



NATO Transformation Seminar 2017 (NTS 17)

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03 March 2017

About the NATO Transformation Seminar

Allied Command Transformation (ACT), in cooperation with the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), will host the NATO Transformation Seminar (NTS) in Budapest, Hungary, from 21-23 March 2017. Bringing together NATO's leadership and European and North American thought leaders, academics, and industry representatives, NTS represents an opportunity to consider the Alliance's transformation agenda. This comes at a time when implementation of the 2016 Warsaw Summit is underway and initial reflection on transformation initiatives for the next gathering of NATO head of states and governments has already begun, against a backdrop of continuing geo-strategic upheaval.

Following the opening session, the seminar is structured around four panels designed to set the conditions for effective discourse on innovation and adaptation. The first panel on the Future Security Environment will underscore the complexity of the challenges facing the Alliance. Projecting Stability, the theme of the second panel, will touch upon NATO's role in fighting international terrorism, the increasing value of partnerships, and the way ahead in defence capacity building. The third panel will explore the importance of Deterrence and Defence and begin to chart a path forward based on the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) and recent measures NATO took to improve security from a 360 perspective with current emphasis to the East and South. The final panel will bring together the political-military implications and stress the importance of the Euro-Atlantic relationship.

Experienced moderators will guide the discussions in each session, fostering debate among the panellists and eliciting commentary from the audience of decision-makers, senior military officers and international thought leaders. Panellists themselves are recognised civilian and military leaders as well as renowned international experts from the analytical community. They will bring a wealth of knowledge and practical understanding to the discussion, aiming to introduce novel ideas and bring fresh thinking to all of the four panels.

Opening Session

The opening session, a moderated discussion led by IISS Senior Fellow Nick Childs, will serve to underline the seminal character and critical timing of NTS 2017 for NATO transformation. For the Alliance, the ability to adapt and to operate are closely linked. The two core themes that emerged from the 2016 Warsaw Summit were projecting stability and deterrence and defence. These themes support NATO's three core tasks—collective defence, crisis management, and cooperative security.

Panel 1: Future Security Environment

Bringing together experts on international terrorism, strategic understanding, and capabilities-based planning, the purpose of this panel is to explore the need to change and adapt as NATO addresses the increasing complexity in the international security environment that continues to challenge the Alliance across the spectrum of its three core tasks. Against a backdrop of interrelated crises this panel will highlight the need to take decisions today to prepare for tomorrow. NATO will need to continue to prepare forces and provide capabilities that give the Alliance the ability to operate across the continuum of peacetime, crisis and conflict. A persistent federated approach, when and where appropriate, can assist NATO with the necessary innovation and adaptation because it can help deliver a mind-set that stresses the characteristics of agility, flexibility and resilience. Specifically, persistence throughout the full spectrum of peacetime, crisis, and conflict will enhance the Alliance's ability to maintain situational awareness. In an environment in which available resources will continue to be constrained, a persistent federated approach, where appropriate, may provide nations with more options to better coordinate both military and political means.

- What can NATO do to foster effective use of security and defence resources that are constrained and in constant demand?
- How does NATO improve its situational awareness, agility, and flexibility as it continues to innovate, operate and adapt?
- In which ways can nations better connect with the NATO Command Structure and rebuild links that can help to explore and fill capability gaps, evaluate missions and prepare for the future?
- How can NATO adapt defence planning, capacity building, and counter terrorism instruments in a way that they strengthen NATO's ability to project stability?

Panel 2: Projecting Stability

Instability and conflict beyond NATO's territory directly affects Alliance members. Drawing on perspectives such as international organisations, crises management, and counter-terrorism, the panel may wish to consider whether innovative approaches to partnerships can be potential game changers in dealing with international crisis and conflict, in particular where partners outside the Alliance may provide substantive capacity in supporting NATO's core tasks and vice versa. Projecting stability reaches beyond the question of partnerships and should be seen as complementary to deterrence and defence.

- How can NATO improve its approach to partnership, in the context of projecting stability?
- Looking beyond NATO, what steps can be taken to optimise and synchronise contributions from other international organisations in support of NATO's core tasks and vice-versa?
- How could NATO's approach to defence capacity building evolve to provide greater utility?
- Which steps could be taken to strengthen NATO's contribution to the fight against international terrorism, including in terms of defence and operational planning?
- Is Counter-Terrorism primarily a subset of Projecting Stability or does it need to be considered across the three core tasks?
- What does NATO need to do to make sure its capacity to generate knowledge and understanding evolves in line with the challenges it faces beyond its own borders?
- How can NATO's partner tools be adapted to assist nations in the management of migration flows and border policing?

Panel 3: Deterrence and Defence

NATO achieves a deterrent effect when it brings together resilience, capabilities, and the strategic communications tools that signal resolve and intent. Deterrence is established across the spectrum of conventional forces, missile defence, and nuclear forces. Alliance unity and cohesion are of overriding importance for deterrence and defence and contribute to making NATO a resilient actor with capacities that span the Alliance. Moreover, NATO as an alliance is supported by nations that have range, depth and experience in civil emergency response, stability policing and long-term national sustainment. Recently, NATO has responded to a complex and changing security environment by strengthening its deterrence and defence posture, including a stance vis-à-vis Russia that combines strength with dialogue and consultation. NATO must invest in innovation and continue to develop capable and deployable forces that are connected and logistically sustainable. Like projecting stability, deterrence and defence requires a 360 degree approach. Therefore, the panel, with diverse perspectives rooted in practical application, will reflect on the further evolution of abilities and capabilities that NATO may require to be able to deter and defend against challenges to its defence and security wherever they arise.

- What does NATO have to do to ensure that its efforts to strengthen deterrence and defence posture are sustainable and flexible?
- Which steps can NATO initiate to make sure that both deterrence and dialogue with Russia are effective?
- By adopting a 360 degree perspective NATO looks beyond operations. What are the most important capabilities NATO should invest in as it prepares for the unpredictable nature of the future security environment?

Panel 4: Political-Military Implications

NATO's ongoing adaptation to immediate and shifting international pressures together with its proactive long-term adaptation impose significant burdens on Allied resources and structures. Drawing on experts on defence investment, operations, and Alliance unity of effort, the panel will offer NTS 17 participants the opportunity to debate the political implications and identify potential building-blocks for future action. The benefits of Europe and North America working together on operations and adaptation are clear. Making sure that the value of the transatlantic bond is recognised, maintained and strengthened further will require continuous effort and innovation. As NATO works with the new US administration, clear political goals and objectives are vital to guide NATO's transformation forward.

- Which are the key steps to encourage NATO nations to connect and synchronise on a day-to-day basis?
- Which political goals and objectives should be highlighted to innovate and adapt—always with the goal of transforming our forces so they are capable of fulfilling the goals and mission of the Alliance?
- Which measures can be taken to further strengthen Alliance cohesion?

NTS 2017 White Paper

Following the deliberations at the NATO Transformation Seminar 2017, Allied Command Transformation, in cooperation with the IISS, will produce a White Paper, drawing together the key takeaways and conclusions of the seminar.