NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION

SACT's remarks to

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Introduction

Thank you Ambassador Reuben Grigety for your kind introduction, and for your invitation and the opportunity to have this "conversation" with the staff and students of the Elliot School of International Affairs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm very happy to be here this afternoon, and to exchange some thoughts with you on how NATO as an Alliance is adapting to the rapidly changing security environment, to defend, to deter and to project stability.

NATO is a political and military organization, assembling 29 nations from Europe and North America to pursue the common goal of protection and defence of its territory and populations, and more broadly committed to maintain peace and stability.

The aim to collectively defend itself against any potential aggression forms the cornerstone of the North Atlantic Treaty, signed in Washington in 1949 to, I quote: *"safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation of their peoples, founded on the principles of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law, to promote stability and well-being in the North-Atlantic area."*

In the aftermath of the 2nd World War and the beginning of what would later be called the Cold War, the ultimate goal was of course the preservation of peace and security by all means.

Today, almost 70 years later, the principles and the content of the North Atlantic Treaty still stand, should we rewrite the Treaty today, we would see that it is still very valid.

This does not mean that the Alliance has not been able to adapt itself throughout its existence. On the contrary, NATO, like many successful and enduring organizations, has been able to continuously adapt itself to the changing environment with the resources and the resolve to ensure a leading role on the world stage as an international security hub.

Let me therefore briefly illustrate 4 phases in NATO's history:

- o 1949-1991: collective defence (post WWII and Cold War period as I mentioned earlier), defence and deterrence with Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, stating that an attack on one shall be considered an attack on all.
- o 1991-2001: cooperative security with the eastern enlargement but also the development of partnerships (Partnership for Peace, including with Russia).
- o 2001-2014: and then 9/11 happened...(By the way : this was the first and only time in NATO's existence that Article 5 was effectively invoked, on 12 September 2001, the day after the terrorist attacks on the United States.) with a focus on expeditionary operations and crisis management, and a strong emphasis on Afghanistan (non- article 5 operations, fight against terrorism).

- Since 2014: Ukraine crisis - the current phase (4th phase) with the returning emphasis on collective defence, and at the same time projection of stability and cooperative security (360 degrees approach, and the interrelation of crises).

Indeed, in the course of its history, NATO has effectively been able to adapt, with defence and deterrence against State actors and to avoid crises to escalate into conflicts.

This brings me to the question: what has changed in the current phase (4th phase)? What makes NATO's adaptation efforts different today?

The Wales Summit (2014) was the Summit that marked the entrance into this 4th phase (shortly after the Ukraine crisis), but the Warsaw Summit (2016) acknowledged the complexity of the new strategic environment at the scale of the Alliance, which in my opinion, made this Summit historical for NATO.

Before elaborating on the Warsaw Summit decisions, it is important to understand what triggered these decisions.

This brings me to the strategic context and its consequences for NATO.

It is therefore important to understand today's strategic security environment.

The adaptation efforts focus on the transformation of NATO's military capacity, to ensure the Alliance to remain relevant and credible, now and in the foreseeable future, against any potential adversary.

The security environment is evolving at a rapid pace, but several defining trends can be identified:

- The interrelation of crises: every event in a regional crisis can have an impact on another crisis in another region (example of Russian actions in northern Europe that can influence their actions in Syria and their relations with other countries).

- The interrelation of threats: state and non-state actors present in different crises and following a different agenda, or interacting differently according to the crises.

- The variety of threats, sometimes simultaneously present in one region (example of the Balkans, confronted to Russian influence, rise of radical Islam, massive migrations, organized crime).

- The emergence of new operational domains (cyber, but also space and information)

- The blurred transition from peace to crisis (the difference between peace and conflict is clear, but crisis is in a sort of grey zone).

- Finally, the easier access to technology, which tends to increase the potential danger posed by any threat.

Consequently, we have transitioned from a "complicated" world to a "complex" world.

- Complicated meant interacting with many factors, but that we could analyse them, and draw reasonable conclusions to drive our decisions.

- Complex means that there are so many factors interacting with each other that it is impossible to comprehend all the possible outcomes, thereby making surprise more possible, decision-making based on imperfect information more commonplace, and failure an option – thus making resilience a necessity.

These strategic trends, hybrid and cyber threats, state and non-state actors impacting the security environment just below the threshold of conflict coupled with transnational challenges such as organized crime, climate change or economic instability deepen even further the uncertainty and complexity of our security environment.

In this context, it is important to understand that strategic awareness is essential.

