



**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION  
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**SACT's Opening Remarks at**

**The COTC 2019**

**Norfolk, 11 December 2019**

As delivered

**Général d'armée aérienne André Lanata**



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- General Erhard Buehler, Commander Joint Forces Command, Brunssum,
- Admirals, Generals,
- Chiefs of Transformation,
- Representatives of the European Union, NATO Partner's Nations and governmental organizations,
- Representatives of NATO's Centres of Excellence, Industry and Academia,
- Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests,
- Dear friends,



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Good morning! And, welcome to the Chiefs of Transformation Conference and welcome to Norfolk.

I am very honoured to open this conference, as I see it as a great opportunity to keep abreast in approaching NATO's adaptation.

In fact, this is the only annual venue that gathers the Alliance and Partner Nations' Chiefs of Transformation, senior enlisted leadership, ACT's leadership, together with non-NATO organizations, Industry and Academia.

We want to share perspectives on current challenges and the best ways to adapt our Military Instrument of Power, and our organization and processes to be able to respond to them.

Welcome to all of you!



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The interactions that we will have here, among representatives of different nations, sectors and organizations, including Industry and Academia, are vital to expand the horizon and frame our decisions.

Therefore, let me also warmly welcome representatives from the invited NATO partners' nations.

You are very important to us, we want you to be part of our warfare development agenda, and I also need you to stay connected to it. Your views and ideas will be an added value to all work-strands of Warfare Development.

Today, our gathering testifies the bond that exist among NATO nations and their partners, from both side of the Atlantic.

Despite some political challenges, our military cooperation has proved its efficiency in the course of this 70 NATO's years.



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It is, therefore, important to continue to integrate this cooperation in NATO's adaptation.

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And, along with our cohesion, our ability to adapt was one of the main factors of success of our Alliance.

*"The only constant in life is change"*, Heraclitus said. We can regret it or feel more comfortable in a more stable environment, but this is a fact!

The rate of change in our environment is exponential, and the character of conflict seems to evolve faster than our traditional defence organizations.

So, to adapt at the speed of relevance is an imperative for us! But, we also have to make our adaptation coherently. While we develop our capabilities individually, we have to ensure it is consistent, always focusing on our ability to operate together.



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One way to ensure that coherence is to identify our priorities, continuously improve our structures and organization, and share our perspectives on risks and opportunities.

Once we identify opportunities, we should exchange innovative ideas and best practices, and develop them and explore them through common projects and exercises.

Fortunately, we are not at the beginning. There are already a lot of efforts being done by all 29 Nations and with our partners, and we need to implement them and do that as fast as possible for the common good.

I don't intend to develop in details all that we are doing in ACT, as Admiral Bennett, our COS, will present it to you briefly.

Instead, I want to focus on two efforts, part of our common priorities, which will allow NATO to better orientate and better facilitate its efforts towards adaptation.



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So, I will elaborate shortly on how we, in ACT, approached describing a perspective of future warfighting (through NWCC), and what we do in facilitating innovation in the Alliance.

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The main driver of change for the Alliance is its strategic environment, which, as you know, is growing steadily more complex, unpredictable and dynamic.

Among the factors that characterize our strategic environment the most prominent are, evidently, terrorism and strategic competitions, particularly with an assertive Russia.

It is also a growing instability at our borders, an issue that consumes our forces, which have to be ready to respond to threats to sustain these lasting engagements and, simultaneously, adapt themselves. Indeed, we face challenging times!



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This environment is today more complex, with following characteristics:

- Blurred lines between peace, crisis and war, further complicated by the increasing difficulty in detecting and attributing hostile actions,
- Conflict extending into new domains such as Cyber, Space or Information sphere,
- Effects combining in several domains,
- The multiplication of actors in theatre (regular forces, armed militia, civilian populations, NGOs, etc.
- The acceleration of time and of tempo, especially in the infosphere, which directly influences the outcome of a crisis today, and, tomorrow, into the kinetic realm with hypersonic weapons,
- And lastly, the gradual deletion of our traditional security landmarks induced by the revision of the international order established immediately after the World War II, including our multilateral framework, and rules-based systems.





