Collaboration is Everything

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Insights from MSC@Amerikahaus – Emerging Leaders

Between February 15 and 18, 2024, the Amerika Haus in Munich hosted official side events of the Munich Security Conference under the banner "MSC@Amerikahaus – Emerging Leaders". These events offered a platform to delve into a broad spectrum of foreign and security policy issues. This year, the spotlight was on the multifaceted crises confronting Germany and Europe.

The agenda featured an impressive roster of keynote speakers and panellists. Among representatives from the military, economy, science, politics, and young personalities, Hillary Clinton, former U.S. Secretary of State,

stands out. The discussions spanned a variety of urgent topics, including combating climate change from a security perspective, protecting critical infrastructure, enhancing cross-border cooperation to bolster the defence industry, securing NATO's eastern borders, and redefining roles within NATO in response to the current challenges.

Central to the dialogues was the array of crises, their implications, and potential strategies for Germany and NATO to navigate these turbulent times. A focal point was Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine, highlighting the critical situation at the front lines and the calls for continued military support. The discussions also touched upon the obligation of the Baltic states and Germany to deploy a heavy combat brigade to Lithuania. There was also discussion about the Bundeswehr, the goal of war capability, and the shift of its mission to alliance defence. All panellists agreed that the 100 billion from the special fund was not enough for all the necessary investments and that additional investments are appropriate. Another special fund as a solution was rejected; instead, the budget should be fundamentally increased, thereby securing investments. Moreover, the panels addressed attacks on critical infrastructure and the emergence of new threats across various domains, including the spread of misinformation and the resultant public uncertainty. School-level education was proposed as a viable long-term solution against such threats.

However, it was felt that the answer to everything in the discussions was increased cooperation between the allies. Cooperation should be improved, especially at the EU level, be it to successfully de-risk China, to research or procure urgent weapons systems or to maintain one's own position in a multipolar world with new emerging players. Initiatives like the European Skyshield were highlighted as exemplary projects, though the lack of participation by key nations such as France or Poland was noted as a significant concern. Similarly, complications in joint ventures like the Main Ground Combat System between Germany and France raised alarm. The consensus among the speakers underscored a singular truth: the path ahead requires unified efforts, bracing for years that promise to be anything but easy.