



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

**DEPUTY SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER
TRANSFORMATION**

DSACT's remarks at

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Followed by 20' Q&A

Admiral DEU N Manfred NIELSON

1340 words – 14'

What: ACT as Warfare Development Command



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Good morning,

I'm very pleased to have the possibility to address the Defense MOU Attaches Group today.

I have to admit that when Dr Seekatz approached my team we had no clue of the existence of this group.

Which is surprising as your mission [quote]: is to promote effective defense equipment, co-operation and defense trade between the U.S. and the Nations represented by the DMAG members and to strengthen DMAG nations' military warfighter capabilities. [unquote]



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This is pretty close to what we do in ACT, despite the point of defense trade and the focus on military capabilities only.

Therefore I'm very happy to share some thoughts with you about Allied Command Transformation which. ACT is the only NATO HQ from the NATO Command Structure on this side of the Atlantic. This is presenting challenges and opportunities alike.

So, what is ACT's role?

ACT does not provide transformation. Transformation is not an end in itself.

We are the command for NATO focused on Warfare Development activities for the Alliance.



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Or in other words: we take care that NATO can meet its three core tasks even decades ahead of us.

It is an incredibly exciting place to serve right now. Our focus is on the analysis of future trends and thoughts on what to expect from the futurity for the military environment. We try to establish the bridge to our variety of challenges in order to increase the effectiveness and relevancy of our current and future capabilities.

This essential forward thinking ensures that NATO is relevant today and even tomorrow.

We seek to provide NATO the necessary capacities in the right posture, for current -, but with even more emphasis, for future operations.



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Allied Command Operations in Mons, Belgium and ACT. One cannot go without the other.

ACO leads the operating effort. They are the warfighters, supported by ACT.

ACT leads the adaptation effort. We are the warfare developers, supported by ACO. It is a combined and permanent enterprise. Together we bridge the present and the future.

Internally we are structured in four cross-functionally working pillars:

Resources and Management under the lead of a two star Turkish General,

Strategic Plans and Policy led by an American two star general,



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Capability Development led by an American three star general,

and Joint Force Development led by an Italian two star general.

Our commander is a French four star general, the Deputy is a four star in rotation between Germany and Italy and the chief of staff is a British three star.

We have in total three subordinated commands,

The Joint Warfare Center in Stavanger Norway,

The Joint Force Training Center in Bydgoszcz Poland,

And the Joint Lessons Learned and Analysis Center in Lisbon, Portugal.



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In order to be fully connected with the Pentagon we do have a permanent one star liaison officer directly linked to the office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

ACTs most important outputs are:

The Strategic Foresight Analysis – SFA, in which we don't predict the future but instead depict future political, social, technological, economic and environmental trends and highlight their implication for the Alliance up to 30 years ahead.



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In this regard, we can't see any future operation without involvement of partners.

Therefore SFA is produced together with partner nations, universities, international organizations like the European Union and the United Nations, civilian companies like Google, think tanks and non-governmental organizations like the red Cross just to mention a few. And it's unclassified and therefore usable by all.

Based on that trend analysis, our Bi-Strategic Commands Framework for Future Alliance Operations - FFAO identifies key attributes driving our efforts to keep our edge over any potential adversary or change in security environment.



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Those key attributes are: flexibility, interoperability and of course, speed in innovation! In short we indicate what forces might need to be and to do for 10 to 15 years ahead.

And this contributes essentially to our NATO Defence Planning Process – NDPP.

A 4 year cycle which is the primary process to facilitate the identification, development and delivery of NATO's present and future capability requirements.

The NDPP is the principal vehicle for the harmonization of capability development efforts undertaken by Allies individually, multinationally or collectively.



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The NDPP mentioned key attributes: flexibility, interoperability and pace in innovation are easy to postulate but difficult to bring to life.

They require detailed understanding and a concerted effort enabled with the right adaptive policy, planning guidance and decision making speed.

In this regard we also have to talk about it from a threat perspective.



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Factors such as the increase in defense spending and the availability, the proliferation of knowledge and technologies have provided rivals and potential adversaries with growing capabilities.

They have the ability to challenge the Alliance politically, militarily and technologically and they don't hesitate to do so.

A substantial part of the rapid modernization of potential competitors' civilian and military capabilities is supported by access to and use of emerging and disruptive technologies.

A number of state and non-state actors are developing new capabilities. Like the Fighter Robots presented by Russia.



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And don't forget in which security environment we are right now. Hybrid warfare is the new normal.

We are in the fog of neither peace nor war. We are in a constant crisis and destabilisation.

We are in a situation in which a large scale cyber-attack can cause much more harm to populations rather than classical kinetic attacks.

This brings me back to the ACT – and the NATO perspective.

NATO's core answer to the hybrid warfare environment is that: NATO must be more aware and alert, more resilient to attacks and able to respond perhaps asymmetrically.



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At the NATO Warsaw Summit in 2016, nations agreed to identify advanced and emerging technologies, to evaluate their applicability in the military domain and to implement them through innovative solutions.

Indeed, exploiting emerging and disruptive technologies will allow us to develop game changing capabilities in order to provide NATO the ability to counter potential adversaries, as the Alliance continues to deter, defend and guarantee peace.

And we are well aware: We can't work on the future without being connected with many others.

In a collaborative effort with industry, academia, international organizations and nations we have already established a common understanding:



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Firstly of the importance of disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence, autonomy and quantum computing.

And the certainty that the classical defense industry is not any longer the driver of innovation. The multiple startups around the world are the ones.

Which means that we have to adapt our procedures and processes which were successful with the traditional defense industry but will not work with the non-defense industry.

To seek for only military capabilities will lead to failure, we have to bring the mindset of civilian capabilities for military usage into reality.



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And this not only due to disruptive technologies but due to some realities as well.

In many of our nations the demographic change will have a serious impact on the military environment.

We have to be ready to ask the question which military tasks could be done by civilians for us. This will require new structures and procedures as well.

Civilian-military day zero interoperability will be key!

Secondly of the urgency for our alliance to adapt and the speed needed to act, to take advantage of the opportunities and meet the challenges alike.



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Keeping in mind that since NATO's inception in 1949, technological superiority has been an essential enabler of our military superiority.

And leading to a pretty simple conclusion that we have to operate and adapt at the same time.

Consequently, at the July 2018 summit in Brussels NATO leaders have discussed modernization efforts to include steps we are taking and probable roadmaps to guide our future work.

This was a very short overview of who we are at ACT, what drives us and what we do and I'm now looking forward to your questions.