



Newsletter

NATO SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

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THE 70 YEARS OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND THE ROLE OF SFA

The NATO Centre of Excellence Opening Ceremony took place in a historical moment of the Alliance's life and certified the vitality and enduring strength of our shared values and commitments.

In fact, the Transatlantic link and the Collective Defence which are making the security of Europe and North America indivisible generated the "strongest and most successful Alliance in history" (J.Stoltenberg).

For 70 years, the Atlantic Alliance has been able to prevent conflicts, preserve peace and to defend the free democratic values and territories of nearly one billion citizens.

Historically, the average life of a collective-defence alliance has been estimated in 15 years. During the last five centuries, just 10 of the 63 major military alliances survived beyond 40 years.

NATO's unmatched success relies on its adaptive DNA.

Opening Ceremony of the NATO SECURITY FORCE ASSISTANCE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

Cesano di Roma, 26 March 2019

Fabrizio W. LUCIOLLI

President of the Atlantic Treaty Association

Despite its complex political-military structure, NATO has always been able to change according to the continuous transformation of the security landscape.

Moreover, the Open-Door policy reinforced the Alliance which – from the original 12 States - is ready to welcome the Republic of North Macedonia as its thirtieth Member. The opening of a new Centre of Excellence on Security Force Assistance testifies NATO's continuous effort to cope with the security needs for the next 70 years.

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To better understand the future challenges of the Centre, one can follow Hegel's suggestion saying that "you can understand the future as much you are able to understand the past."

During its first four decades NATO's role has been summarized by the first NATO Secretary General, Lord Ismay's statement of "keeping Americans in, Russia out, Germans down" .

During the Cold War the security concept was identified in a mere military meaning of static territorial collective defence based on the Art. 5 of the Treaty.

However, in the 1956 Report of the Three Wise Men Committee - chaired by the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gaetano Martino, together with the Canadian and Norwegian colleagues Lester B.

Pearson and Halvard Lange - it was already clear that "security is today far more than a military matter. The strengthening of political consultation and economic cooperation, the development of resources, progress in education and public understanding, all these can be as important, or even more important, for the protection of the security of a nation, or an alliance, as the building of a battleship or the equipping of an army.

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Moreover, "NATO should not forget that the influence and interests of its members are not confined to the area covered by the Treaty, and that common interests of the Atlantic Community can be seriously affected by developments outside the Treaty area" . Such a farsighted vision anticipated the need for a Comprehensive Approach to effectively address the non-Art. 5 Crisis Response Operations (NA5CRO) NATO was launching in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In this context, "the security concept acquired new political, economic, and social dimensions and became a dynamic concept requiring the projection of forces and stability "out of area" .

During the post-Cold War era NATO quickly adapted its Strategic Concept while launching Crisis Response Operations, partnerships programs, training and assistance initiatives, in the Balkans and beyond.

The fall of the Twin Towers and the invocation for the first time of Art. 5, have dramatically outlined to the Atlantic community the danger of the modern global, asymmetric and hybrid threats, which need to be addressed where they originate.

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While NATO promptly reacted with a robust expeditionary role, a new Strategic Concept outlined the paramount relevance “to develop the capability to train and develop local forces in crisis zones, so that local authorities are able, as quickly as possible, to maintain security without international assistance” .

From the Balkans to Afghanistan and Iraq, the NATO Training Mission became a key asset in the framework of a Comprehensive Approach Action Plan (CAAP) adopted in the aftermath of the 2010 Lisbon Summit.

The official inauguration of a new COE for Security Force Assistance can count on more than a quarter of a century’s NATO experience in advising, training and mentoring partner states to achieve sustainable defence reform and building capabilities.

However “the security landscape in which the Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence is today requested to act and the tasks to be addressed, appear much more complex and challenging” .

The 2011 Arab uprisings and the 2014 Russian illegal annexation of the Ukraine’ s peninsula of Crimea, obliged NATO to cope with both the Collective Defence and Crisis management tasks simultaneously, and to adopt a 360° approach able to Deter and Defend the Alliance in the East while Projecting Stability to the South.

