



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

SACT's REMARKS to

Paris International Model United Nations (PIMUN)

Paris, 28 May

Général d'armée aérienne Denis MERCIER



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

[Welcome / introduction]

Monsieur le Ministre {Madame la Ministre},

Mesdames et Messieurs,

Je souhaite vous dire avant tout combien je suis honoré de participer à cette cérémonie de clôture, qui vient couronner 4 jours d'intenses négociations pour cette édition 2016 du *Paris International Model United Nations*.

Prenons par ailleurs le temps de saluer la forte portée symbolique du lieu où nous nous trouvons, puisque pendant plus de 50 ans, le palais d'Iéna abrita l'Assemblée de l'Union de l'Europe occidentale, organisation chargée de suivre la politique européenne de sécurité et de défense, tout en maintenant un lien étroit avec l'OTAN. Il s'agit là d'un symbole fort de la nécessaire coopération entre organisations internationales, j'y reviendrai.

I will now switch to English, since I am told that many of you would feel more comfortable with listening to Shakespeare's language, even if it is with Moliere's accent!

Today's generation of young people is the largest the world has ever known. One in every three people alive is under the age of thirty. That fact alone should remind us of the hugely important role your generation have to play as we seek to adapt to an increasingly challenging environment.

The PIMUN, along with its sister models around the world, is a fantastic event for many reasons: not only does it offer a fertile ground for candid ideas and innovative answers to contemporary international challenges, but also, it gives you, our future leaders, a great opportunity to confront the realities of our world and pave the way for a brighter future.

In this regard, I have no doubt that this 2016 edition was, thanks to you, a tremendous success, especially given the variety of simulations and often passionate negotiation which has taken place over the past few days.

Let me express my warmest thanks to this year's Secretary General, Mr William Thay, for offering me the opportunity to share my thoughts with you about today's challenges to our global security environment. As one of NATO's two strategic military commanders, I will also discuss how the Euro-



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

Atlantic Alliance faces today's challenges and adapts itself to confront tomorrow's.

[Our strategic environment]

To begin with, I would like to state that we are, today, confronted with an unprecedented mix of risks and threats.

I would however immediately mitigate this statement by saying that none of these threats are entirely new. If you read for example one of NATO's most important documents, the 2010 Strategic Concept, you will see that their potential for instability was already forewarned. We had also included them in our futures works (namely the Strategic Foresight Analysis, a document in which we describe potential trends for crisis situations in the 30 years to come, and their potential military implications presented in the Framework for Future Alliance Operations).

But the simultaneity, complexity and interconnection of these challenges demands that we find new strategies which take into account national sensitivities, and, based on solidarity, address crises, whatever they may be and wherever they may arise. So what are these threats and challenges?

1. First of all, threats within the military realm cannot be ignored:

- Many regions around the world are witnessing the easy access to widely available weapons and technology and the acquisition of modern military capabilities, with increased reach and lethality. The growing development of anti-access, area denial (or A2AD) weapon systems, which combine anti-aircraft defence and other ballistic, anti-ship and antisubmarine equipment, threatens international lines of communication as well as energy supplies and logistic supply lines. Beyond their defensive military purpose, they can be used at the political level to deter the willingness of certain countries to deploy their forces.
- Even more important, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, together with their means of delivery, could have incalculable consequences on global stability.



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

2. But most of today's challenges go way beyond the military world:

- The use of hybrid strategies, by combining conventional and non-conventional warfare, overt or clandestine actions, involving military or paramilitary operations, cyber actions and particularly elaborate strategic communications, tend to blur the line between war and peace, between the military and the civilian worlds.
- In addition, the emergence of non-State actors with State like capabilities and access to resources complicates the equation even more. In pursuit of ideological or political objectives, these actors prosper in failed or failing States, feed off sociocultural differences and socioeconomic inequalities, and exploit terrorist and criminal networks.
- Many other transnational challenges not only carry great social and economic consequences, but will also have a long term impact on global security. You know them as well as I do: climate change and accelerated urbanisation, shifts in global power or political structures, changing demographics and mass migration, fractured identities and globalisation of resources.

And let us not forget that all the challenges I mentioned will be fuelled by what may be the greatest change, which by the way offers as many opportunities as it presents risks: the emergence of breakthrough technologies. These will certainly affect our current perception of the world and for us military people, the battlespace, in both its physical and time dimensions. Platforms and weapons will have extended ranges and increased autonomy. Artificial intelligence and the capabilities used to collect, analyse and identify trends and associations in huge amounts of unstructured data will continue to improve. New technologies will also continue to compress the time in which to make decisions, in particular when faced with hypervelocity weapons or ballistic missiles. Lastly, they may trigger a daunting revolution in logistics, through cost reduction and lightened footprint (3D printing is a great illustration).

