

SACT INTERVENTION AT THE FUTURE FORUM BERLIN

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“NATO’s Transformation; The road to the Summit and beyond”

(24 min)

Thank you Professor for your kind introductory remarks.

I am very pleased to be with you today, thanks to the German Council on Foreign Policy and its Future Forum Berlin. Germany is not only one of the most essential pillars of our Alliance; it is as well one of the Alliance’s greatest intellectual powerhouses on military matters and a key leader in pursuing its transformation.

On a very personal note, I would like to start by addressing my heartfelt thanks to Germany for sending so many high-quality people to my Command. The top-notch women and men contribute superbly to the Alliance’s cohesion, and its military relevance. The Alliance is about people before all.

Today, I would like first to build a solid common understanding and foundation, because probably not everybody is familiar with NATO. Before transforming something you need to know what you want to transform. So I will further try to stress the importance of solidarity, cohesion and

credibility as key principles for our Atlantic Alliance, then I will set the scene for NATO's transformation and the roadmap for the Summit and beyond.

[Importance of cohesion, credibility]

Since its creation some 65 years ago (this is not the time for retirement by the way), the Alliance has been built upon the greatest common denominator, its common values, underpinned by credible, deterrent and effective military forces. And through almost seven decades, the cohesion of NATO has been maintained by consensus at the political and military level with a permanent interaction between political and military authorities, which is a great strength for such an organization.

This is why in my perspective, and hopefully for many other people as well, the Alliance represents much more than a mere coalition of circumstantial choices, or even a single security provider. In fact it features the will of Allied nations to preserve peace and security together, to deter any aggression together, and eventually to fight together if needed.

So, we have to keep the Alliance credible, respected, and effective. Obviously, I will not comment on the political side of the equation, suffice to say that nevertheless that considering the evolving strategic context, Allies decided at the Lisbon Summit in 2010 and **reaffirmed** in Chicago in 2012, to define the level of ambition for the Alliance.

The ability of the Alliance to fulfil its task, mainly two major joint operations and similar to this in conjunction six small joint operations and if necessary a major joint operation plus to fulfil the collective defence, this is the key of the commitment of the Alliance, the will of the politicians to provide the

Level of ambition for the Alliance. And I would suggest that this will and this level of ambition is missing, as far as the European political defence and security is concerned.

As the NATO commander for Transformation in the Alliance, I am entrusted to propose ways to adapt the Alliance military capabilities to the new challenges, and prepare the future. This is the basis of transformation. Transformation is the continuum of the past, present and future and its adaptation.

Linking the past and the future is at the very heart of Transformation. Reality of the present, structural trends of the future as well as lessons learned from our recent operational engagements must be fully embraced to stimulate the on-going transformation of the Alliance, which must remain flexible despite being guided with a long term perspective. Flexibility with a vision, flexibility with perspective.

First, the present of NATO is marked by the transition of ISAF mission in Afghanistan with a lot of uncertainties. While there are recurrent tensions at the outer reaches of the Alliance, Syria as well as Mali, now we have to face a crisis at the very the border of NATO with one of our major partners, and that will undoubtedly influence the future of NATO. In addition, we cannot ignore the impact of enduring defense budget cuts on our military capabilities. As far as the more structural trends are concerned, I would mention the emergence of challenges that are related to our global commons, common spaces, **that is to say** the high seas and international waterways, international air space, outer space and increasingly cyber space. Free use and transit through each of them is essential to our

globalized society and from a military perspective, freedom of action in the global commons is a precondition for projection of power. The essential common trait shared by these critical domains is the fact that they stand at the limit of national sovereignty and law, and therefore could be unduly influenced, and even controlled by opponents, and this is true for piracy, this is true for cyber attacks and many other manifestations.

Another enduring challenge to peace and security remains more than ever the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and not so far from NATO borders.

Lastly, I could add hybrid threats that involve a great variety of belligerent parties, military, civilians, state and non-state **actors**.

All these present considerations aligned and in conjunction with structural trends must be incorporated in our studies and planning.

