliance, and NATO has been strongly committed to its security and stability for decades. For many years, NATO has also invested significantly in building mutually beneficial partnerships across the region. Through political dialogue and various forms of practical cooperation, the countries of the Western Balkans were offered support in their reforms and integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures. As a result, today many regional countries are part of the Alliance and contribute to the peace and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond.

Yet, despite its tremendous progress, the Western Balkans continues to face various challenges. With recurrent tensions, stability and security cannot be taken for granted. The European and the Euro-Atlantic integration processes are far from over. At the same time, external malign actors are stepping up their game, using disinformation, hybrid and cyber threats to undermine democracies and derail progress. Against this background, NATO has reinvigorated its approach to the region to help safeguard its stability, advance democratic reforms, and boost its resilience.

The panel seeks to present diversity of NATO partnerships and the successes of integration, while at the same time explore the challenges the region faces and the means and ways to overcome them.

The following framing questions are intended to guide these discussions:

- *What are the main challenges facing the Western Balkans today? Are you worried more about lingering internal issues or destabilizing external influences?*
- *How are the current geopolitical developments reflecting on the security in the Western Balkans? How real is the risk of destabilization in the region?*
- *What would be your recommendations to NATO on how to enhance its engagement with the region?*
- *What tools should NATO leverage better?*



# Panel Discussion - The Western Balkans – A Region Showcasing the Versatility of NATO Partnerships and the Success of Integration



## **Moderator:**

- Mr Josip BRKIC, Deputy Minister Foreign Affairs, BIH

## **Panellists:**

- Mr Elmedin KONAKOVIC, Minister of Foreign Affairs, BIH
- Mr Javier COLOMINA, Acting Assistant Secretary General Political Affairs and Security Policy, NATO International Staff
- Dr Gordan GRLIĆ RADMAN, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, Republic of Croatia
- Mr Perisa KASTRATOVIC, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Montenegro
- Mr Zoran DIMITROVSKI, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Republic of North Macedonia
- Mr Igor KUZELKA, Assistant Minister for Security Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Serbia

The opening panel was an opportunity for high-level officials from NATO, regional Allies (Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia) and partner nations (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia) to reflect on NATO's legacy in the region and the varying approaches regional countries have pursued in their relations with the Alliance.



The Panellists noted that:

- Recognizing that there are differences in their relationships with NATO, they agreed that NATO's partnerships, operational engagement, and integration processes have played a significant stabilizing role in the region and have contributed towards a common vision of a prosperous and democratic Western Balkans.
- They pointed to several residual challenges that threaten peace and stability in the region, such as the malign influence of external actors. Against this backdrop, the panellists underscored the need for NATO to continue to leverage its tools to support further progress.
- They also recognized that countries in the region should actively work towards reconciliation and good neighbourly relations if they are to deliver on the promise of peace and prosperity for all their citizens.

challenges, including external influences and regional tensions.

To move forward, it is essential to maintain a collaborative approach, with NATO continuing its support as regional countries focus on reconciliation and nurturing good neighborly relations, paving the way for lasting peace and shared prosperity in the region.

In conclusion, the opening panel highlighted NATO's crucial role in fostering stability, prosperity, and democracy in the Western Balkans through partnerships, operational engagement, and integration efforts. While acknowledging the progress made, the panellists emphasized the importance of addressing ongoing





## Plenary Session 1: Hybrid Threats and Societal Resilience

NATO Allies and partners are facing hybrid threats which evolve and intensify. Synchronized and coordinated threats target our democratic institutions, sow doubt in the minds of our populations, and undermine our societies. Our perspective must remain broad as we build robust mechanisms for identifying and countering hybrid threats challenging societal security.

Building resilience, including societal resilience, is a top priority for NATO and many of its partners. Resilience is not merely about bouncing back; it's about proactive engagement. Our society must be prepared, informed, and capable of responding to threats constructively.

Two focus areas are emphasized:

- empowering civil society and the public to actively prepare for and respond to crises.
- increasing public awareness and engaging citizens regarding foreign interference and disinformation.

Disruptions to our societies can occur in many domains and by various tools. Besides cyber-attacks and sabotage, we see malign application of new technologies and unattributed hostile disinformation campaigns. With the rapidly evolving information environment and the accessibility of AI tools, hybrid threats pose Allies and partner nations with unprecedented challenges, which test the fabric of our social cohesion and trust in democratic institutions. We need to enhance our collective capacity to withstand, adapt to, and recover from these challenges.

