The transatlantic relationship created by the Washington Treaty of 1949 has been uniquely enduring and successful in warding off common dangers. However, this achievement has resulted in a new era that cannot be characterized in bipolar terms. Ethnic conflict, political instability, and territorial disputes are mounting around the NATO periphery. We face a proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, increases in the lethality of terrorism, non-state sponsored adventurism, and other asymmetric challenges. These dangers have forced us to reconsider the definitions of peace, territorial integrity, and security—concepts that are the raison d’être of the Alliance.

NATO accepts the fact that it must change to remain as relevant as it has been for 50 years. Politically, programs such as the Founding Act with Russia, a distinct relationship with Ukraine, the Mediterranean Dialogue, and the
# Transforming NATO Defense Capabilities

**National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, 260 Fifth Avenue SW Bg 64 Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 20319**

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   - National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, 260 Fifth Avenue SW Bg 64 Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 20319

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Partnership for Peace program evidence this development and extend transparency to the east and south. The most discernible new mission is the assumption of peacekeeping responsibilities as leader of Implementation and Stabilization Force. Bosnia has been a success in both humanitarian and geopolitical terms and demonstrated that the transformation of the Alliance from a fixed defense posture to flexible mobile operations is well underway. NATO force levels have been reduced by 35 percent and shifted from high-readiness, forward-deployed heavy units to a mix of lower-readiness and core rapid reaction forces. Significant progress also is being made in doctrine, organization, and technology to ensure that NATO forces can serve as an effective crisis management tool whenever the collective interest of the allies is threatened.

The Strategic Concept approved in 1991 offered a broad definition of security that set the stage for operations in the Balkans. NATO heads of state will approve a new Strategic Concept at the Washington Summit that is likely to continue that trend toward operations around the periphery of its territory. The next century will present a global environment of rapidly changing technology and diverse asymmetric threats. Members of the Alliance are struggling to make the transition to the information age while facing competing demands for resources. Such challenges will test the ability of its defense forces to function as a coherent and compatible team capable of undertaking joint missions and operations. NATO thus needs a more systematic way of preparing for the rapid development of defense capabilities required by the new Strategic Concept. Although the current force planning process has been effective, it is a deficiency-based planning system unsuited for the larger and faster changes that are bearing down.

**Transatlantic Link**

Throughout NATO history, the transatlantic link has referred to the political, economic, and military ties between North America and Europe. As one of two major NATO commands, Allied Command Atlantic (ACLANT) is the western pillar of that relationship. It was founded to ensure that military forces and sustainment could flow from North America to defend Europe. Traditional common defense operations are integral to the Alliance and remain the primary ACLANT mission; however, the changing security environment provides an opportunity to use the maritime expertise of the command in new ways.

ACLANT currently in the forefront of planning and conducting sea-based combined and joint operations designed to employ the full spectrum of military capabilities from different military services—capabilities that will provide the means of dealing with crises on the periphery of NATO. The unfolding of initiatives such as the combined joint task force, Partnership for Peace program, European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) within NATO, European Multinational Maritime Force, and counterproliferation are vital to the Alliance and enjoy a high priority. Interoperability problems and learning to exploit technology are also critical issues. The character of the ACLANT staff has changed significantly to accommodate them. It is genuinely joint with representatives of every service who capitalize on the core competencies of the Armed Forces as a whole.

In many ways these efforts represent the new meaning of the transatlantic link. ACLANT acts as the conduit for the flow of planning, concepts, and technology between North America and Europe. We view ourselves as a bridge to the future, leading in innovation as we adapt to changes in the strategic and operational environment on behalf of the
Alliance. These efforts are enhanced by the synergy between ACLANT and U.S. Atlantic Command (ACOM).

The ACOM Connection

As commander in chief of U.S. Atlantic Command I am responsible for military interests of the Nation in the geographic area of the Atlantic Ocean, from the North to South Pole, excluding the Caribbean and North Sea. While this is a vast area of responsibility (AOR), the only sizeable populations are found in Iceland and the Azores—and they are not experiencing any major crises. This enables me to focus on assigned functional responsibilities.

