

NORTHERN STAR

MAGAZINE FOR HQ JFC BRUNSSUM - DECEMBER 2019



NATO @70

LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

THIS MONTH'S FOCUS : **PAST ALLIANCE ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES**

- ACADEMICS DAY IN JOINT FORCE COMMAND BRUNSSUM
- REMEMBRANCE CEREMONIES: 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION OF SOUTH LIMBURG
- MUNICIPALITY OF BRUNSSUM AND JOINT FORCE COMMAND BRUNSSUM: SIGNATURE OF A 'LETTER OF INTENT'



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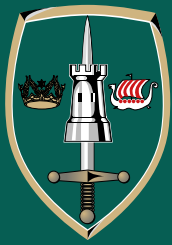


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MAGAZINE FOR HQ JFC BRUNSSUM

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Sgt Marc Andre Gaudreault (CAN Army)

Assistant Editor

CONTRIBUTORS:

Mrs Barry Mellor - JFCBS/Deputy Chief Military Public Affairs

Ms Sarah Boutboul - JFCBS/Intern Military Public Affairs

PHOTO CREDITS:

JFCBS Military Public Affairs



ABOUT THE COVER

Friday 27 September JFCBS commander, General Erhard Bühler, hosted an 'Academics Day' as part of a portfolio of events designed to celebrate the Alliance's 70th birthday on 04 April 2019.

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+31 (0)45-571 61 16
info@tswarteschaap.nl
www.tswarteschaap.nl

NATO@70 – THE BRUNSSUM PERSPECTIVE

By General Erhard Bühler, Commander Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum



On 4th April 2019 the NATO Alliance turned 70 years old. This historic milestone was celebrated by Defence Ministers of member nations as they gathered for a conference and reception in Washington D.C.. Across the Alliance that event sparked a broad portfolio of synchronised celebratory activities undertaken by NATO HQs, the Strategic Commands, their subordinates, and other Agencies, with one core message – **‘NATO is as vital to global security as ever.’** In London the NATO Leaders’ Meeting on 3rd and 4th December 2019 brought together Heads of State and Government discussing current challenges and what lies ahead. Visiting “NATO engages – innovating the Alliance”, a dedicated town hall event complementing the Leaders’ Meeting, I was struck by the richness of views and quality of debate – throughout all ranks, professions, ages or gender.

Throughout the year JFCBS, in spite of a demanding schedule of operational tasks, conducted more than 25 ‘NATO@70’ events. We have taken every opportunity to include the topic in the programmes of visiting groups, mobile training teams, briefings to local schools and other community organisations. Activities included a sponsored bicycle ride from the headquarters to the NATO School at Oberammergau – as a native Bavarian I appreciate that Lieutenant General Stuart

Skeates, my Deputy, chose to lend his support and ride for NATO.

Academics Day at JFCBS

Our capstone event was, no doubt, the Academics Day on 27th September 2019. This Special Edition of the Northern Star is entirely devoted to capture talks and discussions held on that day. Some of the contributions are fairly far reaching and visionary – some are certainly subject to further discussion. To be clear: as an operational commander my role of course is not to endorse specific views expressed in the context of the event. What I will applaud though is the fair and frank debate we witnessed. Besides the active participation of high profile speakers, a diverse audience comprised of both military and civilians – from senior leaders to young students – raised really pointed questions that gave the panel food for thought. I was especially delighted that General rtd. Klaus Naumann accepted our invitation. General rtd. Naumann in his key note provided both historic insight and farsighted analysis. Remarks offered by Vice Admiral rtd. Ben Bekkering proved equally stimulating and intellectually rewarding.

With General rtd. Naumann, serving as Chairman of the Military Committee from 1996 to 1999 and Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering who held the position of Dutch

Military Representative from 2016 to 2019, two outstanding examples of NATO leadership made their way to Brunssum and we were delighted to host them. Dr. Keir Giles, a renowned expert on security issues made vital contributions during the panel discussion. Additionally, Dr. Ziya Meral contributed greatly as moderator and discussant. We are very grateful for his support. I am particularly happy that we could welcome a number of young school and university students that actively engaged our key note speakers – over lunch and throughout the day’s events. I am also grateful to Lieutenant General Stuart Skeates for most eloquently introducing the event, setting the thematic context and welcoming our speakers.

In recent months the question came up whether NATO was still relevant and what it could do to remain so. While some may consider such institutional soul searching as a sign of weakness I see it as a testament to our strength; only sovereign states and organisations based on democratic values and practices have the luxury to reflect on their roles and responsibilities. Organisations and regimes failing to do so were all ushered into irrelevance sooner or later – unless upholding their institutions by non-democratic means. It was in that spirit that I encouraged participants of the event to be curious, outspoken and explore what continuities and disruptions are key to this great alliance of ours. The



'In recent months the question came up whether NATO was still relevant and what it could do to remain so. While some may consider such institutional soul searching as a sign of weakness I see it as a testament to our strength; only sovereign states and organisations based on democratic values and practices have the luxury to reflect on their roles and responsibilities. '

guiding question was: what can NATO do to continue to guarantee security in our current environment?

It is worth remembering that the event took place at an actively operating Headquarters. The team of 30 nations serving at JFCBS is very much committed to its mission while maintaining a balanced and thoughtful approach. The mission is (1) to provide deterrence management in Northeast Europe, (2) to serve as an operational headquarter to the Afghanistan mission, (3) to generate a NATO Response Force (NRF20) - fit for any mission and (4) to contribute to NATO's Partnership Program. I will start by underlining how proud I am to be able to rely on the dedication and quality of daily service delivered by the women and men I am honoured to command.

I will now briefly outline what I consider the key topics presented and identify five "Commanders observations" that I consider especially relevant. My Deputy, in his opening, will then share his reflections – much in accordance with his Opening Address. Following that you find the contributions of General rtd. Naumann and Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering as presented during the event. A summary of the Questions and Answers will follow the Admirals remarks.

Key Topics presented

Lieutenant General Stuart Skeates reminded the audience of the signing of the Treaty of Washington on 4th April 1949. In his opening he underscores how at JFCBS it is really our role to translate strategic guidance into operational action and the delivery of effects. Stuart also reminds us of what Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in 2017 described as the three ages of NATO: 1949-1989 forms the first, 1989-2014 the second and the period following represents the third age of the Alliance. Clearly, 2014, the year in which Russia undertook actions to illegally annex the Crimea peninsula is seen as the year in which the so called "Islamic State" gained questionable prominence. The year is also considered the point in which it became evident that the three core tasks of NATO, Collective Defence, Crisis Management and Cooperative Security, are truly equally important. Stuart also highlighted how history shaped the alliance and how it has repeatedly proven its ability to adapt.