This panel will focus on the importance of collaboration in addressing the pressing challenges and hybrid threats that undermine our societies. Nations must take decisive steps to maintain trust with the public and to seamlessly integrate civil and military authorities, civil society, businesses and the public during crises. Also, cooperation in countering hybrid threats among NATO, Allies, and partners is not only desirable, but essential.

The following framing questions are intended to guide these discussions:

- *Understanding Resilience: What are the most critical components of societal resilience that need to be prioritized in current strategies?*
- *Civil-Military Integration: What steps can be taken to better integrate civil and military authorities in preparing for crises and enhancing societal resilience?*
- *Public Engagement: How can NATO, Allies, and partners effectively engage the public in awareness campaigns regarding disinformation and hybrid threats?*
- *Best Practices: What are the leading and potentially adaptable best practices recently adopted by the Allies and partners? Can you share an example of a successful initiative from your nation that has strengthened societal resilience or that combats disinformation?*
- *International Cooperation: In what ways can NATO Allies and partners enhance cooperation to address interconnected security threats globally? How can NATO support its partners and maximize synergies with other international institutions?*
- *Challenges Ahead: What do you see as the primary challenges to building societal resilience in your country, and how can these challenges be addressed?*
- *Long-Term Strategy: How do we ensure that the lessons learned from recent crises shape long-term strategies for societal resilience in the future?*



# Plenary Session 1 - Hybrid Threats and Societal Resilience



## Keynote speaker and Moderator:

- Ms Shiho RYBSKI, Director Training and Exercise, European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats

## Panellists:

- Mr Alexandre MONÉGER, Head, Cyber and Hybrid Policy Section, IS Innovation, Hybrid and Cyber Division, NATO HQ
- Dr Johan SCHALIN, Senior Analyst, European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats
- Mr Kohei NAKAMURA, Minister, Deputy Head of Mission, Mission of Japan to NATO
- Mr Markus RÄTY, Officer NATO Partnership Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland
- BRIG Lisa FERRIS, Defence Advisor to the United Kingdom, Senior New Zealand Military Representative to NATO & EU
- Mr Andrew LE GRICE, First Secretary Security and Stability, Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, UK Embassy in BiH







The keynote speaker's presentation set the scene for the first plenary session on "Hybrid Threats and Societal Resilience," reflecting on all the different threats from the malign application of disruptive technologies to the increasingly aggressive hybrid tools that are disrupting our societies and challenging our social cohesion and trust in our democratic institutions.

Discussions highlighted the range of disruptive threats facing societies, including cyberattacks, disinformation, political interference, and other hybrid tactics that erode our democracies. Participants noted a shared concern about key state actors employing these methods (notably Russia, PRC, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), and Iran), with an evolving threat landscape characterized by advanced tools and global ambitions.

A particular convergence in disinformation strategies between Russia and the PRC was identified, aimed at exploiting societal divisions and polarization, often amplified through social media. To address these challenges and build societal

resilience, a consensus emerged around the need for an integrated approach across short, medium, and long-term horizons, encapsulated in three pillars:

1. Collect: Enhance monitoring, data collection, and real-time information sharing on hybrid threats. Cooperation with industry is considered as critical, given its role in safeguarding key infrastructure.
2. Expose: Promptly inform the public about threats and identify perpetrators when possible. Transparency was emphasized as vital for maintaining trust in institutions, even when attribution is uncertain.
3. Act: Build resilience not just to recover but to proactively adapt to and withstand hybrid challenges, reinforcing national and collective capacities.

This approach underscores the importance of collaboration among Allies, partners, and industries to safeguard societal stability and trust.



#### Discussion points of note:

- Legislative and regulatory reforms. This would include economic security measures, updated resilience strategies, setting up bodies to facilitate inter-governmental coordination, coordination with industry and civil society, and cooperation between Allies and partners.
- Dedicated human and financial resources.
- An active strategic communication strategy (including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)). Debunking and countering disinformation should be based on facts and solid evidence, packaged in a way that resonates with the public, and delivered through credible sources who are not necessarily government officials, but trusted members of civil society.
- Ensuring high media literacy through education is imperative. It should start in school and through dedicated grass root campaigns that teach populations how to distinguish facts from falsehoods in order to make informed choices.
- Regular evaluation of regulatory frameworks and tools should underpin any such strategy given the rapid evolution of hybrid threats.

