

United Nations, New-York

Monday, March the 3rd from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

**Topic;** *'Integrating a Gender Perspective in Military Operations; with a focus on education and training* **Duration;** 10' to 15'

*Followed by a Panel that will be moderated by Mari Skaare, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, comprising*

Ladies and gentlemen;

It is a great pleasure for me to be here in New York City, where so many symbols express the universal dream of achieving liberty and peace. I would like to thank His Excellency Sebastiano Cardi, Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN, for giving at the opportunity to address this audience today; this is a welcome manifestation of the Collaborative Approach that underpins our common effort to pursue greater synergy and harmonization in the international peacebuilding effort.

[NATO-UN Cooperation]

NATO-UN cooperation has been a fruitful partnership that needs to be continually nurtured by an informative dialogue, on lessons learned, so we can continue to improve mutual knowledge on modes of operation, culture and perspectives. It is important that we promote a mutual awareness that allows our respective organizations to interact seamlessly when engaged together in theatre, which is more and more the case. This means knowing about each other's priorities and methods, as well as our respective strengths and limitations. Our common goal here must be the unity of effort.

A prime example of this unity is NATO's Secretary General reporting regularly to the UN Secretary General on progress in NATO-led operations, and on other key decisions of the North Atlantic Council in the area of crisis management, in the fight against terrorism, but as well of NATO's partnerships. I can also mention the close relationship that exists between

the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General<sup>1</sup>, the ISAF commander and the NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan.

A tangible sign that unites both our organisations and illustrates our commitment to UNSCR 1325 is your appointment Mrs Mari Skaare, two years ago, as the first NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security.

In today's world, such partnership is not a matter of choice – it is a necessity for the international community. **The UN-NATO Declaration of September 2008, the NATO Strategic Concept in 2010 and the Chicago Summit declaration in 2012, make clear that we must continue to strengthen the political dialogue and practical cooperation between our two organisations.**

Cooperation in crisis management and peace keeping operations between the UN and NATO, and with other important stakeholders such as the European Union, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the African Union is not new, but it is to grow in importance.

As a rule, NATO places itself within a broad framework for conflict resolution and crisis management, stemming directly from the UN approach in its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

NATO enjoys valuable logistical, organizational, technical and human capabilities which are ready to be deployed when and where it is needed, but I must stress that NATO's forces primary mission is to provide security to **people**, and protect all those who support **and assist them**.

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<sup>1</sup> Mr. Jan Kubiš, Slovak; served as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Slovakia from 2006 to 2009, as Chairman of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from 2007 to 2008, and as Secretary-General of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) from 1999 to 2005. Mr. Kubiš prior assignments include serving as the European Union's Special Representative for Central Asia with the office in Brussels and as the Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office of OSCE for Central Asia.

In line with this principle, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security fully applies to NATO's objectives for enhancing security and stability.

#### [ACT-UNSC RESOLUTION 1325]

Resolution 1325, which was adopted in October 2000 by the United Nation Security Council, later followed by six additional related Resolutions, presented us with one of the most thought-provoking questions in the history of warfare: the place and role of women in conflicts.

This is relevant and serious question indeed. The annual report of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan published last month, has sadly reminded us that the number of women's deaths and injuries, associated with conflict-related violence, is steadily increasing. Sexual and gender-based violence remain one of the darkest sides of our current conflicts. The NATO Summit in Wales **next** September provides an opportunity for Allies to reaffirm their commitment against these practices.

It is a fact that on our modern battlefields, where wars are waged more often "*amongst population*", where military "*engagements can take place anywhere, with civilians around, against civilians, [and] in defence of civilians*"<sup>2</sup>, women have become more often, involuntary actors, targets or hostages. In the opposite, they **also** now play a direct role in extremist forces, as we have tragically seen in the case of female suicide bombers. A Pakistani religious cleric, has recently affirmed, for example, that the Taliban group in Pakistan has as many as 500 female suicide bombers ready to act.

However, in the great majority of cases, women are victims. During the Balkans war, thousands of women were victims of sexual violence used as a weapon of war, to terrorize the population and force people to leave their homes. In Afghanistan, Improvised Explosive Devices, killed and injured 177 women in 2013, a 20 percent increase in comparison to 2012.

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<sup>2</sup> Sir Rupert Smith, "The Utility of Force".

We believe the disproportionate and increasing impact that armed conflicts have on women -not to mention children- can be mitigated. The means to achieve this demanding objective is better use of the value and attributes of women as active players in building peace and security. Involving women in peace support operations in a more structured and proactive manner is necessary at all levels, this now represents a well-established part of the NATO comprehensive approach to conflict management, both on the military and civilian side.

From the NATO perspective, the direct participation of skilled and well trained women in diverse assignments, as soldiers, as officers, as gender advisors at all levels, is of crucial importance to win the “hearts and mind” of much of the population, and we clearly consider this as an important operational “asset”.

Employing these women close to the commander on the ground is the first step for NATO to integrate the “Gender perspective” into its operations, but this is not an end by itself.