In his keynote, General rtd. Klaus Naumann took us back to the Nineties that had initially been referred to as "a decade of hope". Soon, he recalled, NATO found it needed to adapt and learn to properly conduct peace support operations. While serving as Chairman

of the Military Committee General rtd. Naumann was prominently involved in the Kosovo campaign, a crucial moment that had provided NATO with the opportunity to learn how to maintain cohesion in times of crisis. General rtd. Naumann remarked that 9/11 was the moment in which NATO became a global security actor whereas the illegal annexation of the Crimea meant a refocus on Article 5 requirements: ensuring a credible deterrence and defence posture. To General rtd. Naumann it was clear: NATO is, in his view, significantly stronger today than it was prior to 2014. Analysing the geostrategic situation at present, the speaker then identified a shift of international power distribution and cautioned not to underestimate the significance of the US "pivot to Asia". General rtd. Naumann stipulated that Europe, by aligning itself with the US, could be contributing to efforts preventing increased confrontation between Beijing and Washington. With regard to NATO, General rtd. Naumann maintained that the alliance would only remain relevant to the US in the long run if it contributed to containing and possibly deterring an increasingly assertive China. General rtd. Naumann proposed the EU to increase military capabilities in order to address potential challenges to Europe and the European neighbourhood, whereas NATO should be adapted to defend common interests globally. The retired General closed outlining that the new and primary role of the alliance would be to become a "global stabilizer without giving up its responsibility for the defence of the NATO Treaty Area."

Vice Admiral rtd. Ben Bekkering refocused the attention to the sea domain, recalling the Battle of Java Sea he expressed his conviction that – other than the multinational alliance defeated during that battle – today's NATO was superbly interoperable, equipped and manned. The speaker still raised the question whether the alliance was ready to face potential strategic shocks to come. The retired Vice Admiral described the state of the world as a perfect storm comprised of four destructive weather systems. He cited, firstly, increased efforts of authoritarian states striving to change the geopolitical order to the detriment of the West. Another weather system was a worldwide rise of nationalism and populism. The third was climate change and technological progress – with the latter both contributing to cause and remedy. As a fourth weather system he identified extreme non-state actors – to include transnational crime organisations. In terms of assessing NATO Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering underlined the need for cohesion while calling out risks caused

by national agendas. Admitting that the Alliance had already successfully faced a number of political and geopolitical challenges, to include the challenging year of 2014, he called for preparedness to face the confluence of the aforementioned weather systems. For the operational level this would mean: (1) knowing the battle problem, (2) ensuring connectivity, (3) maintaining interoperability, (4) innovating holistically, and (5) taking the comprehensive approach to a new level. With regard to the latter Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering called for an integrated approach with a specific emphasis on NATO-EU cooperation. Describing himself a multilateralist the Vice Admiral rtd. ended by expressing his confidence in "our natural instinct to cooperate, matured over seven decades."

Commanders observations

There is no room to fully appreciate all relevant points that were discussed during the day. I would like to just mention five selected aspects that are important to me:

1. NATO is significantly stronger than in 2014

Much remains to be done. However: the organisation has become more adaptable, interoperable, and agile than before.

2. Cohesion is NATO's centre of gravity

Cohesion starts at our level: at JFCBS we are not 30 nations working together – in fact we are a "Team Brunssum": capable, competent and committed.

3. Geographic orientation

NATO needs to be prepared to alter geographic orientation.

At the operational level JFCBS is already fulfilling that requirement.

4. Burden sharing

It is key to honour commitments made. At the same time it is required to remain realistic in terms of capacity to spend funds.

5. Cooperative Security

At the operational level we need to contribute to a systematic approach to partnership activities. Effects must be maximised and redundancies removed.

In closing I would like to thank those that have contributed to the Academics Day at JFCBS and hope that the readers of this magazine will find its content as thoughtful and inspiring as I do.

NATO@70 – INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

*By Lieutenant General Stuart Skeates CBE,
Deputy Commander Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum*



Just over 70 years ago, The Washington Treaty was signed by the twelve founding nations at the Departmental Auditorium of the State Department in Washington DC. The 14 articles explain the purpose of NATO, its principles and how it will react at a time of crisis. The focus on the value of individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law are its bedrock and have never been more important. These principles have been the foundation of the strength and unity of the Alliance, allowing it to successfully address the instability that threatens the Alliance, whilst maintaining peace in Europe and,

as many would say, winning the Cold War. More importantly, the Alliance, which will soon include 30 nations, encompassing 930 million people and almost half of the world's GDP and about 55% of global defence spending, is now able to adapt fully to the new challenges and threats it faces in the changing global environment. Currently, NATO faces the twin threats presented by terrorist groups and Russia - as well as the challenges posed by climate change and by state and non-state actors alike.

The purpose of the NATO@70 academic conference held at JFC Brunssum was

to discuss the ways in which the Alliance needs to transform and adapt in order to remain relevant in this new security environment. Therefore, we focussed not simply on NATO's past achievements but on future strategic challenges. This sits at the heart of JFCBS's mission to translate strategic direction into tactical action on a worldwide scale: on land, at sea, in the air, in cyberspace, in the information environment and in the social environment. Our focus must always be on how best to deliver joint effects, ensuring that not only the military forces under our command are operating effectively but that the national activities in the cyber, information and space domains are coordinated to best effect and pushing towards the same strategic end state.

Whilst the focus of the conference was to discuss the future of NATO, it is nonetheless important to consider its past. As Mark Twain once suggested, history may not repeat itself but it sure does rhyme. Identifying those rhymes is key to forming a coherent understanding about NATO and how it should best adapt for the future.



‘Thus, the history of the Alliance should help to prepare us for the future. The three ages of NATO demonstrate the range of threats and challenges the Alliance has evolved to counter whilst also proving that we may have to counter a threat we have not previously even imagined. ’

The challenges faced over time by the Alliance have changed dramatically in both scope and focus. Jens Stoltenberg uses a ‘three ages’ framework to distinguish between these challenges, determining the first period of the Alliance to be from its establishment to the end of the Cold War. This period is often presented as a monolithic period of nuclear and conventional deterrence but it should not be forgotten that whilst NATO’s establishment was in part to counter the threat from the Soviet Union, it was as much to break the centuries-old cycle of European wars.

The collapse of the Soviet Union precipitated not only the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the ‘New World Order’ but also marked the start of the second age of NATO. This period was distinguished by a set of very different challenges - and subsequent successes - focussing on the need to maintain stability in Europe as the ex-Soviet Bloc attempted to rebuild independent states based on democratic

principles. Throughout its second age, NATO evolved from an Alliance focused purely on Collective Defence to incorporate Stabilisation Operations in support of the UN, managing to bring an end to the war in Bosnia, stopping potential genocide in Kosovo and preventing conflict in what is now North Macedonia. However, it should not be forgotten that it this period was set apart by the questioning of the purpose of the Alliance; throughout the second age, fierce debates focussing upon the relevance and value of NATO were common.

As in 1989, it was a strategic shockwave that triggered the further transformation of the Alliance - the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Whilst the 9/11 attacks constituted a major strategic shift and prompted the Alliance to expand its reach far beyond its borders, the fundamental task remained the same: collective defence for NATO members. As a result, the Secretary General has argued that the real change in the security environment happened in 2014 with the

Russian annexation of Crimea, an action that threatens the rules-based international order that has preserved peace in Europe since the establishment of NATO. It was also in 2014 that ISIL emerged as a global threat, demonstrating great destructive capability as well as rejecting the Western international order through its attempts to build the Caliphate. This combination of threats determines the third age of NATO; an age that requires NATO to be prepared for collective defence, to manage all types of crisis and to promote stability far beyond its borders. Unfortunately, we do not have the luxury of choosing which threat we prepare ourselves to act against; we must be prepared for all.

Thus, the history of the Alliance should help to prepare us for the future. The three ages of NATO demonstrate the range of threats and challenges the Alliance has evolved to counter whilst also proving that we may have to counter a threat we have not previously even imagined.