In conclusion, the evolving and multifaceted nature of hybrid threats demands a unified, proactive response from democratic nations and their

allies. By focusing on collecting critical information, exposing threats transparently, and acting decisively to build resilience, societies can strengthen their capacity to face these challenges. The shared recognition of the growing convergence of disinformation tactics, particularly among state actors, further emphasizes the need for a coordinated effort to protect democratic values and social cohesion. While the path forward requires both immediate action and long-term strategic planning, the commitment to transparency, collaboration, and resilience will be key in safeguarding institutions and ensuring the stability of democratic societies in the face of ever-more complex threats.







## Break-out Session - Countering Information Threats



### Facilitators:

- Ms Shiho RYBSKI, Director Training and Exercise, European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats
- Dr Johan SCHALIN, Senior Analyst, European Centre of Excellence for Countering Hybrid Threats
- Ms Beaudine VERHOEK, Officer, Data Insights and Information Threats Section, IS Public Diplomacy Division, NATO HQ

The session aimed to foster the decision-making process in a potential crisis influenced by disinformation and misinformation threats. Participants took part in an interactive scenario-based discussion in which they were asked to play the role of a decision maker faced with a critical situation influenced by hostile information activities. Participants were invited to develop responses based on their own national policies and practical tools currently available to them.

The participants recognized that:

- Making critical and timely decisions through a whole of society approach when facing information threats remains a big challenge.
- Chasing after every single hostile narrative is impossible and counter-productive as it will delay

our ability to fill the information space with our own stories.

- Responses need to be selective and founded on a risk-based approach, while considering the available resources and the right tools.
- Currently, most national responses are short-term and primarily focused on crisis communication. Debunking, as a full-fledged strategy, is incomplete and may not always work given that reactions are frequently emotionally driven.
- Long-term resilience building through tailored awareness campaigns, partners legislation, and engagement with civil society and industry is needed.



Participants recommended that the Alliance consider the following:

- Pre-establish relationships and frameworks for cooperation with industry and civil society to effectively counter information threats.
- Adopt or update legislation and regulatory frameworks.
- In view of the recent adoption of NATO's Approach to Counter Information Threats, enhance cooperation with interested partners by incorporating public diplomacy goals in Individually Tailored Partnership Programmes (ITPPs) and sharing best practices and lessons learned.





## Break-out Session - Achieving Cognitive Superiority in the Age of Hybrid

A 2024 survey of 6000 respondents in 19 African countries gauged whether China or the United States was more effective at selling its political and economic model and its role as a global leader. At baseline, participants overwhelmingly preferred the United States – 83 percent of the interviewees preferred the U.S. political model, 70 percent preferred the U.S. economic model and 78 percent preferred U.S. leadership. But, when they were exposed to Chinese media messaging, whether only to China's messaging or to Chinese and U.S. government messaging in a head-to-head competition, participants preferred the Chinese models to those of the U.S.

The battle of narratives matter as it shapes perceptions, and perceptions become reality. President Xi has said, "The battle for 'mind control' happens on a smokeless battlefield. It happens inside the domain of ideology. Whoever controls this battlefield can win hearts. They will have the initiative throughout the competition and combat... When it comes to combat in the ideology domain, we don't have any room for compromise or retreat. We must achieve total victory."

NATO Nations hold immense scientific, technological, intellectual, financial and military resources. This capacity is further amplified by NATO's vast network of partner nations. Yet, Allies were unable to fully anticipate and prepare for, let alone prevent, a number of past and ongoing challenges and crises. The Alliance needs to get ahead of the threat curve and shape the environment to NATO's advantage.

NATO views Cognitive Superiority as the ability to achieve better understanding more quickly than others, thereby creating an advantage. Cognitive Superiority is about better situational awareness, or sensing; better situational understanding, or sense-making; and, most importantly, building decisional advantage on the basis of enhanced sensing and sense-making. You may ask, how does this translate to a military imperative?

That is Cognitive Warfare. State and non-state adversaries use Cognitive Warfare to influence individual psychological processes to shape opinion and decision-making to achieve effects, often without direct conflict. While Cognitive Warfare is not new, the information age, with its extensive connectivity, volume and variety of data and rapid technological advancements, has brought our increasing dependence on information and technology to the fore, promoting pervasive instability and rising strategic competition.