Our charges include command of more than 1.2 million soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen within the United States—or roughly 80 percent of general purpose combat forces. Because my AOR lacks hot spots, I provide these forces to the other geographic commanders in chief. More
Phases of Joint Experimentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Near Term</td>
<td>Maintain current dominance and enhance capabilities of existing forces by quickly identifying innovative and current operational concepts, evaluating their potential, and applying off-the-shelf solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Term</td>
<td>actualize Joint Vision 2010 and achieve and maintain full spectrum dominance with the 2010 force through joint experimentation with evolutionary concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long Term</td>
<td>Dominate the revolution in military affairs (RMA) and through bold thinking, shape the joint-force-after-next by developing and exploring revolutionary concepts.</td>
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importantly, ACOM is responsible for joint training and integration, which are very much focused on future warfighting challenges. In fact, we like to say that the future is in our AOR. All of these tasks mesh well with my NATO responsibilities and are key to bringing about the healthy changes which I believe are needed in the U.S. military and the Alliance as a whole.

Given these varied responsibilities, the Secretary of Defense asked me to host a conference last autumn entitled “Transforming NATO’s Defense Capabilities” to examine current efforts and future plans to bring about change. In addition to presentations on transforming national militaries, most participants accepted the call to transform allied capabilities to deal with challenges in the next century. There was agreement that long-term force planning, which has served NATO well, will not enable us to get where we must go. I am pleased because this means we can start working on solutions. It will allow us to take the fear out of the planning process in the future. There was also a consensus on one solution—the need for a Common Operational Vision for our defense forces. It could act as an umbrella concept for a more methodical process that allows the Alliance to systematically work on change without necessarily predicting the future.

Joint Experimentation

My role at the Norfolk conference, beyond playing host, was to describe one way in which we are dealing with the transformation of the U.S. military. In October 1998, ACOM became the DOD executive agent for a process known as joint experimentation. The decision by the Secretary of Defense to assign this vital role to us represented the culmination of dedicated efforts by both the Pentagon and Congress.

There are two primary and enduring reasons to pursue joint experimentation that equally apply to the United States and NATO: to prevent surprises by potential adversaries and to maintain our military advantage. Experimentation will help in the exploration of innovative approaches and leap-ahead capabilities and in the exploitation of opportunities to transform the U.S. military into a 21st century force. The bottom line is keeping all our options open.

Before experimenting, however, we are spending considerable time and effort to determine what constitutes an experiment and how the process of selecting topics, developing objectives, and analyzing results works. Joint experimentation is a long-term enterprise, not a series of isolated events. It is not a demonstration or exercise, although with careful planning an experiment can be conducted within an exercise. Experimentation must go beyond studies. We must experiment to discover and learn, not just demonstrate or verify. This is an iterative process for developing and assessing concept-based hypotheses to identify and recommend the best value-added solutions.

We are focused on integrated capabilities and warfighting concepts on the operational level, with forays onto the tactical and strategic levels. We will support, integrate, and leverage programs in conjunction with CINCs, services, and agencies to synchronize efforts and provide a joint context for experimentation. This plan involves performing simultaneous near-term, mid-term, and long-term experiments in the areas of doctrine, organization, and technology.

Near-term experiments seek to correct deficiencies in current forces and doctrine by rapid integration of off-the-shelf technology and changes in current operational concepts. Our methods include the leveraging of scheduled demonstrations and tests as well as conducting experiments.
efforts are focused one to six years out and impact on the current future year defense plan. Mid-term experiments seek to build joint capabilities with emerging technologies and evolution-
yary operational concepts. The bulk of such efforts involve experiments and

**joint experimentation is an aggressive, innovative process to propel the**

**Armed Forces into the future**

wargaming. The Common Operational Vision concepts based on *Joint Vision 2010* fall into the mid-term category. Long-term experimentation explores revolutionary ideas and future tech-
nologies. Although experiments will be used when possible, wargaming, workshops, and seminars will be the most common methods.

Joint experimentation is an aggres-
sive, innovative process to propel the
Armed Forces into the future. It is also
timely—occurring as a more methodi-
cal and systematic approach is required
to transform military institutions to en-
sure their relevancy. Joint experimenta-
tion is key to changing doctrine, organ-
zation, and technology to meet this
challenge of transformation.