'The NATO@70 conference discussed important strategic trends regarding these challenges, demanding an engaged intellectual application from the staff at JFCBS. '

The NATO@70 conference discussed important strategic trends regarding these challenges, demanding an engaged intellectual application from the staff at JFCBS. As you read the following articles, consider the importance of the Collective Defence principle and the evolution of its application; question why NATO has been able to adapt its interpretation of Articles 3 - 5 despite all of the potential obstacles; ask whether NATO is currently structured appropriately to the threats it faces and whether it can make decisions at the speed of relevance; and answer how best you think NATO should adapt to meet the challenges of the future? If, in those deliberations, you could consider the best way to integrate a military plan in support of a diplomatic or economic plan within a comprehensive approach, then the NATO@70 conference will continue to add value, developing us all professionally and enhancing the effectiveness of the Alliance.



NATO@70 – KEY NOTE SPEECH

By General rtd. Dr. h.c. Klaus Naumann

NATO@70
Academics
General (rtd.)
Klaus Naumann

27 September
2019



Grateful for the invitation and appreciate the opportunity to speak at a conference, which marks the 70th anniversary of NATO.

When NATO was established in 1949 the world entered the Cold War, which lasted for more than four decades and led to the biggest military confrontation Europe had ever seen in peacetime. I served in NATO assigned German Armed Forces for a

little more than three of these four decades. The Bundeswehr was when I departed for NATO in 1996 still a truly substantial force ready to fight, trained and equipped for a defensive war to be fought in Central Europe and its adjacent seas. At the end of my military career, then being NATO's highest ranking military officer as CMC NATO, I had to oversee NATO's first war operation, the Kosovo Air Campaign, which ended

twenty years ago on June 12, 1999.

Looking back on the seven decades of NATO makes it abundantly clear that NATO is an incredible success. The Alliance richly deserves being described as the world's most successful security organization, at least in modern history.

'Looking back on the seven decades of NATO makes it abundantly clear that NATO is an incredible success. The Alliance richly deserves being described as the world's most successful security organization, at least in modern history. '



COM JFC BS asked me to discuss with you what needs to be done to preserve NATO as the guarantor of transatlantic security and to do so against my experiences gained during my tenure as CMC NATO at the end of the nineties.

The nineties were a decade of hope. We had hoped for a lasting peace order from Vancouver to Vladivostok. All decisions taken at that time aimed at that objective, the controlled and verified reduction of armed forces, NATO enlargement accompanied by the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997, the 1999 Strategic Concept and the restructuring of the armed forces. But as none of us believed that the changes, which we witnessed were irreversible we continued to paying heed to the one principle of military planning and strategic thinking, which is still valid today: The Military has to be prepared for the unexpected. That came much faster than expected when the former Yugoslavia disintegrated and war returned to Europe but Europe failed

to respond. It was NATO, which had to restore at least an absence of war but it had to learn Peace Support Operations, cooperation with the UN and the EU. Then in 1999 NATO had to fight its first war operation in Kosovo. It learnt how to maintain cohesion, then at 19, although none of the NATO nations regarded Kosovo as a central for preserving their respective national interests. We learnt how to avoid the misinterpretation of political control as micromanagement of military operations and we fully appreciated the incredible advantages offered to NATO by its integrated military command structure. In the Balkans NATO succeeded in bringing the Yugoslav tragedy to a preliminary end since Europe failed to live up to its responsibility. Thus NATO became the indispensable instrument of choice for European security and its success triggered at the same time aspirations for developing European military capabilities, which would enable the EU becoming an actor in crisis management.

That marks more or less the end of the second of the four phases of NATO's history when NATO managed, after the successful end of phase 1, the East-West conflict, by constantly evolving and adapting to maintain its relevance on both sides of the Atlantic in fundamentally different security environments. NATO filled the power vacuum left by the bygone Warsaw Pact, supported the democratization of Eastern Europe and helped to bring peace to the Balkans.

The third phase began with the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York and saw NATO evolving into a global security actor, fighting terrorism and in particular the Taliban thousands of kilometres away from the NATO Treaty Area (NTA). Although NATO's overly ambitious political objectives were not met NATO prevented so far Afghanistan from once again becoming a breeding ground for jihadist terrorism.



‘NATO adapted very swiftly to the new requirements, possibly much quicker than Putin had expected when he launched the still raging war against Ukraine. As a result of the summits in Wales (2014) and Warsaw (2016), NATO significantly improved its readiness for territorial defence across the entire NATO Treaty Area ’



With Moscow's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, the fourth phase of Alliance history started. Since then, NATO is back in the "Article 5 World" – a security environment in which the commitments of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty need to be bolstered by a credible deterrence and defence posture and in which all allies first and foremost have to honour their commitments, which includes the 2% formula. At the same time NATO will have to leave the door open for both dialogue with the increasingly assertive Russia and for new members.

NATO adapted very swiftly to the new requirements, possibly much quicker than Putin had expected when he launched the still raging war against Ukraine. As a result of the summits in Wales (2014) and Warsaw (2016), NATO significantly improved its rea-

diness for territorial defence across the entire NATO Treaty Area (NTA). So, in a nutshell, since Russia's abrogation of the Paris Charta of 1990 in 2014, NATO again guarantees the freedom and security of its members in the East. Thus, the United States remain engaged and despite still lingering concerns about the future course of the Trump administration, NATO is significantly stronger today than five years ago when it was looking for a new *raison d'être*. This is where we stand today and this is the point of departure for discussing NATO's future.

Such a discussion has to begin with the fundamental shift of international power distribution and a changing American worldview. This is and will remain the major challenge to NATO and the American engagement in Europe, not so much the current US president's volatility. I therefore believe

that NATO faces an almost existential problem in the long term as it will be difficult to maintain NATO's relevance for the United States if the alliance will not change in a truly fundamental way. The US is and will remain the dominant, and indeed indispensable power within the Alliance, the crucial question therefore is what to do to make NATO indispensable for the US.

To this end we Europeans have first to understand how the Americans view Russia today and secondly to which extent Europe matters for the US geo-strategically. Washington as well as by the way most Europeans sees Russia as a power in decline. The country missed decades of modernization and wastes it money for boosting its self-image as a major international player. Russia has a significantly smaller GDP than Italy, has only two competitive products



'The Russian armed forces might be able to attack or bully smaller neighbours, but they are hardly capable of taking decisive action on a global scale, let alone mounting a large-scale offensive operation against a Europe allied with the US.'

on the world market, energy and weapons, but has to cope with huge demographic challenges, corruption which paralyses the country, tremendous health problems and a truly damaging exodus of young intellectuals. The Russian armed forces might be able to attack or bully smaller neighbours, but they are hardly capable of taking decisive action on a global scale, let alone mounting a large-scale offensive operation against a Europe allied with the US. But Russia's nuclear capabilities are still relevant, and they are permanently modernised. A modernised NATO can handle the threat posed by Russia's conventional forces but for deterring Russia's nuclear power the full and credible commitment of the US is indispensable. But seen from the perspective of a US versus Russia conflict Russia does not have much more than a "nuisance capability" as the late Senator McCain put it since Russia and it will be less and less able to shape international politics on a decisive scale. Nevertheless, Russia is perceived as a revisionist power, ready to break international law to pursue its power ambitions. Lacking the resources to mount an open challenge to the United States, Russia uses and will continue using the entire range of statecraft, including disinformation, cyber-attacks and interference with domestic elections to take action against what it perceives as the "great enemy" in the West. Moscow invests its scarce resources selectively to de-stabilize countries like Ukraine, to drive a wedge in alliances such as NATO or the EU or to leave a lasting footprint in the Middle East, which is clearly directed against US interests. This may make it more difficult for the US to handle Russia but it does no longer make an expensive and entangling alliance in Europe indispensable for the US for coping with Russia. For the US bilateral agreements with countries geo-



graphically close to Russia could possibly suffice but such arrangements would neither give those countries the assurance NATO guarantees nor would such arrangements preserve stability in Europe. That is the change the Europeans need to digest. It is a change that will last since it has nothing to do with Trump. Economic ties will not suffice since Europe is and will remain an economic competitor who, by the way, has to elimina-

te the US impression to be a free-rider at American expense in security.