The aims of Cognitive Warfare can be tactical, operational, or strategic, ranging from short campaigns to those lasting decades. A single campaign may focus on the limited aim of preventing a planned military manoeuvre or forcing the alteration of a specific public policy. Several successive campaigns may be launched to disrupt entire societies or alliances by seeding doubts about governance, subverting democratic processes or instigating separatist movements. This dynamic creates a critical gap where the responsibility for deterring, defending against and responding to cognitive threats becomes unclear.

### Guiding Questions:

- *How can NATO get better in leveraging its partnerships in pursuit of Cognitive Superiority?*
- *What are the Alliance's and the partner nations' main strengths and potential vulnerabilities in the cognitive dimension?*
- *What offensive capabilities should be developed, if any?*



# Break-out Session - Achieving Cognitive Superiority in the Age of Hybrid



## Facilitators:

- Dr Kestutis PAULAUSKAS, Cognitive Superiority Lead, Strategic Alternatives, HQ SACT
- Mr Richard SHERBURNE, Cognitive Warfare SME, Concept Development, HQ SACT
- Mr Jay PAXTON, Chief Public Affairs, HQ SACT
- Commander Tobi HORTON, Royal Australian Navy Staff Officer, NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence

Allies possess significant resources in science, technology, knowledge, finances, and military strength, further enhanced by NATO's extensive network of partners. However, despite these advantages, they were unable to entirely foresee, prepare for, or

prevent various challenges and crises. In this session, participants examined these shortcomings and discussed how the Alliance can better anticipate threats and proactively influence the environment to its advantage.







The participants recognized that:

- NATO and its partners do not maintain a cognitive advantage over adversaries, with policy constraints and a lack of intelligence sharing being major roadblocks.
- Inconsistent discourse, delays in reaching consensus, and information overload is affecting Allied cohesion.
- Adversaries are perceived to hold cognitive advantage.
- Absence of political will and heavy bureaucracy are significant barriers.
- Mixed perceptions of the military role in cognitive operations.
- Absence of communication and/or coordination between Allies and partners are vulnerabilities.

Participants recommended that the Alliance should also consider these actions:

- Enhancing NATO's understanding of adversaries by fostering intelligence sharing between Allies and partners.
- Adopting a proactive posture in "winning the war of the narrative",

which includes both countering misinformation and actively seeking information sharing between Allies and partners.

- Ensuring resilience, education, and proactivity are part of the toolkit in the battle of narrative.
- Pre-establishing relationships and frameworks of cooperation with industry and civil society to effectively counter hybrid threats.





## Break-out Session – Implementing Capacity Building

One of the strengths of NATO's practical cooperation is the ability to bring together Allies' and partners' expertise to provide meaningful capacity building support. It is a fundamentally networked approach that builds on well-established communities of interest to train, advise, assist, and support in the areas of good governance and institutions, professional military education, capacity building, and interoperability. Against the background of a higher level of ambition for partnerships, as set out in the 2022 Strategic Concept, NATO is actively exploring additional ways of developing its network of implementers to deliver defence and related security cooperation and assistance to partners. In addition to NATO entities already established in this regard, such as the NATO Support and Procurement Agency or the respective Centres of Excellence, the new approach includes more frequent partnering with national agencies and other implementers external to NATO.

This break-out session builds on one of the recommendations from the 2023 Partnerships 360 Symposium, i.e. "to improve the mechanisms for interaction between NATO, partners, and stakeholders responsible for delivering capacity building activities and integrate partners in more thematic tasks." In this context, the session will explore the political and practical implications of delivering NATO capacity building through and with an expanding network of implementers. Break-out session participants will be asked to do so from the perspectives of NATO Allies and partners, while drawing on the experience of defence and security cooperation and assistance policymakers and practitioners on the panel.

The desired outcomes of this break-out session are (1) to shape a common understanding among NATO Allies, partners, and representatives of NATO's communities of interests, national agencies, and other implementers of the political and practical benefits of closer cooperation on NATO's defence and security cooperation and assistance and (2) to develop recommendations for ensuring strategically impactful partnership outcomes of NATO capacity building.

