

Topic: Integrated Air and Missile Defence (NATO IAMD)

nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8206.htm

NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence

Last updated: 27 Jan. 2022 15:15

- [English](#)
- [French](#)
- [Russian](#)
- [Ukrainian](#)

NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence (NATO IAMD) is an essential, continuous mission in peacetime, crisis and conflict, safeguarding and protecting Alliance territory, populations and forces against any air and missile threat and attack. It is an essential element of NATO's deterrence and defence, which contributes to the Alliance's indivisible security and freedom of action.



Patriot air and missile defence system on display at Allied Air Command (© NATO AIRCOM)

- NATO IAMD is the defensive component of the Alliance's Joint Air Power, which aims to ensure the stability and security of NATO's airspace by coordinating, controlling and exploiting the air domain.
- It incorporates all measures that contribute to deterring any air and missile threat, or to nullifying or reducing the effectiveness of hostile air action.

- NATO IAMD is conducted using a 360-degree approach across NATO territory, and is prepared to address the full spectrum of threats, from tactical to strategic, emanating from any direction – through the air, overland or from the sea.
- NATO IAMD provides a highly responsive, robust, time-critical and persistent capability in order to achieve a desired level of control of the air, wherein the Alliance is able to conduct the full range of its missions in peacetime, crisis and conflict.
- In recent years, NATO has further enhanced its IAMD activities to ensure that they remain flexible and adaptive, taking into account increasingly diverse and challenging air and missile threats facing the Alliance, ranging from simple unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to sophisticated hypersonic missiles. IAMD is particularly essential in the current strategic environment, which is characterised by the rapid development of missile arsenals across the globe, including by potential adversaries.
- NATO IAMD is implemented through the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS), a network of interconnected national and NATO systems comprised of sensors, command and control assets, and weapons systems.
- NATINAMDS comes under the authority of NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe.

Activities

NATO IAMD activities vary depending on the specific circumstances of any concrete situation and can include air policing, air defence, ballistic missile defence, cruise missile defence, counter rockets, mortar and artillery, or counter unmanned aircraft systems.

Currently, there are two peacetime activities within the framework of NATO IAMD: NATO Air Policing and NATO Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD).

NATO Air Policing preserves the integrity of Alliance airspace. It is a collective task and involves the continuous presence – 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – of fighter/interceptor aircraft, which are ready to react quickly to airspace violations and infringements.

NATO BMD defends populations, territory and forces in NATO Europe against the increasing threat posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles from outside the Euro-Atlantic area.

In times of crisis, NATO IAMD contributes to NATO's deterrence and defence by demonstrating Alliance ability, resolve and readiness to counter hostile actions. NATO IAMD is an integral part of NATO's crisis response system.

Integration is an essential requirement for IAMD, as it provides coordination and synchronisation of all available air and missile defence capabilities. A key prerequisite for integration is interoperability (procedural, technical and human interoperability).

A key example of integration is the NATO Air Command and Control (Air C2) systems, which provide the Alliance with a capability to manage NATO air operations (including air policing) in and out of the Euro-Atlantic area. NATO Air C2 systems integrate air mission control, air traffic control, airspace surveillance, airspace management, command and control (C2) resource management and force management functions, among other functionalities. The systems cover a theatre of operations of 81 million square kilometres (not including deployable capability) from the northernmost point of Norway to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the easternmost point of Turkey to the North Atlantic. They constitute one of the major pillars of the NATINAMDS capability aimed at safeguarding and protecting Alliance territory, populations and forces against any air and missile threat and attack.

Relevant NATO committees

The Integrated Air and Missile Defence Policy Committee (IAMD PC) is the senior committee responsible for all elements of NATO IAMD and relevant Joint Air Power aspects. It is also responsible for political-military aspects of NATO Ballistic Missile Defence. It reports to the North Atlantic Council, the Alliance's principal political decision-making body.

The Military Committee Working Group for Air and Missile Defence is responsible for reviewing, advising and making recommendations on military aspects of air and missile defence issues to NATO's Military Committee, the senior military authority in NATO.

Another committee that reports to the NAC is the Conference of National Armaments Directors (CNAD), which promotes cooperation between countries in the armaments field and oversees implementation of NATO's BMD Programme.

Evolution

Historically, NATO IAMD is an evolution of the concept of NATO Integrated Air Defence. The original concept was implemented in 1961 through the use of the NATO Integrated Air Defence System (NATINADS) under the command and control of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

During the Cold War, NATINADS was a largely static system arrayed in belts against a uni-directional and well-defined threat of manned aircraft. Since then, NATINADS has evolved into the NATO Integrated Air and Missile Defence System (NATINAMDS), which meets the challenges of today's less predictable environment and which can deploy and address the full range of air and missile threats.

The NATO Air Command and Control System (ACCS) programme was formally established in November 1999 to provide the Alliance with a single, integrated air command and control system to manage NATO air operations in and out of the Euro-Atlantic area. Since then, NATO Air C2 systems have continued to evolve, ensuring that the Alliance is able to meet any challenge or threat.

In light of the significant deterioration of the Euro-Atlantic security environment over the last decade – including increasingly diverse and challenging air and missile threats facing the Alliance – NATO has further enhanced its IAMD activities to ensure that they remain flexible and adaptive. This includes the progressive increase in the number of available IAMD assets in Allies' forces as well as the development of new processes and procedures to ensure that NATO IAMD forces will always be in the right place at the right time, even in the face of a rapidly evolving crisis. Responsive IAMD remains a cornerstone of Alliance credibility, solidarity and cohesion.