Thus, the real danger for NATO is the geostrategic reorientation of the US away from Russia and towards China. That means that Europe is no longer indispensable for the US in geo-strategic terms.



'NATO's new and primary role would thus be to become a global stabilizer without giving up its responsibility for the defence of the NATO Treaty Area.'



My conclusions: First, NATO will have to fundamentally alter its geographic orientation otherwise it will fall into oblivion. Secondly, NATO has to revisit and probably change its strategy since remaining focused on being a regional security provider for Europe could in the long run destroy the transatlantic link. NATO has to think through how it could remain essential for the US

without reducing the US freedom of action as a global player and without being dragged by the US into conflicts in which no European interest is at stake. Alliances are always based on the give and take principle.

During the Cold War and its confrontation with the USSR the most important European contribution was their preparedness to grant the

US the control of the European continent. That permitted a US forward defence of the North American continent at little, at least controllable risk for the US homeland and that made Europe indispensable for the US. This is no longer the case since today's and probably tomorrow's challenger is China and thus the geographical area of main interest of the US is Asia. Europe could matter for



the US if it were a contributor in keeping the risks under control, which could jeopardize the US. Thus my first answer is: A NATO focused on the role of a regional defender of Europe will endanger, probably destroy the transatlantic link in the long run.

The future competitor of the US, the challenger as a global leader is China. China is perceived as a rising power with its breath taking economic development, which becomes increasingly translated into military capabilities. Hence, China is on its way to become a true peer to Washington, not only challenging the US role in the Pacific but also being ready to replace the United States in the international order.

Such an overall view of Russia being in decline and China being on the rise is more or less shared by almost all European NATO Allies. Furthermore, there is a broad consensus that both trends might differ in speed or intensity, but that they are very unlikely to be reversed. Nevertheless, NATO member states have not given a lot of thought to the consequences such developments might have for Europe in general and for the Atlantic Alliance in particular.

What I discussed so far underlines that we Europeans need to understand that we witness one of these turning points in history, which may well mean that nothing, which is valid today may be valid tomorrow. We are as scholars often put it at a defining moment. But this defining moment goes far beyond the military dimension.

The hope that the Western model of an order could become the model adopted by the majority of the world faded away. A competitor emerged when Xi Jinping announced in 2018 China's ambition that the Chinese model will be the order of the world's

majority by the year 2049 when the PRC will be 100 years old. There is no way of reconciling the Chinese model and the Western model since the Western model is centered on guaranteeing the individual freedom protected by the power of the law whereas the Chinese model promises personal well-being as the reward for loyalty, duty, service and obedience to the central power and that leaves no room for individual freedom. Hence, we are in a new global competition, which means that we have to open our eyes to the geo-political and geo-strategic realities of it.

The open question is whether this competition will produce confrontation or cooperation. The answer will to some extent depend on the role Europe, say the EU, will play. If Europe acted as an ally of the US then there might be a chance for a cooperative approach since the world's still most powerful economic actor, the EU, would then stand by the US, the world's only actor which disposes of truly full-fledged capabilities across the entire range of power projection. This could well be the formula, which could avoid that the US-China competition could end in the global war, which some scholars predict as unavoidable.

In this new US-Chinese bilateralism, NATO could assert its relevance for the US only, if it contributed to containing China's potential global ambitions and to preventing Beijing from replacing the liberal, rules-based order with its own concept of international relations.

A NATO, which is able to contribute to deterring China, that is the dimension both NATO and Europe face at this turning point of history and that requires Europe to do at least two things:

1. Maintain cohesion both in NATO and the EU and achieving European

capabilities, which would suffice for managing all risks and dangers facing primarily Europe such as deterring a more assertive Russia and coping with North African instabilities

2. Agreeing on the necessity of contributing to American efforts of defending common interests wherever they are at stake all the way from the Greater Middle East to the South China Sea.

Doing that means

1. Strengthening and reforming the EU in such a way that it could act autonomously in all European crises across the entire range of options and applying all instruments of power projection and defence.

2. Transforming NATO in a full-fledged global actor which continues to deter and prevent nuclear conflicts and nuclear proliferation and which will act jointly with the US and other allies across the entire Indo-Pacific region aiming at conflict prevention or, if necessary, successful conflict resolution

NATO's new and primary role would thus be to become a global stabilizer without giving up its responsibility for the defence of the NATO Treaty Area.



NATO@70 – KEY NOTE SPEECH

By Vice Admiral rtd. Ben Bekkering



General Stuart, thank you for your kind words of introduction.

Also thank you, General Bühler, for inviting me to deliver a key note speech. I feel honoured.

To start, allow me to take you back in time, to a location and medium perhaps less familiar to this HQ: February 1942 in the sea just north of the - now- Indonesian island of Java.

At that time, the fighting in Europe is mainly in its periphery, to the east near Moscow, to the South in North Africa and to the West off the Atlantic coast of the US. Obviously, times are tense for all sides, but each side seems to have a some appreciation of the situation, some plan to go by

and at least some sort of professional respect for the other side.

The situation in the Far East is completely different. Sure, tensions had been rising for some time, but the attack on Pearl Harbor, on the 7th of December 1941, comes as an immense surprise: how can an opponent considered to be doctrinally, technologically, operationally, tactically and culturally by far inferior to Western nations, pull off something like that. And it doesn't stop there. By February 1942 surprise has made room for uncertainty, even fear. Manilla and Singapore have fallen, Sumatra and Borneo under attack, not a single Western naval ship at sea safe, and an attack on the oil- and rubber-

rich island of Java is imminent.

Talking about strategic shock!

Against this background, the battle of the Java Sea takes place. The recently formed American British Dutch Australian Command hastily brings together a Combined Striking Force of 5 cruisers and 9 destroyers under Dutch command. Without any previous training they leave respective ports, meet up for the first time and, against the advice of the commander who wanted to await better conditions, the Force heads towards the alleged position of the Japanese invasion fleet. Strategically it was considered dangerous not to go, as it would give the local population the

'The Alliance has an impressive track record. Intelligence and interoperability are its hallmarks. Treaties, concepts, strategies and policies provide ample political, strategic and operational guidance. Forces are equipped with modern technologies. And our sailors, soldiers, air men and marines are top of the bill with proven fighting spirit and ability.'

idea the western - read colonial - nations could not win, which would then fuel their independence aspirations.