### Guiding Questions:

- *What are the critical decision points that drive the delivery of NATO capacity building assistance to partners and are the right stakeholders able to contribute?*
- *What role do NATO, partners, and implementers have in articulating partnership outcomes?*
- *How does NATO ensure that the NATO brand in capacity building assistance is socialized and enforced with implementers?*



# Break-out Session - Implementing Capacity Building



## Facilitators:

- Mr Kareem I. OWEISS, Director, BGEN Charles Young Research, Analysis, and Lessons Learned Institute, Defence Security Cooperation University
- Mr Christophe LHOMME, Head of Delivery Section, Defence and Security Cooperation Directorate, IS Operations, NATO HQ
- Dr Timothy E. DREIFKE, Incoming Defense Education Enhancement Program (DEEP) Coordinator, Partnership for Peace Consortium
- Ms Merle MAIGRE, Programme Director of Cybersecurity, e-Governance Academy

In this session, participants discussed the opportunities and challenges of delivering capacity-building (CB) support through implementers beyond NATO's own entities. They were encouraged to reflect on three main points: first, the key decision-making factors that shape the provision of NATO CB assistance to partners; second, the influence that implementers have on the outcomes of NATO partnerships; and third, how to ensure that the NATO brand in CB support is effectively communicated and maintained by these implementers.

The participants recognized that:

- At the strategic level, the alignment of political will and ability between NATO and partners are key ingredients for successful capacity building interventions.

- At the practical level, timely delivery and consistent commitment by NATO contribute to positive CB outcomes and impact and strengthen the NATO brand.
- Fostering strategic patience and managing expectations need to be an enduring element of NATO's communications strategy with Allies and partners. Capacity building, by design, is a long-term engagement with long-term desired outcomes for the partners.
- Responding to partners' exact demand signals for support and consistently incorporating NATO and non-NATO subject-matter expertise take time yet increase NATO's design and delivery effectiveness of CB interventions.



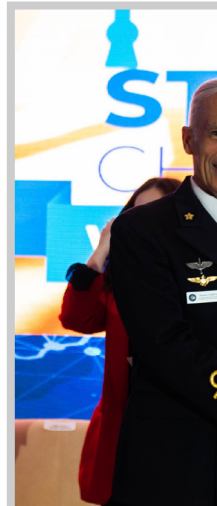


- Embedding partners' ownership into the design and delivery ensures their long-term sustainability and desired impact.
- The NATO brand must be preserved, especially when working with and through non-NATO implementers.

Participants recommended that the Alliance, together with interested partners, consider the following:

- NATO should take time to understand and assess Allies' and partners' mutual needs and interests in order to deliver its capacity-building interventions better and faster.
- NATO should acknowledge and integrate feedback on achievements from all stakeholders to continuously improve the design and delivery of CB interventions, especially through monitoring, evaluation, and learning.
- NATO must invest in and uphold the branding of its CB interventions to differentiate itself from strategic competitors.







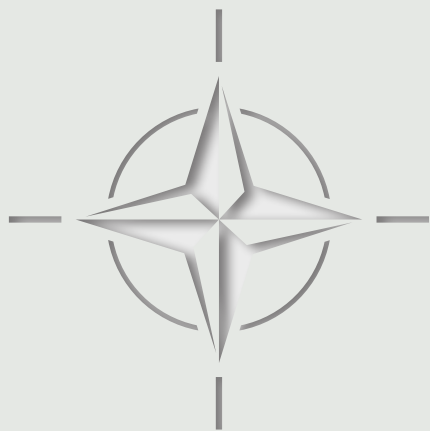
## NATO Student Challenge – Western Balkans Winners Presentation

The NATO Student Challenge – Western Balkans was a feature of the NATO Partnerships 360 Symposium, showcasing the innovative ideas and fresh perspectives of young minds on regional security issues in the Balkan region.

As part of this challenge, Allied Command Transformation, in collaboration with the International Staff Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, invited university students from across the region to share their visions on the most significant security challenges in the Western Balkans, and how NATO, Allies, and partners should address them.

The three winners – Nia Abadzic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Adela Domi (Albania), and Jovan Vasilevski (North Macedonia) – demonstrated exceptional understanding and forward-thinking approaches to the region's complex security dynamics. Abadzic, Domi and Vasilevski were given a platform during the Symposium to share their ideas in a dedicated session, reflecting NATO's commitment to engaging youth and fostering dialogue with the next generation of leaders. Their contributions not only highlighted emerging security concerns but also underscored the importance of collaboration between NATO, Allies, and regional partners in ensuring stability and resilience in the Western Balkans.