NATO's area of operations is centered on the Euro-Atlantic space, but we cannot dismiss the possibility that early signs of a developing crisis may appear outside of this space – in Asia, or in Africa, or elsewhere.

To be able to react accordingly, the Alliance must ensure that it has the capacity to monitor situations across the globe, and the global nature of threats may lead us to consider scenarios that would engage a wider range of partners, out of the Euro-Atlantic area, explore innovative decision-making architectures to face future transnational challenges, and help define the required needs to empower all parties who could play a role in global security.

This is illustrated by the developing partnerships we have with Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Japan, to name a few. Other Partnership initiatives are also ongoing with Mediterranean countries and in the Middle-East region. I have visited some of these countries earlier this year.

This also requires an increased exchange of information with a broad range of actors, and the ability to process tremendous amounts of publically available information – we cannot limit ourselves to the traditional boundaries of intelligence anymore, and a much broader information sharing is not only valid between countries but also with other international organizations or even with the private sector.

Now that we have described the environment and the threats and challenges we face, we must ask ourselves how we can overcome these threats and tackle the challenges?

This brings me to the key question of our today's conversation: how do we adapt?

First, let us now have a closer look at the Warsaw Summit's decisions that form the basis for NATO's adaptation efforts in our current environment.

The main theme of the Warsaw Summit was to build a renewed and robust defence and deterrence posture and to project stability across NATO's borders.

The adaptation of NATO's posture, for which the foundation was laid 2 years earlier at the Wales Summit with the adaptation measures, was thus confirmed and reinforced.

What were these decided measures?

First, in **"defence and deterrence":**

- The deployment of 4 Multinational Battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland forming the Enhanced Forward Presence in the East, and the formation of a Multinational Brigade in Romania forming the Tailored Forward Presence on the Southern flank in the Black Sea region, constitute what we can call a "first wave or line of forces" contributing to deter any potential aggression.

  In this context, the renewed commitment of Canadian and US troops in Europe is a very strong sign (ERI – European Reassurance Initiative) and it is the first time since the end of the Cold War!

- Cyber defence: in the Hybrid environment we cannot imagine anything without Cyber – it is now recognized as an operational domain (together with land, air, sea and space).

- Missile Defence: the NATO ballistic missile defence system has now been declared Initially Operationally Capable - this means that the sea-based US Aegis BMD vessels (based in Spain), the land-based early warning radar in Turkey and the land-based interceptor missile site in Romania are now able to work together under one NATO command and control.

- Nuclear deterrence: a renewed and stronger messaging.

Second, in **"projecting stability":**

- The adaptation of the way we do Partnerships is an important effort to improve the support to the projection of stability.

- When it comes to countering the terror threat, a persistent, flexible and resilient network with partners will be vital to both receive and provide early warning and anticipate security demands.

- As part of NATO's Framework for the South, a Hub for the South at our Joint Force Command in Naples, will as a focal point increase understanding of the challenges in that region, improve the relationship with Partners, both nations and IOs, and share information.

- In particular also a strong focus on NATO-EU: a Joint Declaration identifies key areas for expanding our cooperation, in seven areas: countering hybrid threats, operations, cyber defence, defence capabilities, exercises, increasing maritime security and training and capacity building for our partners.

And to ensure that the Alliance would be able to meet all potential challenges up to its highest agreed level of ambition, the nations also ordered a functional assessment of the NATO Command Structure, which is still in progress.

NATO is the only organization of its kind that has a permanent command and control structure, and the level of ambition defines the maximum level of effort NATO wants to be able to execute, in other words, it is the worst case scenario of a major conflict with a massive commitment of military forces.

What does this mean for NATO's core tasks, and inherently the Alliance's future structures?

First, future structures and capabilities must be robust enough to cope with the requirements of a major all-out conflict, and at the same time flexible enough to better adapt to the rapidly changing security environment.

Second, a bigger focus is put on the responsiveness, and the transition from peacetime (Baseline Activities and Current Operations) to crisis (and to the Maximum Level of Effort when required)

All decisions of the Warsaw Summit support the core tasks but they are mostly short-term oriented. To remain relevant in the future, we must integrate a medium and longer-term perspective.

I would like to quote the famous economist Peter Drucker: "*long-term planning is not about future decisions, but about the future of current decisions*".

Here is where my Command, Allied Command Transformation comes in.

Adaptation is of course the center-piece of my Command Transformation is not an end in itself, we do not provide   transformation.

It is about the transformation of the military capacity of NATO's posture, now and in the foreseeable future.

