



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

General Paloméros

NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation's

REMARKS to

EUROPEAN DEFENCE SUMMIT

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As delivered

«Between Wales and Warsaw: the state and future of NATO's posture»

16'



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Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished guests,

My job in ACT is to take into account the past, adapt and track the future, in a current context where the questions of refugees and migrants is very high in European Nations' agenda.

Almost one year ago, in the context of the crisis in Ukraine, and in conjunction with the equally challenging threats from the South, the Alliance Heads of State and Government met in Wales [*many of you were there*] to reaffirm our Nations' solidarity as well as the need for maintaining and strengthening a credible Euro-Atlantic defence. They confirmed the importance of this objective by defining for NATO an ambitious model, based on modern, interconnected forces enabling a high level of readiness and able to operate together and with Partner nations.

Indeed, they stressed the necessity for NATO to remain forward looking, adapting its posture, its capabilities and structures in an organized and proactive manner in order to cope with the current as well as the future security challenges.

In other words, they confirmed the relevance of the Alliance's Transformation focused on military credibility, interoperability and readiness.

Before sharing with you my vision of NATO's perspectives, I should start by a quick *tour d'horizon* of our main security challenges, stressing more on their implications for the balance between our three core tasks: Collective Defence, Crisis Management and Cooperative Security.



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The Alliance is now confronted with a mix of threats and associated risks, which I believe are without precedent [*in summary, 3 R: Russia, Radicalism, Refugees*]. The simultaneity, complexity and interconnection of crises require more than ever a global strategy based on solidarity and which must take due account of the various national sensibilities of Allies and the real nature of the risks in the East and in the South.

To the East, the Ukrainian crisis has brought back the spectre of state on state conflict, in particular a concern for our Eastern Allies.

Russia's implementation of a global hybrid strategy, through the coordination of all instruments of power—military, economic, political, informational, and even, explicitly, nuclear—will require us to review and develop appropriate and proportionate responses, ones that are more global, inclusive, and cooperative. Therefore, this crisis has highlighted the continued need for a modern, credible, mix of nuclear and conventional collective defence, able to prevent, deter, and if needed, act together.

To our South, we are witnessing the destabilisation of the entire region, which weakened or unstable states are powerless to halt.

These lawless zones are emerging on Europe's periphery which also encourage the creation of support bases for terrorist and extremist groups able to threaten Allied territory.

While this instability may be with us for the long term, Allies are already confronted with the immediate consequences of the crises exploited by these

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groups such as the massive influx of refugees, or inspiring terrorist attacks against our territories. It shows the need for rapid strengthening the capability and capacity of these nations in close co-ordination and cooperation with our trusted Partners.

In addressing these demanding geostrategic environments, we must as well take into consideration the **evolving nature of the threat** supported by massive investments in many countries outside NATO.

The rapid proliferation of sensitive military technologies in avionics, ballistics, detection, precision and drone capabilities, as well as the free access to dual-use technologies will threaten our technological superiority during the next decade.

Advanced weapon systems for anti-area or anti-access denial, in particular those designed for land to air combat, land to sea combat and ground combat, but also those in the cyber domain, may increasingly threaten, or even neutralize, the military strategies and key capabilities on which we have based our security. Even our ability to deploy our forces when and where required to which is at stake.

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To answer this challenging security environment and prepare the future, NATO must adapt its strategy. We have the unique opportunity to do it in close conjunction with the European Union; this is a clear objective for the Warsaw summit. Without pre-empting the final recommendations, I can already say that we have identified key strands of effort to improve NATO's proactivity, NATO's agility and NATO's resilience.



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- **First - proactivity:**
 - Proactivity requires a renewed political-military dialogue both inside and outside the Alliance, with Partners and other organisations such as the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations and the African Union and many others. Proactivity means as well to strive to re-establish the indispensable dialogue with all stakeholders (Russia) at political and military level.
 - It also implies improving, accelerating and testing the decision making process within NATO and with the EU.
 - Proactivity and responsiveness rely on credible and shared strategic awareness based upon information sharing and more importantly common intelligence building. By improving its proactivity, NATO will be able to reinforce its dynamic posture. In this regard, NATO requires policies and instruments that enable graduated escalation and de-escalation without endangering the strength and the deterrence inherent in Article 5. The implementation of a very dynamic presence has been key to the success of Assurance Measures in the East. Another manifestation of NATO's proactivity is the rapid deployment of enhanced partnership and Defence Capacity Building (DCB) in the South (like with Jordan).
 - Last but not least, proactivity must also result in a renewed policy for strategic communication (STRATCOM) to anticipate and prevent the effects of comprehensive information warfare and



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propaganda carried out by states [RU] or non state actors [namely Daesh].

