



Strategic and International Affairs

Mr. Stephen Covington

Mr. Stephen R. Covington is Strategic and International Affairs Advisor to the Supreme Allied Commander, Europe and has served as Special Advisor to eleven SACEURs over the course of 30 years at SHAPE. He has advised SACEURs, Secretaries General, and other senior NATO political and military leaders on strategic, political-military issues during peace, crisis, and conflict, and developed a wide range of SACEUR initiatives pertaining to Alliance policy, operations, partnership, and adaptation. He has supported SACEURs in 15 NATO Summits, over 150 Foreign Minister, Defense Minister, and Chief of Defense Meetings, and executed high-level meetings in every country in Europe and Eurasia.

As the civilian member of the SHAPE Command Group and Allied Command Operations (ACO) senior civilian adviser, he is responsible for strategic assessments of international security and defense affairs, develops political-military strategic recommendations for SACEUR, and works directly with NATO Headquarters, Allied and Partner capitals, and International Organizations. He conducts multi-discipline research and organizes collaborative efforts in strategic affairs, represents SACEUR in international fora at the highest level, and leads an office composed of senior NATO civilian and military special advisors. Mr. Covington has led international negotiations in peace and crisis, designed and developed partnership frameworks, devised C2 arrangements for Russian military integration into NATO-led operations, co-developed key NATO HQ political documents and military assessments, and managed the Russian MOD/CHOD-SACEUR relationship for 24 years – working directly with the Russian General Staff for 13 years on operations, partnership, security dialogue, defense concepts, operational art and planning, and military interoperability. In 2009, Mr. Covington represented SACEUR in the development of NATO's latest Strategic Concept. In 2010, he designed SHAPE's Comprehensive Crisis and Operations Management Centre, which achieved operational capability in 2012. In 2014, his work focused on the initial design of SACEUR's assurance and adaptation measures in response to a changing Trans-Atlantic strategic security environment. Most recently, Mr. Covington has led SHAPE's efforts in the development of NATO military strategy and the concept for deterrence and defence and SACEUR's military dialogue with the Russian Chief of Defence.



He has authored numerous articles in international defense and national security journals; most recently he published three articles on Russia at the Belfer Center, Harvard University (2015, 2016, 2017). He has also contributed to four books on European security. He lectures frequently in Europe and in the United States, and leads SACEUR's strategic outreach to academic organizations, specialists, and security/defense think tanks.

He received the U.S. Department of Army Meritorious Service Medal (1992) for his work at SHAPE and in East and Central Europe during the end of the Cold War; the Department of Defense Civilian Meritorious Medals (1997) for his work in the Bosnian Crisis; the NATO Meritorious JOINT FORGE medal (1996) for his work with the Russian military in IFOR; and the NATO Meritorious Kosovo medal (2000) for his crisis work in Georgia, Moscow, Pristina, and Helsinki during the Kosovo crisis. He received the U.S. Presidential Rank Award for Meritorious Service (2002) for his work on the NATO Response Force and other SACEUR initiatives for the Prague Summit. In 2005, he was awarded the Lithuanian "Cross of the Knight" by President Adamkus for his work in support of Lithuania from 1990-2004. On the 10th Anniversary of the NATO-Russia cooperation in IFOR operation in 2006, Russian CHOD Y.N. Baluyevskiy awarded him honorary status with the Russian General Staff Main Operations Directorate for his expertise in the sphere of NATO-Russia operations and his work in IFOR, SFOR, and KFOR. He received a second US Presidential Rank Award for Distinguished Service (2007) for his work in support of SACEUR on the transition to a NATO-led ISAF operation for all of Afghanistan, Riga Summit initiatives, and in developing, negotiating, and managing a comprehensive NATO-Russia military interoperability program with the Russian General Staff. In 2019, the NATO Secretary General approved the NATO Meritorious Service Medal for Mr. Covington in recognition of his more recent work at SHAPE.

Mr. Covington speaks Russian and French. He is married (Ingrid) and has five children.