



Ulf Kristersson: Tal vid Berlin Security Conference 2025

Talare
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1 Your Royal Highness, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I think it's fair to say, that Europe stands at a crossroads. We are since a few years facing a new and much more dangerous reality.

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Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has shattered peace and stability in our part of the world – but with enormous consequences in geopolitics also for the international order that once helped build Europe rich and safe in the years after World War II.

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President Putin's ambition was clearly to divide Europe, but so far, he has failed. European democracies have supported Ukraine for almost four years – and we continue.

15 For Europe to level up its support is actually one of the greatest responsibilities of our generation. We still don't know when this brutal war will end, but we do know, that how it ends will shape our security for the decades to come.

20 That's why we need to support Ukraine, strengthen our own resilience and mobilise all our available capabilities – be it military, economic, technological, innovative or diplomatic. That is a truly complex task in a very complex world. And we need a real sense of urgency.

25 Security is not for free. Quite a few countries know that since long, not least those neighbouring Russia.

Supporting Ukraine while also increasing our national military and civil defence abilities, requires vast amounts of resources. And therefore, we have to improve economic dynamism and growth. We have to commit to bold and sometimes

politically controversial reforms to boost European competitiveness.

Obviously, every country has its own legacy:

35 For more than 150 years, Sweden has learnt the benefits of international business – taking advantage of being a small country with big successful corporations, benefitting both ourselves, and the world. Now we try to apply the same idea to security. Domestically and together, we improve our ability to defend every inch of NATO's territory.

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Sweden acts in the Nordics and as one of the Nordic-Baltics, but also as a NATO Ally - and as a member of the European Union. Nowadays we seek economic strength and geopolitical security in cooperation with others.

45 Allow me to make five brief points on what Sweden currently does to increase security in our part of the world:

First: we are rapidly ramping up our armed forces in all domains. We have already doubled our military investments over the last four years, and we
50 continue to double down.

We're investing in new fighter jets – and yes, I can confirm they are Sweden-made latest version Gripens. But we invest also in submarines, in a new cyber defence infrastructure – and in other cutting-edge technologies.

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We have made the decisions to increase our defence spendings to NATO's 5 % target by 2030. Importantly, all political parties stand united behind this domestic goal. And six out of eight parties stand united behind last year's Swedish NATO accession.

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We have learned a lot from Ukraine's experience on the battlefield, especially about drones and how to counter them. But we also recognise the importance of a strong civil defence and the population's willingness to defend.

65 We have brought back conscription and civil service for both young men and young women. And I have to admit, that I truly felt proud when I followed my two youngest daughters fulfilling their Swedish military service.

70 Second: We've helped Ukraine from the very start. Over €10 billion euros in military and civilian support since the start of Russia's aggression. This makes Sweden one of the world's biggest providers of military support, actually the global number 6 – in absolute numbers.

75 We take pride in doing that and we very much appreciate the German leadership in supporting Ukraine. But more countries need to step up.

Let's be honest – money to Ukraine will run out and many good initiatives in many various formats will simply not take off unless we agree on a trustworthy and long-term financial framework.

80 We continue to push for a Ukrainian membership in the EU, and we act strongly for a positive decision on the Russian frozen assets at the next European Council meeting in December.

85 Third: After putting competitiveness at the top of the European agenda, we are now pushing for concrete results. The increasing sense of urgency after the Mario Draghi report is a good start – but it also needs to be converted into action. I'm afraid that lack of action too often has become a European problem.

90 Europe indeed has many competitive advantages – but we are still lagging behind, and we simply move too slowly. Quite often in our own Member States, but definitely too often in our common European institutions. In a quickly changing world – like it or not – speed is a virtue in itself.

95 Fourth: Sweden is proud of being home to one of Europe's most dynamic defence industries, including companies like Saab, BAE Systems, and GKN Aerospace.

100 These companies deliver cutting-edge solutions in aerospace, land and marine systems, advanced weapon systems, and sensor technology. In Sweden we also have unique space capabilities, hosting Esrange in the far north – one of the world's most versatile space centers.

105 One reason to success, is that tech savviness increasingly is blended with a strong defence industry. And the old-fashioned skepticism is gone.

110 Not only institutional but also retail investors agree that "defence tech"
nowadays means "peace tech" – and defending democracy.

That's why I'm extra pleased to see many Swedish startups and SMEs from the security and defence industry here today. You are all part of a world class innovation ecosystem, working on the development of AI and UAVs, on
115 geospatial intelligence, and medical solutions for wounded soldiers in the field. Just to give a few examples. I also appreciate the growing interest from German and international companies to partner with Swedish.

And fifth: For many reasons I do think that Sweden and Germany share a very
120 special responsibility – and a unique opportunity – to shape Europe's future as a modern and successful industrial continent.

We already join efforts in defence projects, including next-generation combat aircraft, ground-terrain vehicles, and air defence systems, as well as naval
125 systems. We collaborate on cyber and quantum technologies. And we both advocate for a more competitive, more integrated and less fragmented Euro-Atlantic defence market. That's a good start!

Finally: To be able to face this new security landscape, Europe needs to act with
130 unity and purpose. We should reform our practices and institutions – as Member States and as a Union.

The EU has taken decisive steps to make that happen. And we should take
further steps in close cooperation with NATO Allies and global partners.

135 Over a century, Sweden went from being one of Europe's poorest nations to become one of the world's richest. It did not happen overnight. And it certainly did not come for free.

140 Our journey was built on innovation, engineering, curiosity, openness for international competition, political commitment – and on many people's very hard work. I constantly keep telling my fellow Swedes: don't take that for granted. We didn't get it – we earned it. The same goes for German prosperity. And – which is extra important today – we did it together and we still fail and
145 succeed together.

That lesson should become the guiding star also for Europe as a whole.

150 Thank you.

Källa

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