



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

SACT REMARKS to

**MC Conference Session 5
Farewell remarks**

Istanbul, 12 September 2015

Général d'armée aérienne Paloméros

As delivered

Timing:

Preceded by: CMC Farewell remarks

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Thank you Petr for these kind words, very fitting for a pilot.

First of all, I can only say that being a NATO Commander in the US has been a privilege and a real pleasure. I cannot imagine a better place to lead NATO's Transformation and strengthen the vital transatlantic bond.

Coming back to your points on the end of command.

In 1906, scientist Alexander Graham Bell said that "*There are two critical points in every aerial flight—its beginning and its end*".

Now, it's my turn to ensure a smart, soft landing, hopefully it would be a "touch and go".

But the most important is that NATO keeps on flying "higher, faster, stronger" because our world needs a strong, credible and relevant NATO.

Considering the nature of the challenges that we have addressed today, crises all around the Alliance, I cannot imagine that NATO wouldn't be called upon, sooner than later as it was in the past, notably in the Balkans 20 years ago.

During the last 3 years, I did my best ahead of ACT to support you in your outstanding responsibilities, in delivering a dynamic Transformation for our Nations, with our Nations. Above all, NATO will continue to rely first and foremost on the unwavering contribution of the men and women within all our Allies' armed forces.

I would also like to take this opportunity to personally thank you for the highly motivated, military personnel placed under my command. They are the best

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proof of your constant commitment to prepare the future and they are the true engine of our Transformation.

The men and women of ACT will soon have the privilege to be led by a new, an outstanding French commander whom I personally know very well – a fighter pilot... who will be able to fly in close formation with you, Petr, Phil and the Military Committee.

Le General Denis Mercier est un ami de longue date, un chef exceptionnel qui m'a succédé à la tête de l'armée de l'air française en 2012, un homme aux très grandes qualités humaines et d'une grande ténacité.

Sa poursuite de la transformation de l'armée de l'air française a permis à cette dernière de mener les nombreux engagements opérationnels de la France, auprès de ses Alliées et Partenaires au Sahel, au Moyen Orient mais également dans le cadre des mesures d'assurance à l'Est de l'Europe.

Il ne fait aucun doute qu'il a hâte d'être confronté aux défis d'ACT et de les relever avec enthousiasme, et avec le même plaisir que celui que j'ai éprouvé durant mon mandat en travaillant avec vous à l'atteinte des objectifs de notre Alliance.

I wish you all the best. I have been extremely honoured and privileged to support you, Band of brothers, to support NATO in preparing its future.

Thank you for your trust, thank you for your friendship.

Good luck, good flight.