# Amb Boris RUGE, Acting Deputy Secretary General, NATO HQ

Keynote Speech (Virtual)

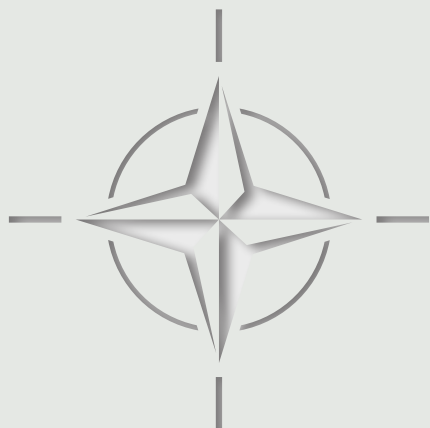
In his virtual presentation, acting Deputy Secretary General (a-DSG) of NATO, Ambassador Boris Ruge, highlighted the next reflections on 30 years of NATO partnerships:

- Many partners from the 1990s Partnership for Peace Programme are now NATO Allies, specifically mentioning Montenegro, North Macedonia, Finland, and Sweden's recent accession.
- The accession of Finland and Sweden is a direct result of the shifting security landscape following Russia's illegal war against Ukraine.
- Countries like China, Belarus, North Korea, and Iran are contributing to the largest conflict in Europe since World War II.
- Allies and partners are facing unprecedented hybrid threats, including cyber-attacks, sabotage, disinformation, and interference in democratic processes.
- Hybrid challenges are too vast and complex for any single nation or region to address alone.
- During the Washington Summit, Allies committed to strengthening NATO and reaffirmed the importance of partnerships in securing shared safety.
- NATO partnerships will remain rooted in common interests, mutual benefit, and a focus on concrete outcomes.
- NATO has a long-term commitment to supporting Ukraine and its ongoing collaboration with partners in regions like the southern neighborhood, the Western Balkans, and the Indo-Pacific.



- Partners provide valuable contributions to NATO missions and their significant support to Ukraine during its crisis.
- He concluded by stating that, looking ahead to the next Summit in The Hague, there is a need for continued work with partners on key issues such as supporting Ukraine, countering Russian and Chinese hybrid campaigns, investing in defense, contributing to regional stability, and safeguarding the rules-based international order. NATO partnerships will continue to evolve in response to a more complex and contested world, while NATO's commitment to shared security with its partners remains firm.





# GEN (Ret) Phillipe LAVIGNE, former Supreme Allied Commander Transformation

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Keynote Speech - Protecting the Future Together

Retired General Philippe Lavigne shared with the audience his thoughts on how to protect the future together for Allies and partners.

General Lavigne recognized that:

- NATO is a growing, cooperative alliance of 32 members, working with global partners to address rapidly evolving security threats.
- The security landscape is marked by hybrid threats, including state-sponsored sabotage and information warfare, which are increasing worldwide.
- To protect the future, NATO must strengthen military readiness, enhance innovation and interoperability, and address infrastructure and logistical vulnerabilities.
- Industrial capacity and mass production are crucial, as seen in the Ukraine conflict and COVID-19 vaccine development.
- A whole-of-society approach is needed, with lessons from nations like Finland and Ukraine, emphasizing interconnectedness and civil-military cooperation.
- NATO's collective defense relies on better



cooperation, knowledge-sharing, and adapting peacetime processes for wartime needs.

He concluded his speech with his motto: WIN AS A TEAM!



## Session 2: Multi-Domain Approach in the Age of Hybrid Warfare

*"The only problem is that war is chaotic, complex, non-linear and uncertain. Always was; always will be."*

*James K. Greer, Colonel, US Army (R)*

On 19 May 2023, Nations approved the Alliance Concept for Multi-Domain Operations (MDO). This formally signalled NATO's transformation from a joint approach, focused on the military services, to a multi-domain approach orchestrating military activities across all five Operational Domains and synchronizing them with the non-military Instruments of Power (IoP), partners and stakeholders from academia and industry. Enabled by NATO's Digital Transformation, MDO will shape the future of deterrence and defence.

The same trends that drove NATO to develop its MDO concept are also increasing the reliance on and interaction with non-military IoP to successfully execute military operations. These trends include the proliferation of sensors, the rapid expansion of civilian space-based assets, increasing importance of cyber to enable military operations and the vulnerability of civilian infrastructure to kinetic and non-kinetic attacks during wartime.