Yet, interoperability and connectivity are poor at best. Common procedures absent. And all crews are tired of long, relentless patrols over the last couple of weeks, without any idea of the enemy's whereabouts, but with the constant fear of imminent attack. The next day they meet their opponent, a force of similar size. The Japanese turn out to be superior in all respect. With continuous air support, sound communications, guns and torpedoes that outrange the Allies and in a winning mood, they defeat the Allies, who suffer great loss of life and ships. The following day most of the remaining Allied ships, desperately trying to get away, are sunk as well. Java is invaded the day thereafter and quickly brought under Japanese control.

Obviously, we are not in 1942. This is 2019. And aren't things much better now? The Alliance has an impressive track record. Intelligence and interoperability are its hallmarks. Treaties, concepts, strategies and policies provide ample political, strategic and operational guidance. Forces are equipped with modern technologies. And our sailors, soldiers, air men and marines are top of the bill with proven fighting spirit and ability.

But are we really better? How valid, in this respect, is the old stock market wisdom that "gain in the past are no guarantee for the future". Yes, I would argue, we are better off for the battles we know. But are we prepared for strategic shocks as those in late 1941, early 1942 in the Far East? Are we prepared for the known and unknown unknowns? Or perhaps better, can one ever be prepared for those in

the first place? And if not, what is it that we actually can and must prepare for? Wouldn't that, as a minimum, require shared awareness and common understanding, recognized at all levels, both politically and militarily?

I don't claim I to have authoritative answers. What I can share with you here, after three years in Brussels, is what I perceive as the state of the world and the state of NATO and what this could mean for your HQ.

Before I continue, I want to make clear that these are my personal opinions and, despite the obvious convergence, not necessarily that of my country.

Let's start with the state of the world

I am afraid this is the sobering part of my speech. I am not all that optimistic about where we stand and where we are heading.

I would describe it as approaching a perfect storm. Some of you may have read the book or seen the movie, starring George Clooney as the captain of an American fishing trawler, caught in a perfect storm which is formed when two destructive weather systems merge and reinforce each other off the US east coast. Despite valiant actions of the Uber-valiant George Clooney, the trawler is defeated by the storm and sinks.

The proverbial perfect storm we are approaching is the sum of not two but four very destructive weather systems. The first system consists of authoritarian states that strive for a different geopolitical order and whose numbers are on the rise. The Western model, is no longer the default aiming point of other nations. China,

amongst others, offer alternatives that may seem tempting, but damaging to us. The second system is rising nationalism and populism, all around the world, certainly also in most of our countries. The third entails climate change and technological progress, both dramatically impacting our lives and our societies. I combine the two, as there are undeniably connected, with technology as much a cause as a potential solution to negative effects of climate change. The fourth system holds extreme non-state organisations, including transnational organized crime, which to me is more destructive and less well understood (and noted) than terrorism.

Each one of these systems could severely damage a ship when caught in the middle. Together they may well produce an unsurmountable problem, even create strategic shocks. So, if we can't run for the storm, which I don't think we can, we better prepare and take action when and where possible and necessary. And as all these systems are global, NATO must also at least think global.

That brings me to the state of NATO

So, how is the good ship NATO? Well, says the former semi-diplomat: that depends.

On the one hand, if values, institutions, populations and territory is what NATO stands for and unity, solidarity and cohesion is how NATO goes about safeguarding them, one has reason to be worried. Despite the fact that our CHODs made a very strong and successful effort in delivering the new NATO Military Strategy and laying the foundation of a deterrence and defense



'Of course, one could add in defense, decision making at 30 is complex, much more complex than decision making at 12. But with the world at least as complex, it its imperative that the decision to call all hands on deck is made in time.'

concept and a capstone concept for development, I did see, in NATO's HQ, too much divergence for my liking. Mostly, I must add, political, even when sometimes disguised as military issues. If populations and territory, as a whole, are not first at risk, which I believe is the case, it is our values and institutions that are at stake. And how common is NATO's set of values? How strongly do all nations still subscribe to the international institutions that have been so important to our stability and prosperity. Why is it that NATO-EU relations, despite warm expressions of mutual love,

are subjected to national agenda's? Add to that definition of terrorism, calls for and recognition of burden sharing and variations in threat perception, and you have a boiling cocktail. Of course, one could add in defense, decision making at 30 is complex, much more complex than decision making at 12. But with the world at least as complex, it its imperative that the decision to call all hands on deck is made in time.

Fortunately, on the other hand, NATO has a proven history of effective change to overcome political and geopolitical storms.

After the relatively stable years between 1949 to 1989, NATO changed. It didn't do so overnight. It took years to move from a collective defense to an out-of-area crisis response organization, but by 2001 NATO had fully transformed.

To guarantee existing stability and prosperity at home, NATO nations had to bring stability and prosperity to regions in our periphery. Hard lessons were learned in the years that followed, both politically and militarily, but our ability to fight terrorism and assist countries reached impressive levels



of output, whatever one thinks of the longer terms outcomes.

As you are undoubtedly all very much aware, in 2014 new events rocked the boat. Russia invaded Ukraine, the Caliphate was called out and the flows of migrants into Europe increased dramatically. The buzzwords of the respective NATO Summits around that time give an interesting tell tale of the evolutionary change that took place within the Alliance.

In 2010, in Lisbon, it was all about partnerships; RUS was invited and sat on the table;

In 2012, in Chicago, smart defense was the OK phrase: we were going to do more with less; certainly the military here know what came of that; Then, in 2014, in Wales, as the dramatic events were unfolding, reassurance as buzz word was a

compromise; yes, RUS is nasty, and sure, we'll come to the aid of eastern Allies when necessary, but not just yet, not forward deployed; so the RAP's and the VJTF were invented;

In 2016, in Warsaw, the earlier concerns solidified; deterrence and defense needed rethinking; yes, Rus really is nasty, and yes, we will forward deployed, albeit in reasonable numbers, both enhanced and tailored;

In 2018, in Brussels, under the dark clouds of the discussion on burden sharing, readiness was the buzz word. It resulted in the NRI, increasing force levels and states. The review of the NCS was completed, enabling decision making at the speed of relevance.

This very brief summary makes clear evolutionary change was taking place. However, evolution can only go on for so long, before revolution

and paradigm change become unavoidable. So what about the 2020 Summit, if there will be one? What should be the buzz word then? The leaders meet at the end of this year in London, so this could give us a clue. But with decision making, readiness and force levels, response and reassurance action plans, a military strategy, the outlines of a defensive and capstone concept for force development already discussed and mostly decided upon, what remains on the political table besides differences in value sets, willingness to invest and spend, developing a common threat perception and truly deepening NATO-EU relations? Sure, one could put the less contentious subjects like transformation and innovation on the table, to which in all earnest nobody can reasonably object, but would not be good if used as an excuse to avoid the fundamental differences within the Alliance.



'We need to operate not just in traditional chains, but in networks, so we can accommodate the loss of a shackle or node, without any cost to the overall effect, and thus become more resilient, more survivable, more flexible. .'



Now there may be still some time. The previous transition took 12 years. There is no reason to believe the current transition will be much faster, given the complexity of the world we live in. That would mean that we are only in the middle of our transition. But do we have time? Accepting that under pressure everything gets fluid, we need some more time for the pressure to build.

What we cannot do, is tackle the four weather systems, one by one. They are already merging and we need to look at them in concert.

