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May 13, 2017

Lennart Meri Conference, Tallinn

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to say a few words from the German Bundestag's perspective about the title of this panel: More EU – less Nato?, question mark.

We are not asking ourselves that question.

What we are asking is: How can we make Europe stronger within a stronger NATO?

External security has never been a given in Europe or for Europe.

But there have been times when our security was less at risk.

Donald Trump is not the driving force behind this development.

It is being driven by, on the one hand:

- Vladimir Putin
- terrorism, including by so-called “Islamic State”
- and the failure of states in Africa.

And on the other hand by:

- climate change
- globalisation
- and digitalisation.

In an economically and digitally interconnected world, conflicts in far-flung regions of the world can no longer simply be kept at a distance.

These developments will continue.

Europe must invest more in its own security and armed forces, not just in order to deploy them in distant regions, but to protect its own citizens.

No country in Europe can ensure the protection of its citizens alone. This can only be achieved by working together in Europe, and it can only be achieved by working together in NATO with the US.

We need NATO and the partnership with the United States.

The Europeans only spend one third of the amount on defence that the US does.

And Europe only provides 10 to 15% of the American capabilities.

In light of the long-term growth in and diversity of the threat scenarios, this level is too low.

We must spend more on our own security, and Europe must use its money more efficiently.

If we Europeans boost our defence capabilities, we also boost NATO. That is our aim.

Germany, as the largest country and strongest economy, has a special responsibility for this, and we are conscious of this responsibility.

We are therefore taking action at three levels:

**1. We are boosting our national defence spending.**

In recent years, the German Bundestag has reversed the previous trend regarding the Bundeswehr's personnel, materiel and budget. Spending had declined since the end of the Cold War. Now it is rising again.

This year the German defence budget grew by 8%. The year before, it rose by 4,2%. For next year, we are planning a 4% increase.

However, these figures alone do not tell us very much, and so I would like to offer you another indicator:

The German Bundestag's consent is required for every investment in the Bundeswehr above 25 million euros.

- Between 2009 and 2013, we approved 32 investments of this kind, with a total volume of 6 billion euros.
- Since 2014, we have approved 47 investments, with a total volume of approximately 16 billion euros ((bis März 2017!)). That represents a threefold increase in spending for our military.

Until 2013, missions abroad, such as in Afghanistan, determined the Bundeswehr's structure and equipment.

Since 2014, national and Alliance defence has once again been the basis for structures and procurement.

## **2. We are boosting cooperation with our European partners.**

There will be no separate European army in addition to the existing armies in Europe. Instead, Europe's armed forces must gradually grow closer together. Only in this way will we achieve greater efficiency.

This means formations across the entire capability spectrum which are jointly equipped and trained to a high standard, and thus deeply integrated.

These formations should engage in exercises together and be deployed together.

One country concentrates on one capability, while other countries contribute materiel and personnel.

In NATO, this is known as the Framework Nations Concept.

To offer a few examples:

Germany is now developing an air transport squadron in partnership with France (C-130 HERCULES). The squadron has only one base, which is in France.

Germany is using a Dutch naval ship to train its soldiers. German service personnel on the ship are under Dutch command.

The Dutch armoured units are under German command.

There will be a joint air refuelling fleet with the Netherlands, Norway, Belgium and Luxembourg (A330 MRTT).

Submarines will in future be built and operated in partnership with Norway.

The Franco-German Brigade already has a long history.

We are now boosting cooperation between the German Army and Poland, the Czech Republic and Romania.

We want to develop a missile defence system with an open systems architecture, on the basis of MEADS and in a transatlantic partnership. From the outset, the project has been designed to ensure that interested partners do not need to buy the entire system, but can instead participate even with a single radar, for example.

Metaphorically speaking, we are developing the computer and partners can plug in their devices using USB. Only instead of "plug and play", the concept is called "plug and fight".

### **3. We are driving forward the Common Security and Defence Policy within the European Union.**

All of these forms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation are important. But they only form a cohesive whole if the European Union also plays a role – complementing, not competing with, NATO.

Nathalie Tocci will report on the EU's efforts in this regard.

In many areas, Brexit is a disaster for Europe. But for the Security and Defence Union, it is a major opportunity.

I am very pleased that the PESCO process has been gathering pace in recent months.

The EU already has a strong role on the civilian side. Take the numerous EU missions in recent years. However, the challenges require a “comprehensive approach”, and so it is right to also look at the military side.

In this context, the countries of Europe must surrender some sovereignty on a micro level in order to gain sovereignty on a macro level.

I look forward to our discussion.