



Thomas Gottschild, Managing Director of MBDA Deutschland GmbH, reflects on Integrated Air and Missile Defence and the Framework Nations Concept.

MT: This year marks NATO's 70th anniversary. What are your thoughts on the Atlantic Alliance?

T. Gottschild: First of all, I congratulate NATO on its 70th anniversary. The commitment of all Allies to stand up for each other has proven its value over seven decades. This commitment has helped Allied nations to prosper economically and socially in an unprecedented era of security for the people. Without NATO, Western Europe would have lacked an important anchor for defence. NATO remains a very important organization, providing stability in a stormy world.

A world without the INF Treaty, with hybrid warfare, terrorism and cyber-attacks – the security challenges we are facing are increasingly complex. NATO has demonstrated its ability to meet these challenges through its commitment to peace, international cooperation and credible military deterrence.

MT: As NATO plans for a world without the INF Treaty, Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) becomes ever more important. How do you see German contributions?

T. Gottschild: Germany and NATO's other member states have recognised that air and missile threats create a dynamic and complex risk situation. New types of missiles, such as hypervelocity missiles and gliders, have



emerged. Awareness, effective development and visibility of emerging threats have dramatically increased over the last five years. However, European countries won't be able to effectively combat the entire spectrum of hostile force capabilities on their own. Therefore, task sharing and military cooperation are essential. With the NATO Framework Nations Concept (FNC), proposed in 2013 and officially enacted at the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, Germany has been engaged to launch cooperation between NATO countries.



As part of NATO's Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) construct, the German Air Force has traditionally been close to the Alliance, playing a key role during the Cold War. Germany could therefore become the Lead Nation in air and missile defence for most of its Framework Nation partners and for NATO as a whole. Germany has created the necessary conditions by selecting a next-generation air and missile defence system, namely the MEADS-based Taktisches Luftverteidigungssystem (TLVS), which will be a major leap in the development of air and missile systems and will put Germany at the forefront of this important field of NATO defence.

NATO

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MT: You just referred to NATO's FNC initiative? How would you assess it currently?

T. Gottschild: The essence of FNC is a jointly structured development of military capabilities in European states. The idea derives from the way NATO establishes structures for multinational operations and is applied to the development of military capabilities. The approach is broader than NATO's existing framework arrangements. Within the FNC, member states decide to organise their capabilities in multinational clusters and build bigger military formations. To date, 17 nations are cooperating with Germany through this framework.

From my point of view, NATO's FNC has made progress in several areas. Cooperation in capability clusters and operational cooperation of armed forces has started to ramp up. However, one missing element of the new concept has been shown to be a common major armament project: air and missile defence provides an opportunity.

MT: Interoperability is an essential mechanism for effective cooperation within NATO. What additional capability does TLVS provide that other systems did not offer to ensure interoperability?

T. Gottschild: TLVS is a child of the digital era. It meets the increasing need for interoperability, data fusion and cyber resilience. The TLVS concept, embedded in FNC, provides a new conceptual approach to NATO IAMD. It aims to strengthen the interoperability of NATO member states' air and missile assets, facilitates the coordination layer and even aims to integrate such assets through 'plug and fight' technology to build bigger air and missile defence clusters through fully networked systems and assets, such as tactical operation centres, sensors and interceptors. TLVS will thus set the benchmark for a new ground-based air defence architecture, beyond interoperability.

MT: What technological developments do you expect for the future?

T. Gottschild: Expect the unexpected! It remains an open question as to how European NATO member states will react to the collapse of a treaty that, for more than 30 years, has succeeded in removing nuclear ground-based cruise missiles with ranges between 500-5,500 km in Europe. However, it is a fact that you need a system ready to adapt to new requirements and technologies to meet the evolution of the threat spectrum.

A next-generation air and missile defence system, for instance, must provide the required flexibility to respond to different mission profiles with a 360° system capability and a networked, distributed approach – alongside the potential to easily adapt and expand its capabilities with an open architecture and netted command and control functionalities, tailored to mission requirements. TLVS is designed to grow and adapt as the threat evolves. As-yet-unforeseen future developments are an intrinsic part of the TLVS concept.

The security challenges facing the Atlantic Alliance are indeed substantial and complex. Cooperation, interoperability and advanced military capabilities within NATO remain key to dealing with the new challenges to ensuring security and stability for its member states. Credible deterrence from the Alliance is as necessary and relevant for today's challenges as it was in the years that followed NATO's formation.