This is the aim of what we call our Strategic Foresight Analysis that we published last year and which tends to describe the future strategic environment. And somewhere the case of the Ukraine must be taken into account as well. And from that future strategic environment we have already drawn some strategic perspectives. In a nutshell, first the enduring need for improving our strategic awareness, the ability to know the intelligence, reconnaissance, everything that could promote and could help to understand a situation and then take strategic decisions. This is what I would call a comprehensive shared intelligence. Second, the requirement for more flexible and adaptable capabilities, to face the uncertainties of future operational environment which could be provided by very agile forces, more versatile weapons systems, and highly trained and

interoperable forces. Surely, the need to ensure what I would call the suitable level of resilience for armed forces, which demands that we organize ourselves to sustain lasting engagements, as it was the case in Kosovo, the Mediterranean Sea, at the Horn of Africa, in Afghanistan or for enduring missions, like Air policy or Cyber Defense. Our weapon systems, our Command and Control systems must be robust, highly interoperable and sustainable to ensure effectiveness on the long term.

Comparing to these long-term military requirements, we can already **make** assessments based on the NATO Capability Review we are undertaking, which is part of the NATO planning process.

First, there is a gap between the capability requirements on the one hand which we deduce from the Level of Ambition to be met in 2020, and the projected allies capabilities, in particular within the European allies. This is not new, this is confirmed. Main shortfalls concern

- Joint Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance, mainly the lack of remotely piloted aircraft systems or drones,
- Ballistic Missile Defense, we are not there yet,
- Projection and sustainment of our forces, in the medical domain for example.
- Cyber domain is as well a subject of attention, as we have to face a fast evolving threat from state and non-state actors, and we have seen that just recently.

Second, following the end of a long enduring operational engagement in Afghanistan, which was followed by a lot of engagements over two decades and just after the end of the Cold War by the way, there is a high

risk of losing our key operational skills that our military, that our people have developed, which could lead ultimately to an insufficient level of readiness and a lack of or a reduced operational effectiveness.

Third, there is an imbalance of defense efforts, not only between both sides of the Atlantic but as well between European allies themselves.

[Way forward]

From this we can deduce three priorities for the Alliance:

First, addressing capability shortfalls among European Allies is a priority, although in the short-term this is difficult to achieve for budgetary reasons, for crisis, for other constraints. Therefore there is a need to prioritise our efforts, there is a need to work together. We must also pay particular attention, when addressing capability developments, to strike the appropriate balance between costs, duration of the development cycle and the expected performance and here, I really believe that multinational cooperation through the Smart Defence Initiative should enable us to progress.

From my perspective we can be optimistic with regard to the performance of Smart defence Initiative. We have a lot of projects which are currently being developed, and in a very short period of time, as the Smart Defence Initiative was launched only 2 years ago, we have to remember that. They enabled the completion of tangible results in critical domains such as the training, the preparation and the protection of our forces in Afghanistan:

- Counter IED, with measures that are very sensible and tangible for our forces,

- logistics, where we reduced the maintenance of helicopters by around 60%, while optimizing the availability of helicopters at the same time in doing that together,
- medical support , where we were short, and we did that together,
- and the support for ammunitions.

All these things, which are not very visible and don't look sexy, they are so critical for the capability of our forces.

Smart Defence projects, which are known by the name of Pooling and Sharing within the EU, the two faces of the same coin, must be pursued in close collaboration with industry, because we are seeking for innovative solutions stemming from new technologies. So I really see the need for a new partnership if we want to achieve our aim, a kind of win-win perspective.

I am pleased to acknowledge the high level of involvement of Germany which participates in 19 projects of Smart Defence and has the lead for 5 of them related to maritime operations in shallow waters, the provision of a multinational Headquarters in ULM, military engineering, medical treatment, and the provision of geo-spatial data and products. On the other hand, from the European perspective, I would like to remind you of the French-German Initiative that gave birth to the European Air Transport Command, alongside with Belgium and the Netherlands, sets another great example of a successful multinational cooperation that is worth following. So it can be achieved. It needs will, it needs long term commitments, but it can be achieved.

