



Bundesministerium  
der Verteidigung

Speech by the  
Federal Minister of Defense,  
Dr. Thomas de Maizière,  
on the Occasion of  
the 49<sup>th</sup> Munich Security Conference

Munich

1 February 2013

Check against delivery!

Excellencies,  
ladies and gentlemen,  
dear Wolfgang Ischinger,

Once again it is a great honor and at the same time a great pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the federal government of the Federal Republic of Germany and on behalf of the federal chancellor, Dr. Angela Merkel, to the Munich Security Conference.

For the security community around the globe this conference is a set date in their political diary. As every year, we will be discussing topical crises and conflicts here in Munich. We will be talking about the devastating civil war and the end of Assad in Syria, the situation in Mali, the threat of a nuclear-armed Iran and other prevailing conflicts.

But the Munich Security Conference should not discuss the current hot spots *only*. It is not the crises that should dictate the agenda of our debate on security policy but the other way around: The fundamental security debate should enable us to manage the current crises better.

And: The Munich Security Conference has always been a place of transatlantic dialogue. This is a well-established tradition. Other conferences may take a different approach. But *here* we should always place the special focus of our discussions on the relationship of the USA with Europe and that of Europe with the USA.

There are many good reasons to do so:

- US President Obama has begun his second term of office. His new Foreign and Defense Secretary are both advocates of the transatlantic relations and both have already participated in the Munich Security Conference. In *NATO* joint decisions are pending concerning Afghanistan for the time up to and - even more important - beyond 2014.
- We are discussing the role Europe should take in terms of security; to be precise, we are discussing the European Union and its relation to NATO.
- For the first time in many years a European Council of heads of state and government, to be held at the end of this year, will be dedicated primarily to security and defense policy.
- And there are first indications that the US-Russia dialogue is taking up speed again, too.

This is why in my welcome address today I would like to refer to our relationship with the USA, to the *raison d'être* of NATO, in brief to the tradition of the Munich Security Conference. In principle, I am optimistic: Europeans and Americans can rely on each other. And it is important to add: They *must be able* to rely on each other.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am convinced: For the US, Europe may not be the best *conceivable* partner in the world, but it is certainly the best *possible*.

No other region in the world is as stable, reliable and able to act as Europe. In the field of security policy we may not be good enough, but we are better than any other partner of the USA. These days, some people warn against the risk of a cooling in the transatlantic relations. Such prophesies have, by the way, been around for decades. If the warning experts had been right, NATO and the transatlantic relations would have failed a long time ago.

Many others argue that a *Pacific* century is coming up, which is why the USA are turning towards the Pacific region and away from Europe.

I do not share these concerns. First: It is way too early to take stock of the century already in 2013. We Europeans had this painful experience in the 20<sup>th</sup> century: In 1913 Europeans (and Germans in particular) were still looking into the future full of optimism. Only 12 months later World War I broke out. To proclaim the 21<sup>st</sup> century to be the Asian or Pacific century already today would be intellectual imposture.

Second: The interest of the USA in the Pacific region is not at all new. It has developed over time and is mainly due to geopolitical facts. More than 10 years ago, the 2002 National Security Strategy (under Bush Jr.) already explained "*The United States are a Pacific Nation*".

Third: *Europe* and Asia are also linked with each other in numerous ways and Europe is turning towards Asia, too! Today, the EU is China's second largest trade partner. The European Union and its member states are also members of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia-Pacific (CSCAP) as well as the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). And there are also multifaceted types of co-operation at national level. We Europeans would also be well-advised to deepen and prudently expand the dialogue with Asia. But we should not see this as a political contrast to our transatlantic relations. And the USA should not consider their relations to Asia to be in contrast with our transatlantic roots.

Quite the contrary: What prevents us from building bridges together? We should consider joint transatlantic options for co-operation in the Pacific. In Afghanistan for example, American and European soldiers are already standing side by side with troops from Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The US and Europe are faced with tremendous challenges – *everyone for themselves and jointly.*

Today, 64 years after its foundation, NATO is the only multilateral organization that is *capable of quick* military intervention around the world. It is stronger than any other power. It does not threaten anyone.

Like nothing before, Afghanistan has forged a joint mindset concerning command and control as well as operations.

The confidence of American troops in the fighting capability of European, including German, soldiers developed or grew there, if not before. Again, we can state: Our troops can depend on each other. Yet: The available resources are limited – in every member state and *on both sides* of the Atlantic. Some people are already aware of this, to others it may be news.

