



ON THE COVER

THE NEW NATO

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«...TO ADDRESS THE FUTURE, WE MUST UNDERSTAND THE BROAD AND LAYERED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE 21ST CENTURY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT. »

AFTER MY FIRST year as SACEUR, it is clear to me that we are entering a phase of strategic and operational adaptation — adaptation shaped by the end of the combat operations in Afghanistan and the rapidly changing global security environment that include violations of state borders in Ukraine, and ISIL to name a few.

The Washington Treaty that created NATO in 1949 was driven by a common interest. World War II was over and a new common threat had emerged, which united our efforts on both sides of the Atlantic and forged a common Alliance.

As we came to the end of the Cold War, the 1990s were a period of great challenge, adaptation and opportunity. This was matched by a robust, creative period of NATO military and policy development that led to initiatives such as the Combined Joint Task Force con-

cept, Partnership for Peace, and the initial moves toward crisis management and "out of area" operations.

We are now again facing decisive strategic and operational challenges. A new period of adaptation will require the same level of innovation, robust ideas, and creative re-design of the military posture to set the Alliance on a stable foundation and trajectory for the future.

To address the future, however, we must understand the broad and layered characteristics of the 21st Century security environment. Any attempts to do so would be incoherent without consideration of what I believe are the five foundational tenets that will continue to significantly influence the environment:

- The cost of security, in terms of human, financial and capital outlays will continue to increase. We must continually assess whether our ways and means of providing





Opposite: The aim of the NATO Ballistic Missile Defence is to provide full coverage and protection for all NATO European populations, territory and forces against the increasing threats posed by the proliferation of ballistic missile. Image shows the space-based early warning capability provided to NATO through the United States. General Breedlove assumed command of ACO on 13 May 2013; NATO's "Unified Vision 14" trial in Norway. **Above, clockwise:** NATO HQ; General Breedlove; NATO naval exercise "Brilliant Mariner". Photographs by NATO.

security are enabling the ends we seek.

- Security problems will undoubtedly multiply in number and complexity. Insurgency, terrorism and organized transnational crime will dominate headlines for the foreseeable future. Yet, as we have seen recently in Ukraine, we can never disregard the potential for state-on-state conflict — be it hybrid and asymmetric or in a more traditionally conventional form.
- While challenging, our capabilities must continue to move forward by aligning strategies that account for modern problems, even as fiscal challenges grip contributors.
- In such a complex environment, today's solutions — whether active or passive — can create new and unforeseen problems, which eclipse the gravity of the original problem.

Understanding the second and third order effects of our strategies as operational approaches are shaped is essential for effectiveness and sustainability.

- Finally, all of these complexities are being compounded as our global connections continue to shrink the environment. We contribute to and are influenced by processes and dynamics recently unimaginable. This illuminates the utility and necessity of transnational alliances and institutions to build the security we seek in synch with our shared values.

Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine and ISIL represent prime examples of current security issues embodying each of these tenets. Russia's actions challenge the fundamental assumptions and baseline principles upon which Europe's post Cold War development was

founded. These actions appear to illustrate a desire to reset the rules not only in Ukraine, but potentially in other bordering countries — a direct threat to the international order upon which global stability depends.

If there was any doubt of the relevance of NATO before now, the last few months have cleared that up and reinforced the need for our essential core tasks: Collective Defense, Cooperative Security and Crisis Management.

Russia's carefully planned and considered actions represent a clear decision by its leadership to disregard the baseline assumptions and principles that have shaped international stability over the past 25 years and have threatened the notion of a Europe that is whole, free and at peace.

In the past several months, Russia has attempted to use ambiguity to mask its actions — we must in every case eliminate this ambiguity and refute the false narrative. Addi-



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visiting the U.S. Patriot Unit deployed at the Turkish military base in Gaziantep, 10 October 2014. Photograph by NATO.



tionally, we must be clear about what has taken place and be able to identify this sort of activity if it continues to happen beyond the Ukrainian crisis and particularly if it should occur within NATO's borders.

