



Commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO visit to Latvia



VADM Foggo addresses the 240 attendees at the BALTOPS Main Planning Conference in Riga, LTV

18 February— Riga, Latvia

During the Main Planning Conference for Exercise BALTOPS 2016, the Commander of Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO, VADM James Foggo, addressed the assembly of planners and delegates from the 16 participating nations to outline his expectation for this year's exercise.

“This is an opportunity to reassure our allies of our commitment to the security of this region. Working with both Allies and partners, we will showcase NATO resolve, unity of effort and command, and demonstrate a capability from the assembled force of ships, aircraft, submarines and ground troops to project power and defend the region against any threat.”

Addressing the core planning team in a small group discussion, he described how the exercise must continue to evolve to support Alliance goals:

*“Last year, you all took this exercise and delivered a major win for the participating forces in terms of training value. You directed an exercise that would rival any major exercise in the world in terms of the number of ships and aircraft, the complexity of the exercise design, and the tempo at which you operated over the two week period. **This year**—with BALTOPS taking place just one month prior to the Alliance’s bi-annual summit in Warsaw, we must plan an exercise of equal training value, but also show the results of the efforts of the Alliance to adapt to the current security environment. I challenge you to stress the linkages of NATO command and control—in the Air, Land, Sea and Information domains—because overcoming those stresses produces the adaptation that makes an organization grow even stronger.”*

While in Latvia, VADM Foggo also took the opportunity to meet with senior officials at the Ministry of Defense and Chief of Defense Staff, and to visit a Latvian Navy vessel. BALTOPS 2016 was the main subject of these visits, as regional leaders are eager to see a repeat of the port visits and engagements with Alliance and national leaders that have been a hallmark of the exercise.

At the conclusion of the visit, at the invitation of Latvian leadership, VADM Foggo participated in an television interview with Latvian Public Broadcasting, in which he discussed basic parameters of BALTOPS, but was also asked to describe the challenges he faces as the Commander of both STRIKFORNATO and the US Navy’s Sixth Fleet. Media were extremely interested in the views from NATO leadership, as the interview took place shortly after the broadcast of a



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program produced by the BBC that outlines a road to crisis in the Baltic States, including the use of nuclear weapons. VADM Foggo was adamant in his response to the interviewer: “Do not get confused by these types of programs. Article 5 (the collective defense promise in the Washington Treaty, NATO’s founding document) is sound. I carry a copy with me wherever I go. There is no doubt that an attack on one is an attack on all.”