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TO: See Distribution

SUBJECT: NATO Non-Commissioned Officer Bi-SC Strategy and Recommended Non-Commissioned Officer Guidelines

DATE: 13 October 2010

1. The men and women who serve as the Non-Commissioned Officers in the Alliance's Armed Forces are the primary and most visible leaders for our Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen, responsible for executing the military organization's mission and for training our military personnel in preparation for their missions. Non-Commissioned Officers are integral members of a team that supports both NATO and National missions. They deliver excellence in the tactical, operational, and strategic environment, exemplifying their Nation's military ethos. These men and women excel when challenged in environments characterized by risk and ambiguity, achieving success by responding to rapid changes and by creatively integrating new ideas.

2. The enclosed NATO Non-Commissioned Officer Strategy and Recommended Guidelines delivers the first Alliance-wide examination of the utilization of the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps and reviews the future of the 'backbone' of the Alliance's Armed Forces. It defines critical capability gaps based on listed assumptions and implications and delivers recommendations. It is our belief that more effective use of the NCO Corps is essential to reach the full potential of NATO in the multi-national environment and we commend this work to you.

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ENCLOSURE:

NATO Non-Commissioned Officer Bi-SC Strategy and Recommended Guidelines.

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NATO NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER BI-SC STRATEGY AND RECOMMENDED NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER GUIDELINES

1. **Introduction.** NATO's transformation is a continuous process requiring a keen ability to perceive new challenges and handle them effectively with flexible means. As NATO transforms, so do its member nations, and vice versa. The extent to which this will influence the transformation of the Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Corps is the subject of this document which reviews the future of NATO's NCOs, defines critical capability gaps based on listed assumptions and implications, and delivers recommendations. The Alliance has never before closely examined the utilization of the NCO Corps. This analysis is a product of developments started over the past few years with the NATO NCO Corps. More effective use of the NCO Corps is essential to reach the full potential of NATO in the multi-national environment.

2. **NCO Corps within NATO.** NCOs are members of the profession of arms, whose expert knowledge and advanced leadership skills distinguish them as true professionals. NCOs are integral members of a team that supports both NATO and National missions, while selflessly serving their country and the Alliance. They deliver excellence in the tactical, operational, and strategic environment, exemplifying their Nation's military ethos. NCOs excel when challenged in environments characterized by risk and ambiguity, achieving success by responding to rapid changes and by creatively integrating new ideas. Loyalty, courage, commitment, competency and integrity are examples of NATO NCO core values.

a. **Vision.** A professional, competent, and effective multi-national NCO Corps fully committed to excel in support of NATO commanders, the fulfillment of missions, and the transformation of capabilities to ensure the future success of the Alliance.

b. **Scanning the Future.** The pace and nature of change is dramatically influencing the current and future environment in which NATO will operate. Further, change is pervasive — in industry, in society, and in military affairs. The nature of conflict and the application of military force are undergoing radical changes. The world has become more volatile, uncertain, complex andambiguous. Consequently, the Alliance needs to transform at an unprecedented rate. Future military forces must be agile, joint and expeditionary in character and design. They must be capable of operating across the full spectrum of military conflict, be rapidly deployable and sustainable. These forces must be tailored and fully interoperable with other military forces and capable of interacting seamlessly with civil authorities, non-governmental organizations and other agencies. Success in such a complex environment will require a professionally developed and trained force. This vision of transforming the Alliance hinges highly on the ability of the NCO Corps to function in a multi-national

environment. This will create more demand on the NCOs of tomorrow to be functional in both their traditional responsibilities and in their ever-evolving roles. NCOs can also anticipate more involvement at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of joint and multi-national operations.

3. **Impact on the NCO Corps**

a. **Key Assumptions.** The survey of the future multi-national environment brings out the following key assumptions that will have an impact on the NCO Corps within NATO:

(1) Increased multi-national operations.

(2) An increased demand for NCOs who are prepared to work and succeed in a multi-national environment.

(3) Common understanding of NCO guidelines and interoperability will enhance the NCOs ability to operate within such an environment.

(4) Command Senior Enlisted Leaders will continue to play an increasingly essential role in mission execution and the professional development and well-being of the force.

b. **Implications.** The following implications for the NCO were derived from the key assumptions:

(1) NCOs must be prepared to operate in joint operations in a multi-national environment. They will have to achieve leadership prerequisites with proper knowledge, skills and abilities based on NATO guidelines for their rank and position.