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I also expect further development of hybrid scenarios in which information warfare and cyber effects will be combined to circumvent our superiority using new technologies, which are now available to everybody.

By the way, these challenges are relevant for NATO, but they are also relevant for all of us sitting in this room.

In our interconnected world, we all share this challenging environment in one way or another, be it as a civil or military organization, a nation, a company or an individual.

To ensure that NATO's military instrument of power can stay ahead of evolving threats in this environment, it is an imperative for us to develop a number of indispensable attributes in our military instrument.



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In order to prevail, our military instrument will need to:

- Better understand and anticipate in order to “**out-think**” potential competitors;
- Build our culture of persistent readiness and ethos to “**out-excel**” and innovate;
- Persistently operate across a single, but multi-domain battlespace to “**out-fight**” any adversary;
- Ensure sustainability and resilience to “**out-last**” and prevail in contested or denied physical or non-physical environments;
- Capitalize on strengths to build advantage by “**out-partnering**” and improving connectivity and interoperability with Alliance instruments of power and other actors;
- And, finally, rapidly generate cross-domain military options.

To conceptualize these priority areas properly, and align development of 29 different military instruments of power to a common direction, we need a common, allied perspective.



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And, my intent is to ensure it by development of **the NATO Warfighting Capstone Concept**.

NWCC will be a threat-informed risk- and opportunity based military concept that will envision a 20-year horizon warfighting perspective.

The Concept will support Allies' and NATO Military Authorities collective understanding of what is necessary to fight and win through tomorrow.

NWCC will, by focusing on trends driving the evolving character of warfare, allow NATO to establish a common warfare development vision in order to take the initiative to develop its military instrument.

And, it is not only a question of producing a new NATO paper. I want to produce not only a 20 years' horizon vision, but also to allow us to identify and launch immediate actions that will ensure we are ready and on time to respond to the challenges of tomorrow.



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Indeed, my intention is to provide and initiate very concrete capability and concept development actions in order to reach our goals.

Development of this Concept is one of ACT's major efforts this year. By doing this, we intend to develop a warfare development strategy to inform and guide our allied capability development.

And we, at ACT, being the lead of its development, would like to integrate the various NATO, national, and multinational perspectives in one model, by incorporating them into our NWCC development efforts.

National representatives have already been included in the workshops we organized, and we are doing our best to incorporate all relevant perspectives and proposals into the document. This Conference will allow us to discuss and focus even more on the content of the Concept. Your views are essential.



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I also have to say I was pleased to note that, in the London's Meeting Declaration, the Secretary General was invited to present to Foreign Ministers a Council-agreed proposal for a forward-looking reflection process under his auspices, drawing on relevant expertise, to further strengthen NATO's political dimension including consultation.

I humbly believe that NWCC could be one of the military contribution to this political reflection.

Regarding the timeline, we plan to have an Initial NWCC in May 2020, and the Final Concept at the beginning of 2021.

Along with developing the Concept that will consolidate our efforts in preparing our military instrument of power for future challenges, we, in ACT, recognized the need to better facilitate adaptation by improving, at the same time, our capability development processes.



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This is why in Allied Command Transformation, we are putting a lot of efforts to facilitate NATO's adaptation through an open **innovation approach**, for example.

One of our breakout sessions is dedicated to the topic of innovation and disruptive technologies. We want you (COTs) to understand what is at stake and, and we want to assure you that your nations can benefit from ACT and other Nations' initiatives.

Beside Nations' efforts, ACT's mission regarding innovation is, in my mind, to provide 3 fundamental contributions to the Alliance's efforts to keep its edge:

- First, to inform the NATO's strategic level on the implications of technological innovation, make them better understand vulnerabilities and opportunities, but also priorities and the different dimensions of the strategic challenges we are facing. So, first, we need to understand!



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- Second, to apply innovation in our capability development and warfare development efforts in order to deliver better, faster, and, expectedly, cheaper capabilities. This goes in line with our efforts to optimize the Common Funded Capability process.
- And, finally, be one of the leading innovation agent for the Alliance, notably by facilitating the adoption of innovative practices within NATO and the nations.

To support these missions, I have decided to reinvigorate our innovation endeavour in the HQ SACT.

