



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

SACT's Closing Remarks at

The COTC 2018

Norfolk, December 13th

As delivered

Général d'armée aérienne André Lanata



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Generals, Admirals,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

It has been my distinct honour to host you at the 2018 Chiefs of Transformation Conference. I thank all of you for your participation and inputs during this annual gathering.

We were privileged to have a video opening address by NATO's Secretary General, Mr Jens Stoltenberg, who recognized our efforts and highlighted opportunities COTC provides.

This morning we were also honoured to be joined by the Chairman of NATO's Military Committee, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach.



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He highlighted “...*the importance of us working together now and into the future as the ever increasing pace of technological change forces our Alliance to constantly adapt and overcome these challenges.*”

This year, we gathered more than 500 participants from 28 Member Nations, 22 Partner Nations, Partner organizations, Industry, Academia, NATO Staffs.

I also want to point out that, for the first time at COTC, we welcomed national young disruptors to join the senior leaders.

We had also the opportunity to host a dedicated meeting with NATO Centre of Excellences’ directors. Their unique expertise and knowledge are essential for NATO. I was pleased to have a frank discussion with you.



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I would like to thank again Lockheed Martin for their hospitality yesterday, during the “Principals” offsite, in their Center for Innovation.

Finally, allow me to congratulate the team of DCOS Capability Development led by LtGen Sharpy, especially the Transformation Network Branch, for their commitment and effort with the organization and execution of this event.

I also want to congratulate the ACT’s Protocol team, remarkable as always and the entire hotel management team and staff.

Let’s give them a round of applause!



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Yesterday I explained our, ACT's, approach to Warfare Development and its six main strands. Many of them have been touched upon in our various discussions during these two days.

While we have a clear idea of what Warfare Development is, achieving its objectives will require a lot of effort and, let me stress it again, cooperation.

Closer cooperation among member Nations, and NATO with partners, particularly with Industry and Academia helps us to ensure the future of the Alliance.

We also proved the benefits of our close interaction here, at this Conference. Let me emphasize some significant insights we developed together and the actions we need to undertake.



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During our discussions on **human capital development** we came with following conclusions:

First off all, even though it is obvious, I would like to insist on :

- the NATO's greatest strength is the men and women serving within the Alliance, and that
- NATO benefits from the shared knowledge and competencies, opinions and experiences of personnel from 29 Nations and Partners.

The consensus among Chiefs of Transformation was that talent management, leader development, and organizational effectiveness are key elements to address in the development of Human Capital.

- NATO needs to consolidate and develop educational tools to help strategic leader development and decision making.



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- Recruiting and more importantly, retaining innovative people is becoming increasingly challenging across the Military.
- A key recommendation was to modernize strategic leader development through virtual reality and other advanced decision making tools.
- I am very concerned about these human capital issues. As former Chief of Staff of the French Air Force, I was really focused on Human Capital challenges.
- The most edge-equipment will remain useless in terms of operational capability if it is not served by well trained and educated men and women. Technology can not and will not by itself give us all the answers to the challenges we face.



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From my first months as Supreme Allied Command Transformation, I am already convinced that these crucial Human Capital concerns remain a subject of major preoccupation for all Allies.

I intend to carry a specific effort on mapping these Human Capital challenges, to help explore and develop solutions that could make us all stronger together.

The discussion on **Emerging and Disruptive Technology** was focused on “Data Centricity in Command & Control and Decision making. A few takeaways are:

- There was clear recognition that NATO must improve its ability to collect, label and make data available for experimentation and analytics purposes amongst NATO and nations to support Command and Control and decision making.



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It is less a technological challenge than a political will to share Data. NATO can provide the systems and set the conditions.

- NATO and nations need to better align in terms of data and systems sharing to ensure interoperability and be able to achieve military objectives, such as enhanced decision making. We have to, therefore, progress in collecting data to be able to use AI “intelligently”.
- Culture, Policies and Processes are the fundamental challenges to address first. We need a policy on data which are strategic resources.
- Data science is iterative in nature and therefore has to be implemented in both development and operational arenas.
- Our cultural approach on risk should evolve. Risk should be accepted within organizations and processes.



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- In the area of Experimentation, NATO and nations must commit resource (people and money), and accept to fail, fail and try again, until a relevant solution is found.

The discussion on **Future Partnerships** was initiated with the question: How can NATO embrace and exploit Disruptive Advances to enhance collaboration and information sharing?”

The main takeaways from this syndicate were the following:

- Most Partner Nations expressed concerns embracing Adaptive Disruptive Advances; their level of ambitions rather focuses on implementing more practical solutions.
- Challenges associated with information sharing could be addressed through the integration of existing technologies and NATO funding these technologies will require a clear demonstration of its value to the Alliance.



Finally, the fourth topic we discussed was **Long Term considerations from NATO's Strategic Foresight Analysis and Framework for Future Alliance Operations (SFA/FFAO)**.

- We recognized the requirement for greater agility in adopting/adapting commercial technologies combined with traditional ways of building military specific platforms.
We need both approaches.
- We also noted that we should not rely exclusively on technology. We should put our human capital in front. One of the strengths of NATO is to bring diversity of thoughts to develop innovative solutions.
- Fostering the discussions within the Multinational Solutions Community has been proposed as part of the response to this challenge.



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We were also delighted to have with us the “Young Disruptors” and students of Old Dominion University who raised the importance and relevance of NATO being a remarkable actor for the international peace and security.

They pointed out that the lack of transparency and information sharing among nations, slow decision making and an organizational culture which does not accept failure are the main problems preventing NATO’s transformation to remain fit for purpose in the future.

To summarize our two days efforts, we have clearly identified many opportunities for continued improvement, looking beyond the Brussels Summit, and in support of the warfare development of the Alliance.



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These improvements, particularly boosted by innovation, will significantly support our Transformation efforts, and result in a fast delivery of tangible and beneficial capabilities to our warfighters.

In fact, what is important is the output: our Alliance's capacity to face all current and future challenges, and to be "fit for purpose". We should bear that in mind and continue to work as one team.

I would also like to assure you that we value your feedback. We introduced a different conference format from the COTC 2017, allowing more discussion, engagement and debate. More importantly, we will be working on implementing the takeaways from this event.



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Let me just highlight one takeaway of last year's Conference which stated that we needed to incorporate advancing technologies such as autonomous systems, advanced analytics, artificial intelligence, and decision support tools in our processes.

Our Emerging and Disruptive Technology Roadmap is a very concrete step in that direction. Currently, there is an undergoing development of two capabilities related to these technologies, which are particularly focused on leveraging data in support of strategic decision making: (1) NATO Shared Strategic Awareness and (2) Information Environment Assessment (IEA) capability.

This has been experimented during the latest Trident Juncture Exercise and it appears to be very promising.



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Thank you again for the very good discussions, and more importantly for the actionable outcomes we can now link to the work strands and upcoming events.

The COTC is a powerful tool. We are innovative every day, but we need to innovate as an alliance to outpace the speed of our rivals. As an African proverb says: *“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together!”*

Above all, after two days of dialogue, we established new contacts, we exchanged ideas and we now know each other better. This work is certainly the guarantee of our collective success tomorrow.



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Finally, let me ask Alexa on her opinion about this event. “*Hey Alexa, what did you think about this conference?*”

[[Alexa answers](#)]

Thank you very much Alexa, I really appreciate your warm words !

After having this “competent” opinion 😊, I would like to thank you for your attendance and wish you all a safe trip home, and as we say here, on this side of the Atlantic, Happy Holidays and merry Christmas.