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IT IS WITH great pleasure that I introduce this year's edition of the Joint Warfare Centre (JWC) journal *The Three Swords*, which features an exclusive foreword on cognitive warfare by NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Transformation, Admiral Pierre Vandier.

I have now held the position of Commander JWC for over a year; a remarkable year of change, commitment, and achievements.

To ensure peace and security in the 21st century, we must integrate innovation in Allied capabilities and improve our interoperability with Allies and partners.

As NATO continues to embrace transformation on all fronts, from bolstering our deterrence and defence through Eastern Sentry to holding the first NATO biotech conference, the JWC has proven that it is able to adapt to the requirements of both Allied Command Operations (ACO) and Allied Command Transformation (ACT), while strengthening the transatlantic bond through exercises STEADFAST DETERRENCE 2025 and STEADFAST DUEL 2025. Both exercises have been capstone events for NATO's deterrence and defence, advancing our operational convergence with our U.S. Allies.

The direction from ACT and ACO has been to deliver more challenging, dynamic exercises, adapting to lessons identified from Russia's war against Ukraine, under the banner of the Audacious Training programme. The exercises grow in scale, scope and complexity as we continue to meet the requirements to train staff processes, while simultaneously shifting to real-world scenarios, plans, and greater dynamism.

It has been a year of firsts: certifying Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe as a strategic warfighting HQ; exercising all three Allied joint force commands and the theatre component commands under an Article 5 declaration, with all three joint domain operational areas activated; exercising with the newest NATO members of Sweden and Finland; and doing all of this under a continuous 24/7 battle rhythm.

The level of integration and pace of change of the newer domains of space and cyberspace continues to accelerate. Multi-domain integrated targeting has moved through the levels of theory and practice, maturing with every iteration.

Another area of change has been the explosion of activity within the digital space, from the implementation of a new NATO mission network



to the integration of AI and machine learning in command and control processes via Maven Smart System. In parallel, we are exploiting novel technologies to digitalize processes, both in our daily administration and in our delivery of exercises.

The JWC's versatile training architecture allows us to move from testing NATO's real-world defence plans to exercising out-of-area crisis management within a span of three weeks. We build upon the foundation of our operational experience, our history of large-scale TRIDENT and STEADFAST exercises, and our wargaming expertise, using the latest data-centric, digitized and AI-shaped technology to enable Admiral Vandier's intent to be *bold in thinking, fast in delivery and unified in purpose*.

Our success depends on our readiness and our adaptability — this is a continuous process by design. We prepare NATO to succeed in future operating environments, defined by multi-domain and data-centric warfare, pervasive competition, and new technological opportunities. As we look ahead, the JWC is continuing to adapt and optimize to support the Alliance's highly complex operational requirements. Our new organizational trial structure, which will come into effect in 2026, is specifically designed to better serve our warfighters, accelerating the delivery of critical capabilities to NATO.

None of this would be possible without the JWC's One Team.

In 2025, the Centre's staff have had to transform the JWC's very DNA even while planning and executing major exercises, preparing for facility renovations, welcoming distinguished visitors, and administering the daily business of the organization. What the Joint Warfare Centre's personnel have achieved this year and are in the process of achieving shows great resilience and dedication to the NATO Alliance.

To support our Transformation Programme, we created the JWC's new values: excellence in action, innovation in motion, and united in purpose. These values, aligned with our ideals and strengths, will act as a beacon, guiding us towards the realization of the JWC's vision for the coming years. The Joint Warfare Centre fills a unique role within NATO, committed to delivering consistent value to our Alliance with greater efficiency and agility. Our mission may evolve, but our core ethos will remain: Together we make NATO better. ✦