With a by and large constant defense budget Germany, by the way, stands international comparison within our league. The way we are dealing with this situation will *decisively* shape the future of NATO and of the EU. Blaming each other will certainly not be conducive.

And this is not just about “burden sharing”.

This is about the fundamental question: *How* do we intend to co-operate in future?

*Europe’s* creative power in security policy will in future depend on two factors: our *capability* (and I am referring to military and civilian capabilities) and our political *will* to shape the world *together*. Concerning both aspects we still need to do our homework.

*In the long term* we Europeans will only be able to increase our military performance (in times of scarce funds) following two approaches: further increasing the efficiency of our national armed forces (being able to do more and being able to do new things), and improving our *co-operation* among each other (being able to do more jointly and being able to do new things jointly).

Many member states (e.g. France, the United Kingdom, Sweden, Poland) are working on plans to re-orient and re-align their own military structures – just like we do. In a few days France will adopt a new White Paper. The United Kingdom is currently the largest European troop contributor to international missions, Germany ranks second. Concerning Europe, however, the United Kingdom is more reluctant. Again, we feel the tremendous pressure to save money.

We wish for France to play a more prominent role within NATO. And we wish for the United Kingdom to play a bigger security role in the EU. In both cases, this entails rights and obligations. The main *political* home of Germany is the EU, its *security* home is NATO. This is why we want to *contribute* to promoting France's goodwill towards NATO and the United Kingdom's goodwill towards the EU.

Ladies and Gentlemen, one thing is clear: Among allies (and here I am referring to both EU *and* NATO) there must be no *uncoordinated* drawdown of capabilities. Therefore, we need to strengthen the existing instruments within NATO and we also need to co-operate more closely at EU level, particularly in the field of *planning*. As regards the *development of military capabilities*, decisions on Pooling & Sharing or Smart Defense have already been taken. From the start, Germany has played an active role in this process and is willing to do more. When it comes to military capabilities, however, it is not new visions we Europeans need, but a strategy of resolute pragmatism. We should first of all prudently and quickly implement the decisions which we have already taken.

When we do that, we will already reach the limits of what some states are prepared to give up in terms of sovereignty. And I am not even referring to Germany right now. Let us imagine, for example, that aerial reconnaissance, strategic airlift, air-to-air refuelling, crucial elements of logistics or training in Europe would only be conducted multinationally, either by all or a certain number of European states. The respective parties involved would then be dependant on each other in these areas. We are already moving towards such a situation. This would mean having achieved a lot, as we have been gathering from the discussions in recent days and weeks. And it would take years, for technical, financial, political and legal reasons. We do not need the vision of a joint European army on top of that, a vision which puts many people off anyway.

Against the backdrop that NATO and the EU are completely different organizations in terms of their origin, organizational structure and procedures, we should focus our attention during the EU security policy summit in December on the following aspects:

In the future, we Europeans should be able to contribute something that others (NATO, for example) are *not* able to provide, as a complement to NATO, avoiding a duplication of effort. I am, in particular, thinking of civilian cooperation and civil-military cooperation, topics which are rather on the back burner in public perception and in terms of their practical implementation.

In the current discussions about Mali, only a *single* question is being asked: Who shall deploy troops and what shall be their mission?



It is clear that it was right and imperative for France to intervene. A military intervention was necessary to establish the (minimum) conditions for a political process in the first place.

But as we are all perfectly aware: Military intervention only marks the *beginning* of a long process towards long-term conflict resolution. *Military* superiority in its traditional sense no longer guarantees a lasting settlement of a conflict.

Or – as an Atlantic Council report recently put it: "*Just because you have a hammer it does not mean that every problem is a nail.*" Developing and establishing viable *peacekeeping* structures, especially by building-up security structures, is a highly complex process. This is yet another lesson learned from Afghanistan.

We Europeans can draw on our ever-growing experience in the fields of long-term stabilization, reconstruction aid and humanitarian missions. The EU is now – at last – putting this experience to good use in Somalia where we are beginning to see modest success. As a result, the EU would be able to bring together military, political and economic elements of an operation, *complementary* to NATO.

This means: NATO and the EU by means of a sensible division of labor, not: NATO or the EU.

The challenge we are confronted with lies in dovetailing the available instruments in a better and coordinated way.

It would also be desirable to enhance the linkage to the Commission's *financial instruments* in order to ensure a long-term stabilization of crisis-ridden regions.

