



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

SACT's REMARKS to

NCOs/Enlisted All Call

NORFOLK, 30th October

Général d'armée aérienne Mercier

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Thank you Jack for giving me the opportunity to have this discussion with you.

Rather than repeat what I said at the All Hands, I want to emphasize some points and address a few others.

First, I want to emphasize the ratio between the number of enlisted people and the number of officers. If we set aside the Liaison National Elements, you collectively represent less than 10 percent of the staff. But this makes your contribution even more important. And the importance of the work you do will drive the work we will do together.

One month after my arrival, my first consideration was: what do we do in this headquarters? As I mentioned during the All Hands, my concern here is that we have to focus on the outputs. We all need to understand the results, the objectives, of our Transformation. We are not transforming for the sake of transforming, we are transforming something. And we are working hard towards that end.

I initially called what we transform, a combat system, but I think it is best described as NATO's posture. It is this posture which enables our Alliance to fulfil its three core tasks, which are collective defence, the ability to response to any crisis response operation, and cooperative security. Our output is therefore operational. We transform our posture, so that when SACEUR uses it, be it today, tomorrow or in the future, he has the right forces, and the overall posture required to fulfil the task. And it is very important that we all understand that. Because when you are talking about all the processes that we work on in the headquarters, like Smart Defence, CFI, and most of our projects, these are great tools, but they are only tools that enable us to provide the Alliance with a strong posture, which is something operational. And this is what I want for this headquarters. And this is why, as you may have heard, I want to focus on 5 key areas: command and control; training; sustainability and logistics;

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manpower; and capabilities. Those are really the outputs of our Transformation. And they are cross-functional. I want everybody in this headquarters to understand that, for command and control for instance, which I consider the key element of the future combat system, all those working in the different directorates and branches, must understand they are working towards this issue, irrespective of whether they work in training or plans and policy or capability development. Because capability development or training are not the outputs. They are merely the way we prepare the Alliance to be ready to fight in any kind of operation. And we have all a role to play in that. This is why we will continuously work on these focus areas, because they are what I call the foundation of our posture.

Posture is, as you know, a big issue at the present time in NATO. Is our posture deterrent enough, and what do we mean by posture? Posture is always having the required forces at the appropriate readiness. And forces are provided by the Nations. But if you want to be sure that you can employ the forces, you need those foundations. You need command and control. If you do not have command and control, including ISR, then you cannot employ your forces. If you do not have all the capabilities to sustain or the necessary logistics to deploy your forces, then you have your forces but without the appropriate level of readiness. If you do not train your forces correctly, then you won't be able to deploy them. If you do not have the correct manpower, correctly educated in their different nations, you do not have the correct posture. We also have to be sure that in our world, we are able to work with others. These can be other international organizations or Partner Nations as well, and this is a part of the constraint.

Capabilities are the fifth key area. By capabilities I mean the equipment with its associated doctrine.

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This is why I want us to have this cross functional view of our work. Even when we are more and more accountable for our resources, we have to be sure that this accountability is linked with the appropriate output, which is operational capability.

We will be working to bring this vision to the other side of the Atlantic. We will be working on this cross-functional view, we will have a FOGO off site, and after that, I, along with the COS and the DCOS will hold another All Hands early in December in order to explain to you what we do and where we want to go.

I sometimes hear people describing ACT as a kind of think tank. While it is true we must make time to think, we are much more than a think tank. We prepare the Alliance to meet all the challenges that it has to meet in the future.

For that to work, we also need to work as a headquarters on the following:

First, building relationships. That's something very important, and for all of ACT, for our headquarters in Norfolk and for the 3J, in Monsanto, Bydgoszcz and Stavanger. All of ACT must continuously develop our identity. We need to show that we have a strong identity, an ACT identity. And that will reinforce our credibility and thereby the job we are doing. We have many ways to do that, and all of us have our part to play. As I mentioned already it is not forbidden to have fun at work, it actually helps. And I wanted to tell you that some of you may have ideas, some of you may have already considered that there are things that could be improved. Don't keep that for yourself! If you bring that to your boss and to us, then we can even empower you to develop a project. We can even inject that into the whole NATO community. I promise that if you have good ideas, we will do follow them up. And you will have this opportunity to develop those ideas and promote them to the other headquarters. I am sure you have ideas! So don't keep them for

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yourself, we need them, and we can give you responsibilities, and I promise to do so. That is important for me.

Another thing is welfare. It is part of this relationship, so it is absolutely important that we continuously develop new ideas and new events in order to be sure that all together, with our families, we can take enjoy this wonderful area of Virginia. So if you have idea how to develop the way we can organize events with our families, do it, it is everyone's responsibility.

In addition to that, I will seek to develop two things. First an ACT book, something I want for myself, but also something I can share with everyone I meet. Another idea, which came from the Chief of Staff, is a yearly book. Something in which we can have many pictures of all the people who work here and in which we can explain what we are doing.

Another point which I would like to stress is our need to recognize talent and skills in others. This probably applies more for enlisted people than for the officers, I know that most of you, you have competences and skills. Which are not always used in your daily work. What I would like to do, is to make the most of those skills. You know, this is linked with what I just mentioned, cross-functionality. Each of you, you may tell me, "I have this competence, and for this cross-functional work I can bring my experience." Then we can take benefit from this, we can even use you and give you more responsibility. And we will do it. I will check that this is being done in the directorates. Again, it will be good for our cross-functional work. Because I really want to employ everybody to the maximum extent possible, but then if we do that, it will be valuable for your career and we will do our best to value that. Because what I want is for you to feel fulfilled in this headquarters, but even more than that, if you can develop your leadership and other skills here and bring them back to your

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home nations, along with showing what responsibilities you have taken, it will be good for you. It is important for me that I am sure that when you are back, your nation recognizes what you have done here. It is just much more than having worked for ACT. Don't stay on the sidelines. We cannot do that without your involvement, but we will do that. You have a role to play in this headquarters.

Out of that, make the maximum use of the recognition programme. I know that it is probably sounds more American than European, but it is good for everybody to have his job recognized, and I want to stress that, it is absolutely important. I will give you an example of that, from my past experience when I was at the head of the French Air Force. I introduced the recognition programme, especially for the enlisted people. At the beginning, I asked people how they felt about that. And they said "no, I won't do that, it is not our culture". But finally I said: "yes, we will do it". And people became used to it. So, we have to do it, it is absolutely important, it is the reconnaissance of your role, of what you bring to Alliance. So, consider that, this is absolutely essential. And that will help everybody to be proud to be in ACT.

Similarly, I would like to know about all the promotions in the headquarters. I do not want to hear that so and so was promoted without my being aware of it.. Once again, it will be up to you to do so, for you and for your friends.

Just a few closing remarks. First of all a code of conduct, which is absolutely important. You have a lot of rights, but rights come with duties and obligations. You must remember this, it is true for all of us. I will continuously work to ensure that, regarding your rights, you have an open door policy with your hierarchy, so you can address your concerns and your problems to your hierarchy. And your hierarchy is always double here: there is your nation, and the Command. And we have to work closely, all together.

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In conclusion, I have often described the enlisted component as the core of our armed forces. This may not be reflected in your number, but it is in your quality.. So, remember that for everything I said, it will be up to you to be the actors of your success. . If you do not play the game then we won't be able to do that together. We must work together. You are not working for me, you are working with me on the outputs I mentioned, to enable our Alliance to meet its future challenges. And the future challenges are not the challenges just for the Alliance, there are challenges for the Nations. We work for the Alliance, but we work for the security of our Nations as well. And this is why it is so important that we work together, and we will continuously improve what we are doing here.