So what do these trends tell us about our available courses of action required to make our world safer and more prosperous? Allow me to present some



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

considerations on how an organization like NATO can help to address the threats and challenges that place the security of the Euro-Atlantic area in peril.

[Evolution of NATO]

It will surprise no one here if I tell you that in order to better understand NATO's relevance in today's and tomorrow's world, it is important to also understand where it comes from.

Since its very inception, on the 4th of April 1949, NATO's essential purpose has been to safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means. The Treaty committed each member to sharing the risks, responsibilities, and benefits of collective security and defence.

It also committed them to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and stated that Allied members (there are now 28 of them, soon to be 29 with the planned membership of Montenegro) formed a unique community of shared values, from individual liberty to democracy, from human rights to the rule of law.

Equally important, the principles of consultation and consensus-based decision-making have been the defining spirit of the Alliance ever since, alongside its defensive nature and its flexibility.

And I must say I have to praise the skill of the Treaty's writers whose text has allowed NATO to adapt to a changing security environment without any modifications of the original document.

Generally speaking, there have been three distinct periods over which the Alliance's strategic thinking had to evolve:

- the Cold War period;
- the post-Cold War period
- and the post 9/11 security environment.

[Cold War Period]

During the Cold War period, international relations were dominated by a bipolar confrontation between East and West. Emphasis was therefore



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

initially more on tension and confrontation than it was on dialogue and cooperation. This led to an often dangerous and expensive arms race.

NATO's main objective then was to deter aggression, by remaining flexible enough to prevent the potential aggressor from predicting, with any degree of confidence, what NATO's specific response might be.

By the mid- to late 80s, the two blocs of the Cold War moved to confidence building.

[Post-Cold War period]

In 1991, a new era commenced. The Soviet Union dissolved and the former members of the Warsaw Pact, Russia and others, became NATO partners and in some cases, happy members of the Alliance.

For the Alliance, this period was characterized by dialogue and cooperation, and a search for new ways of contributing to peace and stability such as multinational crisis management.

While maintaining the security of its members as its fundamental purpose, NATO sought to improve and expand security for Europe as a whole through partnership and cooperation with former adversaries.

[Security environment since 9/11]

However, the 9/11 terrorist attacks brought the threat of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction to the fore. NATO needed to protect its populations both at home and abroad.

It therefore underwent major internal reforms to adapt military structures and capabilities to equip members for new tasks, such as leading the UN-mandated International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan.

This context presented an opportunity for a profound rethink, reprioritization and reform of NATO that eventually led to the 2010 Strategic Concept, agreed at the Lisbon Summit. This document defined the Alliance's 3 core



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

tasks, “all of which contribute to safeguarding Alliance members, and always in accordance with international law”:

- Collective Defence
- Crisis management
- Cooperative security

[Adaptation needed today to prepare the future]

As I have already mentioned, even though most of our security challenges were anticipated, today’s geostrategic context is more uncertain, more volatile, and more complex than we had ever imagined possible. The challenges I have described are neither bound by geography nor by nature. Socioeconomic disorders in one region may result in serious instability in another; hybrid strategies may manifest in different ways and directions in the future. As a consequence, the global nature of crises is resulting in more interrelations between the Alliance’s three core tasks.

[NATO’s adaptation efforts]

This is why NATO is continuously adapting. This is why, as we prepare for the next Heads of State and Government Summit in less than two months in Warsaw, we are taking decisions today to be ready to face tomorrow.

More specifically, we are working to adapt the Alliance’s deterrence and defence posture, which is built upon an appropriate mix of conventional, nuclear and missile defence forces, at the appropriate level of readiness and responsiveness. And, as NATO is a political and military Alliance, its posture must remain credible at both the political and military levels, today and in the future.

NATO’s military credibility lies in the right balance between permanent presence of troops across our Alliance, to strengthen our defence and deterrence, and flexible reinforcement of forces so that we remain able to respond to all challenges rapidly.

In ACT, we have therefore identified 6 essential areas in order to maintain our level of responsiveness: 1) our command and control system, which is the true backbone of NATO operations, 2) training and exercises to maintain



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

interoperability between forces, 3) logistics as an instrument to guarantee sustainability, 4) Partnerships (I will touch upon them later), 5) human capital without which we will never operate with the utmost efficiency, and finally 6) capabilities, in order to enhance NATO's current and future combat system.

