



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

SACT REMARKS to

NATO MODEL CHALLENGE

NORFOLK,

Old Dominion University

19 March 2015

Général d'armée aérienne Paloméros



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Good afternoon Dr Carol Simpson, Ms Allmond, Student Ambassadors, Mentors and guests.

I am delighted to be able to say a few words today in support of the 2015 Model NATO Challenge. This Challenge represents an excellent opportunity for the Student Ambassadors, and no doubt tomorrow's future leaders, to participate in a realistic political decision-making forum, what I would call the "*new generation*" North Atlantic Council.

I am very grateful to President Broderick and the Old Dominion University for hosting this year's Challenge and I am sure that you will agree that this year's setting is perfect. ACT enjoys a fruitful partnership with ODU and I am delighted that the Model NATO Challenge enhances our collaboration. As a matter of fact, this event, which takes place in the scope of a very dynamic Norfolk NATO Festival is very representative of my vision of mutual benefit that NATO and NORFOLK's (Hampton Roads) community can enjoy together. More than ever, today It's crucial that we explain to the Youth what the Atlantic Alliance is.

- First and foremost, to **its roots** in 1349, as we commemorate the 70th year anniversary of the 2nd World War, we must tell them this success



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story or an Alliance born in the aftermath of 2 World Wars and which has provided Collective Defense, Peace, and Security for 66 years to Allied Nations, to 900 million people in 28 Allied Nations that our young ambassadors will represent today.

- We must explain, we must advocate here in Norfolk, in the United States, in the Alliance that our shared values deserve our best commitment, that neither freedom, rules of law, our peace should be taken for granted, and that we must be prepared to fight for them if needed.
- We must explain that NATO is an Alliance for peace and freedom, but that it should remain fit for purpose, ready to answer to the many challenges of today and tomorrow. We have to make sure that NATO can prevent and deter anybody to attack any of its 28 members, which are linked by a unique clause of solidarity: the 28 for the 28, one for all and all for one.

As many of you will know, the North Atlantic Council is the foremost political forum within NATO. It is at these meetings that the 28 NATO Nations come together to discuss emerging crises and decide courses of action as to how to tackle serious issues affecting the safety and security of

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the Alliance members. I have personally attended and intervened in many such meetings and therefore I can assess, the task that is ahead of the Student Ambassadors this evening. It is a challenging yet enriching endeavour.

You only have to read a single newspaper, watch any news bulletin, or use any social media avenue to understand that we live in a very uncertain world, where the Alliance is continually tested. Who would have imagined NATO's recent roles in Libya or Anti-Piracy, while simultaneously overseeing peace in Kosovo and combat operations in Afghanistan?

This is without mentioning the current crisis in Ukraine and the sharp rise in tension with Russia for which NATO forces have increased their dynamic presence to assure Eastern NATO Allies and show the determination and solidarity of the Alliance to fulfil its mission, to protect our shared values through collective defense.

So just imagine those 28 view points coming together right now as these crises continue to dominate political and military debate within NATO and the wider world.

And so, to the Student Ambassadors, I will say only this: The competition for places this year was fierce and your selection to be here today means



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that you should be very proud of the fact that you sit at the table right now, representing a NATO nation.

Make the most of tonight's opportunity to represent your assigned nation in one of the world's premier decision-making panels. To succeed in this Challenge, you will need to recognise other countries with similar views and build partnerships and coalitions with them to shape the continued discussions before deciding on a course of action. Be bold; be decisive; be committed; be open-minded; be respectful of other views, but above all, be prepared to have fun.

I am also very grateful to Yvonne Allmond and the Norfolk NATO Festival Board, but in particular to Mrs Trish Carrier and Mrs Sarah Jordan for their continued support to NATO and ACT and for their tireless work in organising events such as this Challenge. Thank you also to the Judges for this evening, who have given up their time to help with the event.

To all of the supporting staff, the ACT team and in particular to the national military advisors and mentors, I would like to express my thanks to you also for dedicating your time to help develop these young people and their global awareness.



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Young ambassadors,

Bonne chance, Good Luck to you all, now you are NATO !

Thank you for your attention.