- Second - **agility**:

- Agility calls for an improved readiness of our military capacities and a better responsiveness of our forces. That is the purpose of the decision made at the Wales Summit to develop a Readiness Action Plan for an improved NATO Response Force and its spearhead, the Very High Joint Task Force (VJTF). As, we have made significant progress, this is a good news, I am confident they will be fully implemented by the Warsaw Summit.
- Nevertheless, greater agility rests upon the improvement of our capabilities and the reduction of the identified shortfalls. Today we must take the full benefit of a collective Enhanced Planning Process. We also support the Nations in pursuing multinational collaboration projects such as the 153 projects launched under the Smart Defence Initiative and we have significantly improved the coherence, the synergy with the projects developed by the European Union through a fruitful cooperation with the European Defence Agency [*Pooling and sharing + German Framework Nation Concept*].
- Agility also depends on a wider interoperability among Allies and Partners, as well as a greater mobility both at strategic and tactical level.
- Last but not least, the overall effectiveness, and the agility of NATO's forces rely on a robust and well-adapted preparation for



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operations. This has been the aim of the Connected Forces Initiative (CFI) launched three years ago. We needed this reinvestment in our people. Today, we have reenergized our training and exercise policy in NATO, and be able to link more and more national exercises with NATO's ones. A perfect example will be given next month for the NRF certification exercise TRIDENT JUNCTURE 15 [*In the South, that was a good choice in terms of STRATCOM*] which will take place in October with over 36,000 NATO and non-NATO soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines in Italy, Spain and Portugal. It is also worth noting that it will be linked with the Visegrad EU Battle group certification exercise.

- Third - **resilience**:
 - The Alliance's overall resilience is being stressed by new threats, ever more versatile and innovative, more ambiguous and disruptive.
 - Our adversaries will focus on our centre of gravity, making more evident the necessity of a reinforced and shared resilience. That will imply selected redundancy and measures of protection for critical infrastructure, decision making centres, networks, population and other centres of gravity.
 - Achieving this high level of resilience requires a thoroughly coordinated approach between Nations, NATO and its partners, first and foremost but not exclusively the EU.



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These needs for better proactivity, more agility and enhanced shared resilience must be set against the budgetary constraints under which Alliance nations operate, and an obvious imbalance not only between the US and Europe, but also between European countries.

So the Heads of State and Government, meeting at the Wales Summit, to set the aim of reaching 2% of GDP for the defence budget, of which 20% on major new equipment, including related Research and Development. It was a surprise that in the EU Summit the same decision was not made. I can't understand. It will come hopefully.

Warsaw will provide a first opportunity to assess the reality of these reinvestments, but we cannot wait for better days. It is our responsibility today to imagine new efficient solutions, to improve the readiness of forces, to develop multinational projects. It is our responsibility to promote innovation as a key tool for transformation.

We must look for the most cost-effective and time efficient solutions in developing our capabilities and make the best use of new technologies.

From my perspective, there is a real need for global innovation strategy within the Alliance, in particular in Europe, able to maintain Alliance interoperability and military credibility. I must stress that US has launched an innovation initiative. EU cannot stay out of this terrain.

Aiming at a more balanced transatlantic effort, I believe we have a real opportunity to promote the contribution of the European Defence industry and technological base, to make the most innovative small and medium sized companies, the universities, the think tanks and centres of excellence.



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The replacement of major NATO capabilities ending their life in 2030 as well as the replacement of legacy equipment in some of our Eastern Allies armed forces represents perfect bedrock for such a strategy, strengthening as well the bonds between the two sides of the Atlantic.

My command being positioned in the United States, as the overall American strategy calls for a new balance, I firmly believe that Washington will continue to encourage Europeans to take greater responsibilities in generating capacities and deploying forces.

As you can see, NATO's preparation for Warsaw is well underway but the Alliance is already looking far beyond Warsaw to remain a key player in ensuring the security of the Transatlantic Area. The Alliance will continue to evolve as it enters ever-closer cooperation with the European Union. It must remain as well a reference for operational standards and interoperability.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm that no adaptation, no transformation of NATO would be possible without the proactive and courageous men and women serving in our Nations armed forces and other NATO entities. They deserve the best training, the most suitable equipment and our full support.

Thank you for your attention and this opportunity to open the panel.