



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

**SACT's remarks to UN ambassadors and military
advisors from NATO countries**

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Général d'armée aérienne Denis MERCIER

Introduction

Ambassadors,

Generals, Admirals,

- I'm very happy to be here this morning to exchange some thoughts with you on how NATO as an Alliance is adapting to a complex and rapidly changing security environment.
- The political and military vocation of NATO, as stated in the 1949 Washington treaty, is to ***“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.”***
- Today, almost 70 years later, the principles and the content of the North Atlantic Treaty still stand, and if you haven't, **I encourage you to read it**, because it is short, and yet remarkably written, to the point that **should we rewrite the Treaty today, we would probably not change a single word.**
- **This does not mean that the Alliance has not been able to adapt itself throughout its existence.**
- Let me therefore briefly illustrate **4 phases in NATO's history:**
 - **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.
 - **1991-2001: cooperative security** with the eastern enlargement but also the development of partnerships (Partnership for Peace, including with Russia).

- **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), and NATO focused on **expeditionary operations and crisis management**, with a strong emphasis on Afghanistan (non- article 5 operations, fight against terrorism).
 - **Since 2014:** Ukraine crisis - **the current 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).
- This brief history illustrates the different focus and purposes of the Alliance, in reaction to a changing environment. **And to stay relevant, NATO has to keep adapting.**
 - **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) symbolizes the beginning of this 4th phase (shortly after the Ukraine crisis) of NATO history. **But the Warsaw Summit (2016) is the one that really acknowledged the complexity of the new strategic environment** and led to critical decisions for NATO adaptation. **In my opinion, Warsaw was a historical summit.**
 - Before elaborating on the Warsaw Summit outcomes, it is important to **understand what triggered these decisions.** And the starting point is to have a **proper understanding of today's security environment.**

- This 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 environment)
 - **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 (Russia, China, non-state actors).
- **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, coupled with transnational challenges such as organized crime, climate change or economic instability deepen even further the uncertainty and complexity of our security environment.
- **These are the challenges we face. So what do we do to overcome them? In other words, how do we adapt NATO to our current environment?**
- 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.**
- What we call projecting stability is **the development of actions to prevent a crisis, and when necessary, the ability to intervene** – not necessarily in our “natural” area of operations – **before it degenerates and reaches our borders.**
- The adaptation of NATO's posture, for which the foundation was laid 2 years earlier at the Wales Summit, was confirmed and reinforced.
- Several measures were decided in Warsaw. I'll describe the most important ones.
- First, in **“defence and deterrence”**:

- The deployment of 4 Multinational Battlegroups in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland forming the **Enhanced Forward Presence** in the North-East, and the formation of a **Tailored Forward Presence** in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, 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, 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.
- **Nuclear deterrence: a renewed and stronger messaging,** which clearly states that **any use of any kind of nuclear weapon by any adversary** would **“change the nature of warfare.”**

- 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.
 - The creation of a **Hub for the South**, to increase the understanding of the challenges in the Mediterranean region, and to improve the relationship with Partners, both nations and IOs.
 - A stronger focus to increase our relationship with other International Organizations.

- In particular, also a **strong focus on NATO-EU**: a Joint Declaration identifies key areas for expanding our cooperation, in seven areas: hybrid threats, operations, cyber defence, defence capabilities, exercises, maritime security, and capacity building for our partners.
 - Other international organizations were also associated to the Summit, the UN, of course, but also the African Union.
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- 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 the 2 strategic commands to perform a **functional assessment of the NATO Command Structure**, which stated that our structure was only partially fit for purpose to conduct all NATO's core tasks.
 - Subsequently, the nations ordered to initiate a functional adaptation, whose conclusions are currently in the approval process at the political level.
 - This, in a nutshell, is where we are today regarding the adaptation of NATO as a whole. **In this picture, my command, Allied Command Transformation, will be adapting as well** to integrate new functions in coherence with the NCS adaptation and the decisions of the Warsaw Summit.
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- This brings me to my second point: why am I addressing you, here, today?
 - And the short answer is that **I am convinced that the role played by Allied Command Transformation in this complex environment goes beyond the walls of our nations and of our Alliance.**

- The NCS Adaptation has both strategic commands refocusing on their core purpose. Allied Command Operations is in charge of warfighting – conducting today’s operations. Allied Command Transformation is in charge of Warfare Development – preparing future operations.
- I will expand on ACT’s role to describe what it entails.
- We use the term “warfare development” to describe ACT’s purpose and mission, which is not optional nor a novelty, but instead a vital function that keeps the NCS fit for purpose, now and into the future.
- Warfare development is the actions we take to adapt our military capacity to the security environment and to improve responsiveness, now and in the foreseeable future. It supports the three core tasks of the Alliance.
- Warfare development starts with examining the outlook on future threats, scenarios, and technological game-changers. It defines trends on how these evolutions could challenge NATO’s superiority, but also identifies opportunities to strengthen our own forces. It guides the development of new concepts and capabilities to keep pace with the changes in our strategic environment.
- Based on this necessary insight, it leads the development and integration of capabilities that are unique to the Alliance: command and control, communications, intelligence and surveillance, and ballistic missile defence, to name just a few. These capabilities must also be interoperable from the onset, and warfare development is about experimenting and testing, to ensure our capabilities will be ready when called upon.
- Warfare development also contributes to the development of our forces with a focus on human capital, through the implementation of relevant

doctrines, the identification of lessons from operations and exercises, and the education and training of our leaders, to ensure that they remain ready to face any challenge.

- Finally, in a world where no organization has the capacity to solve and prevent all crises by itself, warfare development also supports partnership initiatives in the broad framework of the Alliance's projecting stability and counter-terrorism activities.
 - This is an ambitious portfolio. Which is why **we are also enhancing our efforts to coordinate our actions with partners nations and other international organizations.**
 - **And the UN is a part of this effort.** In the domains of strategic foresight, lessons learned, interoperability and standards, to name just a few, there is work that we could put in common, as NATO is already doing with the EU.
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- **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.

- But to achieve these objectives in a complex environment, we **must be able to operate and adapt at the same time.**
- 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.**
- **And if you are interested in what we do, Norfolk is just a couple of hours from here. I invite you to come visit us and discover what we do in more details.**
- I am looking forward to hear your thoughts.

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