



**NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER TRANSFORMATION**

**SACT OPENING REMARKS to
Transatlantic Forum**

Washington, 28 January 2015

General Paloméros

Supreme Allied Commander Transformation

Deputy Secretary of Defense Robert Work,

Honorable Michèle Flournoy

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to welcome you to the Willard Intercontinental Hotel for the Transatlantic forum which aims to provide an opportunity to share North-American and European visions for a coherent and consistent strategy which will enable our Alliance to maintain its military advantage in current and future geostrategic security environments. So, I would like to thank the Center for a New American Security for co-organizing this forum and for gathering such a distinguished audience.

Since we met last year, the Alliance's strategic environment has undisputedly become more instable. We have seen an increase and a diversification of threats, in addition to the fact that now, we have to face simultaneous crises in the East and in the South of the Alliance. Therefore, today, the Alliance security environment is more uncertain, more volatile, more complex than it has been perhaps for the last two decades. Not only have the risks that we





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have identified in the past materialized on a larger scale, like in cyberspace or more recently terrorism, but the crisis in Ukraine has shown that it was no longer possible to underestimate the resurgence of major crises on NATO's borders.

A few years ago, we used to say that there were no more risks or threats to our borders but that there were no borders to the threats. Today, the latter is still very true and certainly with cyber or terrorism, but unfortunately the former could also no longer be taken for granted. The development of hybrid strategies, built upon the simultaneous employment of all tools of power –political, economic, military including overt and covert operations, information warfare coupled with cyber operations could become a new norm in warfare and therefore we have to imagine new answers, more comprehensive, perhaps, more cooperative, for sure, more transverse and perhaps more asymmetric.

The deteriorating situation in the South, in the Middle East and in Sahel is very worrying as well because not only do we see an enduring destabilization of many weakened states, but in addition it produces a permanent instability which fuels global, connected, terrorist activities, able to strike even at the heart of Allied countries and populations. That situation will undoubtedly call for a long-term commitment of many Allied countries forces for the years to come, which must be taken into account while we are reviewing NATO's posture in particular its readiness and responsiveness to answer to fast developing crisis.

In 2010, the NATO's strategic concept highlighted the risks entailed by the spreading of new technologies. Today, it is a reality and we witness the introduction and dissemination by many powers of state-of-the-art weapons systems able to deny to the Alliance the access to strategic, operational and tactical areas. Some of them could be considered as real game changers which need to be addressed with no delay. This is equally true in the cyber domain, where we can no longer pretend to have a leading edge advantage. In addition, many of these new technologies are made more and more available to organized non-state terrorist groups like ISIL, which means that key capabilities on which we have built the Alliance's security, the Alliance's military superiority could be contested on the middle term. At the last Summit, in Wales, NATO's Heads of States have assessed those risks and tasked us to





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develop a new strategy based upon the Readiness Action Plan, on reducing of NATO's main capability shortfalls and a continuous effort in education, training and exercises to prepare NATO's forces to meet all these many challenges.

In parallel, they have pledged for reinvestment in defense (spend a minimum of 2% of their GDP on defense and more than 20% of their defense budgets on major equipment, including Research and Development), taking into consideration the enduring pressures on defense budgets in many European countries. The role of my command, ACT, is to meet these challenges and promote and facilitate a dynamic Transformation of NATO, building on Allied Nations' commitment and solidarity, building on Allies' ability to better cooperate together to prepare their common future.

Our aim is to maintain at the highest level the credibility, interoperability and readiness of NATO forces. To achieve these goals, we promote a renewed multinational cooperation, effective innovation and the sharing of best practice. We promote as well the crucial role of Defense Industry on both sides of the Atlantic as a key strategic asset for our Alliance. This is the reason why I hope that during the next two days, we will engage in a fruitful debate with some of the best experts from both sides of the Atlantic, under the auspices of CNAS. This is why we are so eager to listen to you, Deputy-Secretary of Defense on the US Defense innovation initiative, which from my point of view, represents a unique opportunity for us, for NATO, for ACT, taking the best of its positioning in the United-States, in Virginia will strive to capitalize.

Thank you for your attention.

