



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

**SACT's INTRODUCTORY REMARKS to
NATO TRANSFORMATION SEMINAR**

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As delivered

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Secretary General,

Ministers

Ambassadors,

Admirals, Generals, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure and honour to welcome you to this 2015 NATO Transformation Seminar. Thank you very much Mr (Damon) Wilson for your words of welcome and the great contribution of the Atlantic Council, our reliable partner in the organization of this event. We are also very fortunate and grateful to the United States for hosting this year's Seminar, and for the impressive support we have received from many of you in Washington DC and in Brussels. This is a true collaborative effort; I'm sure we will make it a collective success.

Halfway between two NATO Summits, the aim of this Seminar is to offer a unique opportunity to step back and take time to put in perspective NATO's Transformation in gathering NATO political and military authorities as well as Industry, think tanks and academia.

One year ago, our previous NTS in Paris was particularly timely as major crises were underway on our eastern and southern borders. Our discussions proved highly valuable for preparing the Wales Summit. We stressed the necessity of rebalancing our Core tasks while highlighting the complementarity, the close interaction of collective defence, crisis management and cooperative security.



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We emphasized the necessity for NATO Forces to be adequately prepared and trained to be able to answer the whole spectrum of missions covered by the Strategic Concept and the necessity to reenergize Readiness and Responsiveness to face rapid development of threats and crisis. In fact, most of our conclusions fuelled the design of the Readiness Action Plan, which we are developing today.

This year seminar aims to carry on supporting the efforts undertaken by the Secretary General and our Nations to complete the tasks given by our Heads of State and Government at the Wales Summit. It should help develop a set of deliverables for Warsaw next year, and look beyond Warsaw as well.

So, while implementing the Readiness Action Plan, we must keep in mind the objectives set forth in previous Summits, with NATO Forces 2020 as a key milestone and I think that we must start developing longer term perspectives because the future will not wait for us.

Since 66 years, and certainly for the last decades, NATO's coherent, consistent and enduring Transformation has enabled NATO forces to respond to emerging crises when they were tasked to do so. I believe it is crucial to keep and even increase the pace of our dynamic Transformation as our forces will likely face a hardened security environment in the foreseeable future and I would highlight three main reasons:

- First, more and more state and non-state-actors may feel unconstrained by International laws and may look to strike our



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SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

Nations even on their own territories. On a Russian model, some of them will synchronize their efforts and act with higher ambiguity. This hybrid modus operandi will likely be very innovative, even disruptive.

- Second, our adversaries may trigger swiftly simultaneous and diverse crises to challenge our planning, preparation and decision making process, putting also at risk the solidarity of the Alliance.
- Last but not least, our opponents will deploy more Anti-access and area denial weapon systems to threaten our forces in their strategic, operational and tactical depth and challenge the Alliance ability to re-posture.

For adapting our forces to cope with these mid and long-term threats, I would stress 5 guiding principles, ensuing from our recent Bi-SC Future Framework for the Alliance operations analysis.

First, to make any appropriate decision, in every single operation, there is a permanent need to improve our Strategic awareness through information sharing, joint intelligence building, real time Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities, and not to forget the indispensable human expertise. In looking into the future, a reliable strategic awareness is not an option but a pre-requisite.

Second, in this future operational environment, our forces have to remain a first strategic shock absorber. In times of enduring budget constraints and pressing environment, we should coordinate, consolidate our shared resilience through selected redundancy and measures of protection for

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critical infrastructure, decision making centers, networks, population and other centres of gravity.

Third, to engage these opponents, our forces will have to be highly agile and modular, trained in the full spectrum of warfare. The enduring implementation of our Connected Forces Initiative will be paramount in preparing, educating and training them in the right balance of our three core tasks.

Fourth, in any context, including hybrid, our Alliance has to gain the battle of the narrative, through effective strategic communication.

