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Strengthening Europe's ability to act in the area of security policy
It is high time¹

Europe needs its own strong and credible security and defence policy. The only way this can be achieved is if there is the political will to establish greater European commonality. In the absence of this, Europe will lack a key dimension of what it needs to assert itself in the globalised world. Given the financial constraints under which all European countries are operating, however, this ability to take effective action in the realm of security policy can only be guaranteed through closer cooperation. No EU Member State even now has the finances on its own to maintain the full spectrum of military and civilian capabilities. The NATO summit in Chicago reinforced this urgent need for action.

Our considerations are based on three premises:

- a. Europe is not now and will not in the future be able to guarantee European security on its own; it requires the support of the USA. This fact must be set in the context of the increased attention being paid by the USA to Asia.
- b. All Europe's efforts should therefore be directed towards not only strengthening Europe's ability to act, but at the same time ensuring that through their contributions Europeans once again become relevant partners of the USA. All efforts must therefore be directed towards the dual aim of strengthening NATO as the essential bedrock of transatlantic relations and increasing the EU's ability to act.

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- c. All states which wish to be involved in making Europe stronger must be prepared to share the risks and the burden between themselves according to their means. Those who seek an “à la carte” approach to risk sharing must be prepared to accept a corresponding loss of influence.

There is a need, therefore, to develop shared ideas on what military potential should be available and which military capabilities should be prioritised in the face of limited finances, on avoiding unnecessary duplication of structures and on improving interoperability and operational readiness. We need to decide what capabilities we want to share and what capabilities we can do without on cost grounds – or because others can provide them more reliably and at lower cost.

Such mutual dependencies require agreement on where and under what circumstances (partially) integrated armed forces are to be deployed. We believe this makes it necessary and indeed provides an opportunity to form a workable strategic consensus on the future of European security provision in the 21st century.

1. A changed situation

Europe’s strategic environment is undergoing a radical upheaval as a result of dynamic political changes: changes such as in North Africa and the Middle East may have a considerable impact on Europe’s security – the future development of the countries concerned in one of the most explosive regions of the world with Israel at its centre is uncertain. Iran’s nuclear policy with its regional and global repercussions has the potential to escalate and impact on Europe. Our relationship with Russia is based on strategic cooperation – for example, with respect to our presence and logistics in Afghanistan. But there are also areas of friction in relation to the pursuit of strategic interests – our stance on the internal conflict in Syria and the violence of the government there, for example, and also issues surrounding joint missile defence. We therefore need a new quality of agreement which goes beyond the current partnership-based cooperation. One particular challenge in this context is the prospective melting of the ice cap in the Far North/Arctic and the effect this will have in terms of the extraction of resources and opening up of strategic traffic routes. Finally in relation to Turkey, it is too early to make any definitive judgment on the change in Turkey’s image of itself as a leading regional power and the consequences arising from this. The Maghreb, Middle East, Russia, the Far North and Turkey – on the northern, eastern and southern flanks of the EU political conditions are in flux and hence are impacting our strategic interests.

At the same time, we Europeans can no longer rely to the same extent as before on the support of the USA to uphold our security interests. The increased attention being paid by the USA to Asia and the Pacific show that America expects more action from Europe



to secure and shape its strategic environment. This also affects the strategic role of NATO as the central guarantor of European security, a role which most European countries believe it continues to have in terms of providing credible security provision.

As yet, the EU has failed to establish an ability to take effective action in the area of security commensurate with Europe's economic weight – despite all the institutional progress since the introduction of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Operation Unified Protector in Libya in 2011 would not have been possible as a purely European operation and was therefore of necessity reliant on American support. In terms of military capabilities this relates in particular to the areas of reconnaissance, surveillance, intelligence collection, sustainability, aerial refuelling and precision munitions.

It is essential for Europe to be able to take credible and effective action on its own in the area of security. It is high time for this to happen since national capabilities are already being lost; this could lead to losses of European capabilities if these processes take place in an uncoordinated manner. We need closer security cooperation and courageous steps towards deepening military integration while continuing to develop the transatlantic division of labour.

In concrete terms this means that an enhanced CSDP is a key contribution on the part of Europe to transatlantic burden-sharing. In this process NATO is indispensable in the areas of nuclear deterrence and non-proliferation, missile defence, strategic reconnaissance and cyber defence. These tasks require globally effective capabilities which Europe does not have and which, given the constantly growing technology gap and scarce resources, it will be impossible to procure or develop in the coming years.

Europe needs in particular to develop and have at its disposal intervention forces capable of land, sea and air power projection. It also needs a network of constabulary forces (e.g. Gendarmerie, Carabinieri) to be deployed in the transition period following an intervention and stabilisation forces which provide security under civilian control as a new state is established. This is where Europe (particularly the EU) can play to its real strengths.

2. Elements of a strategic approach

Against the background of the burden-sharing outlined above, Europe also needs to formulate its strategic approach. In order to do this, we need a consensus with regard to (1) the tasks that need to be tackled, (2) the geographical areas which are particularly relevant to our security and (3) the instruments to be used.



