

NORBERT RÖTTGEN

Member of the Deutscher Bundestag and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee

Terry Martin, Journalist, TV news anchor

I am so disinclined to stop you from talking, but we do need to make room for everyone, and we will conclude the opening remarks with Norbert Röttgen, and hopefully we will then have some time for discussion among ourselves, because I think there are points already on the table that need discussion among the panel, and we, of course, want to get some input from the audience. Norbert?

Norbert Röttgen, Member of the Deutscher Bundestag and member of the Foreign Affairs Committee

Yes, thank you. I would like to make a few remarks and try to pick up some of the thoughts and remarks of our colleagues. We are supposed to talk about the future of Europe, and what has changed in February 2022 is that the future of Europe, first and foremost, has become a security matter. Before that, we were talking about competitiveness and social inclusion and climate change. This all remains compelling and on the table, but now the future depends on security. What changed last month, in November this year, is that European security, for the first time since December 1941, has become primarily a European matter. Therefore, the future of Europe and the future of European security now, all of a sudden, depends on us Europeans. This is fundamentally new, and I think it is fair to say that the Europeans are not prepared for this revolutionary change in their responsibility for their own fate. However, we are now facing the situation, and I would share your slightly positive aspiration that if and when the Europeans are forced to adapt to a new reality, we have the ability to adapt to that. However, we simply have to know that depends on us.

What does this mean? This means that it's not only important that this war ends, but it is equally important how it ends. I agree that there will not be a military solution, but I am absolutely convinced that any political solution, and even the achievability of a political solution has military preconditions. What is of paramount interest for us Europeans and the future perspective of security is that we clearly see our strategic goal to make this war a failure because if this war, the Russian-Putin war, were to turn out to be a success, even to some degree, if there were a revote for war, war would remain. This would be the lesson. Not only that, it would be drawn from a successful war, in Europe and beyond Europe, that the attempt to reintroduce war as an instrument of foreign policy in Europe in the 21st century succeeded. Therefore, our goal is to make this war a failure.

To make this war a failure does not imply any notion of territory, but it implies the notion of sovereignty. What we must work on is to work for the provisions that Ukraine emerges as a

sovereign country, as a viable state, out of this war. This is absolutely important because Putin's intentions, why he started the war, have remained and will remain. This is his ambition, his historic mission to reestablish Russia as a European empire. He has never put up with the outcome of the Cold War. He wants to reverse history. If Ukraine were not to emerge as a viable sovereign country, the end of the war would quite likely turn out to only be a tactical halt, a tactical pause, to enable Putin to reorganize, to replenish his stockpiles and then restart the war. Therefore, this is of paramount interest.

The election of Trump means that we do not know how American foreign and Ukraine policy will evolve. I think this unpredictability as a pattern of his behavior is what we can take for sure, that we do not know anything really. However, we have to prepare for the future, and so we should take him at his word, and we should not expect America to deliver any military financial support to Ukraine. Therefore, we would have to jump in, we would have to substitute, and in the first period, we would have to produce weapons and purchase weapons. Therefore, this is a money question of how to provide for Ukrainian security, which is tantamount to European security. A failure of war in a military term would mean that we have to achieve a real stalemate and not the progressing of Russia's advances. If it turns out that Putin is not able to achieve anything with, through and by the method of war, this would be frustrating Putin's efforts. This is achievable and we have to achieve it.

Therefore, in the first period, we would have to spend money to purchase weapons, to purchase American weapons, and simultaneously, we as Europeans would be forced to develop a European scaling and dimension of our defense industries. We simply could not afford to preserve and continue our national defense industries with the main purpose of creating jobs. We would have to transfer and transform our national defense industries to serve the purpose of providing security instead of national jobs. This is what we would be forced to do.

However, it could be the case that we are surprised by Trump's attempt, out of his desire for historic greatness, to cut a deal with Putin. Once he was to start this negotiation, he would certainly feel bound to achieve a result because he would, of course, sell it at as a big victory at home. Therefore, he is bound to a result, whereas Putin is free to continue to wage war. Therefore, Trump would be, from the start, in a weaker position to concede the outcome, major elements of the outcome, in Russia's and Putin's favor. This is a major threat. I would consider this approach to a deal by Trump as the worst-case scenario for the Europeans because it would accelerate the process of adaptation for the Europeans, perhaps in a way that would be too quick to adapt. Then, we could end up leaving with a deal between Putin and Trump that would be at the cost of Ukrainian security interests, which means at the cost of European security interests, leaving Ukraine as a security grey zone in Europe, and this determining the security situation for years, probably decades to come.

We are therefore facing a very serious situation, and we should have sped up much more quickly. However, we have not really started with that, but we certainly have to do so and are forced to do so because there is no alternative. There is only one Europe. It is our Europe, and we have to provide for the future and security of our Europe.

Terry Martin



Thank you very much.