As we adapt our own forces, structures and methods for the future, we must be clear about what we feel are the challenges and threats that face the Alliance. We need to clearly articulate our role in deterrence and then, if required, our role in defence. We must be ready to respond appropriately to protect and assure all Alliance Members if we are to maintain credibility. It is time to ask ourselves some hard questions:

- Is the Alliance agile and flexible enough to respond appropriately?
- Are we structured correctly to provide a rapid and credible response?
- Are our forces responsive enough and po-

sitioned correctly to address the current strategic challenges?

- Do our exercises and readiness measures allow us to adequately respond to the destabilizing efforts by Russian snap exercises and ISIL witnessed over the last year?

THE CRISIS in Ukraine has highlighted that our current approach to readiness does not necessarily translate into responsiveness. We will need to evolve certain aspects of the Alliance in order to become more adaptive and responsive to future challenges. Our immediate assurance measures — for example, sending additional aircraft to enhance Air Policing over the Baltic States or by providing Patriot missiles in Turkey — contribute to the Alliance's coherent strategic approach to reassurance and deterrence.

These assurance measures are meaningful, incremental, and flexible with strategic depth, breadth and clear purpose. They are

proportional to the general threat situation and are fundamental to maintaining a sustainable strategic effect for the Alliance.

ONE OF the key decisions made at the NATO Wales Summit was to implement a Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, or VJTF.

The VJTF is one part of a series of adaptation measures approved by Heads of State that will enable the Alliance to address the threats against our NATO Allies and the diverse challenges to Alliance security from all directions, including from the south.

Continuous Air, Land, and Sea presence and meaningful military activity are required to provide the necessary assurance, demonstrate Alliance resolve, and the defensive nature of the Alliance.

We can anticipate that our assurance measures will not go unchallenged. We can expect reaction and counter-measures intended





OPERATION REASSURANCE, as part of the NATO Baltic Air Policing mission, 15 September 2014. Photograph by Cpl Gabrielle DesRochers.



«...THIS IS AN ERA-CHANGING MOMENT FOR THE ALLIANCE... »
— SACEUR

to reduce the effect of our actions and apply pressure to test the cohesion of the Alliance.

Beyond the situation in Ukraine, there are many security challenges that face us today. The activity in Iraq and Syria by extremists calling themselves the Islamic State represents one of the biggest threats right now. We also need to consider threats to our Southern flank, Patriot deployments to Turkey, on-going operations in Afghanistan and Kosovo, cyber security challenges, and other potential actions will continue to require our attention. NATO must

be able to do multiple operations simultaneously and we must plan to respond appropriately to all of these as we move forward.

The VJTF, thus, will be designed to respond to threats facing the entire Alliance including significant threats in our southern area, emanating from the Middle East and North Africa. These threats are fundamentally different and therefore our approach to address them will require a completely different solution in the south than in the east, maybe even based around a maritime headquarters.

Although the NATO military structure is making tremendous strides to address the new security environment, it is clear that the military instrument alone cannot achieve strategic success. Future strategies must define end-states which are politically, economically and socially cohesive. They must support common core interests and yet remain flexible enough to account for variances in those interests.

The effectiveness and sustainability of these strategies, in the 21st Century security environment, must be rooted in operative alliances and legitimate institutions invested in synchronized lines of effort. Whatever the final form our adaptation measures take, they must be affordable and sustainable so that NATO can effectively respond to emerging threats in the long run over what is likely to be an extended period of global instability. This is an era-changing moment for the Alliance and it is imperative that we marshal all of our talent, innovation and creativity to ensure that the path ahead is as peaceful and secure as we can make it. ✦

FURTHER READING and VIDEOS

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* SACEUR on Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, watch the video at <http://www.aco.nato.int/video-saceur-on-very-high-readiness-joint-task-force.aspx>



Left: Exercise STEADFAST JAVELIN, May 2014. Photograph by Sgt. Andrew Davis.