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**T**HIS ISSUE OF *The Three Swords* magazine is underpinned by a historic event. On 5 June 2017, Montenegro became the 29th member of the NATO family in what is the first enlargement since 1 April 2009, when Albania and Croatia joined the Alliance. This newest accession is a milestone for both Montenegro and NATO. For Montenegro, it bears testimony to her determination and success in achieving her long-term goal of becoming a fully fledged Ally, which happened 11 years after the country regained independence; for NATO, it epitomizes the success of the Alliance's 'open door policy' to further enhance international peace and security. I sincerely hope that Montenegro's accession will pave the way for other nations to join the Alliance.



The flag of Montenegro was raised at the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) on 7 June as flag-raising ceremonies took place simultaneously across NATO, projecting a perfect image of our unity and solidarity. From this day on, until a new member comes along, 29 flags will fly together at the JWC. I am looking forward to seeing Montenegrin officers here in the future, either as part of the JWC's Peacetime Establishment (PE); with our Training Audiences or as EXCON members.

Over the past four months, the JWC led two iterations of Exercise TRIDENT JAGUAR 2017 and conducted planning exercises for TRIDENT JAVELIN 2017 and TRIDENT JUNCTURE 2018. The JWC also supported an ACT-led workshop on NATO's Collective Training Support Programme of Work and re-evaluated its organizational building blocks, including a new JWC mission analysis that will set the conditions for its future success. Today, the JWC's mission as the primary ways and means of delivering the SACT Vision of *Alliance Military Transformation* for the joint operational level of warfare is unsurpassed. Nonetheless, we do not sit on our laurels. We must always be ambitious, innovative and outward-looking in order to be able to adjust quickly to the changing security environment and the requirements of NATO. My Vision is that the JWC sustains and enhances its role as NATO's premier provider and enabler for innovation and exercises at the joint operational level of warfare, for the headquarters of the NATO Command and NATO Force Structures, and, when ordered, for any other headquarters of the Alliance.

Facilitating *NATO Joint Warfare Development* for Alliance Military Transformation is at the heart of all of the JWC's exercise and training activities. This is no easy task. It involves incorporating new perimeters of concepts, experimentation and capability development into JWC-led

exercises, contributing to the requisite Lessons Learned process, as well as to the maintenance of joint operational doctrine and standards. Parts of our organization, in effect, function almost like centres of excellence in the wider, new organizational structure which, I am confident to say, is very well suited to the JWC tasks.

Our aim is to preserve NATO's military competence and interoperability through planning, preparation and execution of appropriate phases of the nominated exercises for which I am designated as the Officer Directing the Exercise. For the coming two years, the JWC will focus its efforts on delivering the Alliance transition to the level of Major Joint Operation 'Plus', (MJO+) capability, which includes all of our strands of Joint Warfare Development.

We have an organizational motto, so our operational motto might be 'Warfare First'. I believe that this is where the JWC compass should be, now and in the future. General Denis Mercier, SACT, captured the full potential of 'Warfare First', when he said on 18 May during a JWC All Hands Call: "What we do is operate and adapt at the same time."

In the short term, our focus is on TRIDENT JAVELIN 2017. This will be the first exercise where most of the command structure will be exercised together in a (MJO+) Article 5 scenario. We are working hard to make sure all participants will get the most out of this major exercise.

One of the most excitedly anticipated events for us is undoubtedly the JWC's 15th Anniversary next year. This already has us ruminate over what it means to be NATO's hub of innovation and transformation at a time when our 68-year-old Alliance is faced with some of the biggest security challenges in its history. We are a young organization, but we were established as a result of the Alliance's biggest reorganization to date, at a time when NATO mapped the way ahead for its future. On the Activation Ceremony of the JWC, 23 October 2003, Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani, the first SACT, famously described the JWC as "the Jewel in the Crown of Allied Command Transformation".

I believe we stayed true to this most exquisite description of the JWC. NATO is the most successful Alliance in history, but it is not just a security institution. NATO is also committed to the well-being of our transatlantic community and to safeguarding our democratic values.

It is a great privilege to serve at the helm of one of NATO's most unique organizations here in the City of Stavanger, together with the One Team, which is the JWC's main source of strength and what makes us truly who we are.