(1) In terms of defining the tasks to be tackled Europeans have for years had a basic consensus which is defined in the respective current versions of the European security strategy and NATO's strategic concept: fighting international terrorism, stabilising the geographical environment where there is a possibility of regional conflicts, state instabilities and failed states, cyber security, energy security, keeping open trade and shipping routes and preventing the proliferation of WMDs. What is missing, however, is any real prioritisation which would enable corresponding armed forces planning.

(2) There is a need, therefore, to reach a consensus on defining the priority geographical areas in which Europe wishes in future to be able to act. The current potential for crisis and conflict in North Africa and the Middle East makes this area the geographically nearest challenge to European security – particularly since it will be with Europe for years to come. It is important to remember, however, that political solutions in the Middle East must necessarily involve the USA.

Developments in other parts of Africa, too (such as the Horn of Africa), the Caucasus, Central Asia and in the Arctic also pose potential challenges to Europe's power to act in the area of security.

(3) It is important to speed up the further development of Europe's "toolkit" in the framework of the comprehensive approach. The focus must be on measures of cooperative security, conflict prevention and the projection of economic and political stability. But Europe must also be in a position in the 21st century to deploy military power if this is needed to uphold and enforce its interests and values and if it is both legitimate to do so under international law and politically necessary. "Military power" remains a structural principle of international relations.

In order to carry out these tasks Europe must be able to rapidly deploy military crisis intervention and combat units over long distances, and to command and sustain them in the area of deployment, have the capability to undertake strategic troop transports by sea and by air and have at its disposal strategic and operational reconnaissance assets as well as state-of-the-art munitions and command and control resources.

Increased cooperation between NATO and the EU and mutual access to capabilities and structures remain principles of our common security. There is a need to examine military structures in both NATO and the CSDP for duplication and to alter them accordingly. The key here is for Europeans to rely primarily in case of need on NATO structures but to "emancipate" themselves from the USA by providing genuine military capabilities on their own part. There is further an urgent need for NATO and the CSDP to introduce the same procedures and rules in order to be able to guarantee the ability to take effective action without weak links.



3. Efficient use of European resources

3.1 Pooling and Sharing / Smart Defence

In order to improve Europe's ability to take credible and effective political and military action it is essential to intensify security cooperation; this includes deepening military integration. To make Europe better able to take military action, greater and more ambitious use should be made of both pooling & sharing and smart defence. Neither should be regarded as a way of cutting costs or as a substitute for sustainably financed armed forces. Rather this should be taken as an opportunity to carry out the necessary task of building, modifying and expanding Europe's military capabilities.

The aim should be for all EU Member States which participate in the CSDP to agree on the scope and composition of the necessary European armed forces and determine how these forces are to work together. Larger capability gaps should be closed by multinational programmes (such as the European Air Transport Fleet).

Until this can be achieved, it will be necessary to continue, deepen, expand and closely coordinate existing initiatives on the part of individual groups of Member States to strengthen capabilities, pool capacities and share tasks. The Permanent Structured Cooperation provides the political basis for such a procedure by groups of states within the framework of the European Union.

Readiness to become involved in these approaches, however, requires the political will to integrate military capabilities and a readiness to relinquish sovereignty over the deployment of military means.

Important collaborative projects have already been introduced in the areas of logistics (European Transport Command) and training. In addition at the NATO Summit on 20/21 May 2012 the following beacon projects were agreed: Joint Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (JISR), procurement of an Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) system, consolidation of Baltic Air Policing (APB) and strengthening of the NATO Response Force (NRF). These promising approaches need to be built on: examples of deployment-relevant capabilities might be joint helicopter units or the pooling of EU-North Sea or EU-Baltic States maritime capabilities.

Everything that serves to strengthen European capabilities and hence increase Europe's ability to act should be considered. This also includes cooperation projects outside the framework of the CSDP – such as the British-French initiative. Any truly workable European security policy is unthinkable without either the United Kingdom or France.



3.2 The arms and security industry

It is impossible in this context to make any definitive statements on the question of what technological developments will usefully meet the future needs of the armed forces and are relevant or indeed on what core defence industry capacities should be maintained for these purposes. In terms of armaments the state as monopolist – whether as contractor or consumer – in general has a special responsibility and particular influence. The forthcoming process of Europeanisation therefore has to be guided by the following main principles:

- Convincing European corporate structures need to ensure a balance of interests in Europe in order to maintain national value added and jobs. The aim must be to establish a deliberate mutual dependency which leaves no place for national strivings for autonomy and predatory competition.
- Only private-sector businesses in Europe can generate commercially efficient structures and global competitiveness. The private sector is the best place to conceive and maintain sustainable commercial solutions.

In this process it is the task of policymakers to create the necessary environment. There is a need to reach rapid agreement here in order to institute the necessary strategic steps, for example in the form of a round table of selected EU countries and the defence industry, moderated, as appropriate, by the Commission or the EDA.

