Political voices from Germany:

Compliance with the 2% goal agreed on with NATO has always been a central topic in discussions on transatlantic defense policy. What is your take on this debate?

It is crucial that the German armed forces are fully equipped with material, personnel and equipment — whether this amounts to 1.5% of GDP or 2.2%. Rigid adherence to percentages is of little use to the alliance. What is essential for NATO are the military capabilities that its members contribute. And Germany is not in a bad position here. Incidentally, this year we have again increased the defense budget by 12% compared with 2018 (more than ever before!), and in 2020 the budget will grow by another 4%.

Dr. Fritz Felgentreu, SPD
Member of the German Parliament
Member of the Defense Committee in the German Parliament and Deputy Spokesperson on Defense Policy of the SPD Parliamentary Group

We, the Free Democrats, strongly believe in upholding and fulfilling the 2% goal agreed on with NATO. The strategic importance of NATO today is as relevant as it was in 1949. The Russian annexation of Crimea as well as Russia’s hybrid warfare that targets the West through digital disinformation make a strategic Western alliance indispensable. In light of the Russian threat, an increase in military spending does not necessarily mean armament, but rather proper accouterment after years of intended inactivity. Therefore, the 2% goal is not only a necessity, but also a sign of respect to our allies and foremost to our soldiers.

Dr. Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, FDP
Member of the German Parliament
Member of the FDP National Executive Committee and Spokesperson on Defense Policy of the FDP Parliamentary Group
we inform you about AmCham Germany’s advocacy work. As the voice of transatlantic business, we’re committed to having an open ear for our members and conveying their interests to relevant political leaders, think tank members and other stakeholders in Germany, Europe and the US. Strong transatlantic ties are the guiding principle of our policy committees, which are an important pillar of the Chamber’s portfolio.

Today’s security challenges cannot be solved by one country alone. We recognize that working closely together with our partners also means sharing the burdens and responsibilities. However, successful security policies will always have to take into account that civic and diplomatic measures are just as important. This is why determining success only on the basis of defense spending is misguided; an outcome-based approach is needed instead. In all this, we should never forget that the transatlantic alliance is more than NATO. Our common values and ideals of how to best tackle the issues of the future risk being lost if we only focus on the 2% goal.

Dr. Tobias Lindner, Alliance ’90/The Greens
Member of the German Parliament
Member of the Defense Committee in the German Parliament and Defense Policy Spokesperson for Alliance ’90/The Greens

Spending adequate resources for one’s own and the alliance’s defense is core to the principle of solidarity. Germany has taken big steps in the past five years and significantly increased its defense budget. But we must continue on this path for our very own security interests. On the basis of the capabilities we need and have committed to NATO, Defense Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer laid out a clear way forward to increase our defense spending to 2% of GDP by 2031. At the same time, preventive diplomacy, humanitarian aid and civilian crisis response all equally contribute to the security of the alliance. Germany will continue to lead these efforts.

Jürgen Hardt, CDU/CSU
Member of the German Parliament
Foreign Policy Spokesperson of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group