Now I accept that for the military this may sound unsatisfactory, too liberal. If NATO struggles politically to come to terms with the changing world, and at the tactical level our troops perform admirably when given a proper task, what can you as one of the main

HQ's at the operational level do?

Here some thoughts. They are certainly not new and certainly not intended to be groundbreaking, but may give you an idea of what directions you must look at.

First, knowing the **battle problem**. The World War 2 Pacific campaign turned out to evolve around sea control. The Japanese understood that well, initially the Allies less well. To their cost. Here and now, allow me to take a look at the Atlantic. In the Cold War the Soviet Navy had 300 submarines. Now they have 18. So what's the big deal?

Well, all of them are now fitted with LRCM, forming a direct threat to every NATO- and European capital. That is a strategic matter with vast operational consequences.

In the land domain one could pose a similar question. Is our strategic competition about territorial gain or safeguard the Rules Based International Order? Is it therefore about a massive land campaign or about a relatively small incursion with the aim of presenting a fait-accompli. And what would be required to counter that?

Second, we need to stay **connected**. All nations have invested a lot in high quality platforms, of which, on the downside, there are less and less. So what we have must be connected. Sensors, shooters and decision making. Operating dispersed, but able to instantly deliver concentrated effect, reinforced by equally connected forces and fires. We need to operate not just in traditional chains, but in networks, so we can accommodate the loss of a shackle or node, without

'NATO has always been the hallmark of interoperability. It is one of our key strengths. It is fundamental to the principle of burden sharing.'

any cost to the overall effect, and thus become more resilient, more survivable, more flexible. Probably this also calls for doctrinal change.

This implies that we need to control the free spaces. Not just the seas, but also space and cyber space. Not just when things go wrong, but already now. Controlling the free spaces will allow and enable us to know what is going on and act decisively when called upon, at all levels, at all times, with the information domain in the widest possible sense, which I prefer over somewhat limiting term of cyber domain, crucial.

Third, we need to remain **interoperable**, at the very time we see nations develop and innovate at varying paces, not just technically, also doctrinally and operationally. That may limit the depth and width of multi-national formations. NATO has always been the hallmark of interoperability. It is one of our key strengths. It is fundamental to the principle of burden sharing. But it may need a revision in how we train, exercise and operate in times of out-of-sync adaption of disruptive technologies and differing investment cycles, constantly being aware that there is no really room for coalitions within the Alliance.

Fourth, we must constantly **innovate**. Now I don't believe innovation is for nerds. Practical innovation and subsequent implementation can only happen if you bring researcher, builder AND user together. Each one plays a vital role, each one has a personal aim, but they should share a common outcome: effective, affordable, innovative and competitive spin-off. In the Netherlands this triangular model matured in the naval arena, delivering generation after genera-



tion of competitive ships, both in price and capability. It is now also embraced in the other domains, with the Army's Future Camp Field Lab as a convincing example.

And finally, NATO can't do it alone. We are all familiar with the comprehensive approach, combining diplomatic, defense and development efforts in support of the overall aim.

But whether it is for collective defense of crisis management, we need to go further, think multi-level, multi-lateral, multi-dimensional and multi-phased. In other words, at any stage of a conflict, with all parties involved, at all levels of operations and governance and all interments of power, in short an **integrated approach**. Mobility, medical support, resilient digital infrastructure, assured access to



'Our societies may be vulnerable to bullies, but our people and our natural instinct to cooperate, matured over 7 decades of training, exercising and indeed fighting shoulder to shoulder, and the values that are at stake make me believe that we can do it.'



ports all require civilian authorities, some governmental, others non-governmental. Intense NATO-EU cooperation to me is therefore a no-brainer and goes beyond simplifications such as European strategic autonomy.

And yes, this means, that besides the high-end spectrum of warfare, we need to maintain skills, people and tools to conduct train, assist and advice as well as humanitarian assistance operations. That is certainly what the people expect us to be ca-

pable of as well. And where we can hope to win international support for our Rules Based International Order.

I have been talking way too long, so I will come to an end. Besides my commands at sea, my three years in Brussels belong to the best years I have had in uniform. I mean that. It has been a privilege and a joy to work alongside all the nations that form NATO - and the EU. It made me an even stronger multilateralist than I already was. And although the way the world evolves

is not always the way I hope to see, I remain cautiously optimistic that we have enough going for us to find ways out. Our societies may be vulnerable to bullies, but our people and our natural instinct to cooperate, matured over seven decades of training, exercising and indeed fighting shoulder to shoulder, and the values that are at stake make me believe that we can do it. We have to. But with you on the wall and me in the rocking chair. And so I wish you lots of success.



NATO@70 – PANEL DISCUSSION

“PAST ALLIANCE ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES”



NATO@70 Academics Day's panel discussion was conducted at JFC Brunssum September 27th, 2019. The Panel was moderated by Dr. Ziya Meral and comprised of three VIP guest speakers, General rtd. Naumann, Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering, and Dr. Keir Giles.

Dr. Meral opened the conversation discussing **NATO's continued adaptability** to a fast-changing security environment and emerging threats. In this regard, Dr. Giles immediately insisted on the necessity to further develop NATO's strategic communications in order to improve transparency and openness at all levels so as to shape the narrative instead of describing it. This would include a faster response with day-to-day activities to enhance public perception of the Alliance's current challenges, aims and objectives. In his remarks Dr. Giles underlined that public awareness, especially of the young generation, needs to be improved. Dr. Meral followed up with the issue

of common threat perception with the United States vis-à-vis China and the operational implications of Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering's integrated approach theory explained during the morning session. Regarding the question on finding a common threat perception in regard to China, General rtd. Naumann advised it may take time to formulate allied consensus on this issue.

As he reminded the audience, finding an agreement and a strategy expressing the collective will of all the Nations must be done before China becomes increasingly powerful. Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering then highlighted the importance of adopting a bottom-up methodology as soon as possible to enhance an integrated approach within the Alliance, starting from the tactical level. In his view, NATO needs to be more open and connected to the public whether it is seeking to argue its relevance or its importance to the future. NATO must improve engagement with media, commerce,

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) and other sectors of interest.

The second part of the panel discussion made time for a **Q&A session** between a lively audience and key-speakers. The first question, asked by an Albanian student, focused on the matter of a more intense NATO-EU cooperation to protect Eastern European countries from **Russia's continuous interference**. General Naumann responded by reminding everyone of Russia's complex historical context to enhance a common understanding of the country's motives. Since the 17th century there has been a Russian interest in maintaining buffer zones. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, however, most states inside its western buffer zone had joined NATO. Russia perceives the eastern growth of the Alliance as a direct security threat; as a result Russia interferes with nations on its western and southwestern borders and challenges international laws. This included agreements it was effectively party too,



'Dr Giles argued that an enhanced Forward Presence has proven successful in the past. Indeed, small deployments such as these are a reliable tool to increase the security of the Allies by removing military or political vacuums in vulnerable countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania or Poland.'

such as the Final Helsinki Act or the Paris Charta. Furthermore, according to Dr. Giles, NATO needs to enhance its response to non-military threats that eastern countries are exposed to by maintaining a presence within Russia's sphere of influence. Dr. Giles suggests a change of perception within NATO is necessary to deal with a Russia that sees itself already in conflict. Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering remarked that physical buffer zones could also be replaced by virtual buffer zones – hinting at non-military means to impact on the alliances cohesion, i.e. making military gains without military means.