Last but not least, our Partners, committed to support our troops over the past decades have become part of the Alliance DNA. We have to ensure the highest level of interoperability of these forces with our forces to enable them to take their full share in our Future Coalitions, and to cope with their own regional security. As a mutual benefit, they deserve enhanced involvement in the decision of the Alliance's future. I'm glad we enjoy today the presence of our "Spearhead" Partners, the Nations from the Enhanced Opportunity initiative.

We welcome as well the presence of our key strategic partner, the European Union, which stresses the progress of our common endeavour, even if there is obviously room for permanent improvement.

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But a vision, a strategy with a lack of resources could be seen at best as a dream. So reaching first, the NATO Forces 2020 milestone depends on our

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ability to address right now the long-term effects of the post-Cold War budget cuts which have severely impacted the preparedness, the serviceability of our equipment, the logistic support and the modernization of our capabilities.

That already confronts us with the fundamental question on how the Alliance would face simultaneous, emerging threats, enabled by the most modern technologies.

Hopefully on the long term, the Defense Investment Pledge will finance the roadmaps under implementation for our 16 main identified shortfalls. But we cannot wait, it is our duty to provide pragmatic short and mid-term answers.

We may have to prioritize the filling of temporary gaps in our strategic posture. It is our role as NATO military authorities to provide strategic options and related risks assessment. Yet, to be relevant, they need a clear and shared understanding of the objectives, which stresses the importance of the upcoming Political Guidance both for the short and the long term.

To mitigate capability gaps, we can capitalize on our multinational cooperation projects wherever they stem from – Smart Defense, European Pooling and sharing, Framework Nations, Regional groupings- and some of those projects are almost completed and need only a last push to be delivered. Others, more ambitious, need a long term commitment, well beyond 2020.



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What we have learned in developing this multinational approach is that:

- First, nothing can replace the indispensable investments to stimulate participating nations and Industry,
- Secondly, it takes time to refine the requirements and set the proper frameworks,
- And last but not least, it offers a unique opportunity to innovate and take the full benefit of the conjunction of new technologies, new concepts enabled by the connexion of will and brains.

And I truly believe from this experience that the Alliance has the ability and I would say the requirement to bolster Innovation as a key enabler to unleash the full potential of our skilled men and women and encourage their creativity. That also suggests sharing the best practises on new development and procurement models to better solve the equation of time, cost and effectiveness. The superiority of our forces will depend as well on our ability to adapt our concept and identify potential disruptive technologies in close coordination with the Science and Technology organisations, Industry, Think tanks, academia.

As a concrete example, as we look to replace some of our major assets, such as Allied AWACS fleet, within the next two decades, this innovative and collaborative approach should provide credible, affordable, sustainable options. This is as well an opportunity to strengthen our transatlantic bond and support our Industrial Base for Defence Technologies on both sides of the Atlantic.

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So, in summary, during this Seminar, we offer you to shape a Transformation able to provide simple and striking answers to current and emerging security challenges; a way that ensures coherence of all our previous efforts to prepare tomorrow's Alliance the most efficiently, in balancing ambitions and pragmatism, in focusing on operational capabilities, in capitalizing on our formidable human potential, and investing in the youth.

Yesterday, as a full part of this seminar, in partnership with the Atlantic Council, ACT organized a Young Professionals Day based on the same topics that we have in front of us. As we are looking for their creative outputs, we welcome representatives of our young leaders in today's discussion and you can be sure they will not be shy to speak.

“Simple and striking” was also the requirement given by the North Atlantic Council for the design of the NATO flag in 1953: a white compass rose emblem symbolizing the direction towards the path of peace, with four white lines radiating from the four cardinal directions, the blue colour symbolizing the Atlantic Ocean, while the circle stands for unity.

Ladies and gentlemen, leading NATO today on the right heading, requires a great Captain. So, it is an honour and a pleasure to welcome our Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg.

Secretary General, the floor is yours.