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Ukraine War Shines a Spotlight on the Need for Partnerships



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◁ Patriot is the backbone of the German air defence. MBDA Deutschland and Raytheon Missiles & Defence have developed a strategic roadmap creating the possibility to produce Patriot interceptors in Germany setting the stage for Patriot to be employed by Germany into 2048.
(Photos: MBDA)

The unprovoked war of aggression of Russia against Ukraine on 24 February 2022, and the likely resurgence of high-intensity conflicts in Continental Europe, highlight the strategic and decisive importance of the transatlantic Alliance. NATO has again proven its outstanding value as an anchor for cooperation of the West, providing stability in an unsettled world. Moreover, while - not too long ago - some feared a creeping lack of common purpose within the Alliance, reality, in a dramatic way, taught us better. The Russian assault against Ukraine was a turning point: At the broadest level, the political solidarity of NATO has been truly remarkable.

More than ever since World War II, it became clear that security and foreign policy issues need joint answers. We are at a critical juncture and the need to boost our defence capabilities not only strategically and operationally but also our networks in the EU, NATO and with allied countries like Israel, Japan, South Korea or Australia has never been more important than today. While the need for armaments cooperation is obvious, a large part of defence procurement today occurs at the national level.

This, of course, remains not without consequences. Such fragmentation often leads to interoperability problems in the operational and logistical areas due to different national specifications. Likewise, it results in inefficient and costly industrial fragmentation. This makes it abundantly clear: cooperation within strong partnerships is not one alternative among many. It simply is - for military, political and industrial reasons - the only viable option. Provided the right framework conditions are in place, the

path towards more cooperation and international partnerships must be pursued with all due vigor. European initiatives such as the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) and the Main Ground Combat System (MGCS) were launched after the occupation of the Crimea. Only with the rise of the war against Ukraine, Germany started an initiative for air and missile defence, the European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI). As of today, all these initiatives are too big for one European nation or one national company.

In a crisis, we see the need to join our forces. Let me focus on one recent example. We have further strengthened the cooperation with Raytheon Missiles & Defence to meet the needs of German and European armed forces. We have developed a strategic roadmap creating the possibility to produce Patriot interceptors in Germany, enabling the country to respond to the current threat environment and setting the stage for Patriot to be employed by Germany into 2048. This shows that long-term cooperation at eye level can be a win-win situation.

Finally, one of the consequences of the war in Ukraine is also a change of industrial paradigm with new requirements to be satisfied: to produce more and to produce faster, while controlling production costs, without sacrificing our ability to develop future capabilities. Thus, cooperation is a political imperative and an economic necessity as increasing military and financial requirements as well as the growing complexity of weapons systems will no longer be manageable by individual states. We are therefore all called upon to shape these changes in the spirit of far-sighted and close cooperation between nations, industry and society.