(2) NCOs must be prepared and supported by a NATO Professional Development Programme, that complements National programmes, to function most effectively at the tactical, operational and strategic levels in multi-national environments.

(3) NCOs require a working knowledge of NATO organizations, operations, standards and operating and leadership principles. Additionally, they will require a detailed understanding of the many facets of working in a multi-national environment.

(4) Command Senior Enlisted Leaders within NATO military structures should be utilized in an advisory role to commanders at all levels, in order to lead professional development within the OR ranks and to ensure the well-being of the organization and its people.

c. **Strategic Imperatives (SIs).** The SIs described below reflect the scope and direction of actions required to respond effectively to the future; the overall impact on the NATO NCO will be significant. These SIs provide the core elements of a vision for the NATO NCO Corps of the future and the supporting structures:

(1) **NATO NCO Guidelines.** NCOs will be required to understand and function at an agreed upon common set of leadership skills, knowledge and abilities at the tactical, operational and strategic level based on rank and position, prior to deployment on operations or assignment to a multi-national environment.

(2) **Professional Development Programme.** A NATO Professional Development Programme will ensure that NCOs are prepared to face the challenges of operating in a multi-national environment.

(3) **Command Senior Enlisted Leaders.** Institutionalize the role and function of Command Senior Enlisted Leaders (SNCO to a command) to optimize the use of ORs within the NATO Military structure.

4. **Defining the Capability Gap**

a. **SIs and Associated Capability Gaps.** This section examines each of the SIs listed in section 3, using a gap analysis to identify gaps between where we are and where we want to be. Deficiencies were identified by posing the basic question; "If we do nothing more than we are doing at present, what gaps or deficiencies would we have in achieving the vision of the future NCO Corps within NATO?"

(1) **NATO NCO Guidelines: as stated in the paragraph 3(1).** NCOs arriving on operations or assigned to a multi-national military organization who do not possess a required level of leadership knowledge, skills and abilities, or competence expected by a commander, can have a detrimental affect. This places the burden on other members of the organization to either train the individual or leave the NCO in the leadership role, with the hope that they will rise to the challenge. In the worst case, the NCO may be pushed aside and the duties given to another individual who can better meet the requirements.

Critical Gap Statement

There is a critical need to implement common NATO NCO Guidelines, which pertain to leadership knowledge, skills and abilities of the NCO in the multi-national environment.

(2) **Professional Development Programme: as stated in the paragraph 3(2).** NCOs that deploy in a multi-national environment or work at NATO military organizations with very little or no NCO education, professional development,

or knowledge of NATO are at a disadvantage in performing to their full potential. Interoperability in a multi-national environment is essential to ensure mission accomplishment. The NCOs of future operations must be capable of building teams in a multi-national environment.

Critical Gap Statement

There is a critical need to ensure that NCOs selected for duties and deployed in a multi-national environment are prepared to function in this complex operating environment at the tactical, operational and strategic level. A tailored concise NATO-focused professional military education and development programme is essential to ensure seamless integration of NCOs into NATO and the multi-national environment.

(3) **Command Senior Enlisted Leaders: as stated in the paragraph 3(3).** Today's operating environment includes an informal network of communication among Command Senior Enlisted Leaders of the NATO Alliance, where they exist. This network also extends to the Senior Enlisted Advisors to the Chiefs of Defence, Ministers of Defence and military services of the member or partner Nations. They build teams among the NCOs (ORs), communicate, execute professional development, share ideas and lessons learned, and improve capabilities of both the NCO Corps and the whole Armed Forces. Where Senior Enlisted Leaders are not empowered, roles are not formalized, or positions do not exist, there is a significant gap in the professionalization of the NCO Corps.

Critical Gap Statement

There is a critical need to formalize the Command Senior Enlisted Leaders role and recognize their contribution in the professional development of the NCO Corps. Where a command exists without a Senior Enlisted Leader, pursuit of a PE supported position where appropriate, is essential.