[Four key paths towards improving global security]

I will not expand on these six areas, which are very specific to NATO. Instead, I will highlight 4 notions which appear to me as fundamental as we strive to make the world safer.

[1. Decision-making and strategic awareness]

The first of these notions is decision-making, based on continuous and comprehensive strategic awareness. Decision-making, with its command and control translation in the military world, is absolutely key to the stability of our Nations and the security of our peoples. Today, the efficiency of our decision-making is increasingly challenged, whether by time-space compression, media pressure or even the multitude of stakeholders.

This rapid evolution raises many questions about the way we currently make timely decisions. For instance, organizations such as NATO or the UN need to identify and characterize the variations in the strategic landscape, before possibly attributing responsibility and eventually allowing political leaders to [decide to] react accordingly. And the more this ability will be challenged, the less we will be able to anticipate a crisis, which will then force us to dedicate huge resources to manage the crisis.

We believe, therefore, that the solution lies in building a comprehensive strategic awareness for our leaders and decision-makers, covering the entire Diplomatic, Information, Military, Economic, Financial, Intelligence and Legal spectrum.

Some of you may ask how we can do this better: well, it is my true belief that we can capitalize on national efforts and multinational initiatives to enhance the use of existing resources, and information sharing. By creating the necessary networks and connections, we would then be able to monitor and



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

assess the security landscape, based on solid indicators and warnings and on the identification of early symptoms of potential crises.

This is a difficult mission to achieve if you take NATO, especially when it comes to sharing (often classified) information with other International Organizations, Partner Nations, academia, think tanks and many other stakeholders. We are therefore suggesting to build a non-classified architecture, gathering data from open, publicly available sources, and then feeding it with related classified intelligence. Provided we succeed in managing such huge amounts of data, we would then create an Internet of things able to collect and exploit all information in the service of improving our decision-making.

[2. Resilience]

The second notion I want to touch upon, as a tool to react to any “strategic surprise”, is resilience. Resilience has become vital in our response to emerging security challenges, in our ability to reduce the potential consequences of our vulnerabilities. Despite our best efforts, we are unlikely to be able to avoid being “surprised” in the future. Things will happen, the magnitude or timing of which will not been foreseen. Resilience, our ability to resist and recover from these shocks, must be enhanced to meet the challenges we face.

Here again, it demands a strong interconnection between the military, public, and private sectors. In addition, the ways Nations and International Organizations integrate their own resilience efforts across society are of paramount importance. From UN disaster risk reduction programs to the EU Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR) in the Sahel region, from cybersecurity to civil preparedness, our different approaches to Resilience would be even better off learning from each other.

With regard to NATO, Resilience is a major factor underpinning the Alliance’s deterrence, since potential adversaries will see that they cannot succeed or achieve their objectives as the Alliance is prepared for and will recover from any blow, strike, or “strategic surprise”.

As some of you may know, Allied Command Transformation headquarters are located in Norfolk, Virginia, an area well known for its sometimes severe



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

storms and recurrent flooding. Mindful of the coastal resilience strategy developed by the city of Norfolk, we will organize a seminar on Resilience next year, bringing together representatives from the civil security organizations, the private sector, the United Nations and the European Union.

[3. *Innovation*]

I have stressed the crucial nature of decision-making and strategic awareness, I have highlighted the importance of resilience, but none of them will be fully realized without Innovation. And this is my third point.

Innovation is not an end in itself. Instead, it is a mind-set and a means for adaptation in a changing security environment. Anticipating new technological breakthroughs, developing new concepts, working closely with a strong defence and non-defence industry will change, for example, the way NATO plans and conducts operations or even the very nature of warfare itself.

To give you an illustration, when NATO troops faced indiscriminate and lethal Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) in Afghanistan, ACT led the shift from just strengthening armor plate towards an efficient integrated procedure for attacking the threat networks in support of our force protection efforts.

It is only in harnessing the diversity of expertise and ideas, including the private sector, academia, think tanks and others, that we will be able to reactively adapt to contemporary challenges and, equally as important, proactively implement game-changing initiatives. In this regard, experimentation will be a key element: too often have we seen failure as carrying a negative connotation, but I assure you it can be an opportunity that could lead to potentially disruptive ideas.

And let me tell you that Innovation is not limited to the technological or the military field, but will have implications across a wide variety of domains. At the political level for example, the development of a new C2, cloud-like architecture, could lead to adapting the institutional organization of NATO and impact the relations between the Alliance and its partners.



