

Germany reports record €53 billion in NATO defense spending

The figure marks more than a 3% increase from the previous year. However, it still does not meet the target set by NATO of spending 2% of GDP on defense.



Germany is hoping that an increase in spending would improve trans-Atlantic ties

Germany reported a record high in NATO defense spending for 2021, submitting a budget of €53 billion (\$63.8 billion) for the current year.

That figure marks a 3.2% increase over the year before. In 2020, spending was capped at an estimated €51.4 billion.

Countries including Germany have hoped that an increase in NATO spending could ease a trans-Atlantic dispute about burden-sharing among members.

Former US President Donald Trump had accused Germany of not contributing enough to NATO, and subsequently withdrew thousands of US forces stationed in the country.

Earlier this month, however, US President Joe Biden announced that there would be a freeze on US troop redeployment from Germany.

Stoltenberg expects pressure from Biden

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said multiple times that he expects to receive pressure on the issue from US President Joe Biden, who has vowed to boost ties with NATO, unlike his predecessor.

“All US presidents over the past decades have advocated more defense spending by Europe’s NATO partners,” Stoltenberg said in an interview with German news agency dpa last year.

Biden, he said, had already called on European allies to invest more before his election.

In 2018, Trump had offered the possibility of the US withdrawing from the alliance if partners did immediately meet the goal of spending 2% of their gross domestic product (GDP) on defense.

German defense spending in 2020 was in line with NATO calculations, that Germany’s spending should be equivalent to 1.57% of GDP - up from 1.36% the previous year.

Spending to remain the same despite pandemic

According to *Der Spiegel* magazine, an internal analysis for 2022 also shows chronically underfunded armed forces and argues that NATO planning goals of having Germany and other countries contribute 2% of the GDP within the next few years, “can’t be initiated or realized on time,” under the current budget.

In light of the financial consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, however, Stoltenberg has said that defense financing should remain the same, if not increased.

“All of this has created a new security environment that makes investment in our security continues to be necessary,” he said.

Source:

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