



# MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Tennessee National Guard partners with Bulgarian Cyber Security Forces**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Four top officials from the Bulgarian Armed Forces Information Security Directorate were on hand in Nashville this week to observe the Tennessee National Guard’s Cyber Unit in an effort to strengthen their own cyber defense program.

The visit centered on establishing methods of instruction to allow the Bulgarian team to better train their own defense force on cyber security measures. The group also focused on course administration, school management, and a detailed analysis of the country’s cyber defense program.

The meeting took place as an outreach of United States European Command’s State Partnership Program to support Bulgaria’s continuing efforts to strengthen their cooperation with NATO and other partners in the hope of enhancing regional security and stability. Overall there are 60 state partnerships worldwide, which enhance each country’s capabilities and focus on issues that support their shared objectives.

“The relationship between Bulgaria and the Tennessee National Guard is very important for us to maintain,” Lt. Col. Atanas D. Atanasov, Chief Expert for Bulgaria’s Information Security Directorate, said Friday. “We were able to share information and best practices during our time here. It was very beneficial.”

Lt. Col Wesley M. Nave, Tennessee’s State Partnership Program Director, echoed the valuable nature of this visit. “I think all in all it went very well. They met the objectives from EUCOM in getting their infrastructure to conform to NATO and international standards.”

Col. Yordan Z. Bozhilov, Head of Bulgaria’s Information Security Directorate, said his team welcomes the opportunity to host their Tennessee partners in a similar visit. “We hope that we can invite our hosts to Bulgaria so that we can show them what we have in this area. We are ready to host this kind of visit.”

Despite its intense focus and productive result, the trip wasn’t all work and no play. Tennessee’s Cyber Team ensured their guests were introduced to everything Nashville has to offer.

“This trip has given us a chance to see more, to learn more, and even better - we had the best entertainment in the U.S.A., which isn’t something we can find in Bulgaria.” Bozhilov said.

“We were very impressed with Tennessee and with Nashville,” Capt. Boyan G. Devedzhiev, Bulgaria’s Junior Expert in Information Security, added. “We had a very nice time here, and we actually learned a lot as well.”

“I think they got a little bit of Tennessee flavor here,” Nave said with a smile. He agreed that the trip was a success and said the Tennessee National Guard is looking forward to its continued relationship with its Bulgarian partners in the future. “We have been trying to help them as well as they help us,” he said. “It’s a win-win.”

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All Tennessee Army and Air National Guard press releases can be found at <http://www.tnmilitary.org>

**PHOTO CAPTION:** Tennessee’s Adjutant General, Maj. General Max Haston, reviews a map of Bulgaria’s area of operation with Bulgarian Armed Forces Cyber Security officials at Tennessee’s Joint Force Headquarters, Jan. 16. Four of the country’s top cyber security officials were on hand in Nashville this week to observe the Tennessee National Guard’s Cyber Unit in an effort to strengthen their own cyber defense program. (Army National Guard Photo by Staff Sgt. Melissa Wood/RELEASED)