Ukraine's defence against Russia demonstrates how the military IoP connects with and depends on non-military IoP. Ukraine has utilized commercial space capabilities to complement government-provided satellite imagery intelligence to great effect. Ukraine also leveraged the proliferation of private sensing available by incorporating publicly available information into its intelligence and targeting. In addition to turning to private-sector capabilities to improve combat effectiveness, Ukraine has had to address challenges posed by its reliance on private industry, critical infrastructure and the private-sector companies that operate and maintain said infrastructure.

The MDO Concept describes how synchronizing activities in any operational domain with non-military actors creates effects in one of three dimensions: physical, virtual and/or cognitive. The cognitive dimension is of particular importance, as state and non-state adversaries use Cognitive Warfare in combination with other hybrid tools to exploit psychological processes and shape public opinion and decision-making to achieve victory without direct conflict. Cognitive Warfare is designed to modify perceptions of reality and influence behaviour, creating challenges across the whole of society and the military with the aim of decreasing combat readiness, reducing operational effectiveness, increasing vulnerability to physical attacks, compromising information security and impairing decision-making.

There are numerous tools available to conduct such attacks, but looking at the Russian war on Ukraine, of particular note is the role social media plays in modern-day warfare, with conduct occurring in both the physical and information environments.

The scene setter for this discussion, with a view on how a multi-domain approach in the hybrid environment is manifested in the Indo-Pacific region, will be provided by Air Vice-Marshal Dianne Turton. Dr Matthew Levinger will then engage senior NATO officials discussing:

- *What are NATO's priorities for MDO implementation?*
- *To counter cognitive attacks and develop the ability to launch our own, should NATO consider creating an information domain as a sixth Operational Domain?*
- *What is Russia's war in Ukraine telling us about the interplay between military and non-military Instruments of Power and the impact on them both due to hybrid attacks?*
- *What is the proper framework for synchronizing the military Instruments of Power with the other Instruments of Power and who should own oversight of this framework?*
- *What are the similarities and differences in hybrid attacks in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific area?*



## Plenary Session 2 - Multi-Domain Approach in the Age of Hybrid Warfare



### Scene setter and panellist:

- Air Vice-Marshal Dianne TURTON, Australian MILREP to NATO and EU

### Moderator:

- Dr Matthew LEVINGER, Director of National Security Studies Program, George Washington University

### Panellists:

- RADM Placido TORRESI, DCOS Multi-Domain Force Development, HQ SACT
- LTGEN (ret) Mate PADEN, Defence Director, OPEWI Europe's War Institute
- Mr Christopher RILEY, Head Strategic Communications, NATO Public Diplomacy Division, NATO HQ
- Mr Dominik JANKOWSKI, Poland Deputy Permanent Representative

Starting the session, Air Vice-Marshal Turton's keynote speech focused on the Australian perspective regarding the security of the Indo-Pacific. She stated that China's strategy focuses on achieving national rejuvenation by 2049 through modernization in all sectors, boosting its power and influencing the global order to serve its interests. In response, liberal democracies must shift from reactive approaches, disrupt adversaries' expectations, and deter China from altering the global landscape, all while preparing for potential conflict in a measured and strategic manner.

During the session, panellists emphasized that China's use of hybrid warfare tactics is not a recent development. The PRC has become highly proficient at combining diplomatic, military, economic, and ideological strategies to expand its influence and pursue territorial goals. It also utilizes Cognitive Warfare and manipulates international organizations to achieve its aims. In contrast, Russia has had limited success in using most of these methods, except for Cognitive Warfare. Russia has exploited the strengths of Western democracies, such as free press, unrestricted social media, and political discourse to







its benefit. Communication and Cognitive Warfare are central to Russia's operations.

Panellists noted that:

- It is agreed these tools must also become integrated into NATO's strategic planning.
- NATO's Concept for Multi-Domain Operations (MDO), adopted in 2023, was seen as a positive development. It will help improve the coordination of military and non-military tools across all domains, including the information space.
- NATO and partners must improve their coordination and strengthen their cooperation in cognitive and hybrid warfare by, for example, leveraging lessons learned from Ukraine and other global conflicts.
- The private sector, particularly those controlling critical infrastructure (energy, telecommunications, tech, finance, etc.) should be included into the MDO framework. Their involvement is indispensable in the preparation of incident response, management of

crises, and strategic planning.