Moreover, the Russian nuclear posture, the Skripal case and the risk of CBNR proliferation, together with the potential threat of new forms of terrorism, are also of major concern. In addition, the new cyber operational domain, energy security, climate change and migrations, are testifying the different nature of today’ s threats and challenges, often originating with unprecedented speed, thus challenging the decision-making process of the Alliance.

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Likewise, a new Hybrid Warfare is eluding the application of Art. 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty whilst the vicious use of disinformation and false news attempts to weaken the cohesion of the Western societies and their free democratic processes.

In this unpredictable security scenario, “If NATO’s neighbours are more stable, NATO is more secure.” This statement is at the heart of NATO’s Concept on Projecting Stability adopted by Allied leaders at the NATO Summit in Warsaw in 2016. NATO Secretary General has often outlined that investing in developing local institution and forces and capabilities is a cost-effective mean to prevent crisis and fight terrorism and destabilization. By stating that NATO’s security is linked to the stability of the neighbours, Allied leaders made clear that while carrying out the most relevant Collective Defence reinforcement since the end of the Cold War, they were not looking to pull up the drawbridge of a NATO Fortress. On the contrary, while NATO was enhancing its Deterrence and Defence posture, in 2014 an integrated package of defence capacity building was launched with Jordan, in 2017 the Allies and Kuwait inaugurated a regional Centre in Kuwait to conduct activities with the Gulf Cooperation Countries, and in 2018 a new Training Mission has been planned in Iraq.

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However, cooperation with partners could be more challenging in the present times. In the past, partners in Central and Eastern Europe were much more homogenous and motivated to act due to their aspiration for NATO membership.

At present, just a few nations among the over 40 NATO partners are official aspirant Countries.

Due to the increased diversity of today’s partners, a more flexible approach should also be considered by NATO.

Moreover, the complexity of the security scenario requires very-well tailored programs.

[In this respect, while in the long-term NATO models of training Security Forces will prove to be the best ones, in the short term you could get more effective outcomes by taking advantage of the local procedures and training traditions.]

In the present high demanding security scenario, a critical issue remains the financial sustainability in the long-term of the Centre of Excellence training programs.

To this end, NATO’s political consultation is essential to maintain the Atlantic solidarity, which could be affected by different security perceptions among NATO member States and across the Atlantic, as the Alliance is called to act in three different continents, from the Baltic to Iraq and to Afghanistan.

Allied solidarity and the Transatlantic Bond need to be strengthened by a fairer burden sharing in line with the commitment adopted by the NATO Heads of State and Government participating in the 2014 Wales Summit, which requires to devote the 2% of the GDP to defence expenditures, with a significant portion on major new equipment and related Research and Development.

In this perspective, the strategic partnership with the European Union is key, also to assure a coherent development of civilian and military capabilities and cutting-edge technologies.

The aforementioned security landscape represents the field of action of the COE for Security Force Assistance. Moreover, the Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence will take advantage and will impact on several other NATO concepts, doctrines, and policies.

The NATO SFA COE activities can be summarized by the effective acronym GOTE-AM: Generate, Organize, Train, Enable, Advise, Mentor.

"the Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence will take advantage and will impact on several other NATO concepts, doctrines, and policies".

Activities must be based on the principle of a political and possibly financial commitment of the Hosting Nation (HN), Political Primacy of the local authorities;

Legitimacy; Comprehensive Approach with the International Community, especially European Union and United Nations; Local Ownership and Empowerment of local forces; in-depth Understanding of the Operational and Information Environment; Sustainability in the long-term; Force Protection; Strategic Communication; visible and controlled Effectiveness.

Finally, one must also mention how important are for NATO the gender issues in security. According to the UN Global Review on the Women, Peace and Security UNSCR 1325, the security of women is one of the most reliable indicators for how peaceful a state is. The participation of women in peace processes increases by 35% the probability that peace will last longer than 15 years.

