



SESSION ONE

SUSTAINABLE DEFENCE: ECO-FRIENDLY INNOVATION AND ADAPTATION IN THE MILITARY

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MEET THE PANEL



**Maj Gen (Ret.)
Gordon 'Skip' Davis**

Former Deputy Assistant Secretary-General for Defense Investment, NATO HQ (Moderator)



**VAdm. (Ret.)
Mark Mellett**

*Former Chief of Staff
Irish Defence Forces*



**Lt Gen (Ret.)
Richard Nugee**

*Former Executive Director for Climate Change & Net Zero
UK MoD*



**Maj Gen (Ret.)
William 'Bill' Hix**

*Former Director of Strategy
US Army*



Simon Baumann

*Program Officer – Multinational Capability
Cooperation Unit Defence Investment
NATO HQ*

PANEL OUTLINE

Environmental concerns have ascended global agendas, compelling every sector to introspect and innovate, and the defence realm is no exception. Historically characterised by heavy resource consumption and adverse ecological impacts, military operations are now at a critical juncture, balancing operational efficiency with ecological responsibility. Yet, it's not a one-way street. As environmental degradation and climate change give rise to new security challenges, the defence sector also assumes the role of a responder, tasked with understanding, mitigating and adapting to these emergent threats. This panel endeavours to shed light on this dual role, showcasing pioneering sustainable military practices and underscoring the sector's evolving environmental responsibilities.

Listeners will embark on a journey that showcases the intersection of defence and environmental stewardship. From understanding the environmental ramifications of military activities to exploring innovations that herald a greener defence future, attendees will gain a holistic view of sustainable defence. They'll also appreciate the multifaceted role of defence sectors as both environmental actors and respondents, preparing them to champion and support eco-friendly transformations in defence while simultaneously evolving to operate in changing and ever more challenging climate conditions.



EXPLORING THE INTERSECTION OF MILITARY OPERATIONS AND SUSTAINABILITY: A DIALOGUE AMONG DEFENCE EXPERTS

Maj Gen (Ret.) Gordon 'Skip' Davis, Deputy Assistant Secretary-General for Defense Investment at NATO HQ, led a thought-provoking discussion on the evolving relationship between military operations and sustainability. The panelists delved into the implications of climate change, technological advancements, and strategic planning for defence forces worldwide.

Historically, energy supply has been pivotal in shaping military campaigns and force structures. However, the panelists noted a paradigm shift towards sustainability, driven by environmental awareness, political consensus on climate action, and technological innovations. Defence forces must grasp the ramifications of climate change on security and leverage new technologies to transition to more sustainable practices.

While embracing sustainability entails significant challenges, including reducing fossil fuel dependency and integrating new systems, the potential benefits are immense. Sustainable defence systems offer operational advantages such as reduced fuel consumption, increased agility, and improved tactical flexibility. Moreover, adopting sustainable practices aligns with public expectations and enhances trust between citizens and armed forces.

VAdm. (Ret.) Mark Mellett of the Irish Defence Forces underscored the strategic advantages of sustainability, including enhanced force readiness and cost savings. He emphasized the importance of long-term planning and global responsibility in mitigating environmental impacts and fostering international cooperation.

Lt Gen (Ret.) Richard Nugee from the UK MoD highlighted the role of defence forces in leading the transition to sustainable practices. He emphasized the need for policy reforms and mindset shifts to drive sustainable innovation within the military. Nugee stressed the importance of starting small and scaling up initiatives to achieve long-term sustainability goals.

Similarly, Maj Gen (Ret.) William 'Bill' Hix of the US Army outlined opportunities for incorporating sustainable practices into military operations. He advocated for the adoption of hybrid electric vehicles and big data management techniques to improve operational effectiveness and reduce emissions. Hix emphasized the economic benefits of sustainability, citing potential cost savings and enhanced force performance.

In conclusion, the panelists emphasized the critical role of defence forces in driving sustainable innovation and responding to environmental challenges. By embracing sustainability, militaries can enhance their operational capabilities, strengthen public trust, and contribute to global efforts to address climate change. Collaboration between defence forces, private industry, academia, and civil society will be essential in navigating the transition to a more sustainable future.

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