- There is a need to develop NATO's doctrine and operational capabilities to better handle MDO.

In conclusion, the panel highlighted the growing sophistication and effectiveness of hybrid and cognitive warfare tactics employed by the PRC and Russia, emphasizing the urgent need for NATO to adapt and respond. The adoption of NATO's Concept for Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) in 2023 marks a significant step forward in coordinating military and non-military tools across various domains.

However, the discussion underscored the importance of integrating lessons learned from recent conflicts, enhancing collaboration with the private sector, and further developing NATO's doctrine and operational capabilities. These measures are essential to strengthen NATO's resilience and strategic planning, ensuring it remains well-equipped to counter evolving threats in an increasingly complex global security landscape.



# Closing Session



## Speakers:

- Mr. Elmedin KONAKOVIC, Minister of Foreign Affairs, BiH
- RADM Placido TORRESI, Deputy Chief of Staff for Multi-Domain Force Development, HQ SACT

The official agenda of the 2024 Sarajevo Partnerships 360 Symposium wrapped up with brief closing statements from Mr. Elmedin Konakovic, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and RADM Placido Torresi, Deputy Chief of Staff for Multi Domain Force Development at ACT.

Both reviewed the findings, outcomes and recommendations drawn from the sessions and panels. They stressed the importance of combating the hybrid threat together, Allies and partners, as

well as continuing the cooperation in this field.

The speakers reiterated the importance of holding the event in Bosnia and Herzegovina, expressing gratitude to the participants for their valuable contributions and suggestions. They also urged Allies and partners to leverage the outcomes of the Symposium to guide their ongoing efforts in addressing hybrid challenges.







## Conclusion

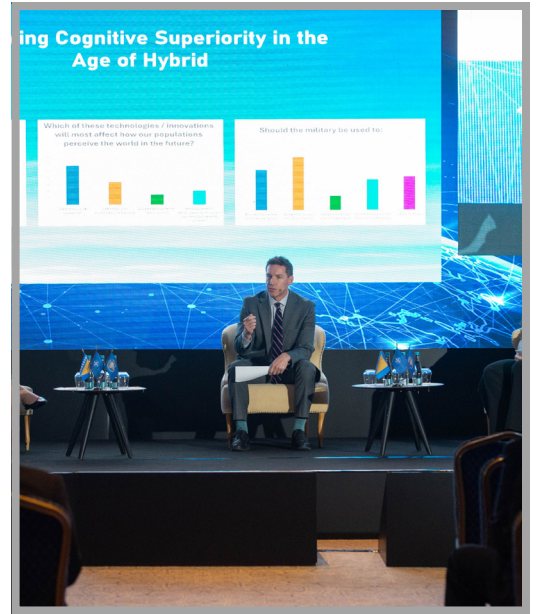
The NATO Partnerships 360 Symposium 2024 in Sarajevo was a key moment for NATO in its effort to enhance and deepen mutual benefits and understanding between the Alliance and its partners in response to a changing security landscape, primarily influenced and challenged by the growing hybrid threat.

The event provided a timely, informal opportunity to reflect on NATO's broader approach to countering hybrid threats in collaboration with its partners, including insights from ACT on Cognitive Superiority and Cognitive Warfare. It facilitated an exchange of ideas and best practices among civilian and military representatives from NATO Allies, partner countries, international organizations, and academia. This dialogue helped strengthen existing relationships, foster new ones, and enhance the collective ability to anticipate, prepare for, prevent, deter, and respond to both current and future hybrid threats.

The significance of the NATO Partnerships 360 Symposium was that it brought together civil and military stakeholders who would not normally have had the chance to meet, exchange knowledge, and discuss proposals for improving partnerships.

The success of the Symposium reflected the valuable contributions of the speakers, moderators, panellists, facilitators, and attendees. It would not have been possible without the support of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the NATO International Political Affairs and Security Policy Staff, Allied Command Transformation, and the numerous organizations and individuals who provided assistance.







## Participants in chronological order of appearance



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Master of Ceremony



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Panellist, Panel Discussion: The Western Balkans –  
A Region Showcasing the Versatility of NATO  
Partnerships and the Success of Integration



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Panellist, Plenary Session 2: Multi-Domain Approach in  
the Age of Hybrid



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Panellist, The Western Balkans – A Region Showcasing  
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