Our main focus is future warfare development. Of course, we must do this hand in hand with NATO's other strategic command, Allied Command Operations (Mons, Belgium) that is focused on warfighting.

There is a clear supporting/supportive role between the two Commands: Allied Command Operations is in charge of current operations supported by Allied Command Transformation, and Allied Command Transformation of future operations supported by Allied Command Operations.

That is why, "operate and adapt" are key words in this equation.

This brings me to my final part, how do we operate and at the same time prepare for the future, in other words how do we conduct current operations, and make sure that our posture remains relevant for future operations?

NATO must be ready to face today's challenges, while simultaneously adapting to the rapidly changing environment.

The most successful businesses in the civilian world are those that succeed best to do this, and it is not different for NATO. Our aims and objectives may be different, but we share the same environment.

Consequently, the main idea we focus on in the adaptation effort is: improve today, shape tomorrow and bridge the two.

How can we achieve this?

First we produce analyses on the trends of future operations, challenges and technologies. These trends are described by the Strategic Foresight Analysis. Then we analyze the military implications in the Future Framework for Allied Operations. These documents look out to the 30-year horizon (I highly recommend you to read these documents – and we are updating them, SFA this year, and FFAO next year).

(By the way – you can participate with us, by connecting to our Innovation Hub)

But between short term adaptation and long term trends there is a need to identify the mid-term potential breakthroughs and game-changers at the 10 to 15 year mark.

As Peter Drucker said, the purpose is to put our actions in a broader perspective and assess how our actions today anticipate future changes.

To drive our work and we identified 6 areas for which we anticipate important breakthroughs: command and control, logistics and sustainability, exercises and training, partnerships, capabilities and human capital – as pillars of a robust military posture through an incremental approach.

We believe that these 6 areas are the foundation of our military posture, necessary to ensure the appropriate levels of readiness and responsiveness with the right capabilities.

As you can see, partnerships are an important part of our posture because we cannot imagine to address contemporary crises without partners.

The overarching principle that drives our partnership and projecting stability policy is that no nation nor organization holds alone the key to every crisis.

The network that we build requires persistency, because it is key to make information exchange possible and to build trust between the participants.

Many initiatives regarding Partnerships in NATO and outside NATO have been initiated, and this calls for better coordination, streamlining of efforts and harmonizing common objectives with all actors involved.

And finally, **in the adaptation process we must develop innovation.** Innovation is not just about new ideas, but it is foremost about the implementation of new ideas.

As I speak, my headquarters' staff is conducting an internal innovation seminar. To develop its role as a warfare development command, we must foster a culture of innovation. This week's innovation seminar is the first step in the process of teaching innovation to the staff. It is an internal seminar, but the aim is to extend and pollinate innovation initiatives within NATO. It is important to confront these initiatives with the nations, to promote complementarity in new and smart investments, and foremost to maintain interoperability.

There are many citations about innovation, because it is of course a popular word. If you are innovative, it almost automatically means that you should be successful in what you do.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery (the author of the Little Prince) once wrote: *"A pile of rocks ceases to be a pile of rocks the moment one single person contemplates it with the idea of a cathedral in mind"*.

It is indeed first and foremost a mindset, in the process of finding solutions and by applying them, to bring improvement to what you had before. It is not necessarily only about doing things differently, but about identifying and applying those game changers that will keep you ahead of any potential adversary or competitor, to keep the edge and remain relevant.

One of the key issues is to understand the problems properly before trying to find solutions that are most evidently and closest at hand. It is my ambition to make Allied Command Transformation the innovation hub of NATO. In this context, the project to create a Centre of Excellence for Innovation here in the US is of course fully encouraged, and it would also offer the possibility extend and connect with other hubs in Europe.

To conclude.

NATO is working hard on a successful adaptation because the security environment calls for it. The Warsaw Summit acknowledged the complexity of the environment at the scale of the Alliance.

Defence and deterrence, and Projection of Stability form the bedrock of NATO's strategy to prevent crises, and in case of failure to deescalate conflicts and enforce peace.

The Warsaw Summit decisions can only be enduring if the adaptation measures are put in a larger and longer term perspective, to bring coherence

and to leverage a global network of likeminded people and organizations that can help foster innovation through the Alliance.

The principles we use are the same than most innovative companies use in their respective businesses. This should not be a surprise: we have different purposes, but we live in the same environment, complex and unpredictable. Therefore, my Command, Allied Command Transformation, is always very open to share our work with a wide spectrum of actors.

Thank you for your attention. I will be happy to answer your questions.