



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

**SACT's Opening Remarks to
Stability Operations 2020 and Beyond
WS (Atlantic Council)**

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Final (as delivered)

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Opening remarks, 03 Oct

Thank you Mr President, for your kind words, and for offering me the opportunity to address some Opening Remarks

Ambassador,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to thank the Atlantic Council, and its President and CEO, Mr Frederick Kempe for co-organizing and hosting this informal two-day workshop, in partnership with NATO Allied Command Transformation.

It is a real pleasure and a privilege for me to take part in this important event that brings together representatives and experts from a wide span of organizations across the spectrum of stabilization, security, aid and development.

It is also an opportunity for me to thank Brigadier-General (retired) Matt Brand, and Mr Magnus Nordenman of the Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security, for the preparation and the organization of this workshop.

I would also like to thank all participants who took time out from their busy schedules to attend the workshop today.

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The increasingly complex and evolving security environment has a 360 degree dimension, not only geographically speaking but also in terms of the wide range of actors and threats involved in potential crises.

Crises can mix state and non-state actors, including terrorist groups and organized crime. They can threaten or even disrupt critical infrastructures and resources, often creating humanitarian disasters leading to migration of populations across the regional borders. External factors such as the easy access to new technologies (cyber, but also the use of social media) know no border, no nationality or religion.

For NATO this new global environment generates an overlapping of its three core tasks (Collective Defence, Crisis Management and Cooperative Security), and it increases the difficulties to detect and identify signs of emerging crises. It also makes it difficult to attribute clear responsibilities among the multitude of actors involved.

These challenges and threats are increasingly interrelated and we can no longer imagine an isolated crisis in one region that doesn't impact the same actors in another one. Moreover, they can span over peacetime, crisis and conflict.

Taking into account the complexity of this environment, crisis management requires the participation of many actors and organizations that can work together.

Let me illustrate this with a recent but unfortunate event.

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As you may be aware, last Thursday there was an awful commuter train crash in Hoboken, New Jersey, just outside of New York City. Roughly 100 people were critically hurt, and unfortunately 1 person died.

But it could have been worse! In the joint press conference, Governor Chris Christie of New Jersey and Governor Andrew Cuomo of New York both stressed the following.

First, the citizens will get through this awful event because the community is resilient. Second, since being elected governor, both men have jointly endured many natural disasters and serious terrorist events; as such, they have built a strong relationship with each other. They discussed the pre-existing relationships between first responders, the Red Cross, city and state services, the military, and others. These previously formed relationships and the understanding of what each organization can contribute to during an emergency was key to a successful response.

I believe this situation and associated comments directly illustrate what is our intent with the Stability Operations Workshop and they stress the importance of building relationships, common understanding and confidence between our organizations.

This brings me to how we could do this.

The thread that links us in this increasingly unstable global security environment, is that we are all actors with a common commitment to avoid crises, and in the event of the inevitable, to manage and stabilize them. No actor nor organization has all required abilities to do so on its own.

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However, whilst we find ourselves on the same river, we know we are not always in the same boat, although we are most likely navigating in the same direction.

How can we better combine our efforts within the limits of the abilities of our own organization with the aim to avoid a crisis or escalation?

I would propose a threefold approach.

First, by defining ways for sharing strategic assessment.

Second, by defining principles, instruments or mechanisms to coordinate or synchronize our actions more efficiently.

Third by defining how we can move forward and integrate these principles in training and exercises conducted by our respective organizations.

I hope this workshop will be a unique opportunity to share information, experiences and knowledge to better understand our respective perspectives and identify opportunities for further cooperation.

I am very much looking forward to your presentations, your insights and discussions and for a very fruitful workshop!

Thank you for your attention.