**Concept Development**

NATO recognizes the requirement
for concept development and exper-
imentation (CDE) as integral to force
planning. CDE will help the Alliance and individual member nations to
transform defense forces to meet
emerging conditions. It will support
implementation of the new Strategic Concept and the operational vision for
NATO forces and help member nations
harness emerging technology via inno-
vative operational concepts. CDE will
examine both doctrine and organiza-
tion as well as technology and, like
U.S. joint experimentation, focus si-
multaneously on near-term, mid-term, and
long-term concepts. It will save
money by identifying the most prom-
isting concepts and helping nations
avoid locking in on expensive techni-
cal solutions too early.

In the process of implementing a
CDE program within NATO we are
proceeding along two complementary
tracks. The first involves leveraging na-
tion-centered experimentation efforts
which involve battlefield operational
tasks such as the rapid insertion of re-
action forces to stabilize

**crises, defense against**

**hostile aircraft, or the**

detection and destruction of

**theater ballistic missiles.**

Using this approach, coalitions of interested members oper-
ating under a lead nation would col-
laboratively develop and experiment
with new operational concepts devel-
oped to carry out critical tasks.

This process begins by identifying
critical task needs across the range of
potential military operations. Tasks
could be selected from various sources
which include: NATO-validated long-
term requirement force goals; NATO-
sponsored requirement identification
efforts (such as land, maritime, and
aerospace long-range studies); member
nations; Supreme Allied Commander
Europe or Supreme Allied Commander
Atlantic (SACLANT); research and de-
velopment committees; and the pri-
vate sector. To gain the maximum ben-
efit for the resources expended, tasks
will be chosen when significant short-
falls exist or the potential for major
improvement is clear. Initially CDE is
focused on reaction forces, but it could
be extended to all defense forces.

AACLANT, in association with Allied
Command Europe, will help coordi-
nate and support the development of
concepts from battlefield operational
tasks and facilitate the conduct and evalua-
tion of experiments.

The second CDE track involves
experiments on functional areas such as
command, control, and communi-
cation (C3); intelligence, logistics, and
mobility. Concepts for the experiments
could be selected, refined, and devel-
oped by a major command working
group from the same sources as na-
tional level CDE. AACLANT would cre-
ate a campaign plan to provide a high-
level description of the process and an
assessment of the utility of candidate
concepts for experimentation. It would
then present the plan to the North At-
lantic Council via the NATO Military
Committee for review and concur-
rence. Once approved, the command
would develop a plan for each concept
to describe the schedule, participants, and
desired capabilities in sufficient
detail that operational commanders or
agencies such as the NATO C3 Agency
or SACLANT Undersea Research Center
can carry out the trial. This would con-
tain a hypothesis that both defines ob-
jectives and describes the collection
and analysis of data. ACLANT will ex-
amine the results reached on a given
concept as well as information from
other experiments to draw conclusions
on its utility and value for combined
operations. After a thorough review,
these conclusions will become recom-
mended actions for implementation.

It is not clear what exact shape
transformation will take. Yet we expect
the challenges of the next century to
be both quantitatively and qualita-
tively different from those of the Cold
War and to require changes in individ-
ual and collective institutions, military
strategies, and defense postures. The in-
stitutional challenge can scarcely be ex-
aggerated. Usually a sea change in the
military occurs only after a new, ascend-
ant threat appears on the horizon or
major crises begin to unfold. Fortu-
nately, the end of the Cold War leaves
us without the former threat for now.

This is an era of dynamic change,
constrained resources, and rapid tech-
nological advances. It requires bold,
innovative thinking and an ability to
shape and manage change to preserve
the leadership role of the Alliance.
Technology must be an ally. To suc-
ceed, we must look into the future, ex-
plor innovative operational concepts,
develop the right technology, commit
assets wisely, and prepare the joint and
combined community for tomorrow. A
program of concept development and
experimentation is indispensable to
systematic change. By seizing this op-
portunity, NATO will remain the secu-
ritv organization of choice for the next
century.