



Atlantic Treaty Association - Association du Traité Atlantique

- NOTE -

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On May 31st 2012, **H.E. Amb. Martin Erdmann**, the German Ambassador to NATO, spoke at the Adenauer Forum of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Brussels on the topic of “**NATO’s Chicago Summit – a German perspective**”.

Ten days after NATO’s Chicago Summit, the Ambassador divided his statement into three major parts: First, he classified NATO Summits in general and differentiated them from the example of EU Summits. He created the term of “self-reassurance events” to characterize NATO Summits. According to Amb. Erdmann, this reassurance applies to different dimensions of the North Atlantic Alliance. Summits try to answer the question of where the security policy journey is going to lead the Allies. By using the statistics concerning the number and frequency of NATO Summits, he demonstrated that since 9/11 the transatlantic community seems to be in strong need of these self-reassurance events when it comes to the future of global security.

In the second part of his speech, the Ambassador tried to put the Chicago Summit into a global political context by referring to the recent/upcoming elections in France, the US and Russia (one of the reasons why there was no NATO-Russia Council meeting in Chicago), to the financial and economic crisis constraining national defence budgets, and to the new orientation of US foreign policy (this is of importance for NATO’s partnerships) towards Asia-Pacific including the re-orientation of the relationship between Washington and Europe (especially after the Brussels speech of former US Defense Secretary Gates in June 2011). Amb. Erdmann highlighted, from a German perspective, that it is up to the Europeans to make an effort to continuously gain the attention of the US and to remain high up on the US agenda.

In the third part, Amb. Erdmann touched upon the concrete results of the Chicago Summit and tried to put them into a German perspective. He first tackled the decisions in the scope of NATO’s “Smart Defense” initiative and called this common move towards more transatlantic burden-sharing concerning the procurement and maintenance of defense capabilities a “new way of thinking” and even a “paradigm change” among the Allies. Germany will among others be involved in the major projects of Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS) and the Baltic Air Policing mission. Asked whether he would consider the initiative as a substantial project which goes beyond mere lip service, he pointed out that there is a common will to invest into the 20 projects but that those would still have to be implemented, with a main responsibility on the European side.

A special German side-debate of the Smart Defense developments is referring to the consequences of the German parliamentary prerogative on a German participation in multinational defense projects. While there was even a question to Amb. Erdmann about a possible need for the change of the German constitution, German media transport a strong refusal of this idea within the entire political landscape in Germany. In a recent interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ Online, 24 May 2012), the German Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière highlighted that the German parliamentary prerogative only applies to the involvement of German troops in missions but would not apply to the supply of defense equipment. The Ambassador himself however kept a low profile regarding these political questions that would need to be clarified by the Government and Parliament in Berlin.

With regard to NATO’s engagement in Afghanistan, the Ambassador said that Allies had demonstrated their long-term commitment to the development of the country. According to Amb. Erdmann it was vital for the Alliance to look at its engagement beyond 2014. Germany itself will contribute an annual amount of 150 million Euros for the support of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) from 2015 to



2017. The majority of the 4.1 billion Euros will be provided by the United States. However, the operational plan for NATO's follow-up mission to ISAF, which will focus on training and advisory for the ANSF, remains to be defined.

An important topic of this Adenauer Forum was also NATO's renewed commitment to its partnerships in the scope of the Chicago Summit. Amb. Erdmann especially appreciated the fact that 13 partner nations attended a meeting with NATO Heads of State and Government in Chicago as if they had always been there and added their perspectives on key security challenges at eye level. He added that Germany did not mainly look at these partnerships through "operational eyes", but from the angle of cooperative security and the political contributions of the partners. H.E. Amb. Karl Schramek, Permanent Representative of Austria to NATO, highlighted that, together with the representatives of other European partner countries, he experienced the Chicago meeting as a highly positive signal by the Alliance and praised in particular the partners' contributions to the 2011 Libya operation.

In his overall wrap-up concerning the Chicago Summit, Amb. Erdmann emphasized that the Alliance managed to prove its adaptability, and he called this adaptability the key to NATO's endurance. He mentioned that NATO's force of attraction for potential new members is unbowed which demonstrated the Alliance's importance, being more than a security alliance. As a final statement he added that NATO's cohesion with regards to the ISAF mission is astonishing, especially because the Alliance was not at all founded for a major out-of-area operation like this one. Due to a long range of commitments and positive outcomes the Chicago Summit had been more than just a "realisation summit" of the Lisbon Summit agenda.