The debate moved on with examination of two extant challenges for the Alliance: **burden-sharing** and the **future of the arms control regime** with the demise of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. As for the first matter, the panel agreed that most European member states do not honour their 2% GDP commitment which, as a consequence, builds contention amongst the Allies. On this subject, Dr. Giles insisted that it is imperative member states respect their burden-sharing and capabilities contributions in the future in order

to be able to counter evolving threats.

The discussion on arms control proved not to be optimistic. The panel expressed concern that related agreements were ending. According to General rtd. Naumann, arms control had in the past been very much based on bilateral agreements and quantitative control. The future, however, would require completely different approach: multilateral and qualitative. Contemplating whether additional deployments to Poland were impacting the Russian calculus Dr. Giles argued that this was not the case. However, he argued that the enhanced Forward Presence had already proven successful. Indeed, small deployments such as these are a reliable tool to increase the security of the Allies by removing military or political vacuums in vulnerable countries such as

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania or Poland. Another interesting question from the audience referred to NATO's possible expansion outside its current borders. General rtd. Naumann stated that neither NATO nor the EU would be contemplating that. Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering pointed out that where

membership was not an option, military partnership may prove the most suitable tool to achieve global reach if threats should be global in nature and call for such requirements.

As the panel discussion came to an end, the question came up as to what the speakers would offer in terms of **advice to young people** contemplating a career in national or international security. Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering in his response stated what had convinced him to choose a military career was the sense of comradeship, exciting experiences of doing good all over the world and the opportunity to grow and mature as a person. General rtd. Naumann recalled one of the strategic shocks of the past century as a prime motivator. During the Budapest uprising of 1956 he had realized that some had to take on the responsibility to protect individual freedoms enjoyed by all. Dr. Giles added that regardless of what career path someone was keen to follow – someone had to preserve the social system in which such career path would take place.

Dr. Meral raised the question regarding the translation of this con-



'The Alliance's first aim for the future should be to ensure military credibility to the public through its interoperability capability. .'

structive discussion into practice and application and turned to Vice Admiral Paul Bennett, Chief of Staff **Allied Command Transformation (ACT)**, to address this issue. Vice Admiral Bennett highlighted the linkage between interoperability and credibility and the requirement to set up the Alliance for the future. In that regard he submitted that one should never deliver only on current operations but also consider experimentation and defense as a collective endeavor.

A final question raised from the audience was about the potential impact of **populism**, especially when seen in conjunction with a deteriorating economic situation and the terrorist threat. Vice Admiral rtd. Bekkering could not recall the debate on allegedly disenfranchised portions of the population reaching the NATO HQ during his service there stating that the impact was probably hard to measure. Dr. Giles added the EU was more impacted by populism as more nationalist individuals would probably support a strong national defense thus strengthening NATO. To this Dr. Meral argued that populism, in principle, was antithetical to multilateralism, therefore it would indeed be a problem, if countries concluded that a specific Article 5 situation was not of national concern.

General Bühler concluded the debate with remarks designed to underline the importance of this type of event as it brings light to the complexity of the obstacles that NATO has to face. With this in mind, he stated it is critical all Allies work shoulder to shoulder to develop a comprehensive portfolio of capability. In closing he highlighted five points he considered particularly relevant for the Brunssum context: Firstly, the Commander stated that **NATO was significantly stronger than in 2014** and that this was due to the right decisions being taken at both the military and the political level. He emphasised that JFCBS was ready and involved to continue implementing these decision. General Bühler



stressed, secondly, the importance of **cohesion** to the Alliance. He underlined that at JFCBS it was not 30 nations working together, but one "Team Brunssum". His third point highlighted the requirement to prepare for adapting **geographic orientation**. The Commander also commented on the issue of **burden sharing**, i.e. the necessity to honor commitments made but also to be realistic in terms of spending capacity. His final point was dedicated to **Cooperative Security**: General Bühler highlighted the importance to contribute to a systema-

tic approach to partnership activities. In that regard he demanded that effects had to be maximised and redundancies removed wherever possible. Overall, the panel discussion paved the way for a better collective understanding of NATO's future challenges. It examined important contributions and suggestions from the key speakers and, in so doing, appeared to inspire the military and civilian audience to engage. Students spent considerable time after the event, continuing the discussion with the respective key note speakers.



NATO @70 LOOKING BACK :

In September 1944, the American army crossed the Dutch border near Maastricht from Belgium; this is when the liberation of Holland started. Allied forces managed to liberate large parts of Limburg in the same year. You can find many historic sites, cemeteries, monuments and Liberation Route audio sites throughout the province. These sites commemorate the heavy fighting that preceded the liberation.

Allied forces crossed the Dutch border near the village of Mesch, in Zuid Limburg, 12th September 1944. They reached Maastricht just two days later and that became the first Dutch city liberated. Heavy fighting occurred across the province in the period after that. The River Meuse became a front line. Roermond was largely evacuated and the cathedral tower was blown up. The town of Brunssum was liberated on September 19th, 1944.

On 1st March 1945, allied forces liberated Venlo in the north of Limburg. An important element of this was

the allied liberation of the airport, which was baptized 'Yankee 55.' The site had to be rebuilt from the ground up as the Germans had blown up all the buildings and landing strips before they abandoned it. Because there were no buildings, the Americans set up a tent camp they called 'the Venlo Hilton'. Ultimately, it took until 5th May 1945 to liberate the entire country.

Eager to appropriately mark the 75th anniversary of the liberation of South Limburg, in the Autumn of 2018, the Governor set up a network of project teams across the province to develop suitable remembrance services and activities. At JFC Brunssum (JFCBS) it was decided the headquarters would focus support on its host town.

JFCBS staff supported town officials in the generation of a unique four-day celebratory programme, executed 19 to 22 September 2019, to properly mark this anniversary in Brunssum.

Day one

Day one (19 September) had a theme of 'Remembrance.' Exactly 75 years after the town of Brunssum was liberated in WWII the 328 British soldiers laid to rest in the Brunssum War Cemetery were awarded Honorary Citizenship of the town. Honorary Citizenship is Brunssum's highest distinction and this was the first time the award had ever been granted posthumously. The remembrance service was inter alia preceded by an afternoon programme comprising speeches by the Governor & King's Commissioner for the Province of Limburg (Mr Theo Bovens), the British Ambassador to the Netherlands (The Hon. Peter Wilson CMG), the Mayor of Brunssum (Mr Gerd Leers), and the Director General of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (Victoria Wallace).

Alongside the speeches a mixed programme of music, film and personal reflection was excellently delivered by the master of ceremonies, former NATO civilian at JFCBS, Mr Ed Frieser.

An interview conducted by Mr Frieser with 1st Lieutenant Francis Turner (aged 100 & veteran of the US 2nd Armoured Division) was something that will live in the memory. At 1800 reception guests joined in a procession that made its way from the Lindeplein to the Brunssum War Cemetery. Upon arrival, a moving service was conducted, where perhaps the highlights were: the reading

aloud of the names of all 328 soldiers by children from the AFNORTH International School; the presentation of Honorary Citizenship certificates to more than 30 relatives of those laid to rest, who had travelled from as far as Australia to attend; heartfelt remarks by Shirley van Dishoeck-Sinfield, of the Brunssum War Cemetery Foundation; and the reading of a letter from Dame Vera Lynn by her daughter, Victoria Lewis-Jones.