4. The Consequences for German Policy

In order to carry out the urgent task of strengthening Europe's ability to act in the area of security, the nations of Europe will have to take far-ranging decisions affecting their national sovereignty and traditional security cultures. The Federal Government and the Bundestag need to play a leading role in terms of responding to these structural questions and provide important impetus.

- a. We have to acknowledge that German security policy has a credibility problem. At least since Germany's abstention in the UN resolution on military intervention in Libya, some of our partners in NATO and the CSDP have doubts about whether they can count on Germany in hard power conflicts. The repeated arguments over the deployment of AWACS aircraft – a capability that has long followed the pooling & sharing principle and where NATO is reliant on Germany – has increased this scepticism. Germany must engage more intensively, more broadly and more strategically with security policy if it is to pull its weight and protect its interests in global politics and regain lost credibility. Not only Germany's role in NATO but also the effectiveness of the CSDP depends on this.



Recommendation: A regular security debate should be initiated in the Bundestag to identify the goals of German security policy, analyse current challenges and identify corresponding resources and measures. Presented by the Federal Chancellor on an annual basis and subject to parliamentary discussion, such “security guidelines” could make an important contribution to sharpening the focus of German security policy and making it more comprehensible to both the German public and our partners. If necessary, this approach could be further developed into a cross-ministerial federal security strategy.

- b. The ability of the EU to take effective action in security matters can only be strengthened if Member States give up part of their national sovereignty. To operate to good effect the CSDP should ideally pool the military capabilities of Member States and share command and control responsibilities to such an extent that it would no longer be possible to enforce single national reservations. This means that German troops could be deployed on an EU mission which the German government and the German Bundestag would not have agreed to in advance. In return for this relinquishment of sovereignty, Germany – like all EU Member States – would, however, be better able to take effective foreign and security policy action and would have a more effective and affordable set of instruments.

Recommendation: Germany should offer itself as a supporting partner to countries with a comparable security culture. It should be prepared to take concrete steps towards establishing a pooling & sharing arrangement with these willing partners, e.g. in the areas of joint air defence, joint coastal defence, joint training establishments, command and control structures (e.g. Ulm Headquarters) and a single command, control and information system. This should occur in the framework of the CSDP as a further development of the German-Swedish Ghent Initiative on Pooling & Sharing, which is an important interim step although not enough to guarantee a properly regulated procedure for role specialisation and cooperation. There is also a need to deepen the German-French cooperation agreement on creating joint capabilities and open it up to interested partners.

Recommendation: The Federal Government must work with willing partners to develop a concept for joint European defence planning in order to ensure a regulated structure and setting of priorities in the areas of role specialisation and integration of capabilities which is oriented to the above parameters. NATO’s defence planning should be revitalised for this purpose. A further important field is the development of coordinated proposals in the area of military personnel training. The groundwork for this could be carried out by a joint EU-NATO



working group at political director level, whose remit should include defining concrete fields of work on the basis of a joint agreement.

- c. The Bundestag, which has a relatively large role in decision-making in comparison with other European countries, would be particularly affected by a relinquishment of sovereignty. It would entail a reform of parliament's right of prior approval of foreign deployments of the Bundeswehr, although the Bundestag must continue to have the last word in the form of a right of recall in relation to such decisions. Such a move, however, would send out a clear signal to our partners and help convince them of our intention to make the German decision-making system more flexible.

Recommendation: The President of the German Bundestag and the leaders of the parliamentary groups in the Bundestag should launch a consultation process on possible approaches to making the system more flexible. One possibility would be a parliamentary decision within the framework of the annual debate on security policy guidelines (see 4a) on making available German troops and capabilities for integrated armed forces, the deployment of which would then be subject to the unanimous decision of the European Council (or the NATO Council). Thus, the executive would have the "right of deployment" while the Bundestag as legislature would have the "right of recall".

- d. In the light of the dynamically changing political situation both in the ambit of the EU and in international relations, there is a crucial need to further develop strategic partnerships. The focus here must be on the USA and Turkey, in both of which cases Germany has a particular responsibility. In terms of the USA the strategic discussion on smart defence, defence planning and the strategic division of labour must be conducted in the framework of NATO. Turkey, for its part, is growing in self-confidence in the areas of foreign, security and defence policy and is demonstrating this both within and outside NATO. It remains to be seen how far Turkey can be integrated in efforts to strengthen Europe's ability to act – Turkey must show some movement in particular in the resolution of the "Cyprus" problem.

Recommendation: Germany should therefore develop proposals at European level regarding how Turkey could be accommodated in European institutions: with respect to the CFSP, consultations could be held with Turkey prior to each Council of Foreign Ministers, while in the CSDP it could be involved in the decision-making processes of the EU relating to crisis management operations (a model for this could be the WEU acquis extended to the 27 – both sides benefitted particularly from this up to around 2002). Turkey could also become a member of



the European Defence Agency. It is important to ensure, however, that Turkey demonstrates an awareness of its responsibility for Europe's joint security provisions.

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