



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

SACT's REMARKS to

All Hands

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Général d'armée aérienne Denis MERCIER



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Generals, Admirals, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear all,

Good afternoon,

Bonjour à vous tous,

It is again a great pleasure for me to meet you all in person for this first All Hands after the summer break. I hope you all had an excellent and replenishing leave, the batteries are charged again and I'm confident you're all ready to take up the new challenges that lay ahead of us.

I especially also want to wish a very warm welcome to the many newly arrived staff members! Your summer break was obviously, or at least partially, spent on moving in to the Hampton Roads area, with your families. I hope that you were all able to get settled and I encourage you and your families to fully enjoy your stay in beautiful Virginia!

Your respective nations assigned you to our unique headquarters, the only of its kind within NATO located in the USA, where you will get the opportunity to contribute to the shaping and continuous adaptation of the Alliance's posture. Together with the staff already in place, as one team and building on the legacy of your predecessors, I'm confident that your good work here and now, will impact tomorrow's successes.



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There is indeed an enormous amount of work to do, related to a huge adaptation of the Alliance, decided at Warsaw - and we ACT, will play a critical role in the continuous transformation of NATO.

So, firstly I would like to share with you my view on where we stand today – our “current context”.

After more than a decade of mainly expeditionary operations, the Alliance is adapting its defence and deterrence posture. The right posture – based on the right mix of conventional, nuclear and missile-defence forces, at the right level of readiness - is a fundamental factor of our responsiveness.

This renewed mix of forces has to be able to simultaneously fulfil NATO’s 3 core tasks: Collective Defence, Crisis Management and Cooperative Security.

The security environment has dramatically changed. There is an arc of insecurity and instability along NATO’s periphery and beyond. The Alliance faces security challenges and threats, from the East, from the South, and from the North, by state and non-state actors. Regional conflicts have degenerated into humanitarian disasters, with indiscriminate violence on civilians leading to massive migrations, but also threatening or disrupting critical infrastructures and in some cases even threatening stable and reliable energy supply.



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Consequently threats and opportunities have also become more diverse, in multiple domains, and comprise physical, virtual and psychological dimensions. Crises have become interrelated, we cannot imagine a crisis in one region not impacting the actions of the same actors in another region.

To cope with this new security environment initial decisions were made at the Wales Summit in 2014. The most tangible decision (and also the most symbolic one) was the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) – meant to enhance responsiveness at 360*, but essentially reactive in nature and generated by an enhancement of the NATO Response Force (NRF).

However, further adaptation is needed. Responsiveness will not only result from the enhancement of the NRF. We need to look at the whole range of military capabilities on which NATO's posture is based as well.

Responsiveness will result from decision making processes, top-down from the highest political level to the tactical level, our ability to deploy and sustain forces, increase interoperability through training and exercises, leverage partnerships with a wide range of actors, invest in the right capabilities and develop our human capital (*6 Focus Areas that drive the vision we develop to bolster NATO's posture readiness and responsiveness*).



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How do we implement these areas?

This brings me to my second point, the outcomes of the Warsaw Summit.

Indeed, the new security environment triggered the Alliance to adapt to the new security challenges, whilst the Strategic Concept 2010 remains valid.

The main theme of the Warsaw Summit was the building of a renewed and robust defence and deterrence posture and the projection of stability across NATO's borders. Decisions have been taken to expand our efforts to reinforce our protection against a full range of threats thus consolidating the Alliance's centre of gravity, its cohesion and unity.

A significant number of post Summit tasks have been assigned to the NATO Military Authorities (NMAs) - the Military Committee (MC), and the two Strategic Commanders - and I'm confident we will be able to execute these tasks in a timely and coherent way.

This brings me to my third point, what is the role of ACT in this context?

We are often asked the same question: what is transformation?

Transformation is not an end in itself. What do we transform? ACT is the architect of the Alliance's military capacity that is needed to conduct the current operations (short term), but also to be ready in the future (medium and long term) to keep the edge against any adversary. To do so, we will

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assess and define the capabilities, concepts, doctrines, exercises and partnerships we will need, to cope with future conflicts, and to bridge the needs of tomorrow with what we do today.

In a national context, within this scope of responsibilities, we would be a Joint Warfare Command, so consider we are NATO's Strategic Warfare Command, developing a longer term and as much as we can an innovative perspective, for the development of NATO's renewed posture.

In the past months, we have worked hard on the vision we intend to promote consequently with the long term adaptation decided in Warsaw.

We will use a Campaign Plan and a new Battle Rhythm to develop an engagement plan and to deliver these outcomes. Keeping in mind that the outcome of our work is not transformation, but NATO's military capacity to face today's and tomorrow's challenges and to keep the edge!

This brings me to my last point, what do I expect from you?

First, you do not work for me or for the Command Group, but we work together.

ACT's mission to lead the Alliance's transformation can only be accomplished by adopting a spirit of "thinking differently". We all have a rich background and reach back through experience, but we also worked in a well-defined framework regulated by policies, doctrines, rules and



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regulations. This is the time and place in ACT to challenge the way we have always done things in the past, by thinking “out of the box” and not fear the consequences of a changing environment, but to use them as opportunities for innovation. We must open our mind-set, and reach out to learn about new technologies and concepts that will change the way we will conduct warfare in the future. Do not constrain yourself, rather propose ideas, always think “future”, and think at a strategic level.

Cross-functional work will be essential, so build up your network, be curious and learn from other staff members!

We must always work in a constructive way, so no frictions and fights among us and with other NATO organizations, and when we reach out, ACT must speak with one voice.

It's also important to think resources. We have resources constraints. We must ensure we identify to the maximum extent possible the resources, (finances and human capital) associated to each of our projects with the highest level of transparency.

This is the condition for our credibility and the attribution of the right level of these resources in the future.

Finally, welfare is on my top priorities. We must try to work in pleasant conditions and as you surely heard me say before: “it's not forbidden to work in a good mood” or even to have fun at work! Stay positive and

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confident, and be assured that our work is highly appreciated and each and every one of you has a role to play in it!