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

[4. Cooperation]

The last idea and certainly the most important one is Cooperation.

If you take the military world, NATO's credibility will increasingly depend on its ability to act together with its Partners across the globe, whether they be Nations, International organizations, think tanks, academia or private companies.

From an operational point of view, it will be highly unlikely for NATO to conduct any operations without the involvement of some of its 41 partner Nations. Let me remind you that Georgia is the second largest troop contributing country in Afghanistan, after the United States. And due to the global nature of threats, NATO partners are far from being limited to the Euro-Atlantic area. For instance, the 5 so-called "Enhanced Opportunity Partners" we work with are Finland, Sweden, Jordan, Georgia and Australia.

Today's interconnected world compels us to adopt a truly comprehensive approach to modern threats and challenges. I would like to stress again that the tasks of crisis prevention, crisis management, or stabilisation cannot be accomplished with purely military means alone, as you all have experienced during these past few days. Sustainable security in our modern world requires reconstruction, economic and social development, as well as transparency and good governance.

Under this light, it is clear that NATO has probably the most robust and credible military capacity but, notwithstanding its civil capabilities (in emergency planning for example), lacks tools and mandates to achieve the objectives it shares with its partners.

On the other hand, other institutions have considerable assets: as you all know, the United Nations have a unique role in providing a framework of legitimacy for the use of force, coordinating multilateral stabilization and reconstruction efforts, or attracting resources on a global basis. The European Union has many civilian assets that are essential to capacity building, such as police, justice and rule of law programs, together with financial and development resources. In the same way, the OSCE provides a framework for arms control, transparency and risk-reduction measures, or norm setting for post-conflict processes. And I could go on and quote many



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

international organizations which you have made yourselves familiar with during this Forum.

If you take the instability in certain parts of North Africa and the Middle East, with fragile or failing States under growing pressure from terrorist groups, one of the main efforts for the international community will be to contribute to strengthening these States, and helping them improve, upon their request, their defence and security capacities.

Since the Wales Summit, NATO has been developing a range of programs and initiatives in the field of what we call defence capacity building, with training, advisory, and equipment aspects. But how many other initiatives were launched in parallel by Nations or other international organizations?

Under my command's leadership, NATO is currently working on a new concept called Individually Tailored Roadmaps, or ITRs, which is intended to simplify, optimize and synchronize the Alliance's partnerships program. I believe that these ITRs could offer much more, and become a common, modular planning framework with other international actors which have their own partnership programs, often similar to one another.

Going even beyond, at the risk of being somewhat revolutionary (but is it a true risk?), I would offer that we could start thinking of achieving a new model of governance among the different international actors. How could we find a coordinated or modular way to approach security issues? How could we be more coherent and avoid duplication whenever possible?

Many suggestions have been submitted to achieve greater effectiveness, including planning conferences or discussions on lessons learned. Convening workshops, in association with the think tank and the academic world, would be a practical step to develop and then implement innovative ideas. It could complement the necessary education of our current and future leaders, on the risks related to competition between organizations, for resources and missions.



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

[Conclusion]

To conclude, I would like to stress that current and future instability situations will increasingly fail to recognize national boundaries, any religious, cultural or social adherence, and any membership of organizations. They will emerge when we least expect them, and affect us in ways we may not have foreseen.

That is why we must always remain flexible and continuously adapt to a rapidly evolving environment. That is why, within NATO, Allied Command Transformation, endeavours to connect current decisions to futures thinking, while constantly improving the military credibility of the Alliance.

Let me end on a more personal note and encourage you to remain engaged and interested in the strategic environment and security policy matters in general. One should never take peace and security for granted. Both demand permanent efforts from a wide range of actors. And though carrying great uncertainty, our world offers many opportunities! The bottom line is that we need you, the world needs you and all the ideas you have brought to the table during the many discussions and negotiations you had this week.

I take this opportunity to encourage all of you to engage with my Command, Allied Command Transformation. As you may have found out, we are extremely keen on interacting with young generations. We organize every year a NATO model challenge, during which high school students simulate a several-day NATO North Atlantic Council negotiation.

We also have developed the web-based Innovation Hub that you can reach through our Command's homepage. It brings people with different backgrounds and perspectives together to discuss, collaborate, and design solutions for the many challenges our nations face, so join us there!

Je vous remercie pour votre attention, et tiens à féliciter dès à présent les brillants négociateurs de ce PIMUN 2016 que j'aurai l'honneur de récompenser dans quelques instants.