5. **Conclusion**. A NATO NCO Development Programme should be afforded to all NATO Alliance members and partner nations. This Programme would complement all national NCO development programmes. NATO should continue to develop, control and deliver its own current and future NCO courses. This would allow NCOs from all nations to participate in international courses that could provide national credit for overseas military education as they see fit. Additionally, NATO should encourage opportunities for instructor and student exchanges between nations for their national and international NCO development programmes. This should include participation in conferences as a venue of information sharing and exchange of ideas. Only through exposure to a multi-national environment will the NCO Corps understand the complexity of the operating environment. The NATO NCO Development aspect of the military

structure should be spearheaded by Command Senior Enlisted Leaders. Additionally, NATO should provide the NCO Corps with the necessary tools to fully reach its potential as a force multiplier in addressing current and future challenges. The NATO Alliance must invest now in the NCO Corps to ensure success in the future.

ANNEX:

A. Recommended NATO Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Guidelines.

ANNEX A TO ENCLOSURE
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RECOMMENDED NATO NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICER (NCO) GUIDELINES

1. **Aim.** To enhance NATO operational effectiveness and interoperability by establishing common guidelines for NATO NCOs throughout the NATO Alliance.

2. **Vision.** A professional, competent and effective multi-national NCO Corps, fully empowered to:

a. Accept responsibility in support of NATO commanders.

b. Fulfil mission requirements.

c. Contribute to the transformation of NATO to ensure future success of the alliance.

3. **Definition of NATO NCO.** The NATO NCO is a professionally trained leader who serves as the "backbone" of any military. The NATO NCO is committed to excellence and pursues the highest standards of leadership, competence, integrity, honour, trust, responsibility, respect, comradeship and language skills. NATO NCOs remain faithful to the mission of the Alliance, consistently supporting its international and multicultural nature, while conforming to established NATO guidelines and complying with their own national standards.

4. **NATO NCO Structure - Guidelines for OR-1 through OR-9.** These guidelines, based on the NATO NCO structure, demonstrate the continual accumulation of leadership skills throughout the course of an NCO's professional development and advancement. As NCOs are promoted, they build on the leadership demonstrated in their former ranks, assume more responsibility, and exercise greater direct and indirect leadership.

a. **OR-1 through OR-3:** These are the basic entry ranks into the military structure. Personnel are expected to uphold national personal appearance and conduct standards and follow the orders of Non-Commissioned Officers and Officers appointed over them.

b. **OR-4:** The first level of supervisory leadership within the NATO NCO ranks. Is responsible for the good order and discipline, training, personal appearance and general welfare of their subordinate personnel.

c. **OR-5:** The OR5 is level of leadership with the greatest impact on subordinate ranks. Practises leadership-by-example, demonstrating personal compliance with standards while enforcing those standards in order to ensure the good order and

discipline, training, personal appearance and general welfare of subordinate personnel. Unquestionably competent to execute tasks correctly, exercise leadership, care for assigned personnel and support mission accomplishment.

d. **OR-6:** This is the first of the NATO Senior NCO ranks. The OR6 is usually assigned in positions requiring increased administrative and supervisory responsibilities. The OR-6 is responsible for more subordinates, and more equipment, and uses greater experience and leadership to shape his/her sphere of influence under all circumstances.

e. **OR-7:** Senior NCOs at this rank are fully vested in the institution. The OR7 is considered a key element within the command structure. They focus their increased experience and leadership skills toward collective mission accomplishment and are responsible for the effective management of larger numbers of personnel and equipment.

f. **OR-8:** Uses enhanced leadership skills and broad experience to successfully implement planning and management for collective mission accomplishment. Advises unit/element commander, instructs and mentors subordinates, coordinates and supervises training. Monitors unit effectiveness and upholds standards.

g. **OR-9:** Most experienced NCO leader within the NATO NCO structure. Uses enhanced leadership skills and broad experience in a greater capacity to successfully implement planning and management for collective mission accomplishment. Advises staff element, instructs and mentors subordinates, coordinates and supervises training. Monitors unit effectiveness and upholds standards. The OR9 serves as a role model for all NCOs/ ORs.

h. **OR-9 as a Command Senior Enlisted Leader:** This key senior enlisted leader, at the pinnacle of the NCO Ranks, serves as an advisor to the commander and the staff element leadership. This NCO makes recommendations to the commander on all matters pertaining to NCO Ranks. He or she ensures compliance with policies, adherence to standards of performance, conduct of effective training, and maintenance of discipline within the unit/element. This NCO oversees the professional development of the NCO Corps while assigned to NATO command structure. He or she provides calm, unequivocally accurate counsel, with an energy and enthusiasm that never wanes, even in the toughest of times. The epitome of what it means to be an NCO in the NATO Alliance.