



## Es gilt das gesprochene Wort/Check against delivery

**Remarks by Federal Minister of Defence  
Dr Ursula von der Leyen  
to kick-off Panel 4 of the Shangri-La Dialogue  
on 3 June 2018**

Good to be back at the Shangri-La Dialogue!

Here we can directly see and feel the extraordinary dynamics of the Asian world, dynamics that encompass economy and society, science and innovation, and also in international security policy. They are the dynamics of opportunities and modernity and, at the same time, the dynamics of risks and threats.

In Europe, the situation is very similar. I was last here in 2015, three years ago.

At the time, in Europe,

- Neither Brexit had happened,
- nor had we experienced the refugee crisis,
- or heard the many new voices that favour unilateralism over multilateralism.
- The brutish force of ISIL terror had not yet reached the hearts of our cities,
- nor was there the utmost urge that we, Europe do more for our own security at last.

Only three years on, the Europe that I left to speak to you today is no longer the same.

Within the European Union we had to reassure ourselves of who we are.

We have come out stronger:

- we have spoken more honestly about solidarity and our values than in decades,
- we stand united in promoting free trade and opposing protectionism,
- we are fighting together for a global agreement on climate change,
- we are reinforcing the common protection of our external borders.

And: we have understood that we need to take more ownership for security on our continent in our very own interest. Europe, which for a long time has been perceived as a purely economic and trading power, now has started what it takes to become a truly relevant partner in security and defence.

We have started European Defence Union.

This will enable

- better common planning for our armed forces,
- smarter common investments in capabilities,
- and faster and better coordinated military action.

We have already begun to fill the European Defence Union with life.

My ultimate goal is to have an "an Army of Europeans":

While countries will continue to have national armed forces, they will be fully interoperable and compatible with each other.

There is a reason for all this:

We know that we as European nation states in the long-term will only remain truly relevant if we join forces. The geopolitical shifts and the demographic realities in Europe speak a clear language. Only if we join forces will Europe become a more relevant global partner a more relevant partner also for our friends in Asia.

We had to take these steps not least because our security situation has changed dramatically in recent years:

Our big neighbour, Russia, is increasingly projecting power with military means most recently Ukraine was the victim of this. What Russia puts into question is one of the very fundamental principles: the rule-based order, rules to be respected by all countries, be they big or small. This principle we will by no means abandon.

At the same time, we are faced with an arc of crisis, stretching from West and North Africa to the Near and Middle East, with unstable and fragile states, civil wars, genocide, displacement, misery and hardship and with brutal terrorism that combines archaic objectives and state-of-the-art methodologies.

How to deal with this terror?

There are 5 thoughts I would like to share with you:

1. There is truth in the saying "It takes a network to fight a network".

Translated into concrete terms this means:

We must intensely coordinate our national instruments of law enforcement, diplomacy, economy, development policy and the military, and then apply a well-tailored and targeted mix of measures. Internationally we need to cooperate even closer in our respective regional organisations and alliances.

In other words:

terrorism that uses diverse, hybrid means, requires a "hybrid defence".

In some places we are doing this already, for example within the Coalition against terror: to defeat ISIL, we fight with military means, yet reconstruction and stabilisation are part of our planning right from the start.

It is exactly these military and humanitarian efforts that we need if we want to avoid hopelessness and despair turning into radicalization and violence.

When poverty grows radicalization, it's education, human security and jobs which foster reconciliation stability and peace.

2. We have to win the battle for attention.

ISIL's recruitment strategies are advanced and highly professional. 90% of its propaganda is distributed through visual content. It appeals to the emotional level by using imagery and music which skilfully replicate the aesthetics of popular video games. We have to be prudent in our response:

We need to develop our own narrative and communicate the openness of our societies, our respect for other cultural, religious and national traditions in a powerful and modern way. At the same time, we need to address, expose and disprove the false arguments of terrorist organisations and be convincing particularly to young people.

3. We have to strengthen fragile countries and regions that are vulnerable to terrorism, help them build resilience.

This means that we need to enable and empower them to assume responsibility for their own security. The fight against terror needs a local face.

We are making a tangible contribution to this, with a number of projects in Jordan, in Tunisia, in Iraq, or by supporting the G5 Sahel force conjoint in West Africa.

4. Terror needs money and communication.

This is why we have to disrupt the terrorists' channels of communication and financing.

We are working hard on this already, especially in the Global Coalition against ISIL.

We formed working groups to coordinate our Strategic Communication and Counter Financing. We have to take concerted action to combat black market operations, the cashing in on hostage taking and art theft even more effectively.

5. The return of fighters harbours an enormous risk.

Those individuals are combat proved, radicalized, often traumatized and brutal, and they are mobile. This is why we in Germany have taken numerous measures to prevent departures to these regions, to prosecute foreign fighters and to invest in prevention and de-radicalisation.

For us, this topic is one of the very top security challenges; it needs highest attention and a continued, unified effort across the continents.

Finally:

One principle holds with regard to all actions in the fight against transnational terrorism: the rule of law and our values must be respected.

Because human rights and the rule of law apply even to the worst criminals.

At the end of the day, we will only succeed if we steadfastly defend this most fundamental of principles: The power of the law must prevail over the law of power.

My country stands for this principle, and so does Europe.

This principle is at the root of our firm conviction that we can best protect our security through reliable and rule-based multilateral cooperation.