In 2018 at the Brussels Summit NATO leaders declared the Full Operational Capability of the NATO Strategic Direction South-Hub, based at the Joint Force Command in Naples. The NATO Security Force Assistance Centre of Excellence Opening Ceremony represents another milestone of the Italian contribution to the Alliance.

The Centre will soon become an internationally recognized focal point able to provide NATO and Partner countries with a unique capability to train and develop local forces in crisis zones while offering a comprehensive expertise and support in the area of the Security Force Assistance (SFA).

While the world is changing and NATO is continuously adapting to cope with the new security challenges, the core values of freedom, peace and security that the Centre is looking to serve remain the same that, 70 years ago, the Heads of State and Government of the Western community decided to defend by signing in Washington the Atlantic Treaty.

Abstracts of the Opening Ceremony speeches

The Centre's Director, Col Franco MERLINO

“... Human Capital plays a fundamental role in SFA activities. Advising, assisting and training Local Security Forces and their related institutions is not only a question of delivering procurement and develop programs but, first of all, of a good quality of advisors, mentors and trainers employed at all level of interaction with the counterpart. ...Security Force Assistance is ... part of a broader framework of activities in which military actors are just some among many others...” .

The NATO SACT HQ representative, Major General Nerim BITLISLIOGLU

“... NATO needs the NATO COEs to continue being independent thinkers who utilize their broad international network of experts, in developing consistent innovative solutions to address both current and future alliance challenges... With the establishment of a SFA COE, NATO will reach a higher level on the SFA topic through: their contribution to exercises ..., the participation ... in training modules ..., the tight link with the hub to the south in Naples. ...” .

The Deputy Director General of the Directorate General for Political Affairs and Security of the Italian Ministry of Foreign affairs Minister Plenipotentiary, Min. Diego BRASIOLI

“... This ceremony comes at a time when we are experiencing manifold, complex challenges to security coming from all strategic directions. Our partners ... are engaged in a struggle to strengthen their institutions and their capacity to handle security effectively and autonomously. ...it is essential for the Alliance to provide high-level expertise in the field of reconstruction and post-conflict scenarios through a unique capability such as Cesano's new Centre. ...”

The Albanian Chief of Defence, Gen.B. Bardhyl KOLLCAKU

“... Defence Capacity Building and Projecting Stability become of paramount importance in dealing with threats from the south... Albania...strongly believes that this Centre will help the Alliance in effectively promoting stability during conflict and post-conflict scenarios, through the organization of seminars and conferences; aiding and supporting education and training; supporting the development of NATO doctrine and standards; supporting the development of academic research projects; as well as producing publications related to SFA etc. At the same time, through cooperation with other civilian and security institutions, I believe that the Centre will have a lot to benefit... The Centre might assist in improving pre-deployment training and selection for the Albanian armed forces members that perform advising, training and mentoring tasks...” .

The Italian Chief of Defence, General Enzo VECCIARELLI

“... This Center is part of a larger effort aimed at sustaining all three NATO core tasks: Collective Defence, Crisis Management and Cooperative Security. The NATO SFA COE is a tangible sign of its Sponsoring Nations - Albania and Slovenia - and of the Italian commitment to NATO. ...This Centre will also enhance an international collaborative approach between the Alliance, NATO nations and NATO partners and other partners in the development of SFA capabilities and in ensuring a common approach to stability operations. ...Security Force Assistance is absolutely relevant regardless of the nature of the operations we are likely to take part in: peacetime limited engagement, peace support operations, irregular warfare or major combat operations” .



From left to right: Albanian CHOD Gen.B. KOLCAKU , Italian CHOD General VECCIARELLI and Slovenian Deputy CHOD, B.Gen. GLAVAS.

Ribbon cutting during the NATO SFA COE Opening Ceremony that celebrates, after the formal accreditation from the North Atlantic Council on the 3rd of December 2018, the official entrance of the SFA COE among the NATO COEs community.



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