Our main ambition is to create the conditions that will allow innovation to flourish, but also make sure that it constantly improves our capabilities and the way we operate collectively.

In other words, my goal in promoting innovation is to implement novel solutions that deliver value to the Alliance.



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But, I want to emphasize one thing - innovation is not only question of technology. It may sound provocative, but I think that the technology itself is of secondary importance.

It is because the majority of technologies is widely available, and instead of focusing on developing technology, our challenge is to adequately think our military strategy and, at the same time think adaptation.

It is, therefore, first the question of the use of these technological opportunities. And, as we explore through NWCC how to adapt our military strategy, it is also a question of adaptation.

This includes adaptation of our procedures, our capability development and, most importantly, our agility.





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To illustrate this, I want to present to you what we, in ACT, have done since last year, to facilitate innovation in NATO.

- ACT had an important role in developing, together with our colleagues from the IS ESC division, the roadmap on Emerging and Disruptive Technologies, which has been agreed last week in London during the Leaders' meeting.

This roadmap shows not only political willing towards the use of new technologies in the Alliance, but will also open many areas that will take into considerations our (ACT's) recommendations.

- We took the ACT innovation hub to the next step by giving it a “lab” capability, making it able to rapidly prototype and to offer a productive environment for final users and solution providers to interact and design “user-centric” solutions.



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In this endeavour, ACT is leveraging its geographic location on US soil to benefit from the exceptional innovative tissue we find here. For example, from the lessons learned in the US DoD open innovation Labs and USAF's software factories, especially the "Kessel Run" initiative.

- We are adapting our structure to be better suited to work with EDT, by establishing the Innovation Branch, with a Data section and a Disruptive Technology Policy section.
- After more than a year of existence, our EDT roadmap, which should not to be confused with the political roadmap approved last week at the strategic level.

Our Roadmap has a lot going on and covers now every "cluster" of technology, including Data Science, Artificial Intelligence, Autonomy, Hypersonic Technology, Directed Energy Weapons, Biotechnologies, Human Enhancement and Quantum Technologies.



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- We delivered *the Information Environment Assessment* tool, experimented during Trident Juncture 2018, to SHAPE and NATO HQ. Declared IOC last June, we will continue to improve this capability towards FOC in 2022.
- As a reminder, this tool, by using Artificial Intelligence on Big Data, intends to profile the information environment in real time in order to advise operational and senior political leaders about how NATO messaging is received.
- We are also studying the art of the possible in Quantum sensing for underwater detection and will fund a demonstration on underwater quantum communication, next year at the Centre for Maritime Research and Experimentation (CMRE).
- Lastly, we openly shared some of NATO's problem statements and use cases with industry and academia through two innovation challenges in the 12 past months.



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As you can see, we are steadily building conditions for innovation to become our everyday reality.

It is not for the sake of producing something new, it is to ensure the best conditions for NATO's adaptation! And, I know that a lot have been done, at the same time, everywhere in your nations.

Today, we want to share our visions, perspectives and best practices with you during this conference on innovation and disruptive technologies and to identify possible common efforts.

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With this conference, we want to continue to demonstrate our commitment to innovative adaptation and interoperability as crucial for our warfare development.

For all these reasons, the title of this year's Conference is "NATO Warfare Development: Innovation & Interoperability, Winning Tomorrow's War Today"



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I didn't have time to elaborate other important topics, such as NDPP, the optimization of the work with COEs, interoperability or NCS Adaptation, to mention few of them. But, we will include them in our discussions during these two days.

I want to encourage you to use “innovative thinking” in all breakout sessions, discussing topics on our agenda: NWCC, interoperability as a mindset, counter hybrid warfare and terrorism, and human security.

I am sure you will agree with me: only by acting together, in a “one NATO” approach will we be able to tackle the challenges we face, today and will face tomorrow.

We need you, the Chiefs of Transformation, NATO's Partners, Senior Enlisted Leaders, representatives from Industry and Academia, and young disruptors to help us define what our future focus on capabilities will be.



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I'm looking forward to getting actionable outcomes from the breakout sessions, in a spirit of openness, connectedness and close collaboration.

Thank you for your attention and wish you all fruitful discussions.