

Why the Global MilSatCom conference is more crucial than ever

13 June 2024 Adam Jeffs, Editor, SAE Media Group

The 26th edition of the Global MilSatCom conference will feature a range of industry and government experts discussing critical topics in the MilSatCom space.



What is Global MilSatCom?

The [Global MilSatCom](#) conference has brought together some of the world's leading satellite communications experts, both military and commercial, for more than a quarter of a century. The conference offers an opportunity for military leaders to share their current capabilities and strategies in the MilSatCom space and air any challenges they may be experiencing.

Space has never been more accessible and there is now a host of commercial innovators seeking to provide services and solutions in the final frontier. Global MilSatCom allows military organisations from across the globe to cut through the noise by sharing exactly what they need in order to continue advancing their goals, and connecting with solution providers that understand these needs.

For example, the UK is currently in the midst of an ongoing effort to advance its military space capabilities as the threat of conflict in space grows. With increasing global tension stemming from [hostile posturing by Russia](#) and [potential preparations for war in space by China](#), in November 2020, the UK government announced an ambitious plan to invest £16.5 billion over four years in defence, with a substantial portion earmarked for enhancing space capabilities.

[At the 2023 edition of the Global MilSatCom conference](#), Lieutenant Colonel Michael Macdonald of the UK MoD took the opportunity to detail the key requirements driving the UK's MilSatCom development and laid out the plan for working with industry and international partners.

The conference has also offered commercial innovators a chance to show off what they have been up to. For example, Kratos used its speaking slot to showcase OpenSpace, its software-defined satellite ground system, while Telesat discussed the capabilities of Lightspeed, its LEO constellation.

This year, Oscar Wolffe, Senior Conference Producer, explains that the entire event is focussed on the theme of 'Building Resilient & Robust SATCOM'.

“We've changed our approach to the agenda for Global MilSatCom in 2024 to give even more value to our audience based on their feedback. This means the agenda is not split on geographic lines but instead on key topic areas within this theme. This will give the delegates an even greater mix of perspectives from across the world.

We've moved away from purely long-form individual presentations and are instead prioritising a mix of short presentations and interactive panels, punctuated by highly topical keynotes.”

Why is it important?

With global tensions rising, the ever-increasing threat of global powers such

as China and Russia in-orbit and many predicting that war in space could be upon us as early as 2027, it has never been more important for nations to bolster their efforts to advance space-based military capabilities.

With the space economy taking off, commercial innovators are collectively operating at a pace that military organisations cannot match and in niches that they are unable to allocate the necessary budget to dominate in. In light of this, it is crucial that those working to innovate in space are not working in isolation.

According to Patrick Wood, SVP Space Systems UK at Airbus:

“Global MilSatCom is a really crucial conference bringing people from across the world, both customers and suppliers. It’s a great opportunity for us to come together and exchange, learn what each other are doing and look at future capabilities.”

The continued presence of Global MilSatCom will offer those in industry and military a place to collaborate, says Nik Simit, Regional Director UK and Europe at Lockheed Martin UK Space:

“Global MilSatCom has existed for more than a quarter of a century. This is testament to just how important and relevant this event is. It gives us the opportunity to network, to build up partnerships and to interact with customers and innovators across the sector.”

What to look out for

The [Global MilSatCom 2024](#) conference will feature a range of experts from military and industry, who will speak on everything from strategy and objectives to the latest tech developments in MilSatCom.

Key speakers include:



Key sessions to look out for include a Q&A panel discussion with Captain Phil Coope of UK Strategic Command, Victoria Cope of the UK MoD and David Dean of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory. This session will see three senior leaders and key decision makers in UK government sharing the current programmes and priorities in UK MilSatCom. The session will focus on resiliency and UK Space Command’s ‘Protect & Defend’ mission. Updates from 2023 will be discussed, along with the next steps of the SKYNET 6 Program, commercial partnerships at Defence Digital and the challenges the UK MOD faces.

The conference will also see international leaders come together, with Pinar Yasar Orten of NATO, Kimberly Morris of the US Navy and Captain Jose Freitas of the Portuguese Amed Forces General Staff also hosting a Q&A panel discussion. The three will dive into the key considerations for utilising low-

earth orbit and multi-orbit SatCom for military operations and some of the key challenges that come along with this for industry and government alike.