



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

**SACT's REMARKS to
MUNICH SECURITY CONFERENCE**

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ROUND TABLE

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As prepared



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INTRODUCTION

Ministers,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is no exaggeration to say that the Euro-Atlantic area is living an era of unprecedented instability, not seen since the end of the Cold War.

However rather than fostering potential divisions between Allies, I believe that this Summit will present a clear and visible expression of unity and solidarity.

Because, instead of focusing on possible weaknesses or shortfalls, the Alliance has a unique opportunity to reaffirm its many strengths and offer a tangible foundation on which it can base its vision for the future security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area.

As one of NATO's two strategic military commanders, I would begin by making two observations.

First, regarding the multiplicity and complexity of threats, it may be necessary to examine whether the Alliance's ability to tackle these threats has been reduced over the years by what may have been excessive cuts to defence budgets in many nations.

It is also clear that while we were concentrating our efforts on expeditionary issues, our political and technological edge was coming under increasing challenge.

In reality, we knew that we would likely be confronted with well-integrated and sophisticated anti-access, area denial weapon



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systems and furthermore that our opponents would attempt to use hybrid strategies. But we may have failed to prepare ourselves fully by taking the necessary steps to maintain our dominance.

Now however, let us be clear: A2AD can already be defeated, even more so with the ongoing efforts to develop a system of systems approach for our military capacity.

Hybrid strategies can also be countered, especially through the strengthening of our Partnership with the EU.

Indeed, and this is my second observation, we should not overlook the entirety of Alliance strengths, drawn from the combined contributions of 28 Allies, -and we should not forget - 41 Partner countries, as well as many other organizations, notably the EU.

When we address the question of defence and deterrence, we often focus excessively on the effective implementation of the tasks initiated in Wales. Now these tasks obviously highlight areas of necessary improvements and I can assure you that much has been done to improve NATO's responsiveness and flexibility through the Readiness Action Plan.

But we should keep in mind that this Plan is only a first step in NATO's adaptation to the new security environment since it essentially covers only Response Forces.

NATO's military strength is larger than that, larger than all the forces declared by Nations to NATO, since it can aggregate all the conventional and missile defence forces of the 28 Allies.

This collective strength is also true in the nuclear domain, since even independent strategic forces, such as those of France and



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Great Britain, have a specific role to play and contribute to the global deterrence of the Alliance.

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Let me then go further. Warsaw is the opportunity to highlight how NATO can capitalize on the combined strengths of 28 Nations and their ability to innovate and maintain a political, military and technological edge.

Nowhere else in the world is there such a powerful concentration of Industry and such a level of investment in Research and Development. Nowhere in the world do we find such a concentration of all the varied expertise that can be brought together to generate innovation.

It is then our political and military responsibility to not only encourage this incubator of talents by providing a sufficient level of resources but also to deliberately engage the Alliance in the implementation of new and creative ideas which will contribute to the security and stability of the Euro-Atlantic area.

It calls for a new mindset.

We have to foster dynamic change instead of reactive adaptation. We have to foster experimentation in all our activities.

This is a shift that may drive the future of the Alliance in many domains, such as its central command and control, how we define and deliver all its capabilities, how we train and exercise our forces or educate our people.

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And I believe that innovation can become the common driver of a closer cooperation – beyond mere coordination – with the European Union, while strengthening the transatlantic bond.

The two organizations could start on an equal footing to design and invest coherently in future defence and security capabilities and concepts.

Especially in the current hybrid context, this focus on innovation could define new ways to prevent, recover and respond to any kind of crisis.

- **In terms of Innovation:**

NATO and EU can start designing together the capacity which will underpin the future Euro-Atlantic posture of our Nations. In my view, there are six areas of efforts: Command and Control, Logistics and Sustainability, Collective training and exercises, Partnerships, Capabilities, and Human Capital.

- **Innovation to enhance our ability to anticipate:**

NATO and the EU can build the ways and means for a continuous and broad awareness. They can design future communication systems with an inherent interoperability in order to share approved information when needed. In addition, both organizations can implement new kind of common or linked exercises, from the strategic down to the tactical level. There are some first positive examples (Visegrad Battle Group Certification exercise linked with Trident Juncture 15, EU participating in Cyber Coalition), but we need to be more ambitious.



- **Innovation to improve our collective and shared resilience:**

Both NATO and the EU, as well as their member states acknowledge the need to become more resilient to hybrid attack.

The interdependency between NATO and EU innovation in many domains could amplify this resilience. Military resilience relies heavily on the civil and private sectors. Similarly, societies depend on free trade, which in turn relies on the protection of military forces.

- **Innovation to enhance the coordination of our responses:**

NATO and EU could also find mutually beneficial innovative approaches to increase the effects of their respective responsibilities.

For instance, as NATO is improving the responsiveness of its forces, the EU's normative role could lift many restrictions affecting the transport of equipment and goods across the borders of Member States.

Conclusion:

Let me conclude by repeating, once more, that the upcoming Summit gives NATO Nations the opportunity to reaffirm the Alliance's credibility and its many strengths.

The Alliance has succeeded in dealing with the challenges its members faced throughout history. NATO will succeed once again.

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It is also a great opportunity to leverage this fertile ground for innovation to shape the future Alliance and help it offset any potential opponent threatening the security of the Euro-Atlantic area.

We owe it to the people of Europe and to those who fought so hard, not so long ago, to guarantee their safety, their values, and their rights.

Thank you for your attention.