We also need to find out, how we can better leverage their unique attributes in support of operational and strategic goals. Herein lies the importance of gender advisors. As an aside, I want to stress that these advisors can be men and women, because we consider that applying a gender perspective is an overall responsibility which must involve all of us, male or female, Commanders and Soldiers on the ground.

In their position the Gender advisors undertake first a “Gender Analysis” which is a social study that highlights conditions of women in the area of conflict, in order to identify their needs, and their potential role for improving peace and stability in their own environment.

Of course, we all know that there is no universal way for defining the role of women in a range of societies that are all different, each based on a specific social construction that furthermore evolves continuously, at its own pace, depending on both external and internal factors.

So ACT produced last year a guidance in close cooperation with NATO's Operational Command, Allied Command Operation, Commanders and their Gender advisors, in order to better integrate the gender perspective into the planning, execution and evaluation phases of NATO-led operations.

This guidance provides a framework which promotes the implementation of a dynamic network of liaisons with the local population, Non-Governmental Organisations and International Organisations, and the application of a robust education and training plan for deployed and pre-deployed personnel. Other principles are encouraged as a more balanced composition of workforce and the expansion of the roles of women at all levels within NATO forces. Finally this guidance calls for NATO forces to put in place an effective mechanism for reporting and sharing information, that includes the situation of women, boys and girls, the impact of NATO interventions on them, and other topics such as human rights violations, indications of domestic or international trafficking, and rights of children.

On the ground, practical involvement of military women takes different forms. In Afghanistan, it has been important for instance that NATO was able to integrate into its patrol units women who were able to engage more easily with village elders and ultimately, with women in the local population. Seen as more effective and more acceptable approach by the population, it also allows the development of a more holistic picture of the situation, and better situational awareness that increases operational effectiveness.

In NATO, ACT is in charge of preparing the future. Today we focus very much on force preparation, readiness, interoperability and partnership. So we are fully supporting the UN-NATO partnership in general and Resolution 1325 in particular.

In terms of partnership, we can bring to the UN a wide array of courses and training opportunities through the NATO network of training facilities, Centres of Excellence, NCGMO and other NATO entities such as the NATO Defence College and the NATO School in Oberammergau. When we cooperate in training, our personnel can meet each other, exchange experiences, and find out about each other's procedures in the pre-

deployment phase, going more in-depth towards a comprehensive approach.

ACT is committed to enduring support to Resolution 1325 and to the important role of women in establishing peace and security. Our intent is to build on the efforts I have described above and to make the “gender perspective” an integral part of wider ACT initiatives for preparing NATO for the future.

Our first strand of effort will be to integrate more systematically the “Gender perspective” into our training and exercises. NATO’s Connected Forces Initiative aims to reinvest in the education and training of our men and women in uniform. This three-pronged plan consists of the expansion of education and training, an increase in exercises, and a better use of innovation. In seeking realistic scenarios, **we will design** our exercises to integrate a wide range of situations and possible answers, including a Gender perspective.

Another potential field of improvement is using lessons learned to broaden understanding of the role of women in security. Over the years, ACT has developed a considerable lessons learned database in fields such as civil-military interaction, medical support to operations or logistics. Today we can exchange our experiences on these topics, strive towards better information sharing and, in the longer run, develop proposals to create strengthened links and more efficient and coordinated action. In my view, we must extend this pragmatic approach to the gender perspective and develop and share the lessons learned from our joint operations.

As another specific example of the NATO-UN cooperation we recognize here today, we are about to launch an “e-learning Gender Awareness course” built upon relevant, realistic, examples that were provided by the UN from its own experiences. This interactive course, should represent a significant step forward for increasing the global awareness of Gender perspective in NATO. We will make sure that this course is also be available on request for the UN.

Lastly, I would like to stress that women represent a great potential, a great human resource for NATO. And we must continue our efforts to improve their integration.

They must enjoy equal treatment, equal perspectives, equal promotions as their Male colleagues and we must be uncompromising against any discrimination or misbehaviour towards, women.

[CLOSING]

Since the end of the Cold War, NATO operations and missions have been conducted amongst the people, amongst women and children, within a complex human environment. This paradigm shift has introduced new dimensions in our comprehensive approach to conflicts, it has also called to foster the dialogue between us, military and government actors and other international organizations such as the United Nations or NGOs.

Together, we have already been able to address many sensible questions as Gender, Children and Armed Conflicts or Building Integrity. We have strengthened interaction between NATO and the UN, ACT is ready to continue to build a way forward in understanding and cooperation. To illustrate the importance of our common endeavour I would like to end these remarks with a note of hope, even if tenuous. In Afghanistan today, more than two million girls are going to school, compared with just a few, ten years ago. This achievement has been rendered possible by the combination of efforts of the international community, including the military, and the Non Governmental Organizations. Even if we all know that this achievement remains fragile, it is one piece of really good news regarding the future of this country. I think that this captures well how the military can also have a role, by creating a secure environment, in support of our common endeavor.

Thank you