As far as the Framework Nation Concept proposed by Germany is concerned, I deem it very promising for the Alliance, because this innovative concept will reinvigorate multinational cooperation that is so crucial. It is so crucial, but it is not a magic recipe against budgetary cuts. Actually, your country has already backed words with deeds in Afghanistan, where, under its framework responsibility, coordinates the action of more than 11 nations in its regional area of responsibility. In the domain of training and exercise, Germany is leading 4 centres of excellence and is running as well, in conjunction and coordination with the US, the NATO School Oberammergau, a very valuable centre for training and education. In my perspective, the Framework Nation Concept offers another opportunity for Allies to take responsibility, particularly the European Allies.

But capabilities will be really efficient only if we have the men and women able to operate them to their full potential. This brings me to the second priority for the Alliance, which will be my first priority by the way, the Connected Force Initiative that aims to prepare the women and men of the Alliance to face challenges of today and tomorrow.

In this context, we will present for the approval of NATO Heads of State and Government in South Wales in September for the NATO Summit, a new ambitious programme of exercises, which will benefit to NATO and to the nations together. A particular effort will be dedicated to the NATO Response Force, which is the spearhead of the Alliance in terms of responsiveness and interoperability.

This programme is ambitious, but it is based on realistic and achievable efforts. It will comprise a very high intensity exercise in 2015 and it will

consist as well of an overall improvement in NATO's approach to Education, Training, Exercise and Evaluation. And it's perhaps also good to know that NATO through ACT today is one of the most prominent provider of e-learning; We still have to progress, but we also have already achieved quite a lot in that domain.

Particular care will be given to the military and geopolitical relevance of exercises. We must build not only a high visibility exercise, but credible exercises, credible for the public as well as credible for our people.

Thus, the implementation of the programme of exercise is to involve more often national headquarters and forces, in addition to the NATO owned Command Force Structure., We aim to exercise complex scenarios, which will integrate new and emerging threats in domains such as Cyber Defence and Ballistic Missile Defence, in order to explore opportunities to stimulate technological development during our training and exercise, and we will propose a better interaction with industry during those major NATO exercises.

The third priority for the Alliance relates to our Partners. Progressively, their contribution to the Alliance's relevance has been becoming of utmost importance as in Afghanistan, in Libya or for Maritime operations. Partners, and we must remind that, have paid the ultimate sacrifice in Alliance operations and are keen to continue working closely with Allies to maintain the high level of interoperability achieved in operations. They want to take part in our training, in CFI, and want to improve their interoperability and also contribute to the Smart Defence projects.

We must therefore be in a position to offer them appropriate frameworks to support our shared strategic interests and our common vision. With this in mind, I think it useful to promote areas of functional cooperation, similar **for instance** to those developed within the Nordic Defence Cooperation.

In primary position as our Strategic Partner of excellence comes the European Union. This partnership, which, for instance, has already produced some very good results in Somalia, in **the** Balkans, and in some capability developments as well, must be enhanced through the full operational and capability spectrum. We must operationalize this partnership for conceptual work in maritime security, cyber defence, and more and more the comprehensive approach to crisis management, where NATO and EU can really complement each other.

More practically it is important that we can align our defence planning and capability development processes, and also find the best synergies for training, education and the employment of our forces. This partnership is vital **to** reinforce the transatlantic link, and it is hoped it will lead to a common understanding of the conditions required for a “more balanced Alliance”, which is so urgently asked by our American Allies, because they have so many other commitments.

The European Union is essential for the transatlantic security, and this organisation will also facilitate the military cooperation with other national and regional stakeholders, for instance the United Nations or the African Union.

[Closing]

Ladies and Gentlemen,

From my perspective, the route towards the Transformation of the Alliance aims at maintaining its military credibility, reinforce its cohesion and rebalance the sharing of responsibilities among Allies, going therefore further than the simple notion of improving the sharing of burden. This can only be achieved through the effective training and exercising of our forces, the development of European capabilities and the optimisation of a pragmatic and dynamic policy with our partners.

I have developed ACT's roadmap in support of these goals, and I want to stress again that most of the work carried out by my command will only bear fruits over the longer term, and with the commitment of every Ally.

Within this context, we must make the right choices and I hope that these choices will be made through an open, collaborative and transparent dialogue. This is the aim of this meeting so I am ready to share your questions and your thoughts.