



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

SACT's remarks for JALLC 15th Anniversary

Lisbon, 20 September 2017

Général d'armée aérienne Denis MERCIER



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Mr President,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour and an immense pleasure to celebrate with you the 15th anniversary of the Joint Analysis and Lessons Learned Centre, here, in this beautiful city of Lisbon.

As a founding member, Portugal has been a steadfast and reliable ally ever since the creation of the Alliance in 1949, and a home to several NATO entities over the years. Today, in addition to JALLC, Portugal hosts STRIKFORNATO – the Alliance’s primary maritime battle staff operational command – and will soon be home to a new NATO Academy, which will train Information Technology specialists, including cyber experts, to deal with the threats stemming from an increasingly complex environment. NATO’s footprint in Portugal illustrates the necessity for our Alliance to operate and adapt at the same time. And, Mr President, I want to seize the opportunity of your presence among us today to express my sincere gratitude for the support of the Portuguese nation and the hospitality of its people.

And this necessity is acknowledged in the adaptation of our NATO Command Structure, in which the JALLC is expected to play an important role. As Allied Command Transformation focuses its efforts on warfare development activities, our role will be to ensure that the Alliance is ready to meet any challenge that may come in the foreseeable future.



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JALLC may be a young institution, but its ability to collect and analyse data, and to process the lessons we identify in operations or exercises is invaluable. The parentage of the JALLC dates back to the Permanent Analysis Team, a NATO organization stationed in the UK that had been in charge of operational analysis of maritime exercises since the late 1970s. This entity contributed to NATO's deployment in Bosnia, in the 1990s, to process and analyse operational data. This evolution led to the conclusion that a joint military body to collect and process data from operations and exercises was necessary for the Alliance. This lesson identified actually became a lesson learned, and in 2002, the JALLC was founded here, in Portugal. Over the last 15 years, the JALLC has continued to evolve to match the evolutions of our strategic context, gradually extending its responsibilities across the Alliance.

And now, as we are going through the adaptation of the NATO Command Structure, following the decisions of the Warsaw Summit last year, the JALLC has to adapt again.

In the current strategic context, NATO will face increasingly demanding challenges and engagements. The JALLC has to shift its focus towards lessons learned, and to use modern tools to process and analyse data drawn from all our activities.

In this development, how we identify many parameters from our operations and exercises, and translate them into relevant data for future analytics will be critical.



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It will require different sets of expertise, but building a common source of data, ready to use the tools of the 21st century will allow the Alliance to enhance its collective ability to learn from experience.

This is the reasoning behind the creation of an Alliance-wide lessons learned portal.

It is a challenging but necessary endeavour: by creating a shared database for the benefit of the Alliance as a whole, but also of our partners and other international organizations, we will be able to connect and leverage the expertise acquired in the field from various sources, and to learn from it.

As the JALLC new shield illustrates, with the owl whose wings remind an open book, this Centre's vocation is to share knowledge and wisdom, while moving forward to prepare the engagements of tomorrow. I know that the Centre is up to the challenge, which is why I will ask more of you.

I commend you for the incredible work that you have done over the last fifteen years, and I express my full confidence in your individual and collective ability to challenge yourselves, surpass your reputation of excellence, and make the JALLC the reference for lessons learned in NATO and beyond.

Long live the JALLC. Thank you for your attention.