

## A Change of Command, But Not of the Transformational Vision - ACT

Written by Ms. Megan Thum, ACT PAO and Strategic Communications  
Friday, 28 September 2012 11:44

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Today marks the fourth welcoming ceremony of a new Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT) to Allied Command Transformation (ACT) headquarters in Norfolk, VA.

French Air Force General Jean-Paul Paloméros has taken the handover from French Air Force General Stéphane Abrial in a ceremony and reception at the Half Moone Cruise and Celebration Center adjacent to Nauticus and the Battleship Wisconsin on the Elizabeth River.

NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen welcomed more than 800 attendees and addressed the job well done by General Abrial and the challenges ahead for General Paloméros.

Secretary General Rasmussen delivered his remarks enforcing the relationship and the great foundation that has been set forth between General Abrial and General Paloméros.

"General Abrial has left you a command that is in very good shape. But, that does not mean that he has left you with nothing to do. On the contrary, you face a broad range of challenges. We look to you to help ensure that Allies, national and multinational contributions can be brought together effectively under NATO command and control so that the Alliance stays fit for purpose and fit for the future. I have every confidence in you that you will succeed."

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He continued his address to focus on the great strides General Abrial has made over his three-year tour in Norfolk. Secretary General Rasmussen stated, "For the past three years, we have worked very closely together. You have made a difference for NATO, for France and for Allied Command Transformation. You have brought a clear and coherent focus to the Command's wide range of work. Due to your efforts, this Command now lies at the very core of NATO's business."

For General Abrial, today's Change of Command was not only a handover of the Headquarter, but his farewell as he also leaves the French Air Force. He addressed the gathering of staff and colleagues for the last time, stating "And today, when I leave this great country, marks not only the end of my last command, but also the time for me to leave the French Air Force. What better way to conclude a 40-year career: In the United States, with a multinational and prestigious Command, and at the service of NATO's common values."

General Paloméros, former Chief of Staff of the French Air Force, accepted his new position in a traditional ACT Command Exchange of Colours ceremony.

"Secretary General, the challenges that you have just outlined are considerable. I stand ready to pursue and implement multinational co-operation as you envisioned. I have full confidence in the men and women I have the privilege and honour to command as of today. They are the best investment for the future; they are the real source of my motivation."

This event is the second time in NATO's 60 year history that a non-US officer has been permanently assigned to one of NATO's two Supreme Allied Commands.

The NATO Supreme Allied Commander Transformation preserves the peace, security and territorial integrity of Alliance member states through the transformation of NATO military forces, structures, capabilities and doctrine.

[General Paloméros' biography](#) .

**Change of Command Ceremony, September 28 2012**

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