Let me mention a few examples of the interaction between NATO and the EU: I would like to start by mentioning the mission in Kosovo: Whereas NATO has proved itself within the frame of KFOR to be an essential stabilizing factor in Kosovo thanks to its strength and its authority, EULEX in its initial stages exposed serious deficits in terms of assertiveness and force generation. This situation is now to be improved.

In the medium-run, however, we should consider the following question: Given further political progress, will we be able to make the transition from two missions into a single mission under European lead?

Second: We must set ourselves *realistic* objectives, also with a view to civil-military cooperation. Afghanistan has triggered a learning process. While a western-style democracy used to be the objective at the beginning, the task at hand now – after many, sometimes painful years – is to empower the people in Afghanistan to preserve at least a minimum of peace in their country themselves (“Afghan face”).

In Afghanistan, military progress or progress in terms of security is not really *good*, but it is better and advancing more quickly than the political and above all economic progress. Defining realistic objectives, however, requires us to have an adequate prior understanding and knowledge of the country and her people. We can and we must do more to enhance our joint *strategic ability to conduct analysis*.

We must not be taken by surprise time and again.

Reconnaissance and political analysis, these are two further examples where NATO and the EU can do better than before if they co-operate and follow a burden sharing approach. Third: If we want to successfully implement and expand the comprehensive approach, we Europeans must, in the medium term, enhance our ability to *plan and conduct* CSDP operations. This does not only hold true for EU battle groups, but *also* for an intelligent use of infrastructure to plan and conduct *civil* or *civil-military* operations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, At the beginning of my speech I touched upon the transatlantic link and the pivot to Asia. Afterwards, I addressed the question of what a smart cooperation between NATO and the EU might look like in the future. In our discussions, however, we should *also* take into consideration that we will increasingly be cooperating with partners that are *not* part of our traditional alliances and institutions.

- The current counter-piracy operation at the Horn of Africa shows that multilateral cooperation on deployment is working, even *outside* traditional *institutional* structures. The NATO mission Ocean Shield and the EU mission ATALANTA are coordinated via the Operation Head-quarters in Northwood. Nonetheless, I think we should consider merging these two missions into a single mission, too. *In addition to NATO and the EU*, various other actors such as the United Arab Emirates, China, France, the

United Kingdom, Thailand, Iran, India, Malaysia, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, the United States and Japan either were or are still involved unilaterally on the ground. All these players coordinate their activities in theatre by means of the Mercury situation and information system, to which all actors have access, and by regular Shared Awareness and Deconfliction (SHADE) meetings held in Bahrain. In my opinion, this mixture of an institutionalized form of co-operation between the UN, NATO and the EU on the one hand, and – as I would like to call it – a *situational, event-driven, but nonetheless coordinated co-operation* with individual stakeholders on the other hand, seems to be an approach we might put to more frequent use in the future (regional ownership).

- In Mali, too, the co-operation between ECOWAS, France and the EU has started to that effect. If such a co-operation is successful, it might serve as an anchor of stability *with far-reaching effects* on the region.
- As the third largest troop- contributing nation in Afghanistan Germany has learned that multilateral co-operation with states which are not members of NATO or the EU is of crucial importance. “In together, out together”; this statement has its root in the fundamental experience that in Afghanistan we are all dependant on each other. This applies to the deployment phase in theatre. It also applies to redeployment. I would like to add: We should also prepare and implement a new mandate together – for the *post-2014* period.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

More than 160 years ago, Otto von Bismarck coined a wise phrase: "*fert unda, nec regitur*", "one can ride the wave, but not make it." Translated more freely: he who is wise knows the limits of his power. This holds all the more true in the globalized world we live in. I would like to draw two conclusions from this insight:

First: We should not *over*-estimate ourselves.

We should not succumb to the belief that we are able to control *all* developments *anywhere* in the world. It is only legitimate to admit this publicly. We can make a *contribution* to conflict settlement, nothing more. This is a lot, but it is not everything.

Second: Realizing the limits of one's power *also* means: We should not *under*estimate ourselves.

This holds especially true for us Europeans, and also for us Germans. The transatlantic link, NATO and Europe: Like hardly any other nation on earth we Germans are aware of the vital importance of these partnerships. We can rely on each other. And we must be able to rely on each other. Therefore, Germany will do everything within its power to invigorate and strengthen these partnerships together with our partners on both sides of the Atlantic. Germany knows its responsibility.