But, most importantly, the people of Brunssum turned out in their hundreds, possibly thousands, to pay their respects. The depth of gratitude expressed by the local people to those who liberated their town was immense. After the service a reception was again held in the Brikke Oave.



75TH ANNIVERSARY LIBERATION OF SOUTH LIMBURG

By Barry Mellor, JFCBS/Deputy Chief MPA

Day two

Day two (20 September) had a theme of 'Celebration' – the goal being to thank individuals who had previously served in the military for their service and acknowledge the critical supporting role of families to those currently serving. And what a day this turned out to be as the focus switched to Families & Veterans! At 1400 the Mayor and Commander JFCBS (General Erhard Bühler) made opening remarks and the party began.

The centre of Brunssum – the Lindeplein & Vijverpark – were transformed as, amongst other things, a stage was erected for a succession of musical acts, an eclectic assortment of static military vehicles and displays were set up, activities for children were provided (including a climbing wall and fast-boat rides on the lake), veterans booths were constructed and, from JFCBS nations, 13 national food stalls provided free culinary specialities and drinks from their countries. Special thanks to the Senior National Representatives and those who manned stalls for their superb efforts. At 1930 the German Heeres Musik Korps, from Koblenz, took to the stage and played until 2130 when closing remarks were made by the Mayor and Deputy Commander JFCBS (Lieutenant General Stuart Skeates, CBE).





Day three

Day three (21 September) had a theme of 'Reflection & Connection.' This took the form of a cultural educational programme in the Brikke Oave mainly focusing/reflecting upon the meaning of freedom. Major Bart Bams (JFCBS Protocol) was interviewed on his thoughts with regard to the topic, and his observations as a NATO soldier living locally and working at JFCBS, as part of the day's programme.

Day four

Day four (22 September) saw the re-emergence of the 'Celebration' theme. From 1400 a musical Tattoo took place on the Koutenveld. At 1830 a Ticker Tape Parade comprising more than 50 military vehicles and a large number of local organisations set off from the area of the Gregoriuskerk, made its way up the pedestrian precinct, and finished on the Lindeplein.

Captain Linda Schrader (Netherlands Army) was the overall Parade Commander and led the column in an open-top jeep from the front. JFCBS also contributed a multi-national platoon of approximately 50 personnel, led by OF-3 Sportelli.

The salute was jointly taken by the Mayor and DCOM on a dais positioned at the top of the pedestrian precinct. At 2100 the 4-day festival concluded with a fireworks display from the Vijverpark.

By any measure the festival was a huge success. Congratulations to all those who worked so hard to ensure this event was conducted with appropriate levels of respect and celebration.



NATO@70 LOOKING FORWARD: JFC BRUNSSUM AND HOST TOWN EMBARK UPON PATH TO GREATER COOPERATION

On Friday, 20th September 2019, in the presence of an invited audience, the Commander of JFC Brunssum (JFCBS), General Erhard Bühler, and the Mayor of Brunssum, Mr Gerd Leers, officially signed a Letter of Intent in the Town Hall agreeing the principles that will form the baseline of the future relationship between Headquarters Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum and its host town.

Eager to consolidate, sustain and strengthen the strong bond of friendship that already exists between JFCBS and the town of Brunssum, the Mayor and General aim to ensure the relationship is preserved for future generations. It is anticipated this document will establish a framework for enhanced cooperation that will extend and strengthen the execution of collaborative activities in areas of common interest.

The outcome, it is hoped, will be better integration of the international JFCBS community into that of the host town to the mutual benefit of all as understanding and friendships deepen.



An advertisement for RoadCraft Diplomatic / Military. It features a close-up of a smiling man with glasses and a mustache, wearing a light blue shirt. To his right is the RoadCraft logo, which includes an eagle and the text 'ROADCRAFT DIPLOMATIC / MILITARY'. Below the logo is a gold badge that says 'LOWEST U.S.A spec Volvo prices!'. At the bottom, there is a circular seal with 'VOLVO' in the center and 'BEST DEAL - BEST SERVICE - MASSIVE DISCOUNTS' around the edge. The text 'Buying a Volvo was for me only a dream, not a reality, till I discovered RoadCraft.' is prominently displayed. Below this, it says 'OR-6 Zwiers (NCO)'. At the very bottom, the website 'MilitaryDiplomaticTaxFreeCars.com' is listed along with an email address and a phone number.

An advertisement for Haus Hamacher, a Café, Restaurant & Partyservice. The top section features the restaurant's logo in a stylized script font, with the address '52538 Gangelt Am Freibad 10' below it. The middle section contains promotional text: 'Upon presentation of this advertisement during December you get 10% discount on the total invoice amount.' followed by conditions: 'Applies Mondays - Saturdays / 1 coupon per day per person' and 'No cash / non-combinable with other promotions'. Below this, it says 'New at Haus Hamacher: we cook grandma's specialties!'. The next section describes the dining experience: 'Enjoy your coffee with cake or one of our ice specialties in our Panorama Pavilion with view on the canoe lake. You can also dine German style in our hunting room. Afterwards you can play a game of bowling or minigolf or go for a nice walk in the woods nearby.' This is followed by the text 'We are open all year, 7 days a week. The Hamacher-Wüllenweber Family and its team look forward to your visit!'. The bottom section lists contact information: Tel.: 0049-2454-1414, Fax: 0049-2454-939301, Mail: haus.hamacher@t-online.de, Site: www.Haus-Hamacher.de, and a Facebook link. The advertisement concludes with a festive message 'We wish you a Merry Christmas' over a background image of the restaurant's exterior at night.



PANELIST AND SPEAKERS BIOGRAPHY

Moderator: Dr Ziya Meral

British-Turkish researcher specialized in politics and foreign affairs of the Middle East and Turkey, thematic issues surrounding interaction of religion with global affairs and British defense and security. He is a Senior Resident Fellow at the UK's Centre for Conflict Analysis & Conflict Research which is a civilian and military think-tank providing independent analysis and research on violent conflicts, defense and security issues. He is ideally placed to provide insights to the impact that Global Terrorism has on NATO.



General Klaus Naumann

Born in 1939, he is a retired German General who served as Chief of Staff of the Bundeswehr, the German Armed Forces from 1991 to 1996 until he was elected as Chairman of NATO's Military Committee (MC), overseeing Operations in Bosnia and Kosovo. Among his publications, he is the author of the book "Die Bundeswehr in einer Welt im Umbruch" (The Bundeswehr in a world of transition).



Vice Admiral Ben Bekkering

Joined the Royal Netherlands Navy in 1979 and followed a career path in the surface fleet. In 2012, he took command of the Task Force 508, NATO's contribution to the international counter piracy effort. Promoted to Vice Admiral on June 1st, 2016, he assumed the post of the Netherlands' Military Representative to NATO and the European Union. Drawing on this wealth of experience, he is considered well-placed to comment on the inherent challenges between NATO ambition and Allied interest.



Dr Keir Giles

British writer and academic, expert on security issues affecting Russia. He is a senior consulting fellow of the Russia and Eurasia Programme of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) and a research director with the Conflict Studies Research Centre. While attached to the UK Defense Academy's Research and Assessment Branch, he briefed on behalf of the UK on Russian military, defense and security issues, Russia's relations with NATO and Russia's neighbours in Northern Europe.



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