

Center for Strategic and International Studies

TRANSCRIPT

Event

## **“Global Security Forum 2023: Transatlantic Defense”**

### ***Introduction and Welcome Remarks***

DATE

**Wednesday, April 5, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. ET**

FEATURING

**Alessandro Profumo**

*CEO, Leonardo S.p.A.*

CSIS EXPERTS

**John J. Hamre**

*President and CEO, Center for Strategic and International Studies*

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John J. Hamre:

OK, folks. Let me ask people to find seats. You know, I hate to interrupt the conversations. I mean, the reason we come in person these days is so we can talk with each other on other things. So I'm sorry to interrupt that. But we do want to get started. And I want to say a hearty thank you and welcome to everybody. I'm really glad you're all here. This is – it feels so good to have real people, you know, in a room rather than just Hollywood Square things, you know.

My name is John Hamre, president here at CSIS, and very – this is our flagship event every year, you know. And it's to highlight, you know, the security – our provenance as a think tank is a defense think tank. So it's really important for this opportunity. And I want to say thank you to everybody for such a rich program.

I think I do want to say deep thanks to Bill Lynn, Matthew Green for their support. You know, Leonardo DRS has been supporting this now for 13 years. And so just to – this is – they didn't ask me to do this, but yesterday they won a billion-dollar contract for the propulsion system on the Columbia class. OK, they're now an American company. It's just so good. And we now get the best of Italian engineering helping keep our submarines safe. So wonderful.

Yesterday really was – it wasn't just because of Leonardo's win. What was really – and I talked a bit about this last night – you know, yesterday was a momentous day because Finland became an ally. Unbelievable how important that is. I remember going 25 years ago when I was deputy secretary; first went to Finland and talked to the state secretary. You guys ought to join NATO. And he was very polite and he said you don't know what the hell you're talking about. You know, he just brushed me off, which was – and at that time was probably appropriate.

But, you know, Vladimir Putin has changed the landscape. And the clear malevolence that we now have to live with in Europe, which is a real threat, led Finland to say we need to be a part of this alliance. And they've strengthened this alliance by joining us. They're a very capable, competent military. And we celebrate that.

But there is a larger and more important aspect to this, which is there's no Finlandization option now to end the Ukraine war. I mean, that may have been a possibility. There isn't a Finlandization option now. And we now have to internalize in our own thinking how we're going to defend ourselves in the East in a way that incorporates Ukraine.

Now, that's a big and kind of scary thought. I'm way out there. I personally think we ought to bring Ukraine into NATO right away. You know, our best defense in the future is to rebuild Ukraine. But Ukraine on its own cannot establish a deterrence framework against Russia.

You know, so we just have to start thinking bigger ideas about this. That may not be the right answer. I mean, but we do need a strategic framework that talks about the long-term security, the security of Europe over 30 years, not the next 18 months. And I know we're going to get after that. We've got such a great lineup today. And so I'm really excited. I'm looking forward to all of this.

And so thank you all. You're vitally important in this conversation, because your questions are going to stimulate these intellects to even better ideas and thoughts. So please be active in this conversation.

You know, we are – we have been partnered with Leonardo DRS. And, you know, we're very, very fortunate that we have the president of Leonardo with us today. And it's – it is a wonderful company. But they want to be a trusted partner to the American industrial base. And I think under Mr. Profumo's leadership, that's gotten stronger and stronger and stronger. And it's a very good thing.

So if I could – if I could turn to – you're here with us virtually, and – (laughs) – and I'm delighted that you're here, Mr. Profumo. Let me turn to you to get this going. We don't have audio. Let's – could we get that?

Alessandro  
Profumo:  
Dr. Hamre:

Do you hear me? Do you hear me?

OK. Now we can. Yeah. All good. Thank you. Go ahead.

Mr. Profumo:

First of all, many thanks, John, for this kind introduction, really.

I do apologize by the fact that I'm not there with you. So I hope that I'm the only one in video and all the other are in person. Next time, I promise you that I'll be there. Today we are pretty close to the end of the mandate of our border so it is not easy to fly in these days.

Having said that, welcome, again, to the 13th Annual Global Security Forum. Leonardo DRS and Leonardo – (inaudible) – have sponsored

this important event since its inception, and we are so pleased to be associated with it again today.

This year, the Global Security Forum is focused on transatlantic defense. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has thrust Europe into the spotlight, raising important questions about the challenges Europe and NATO must address on their eastern borders and the broader collective responsibility free democracies around the world face to maintain a just world order – a world that is fast changing to the worst, unfortunately, and forces government institution and industries to adjust to a new normal and shift to an economy of crisis if not an economy of war.

Never in the last decades European territorial integrity and the security and safety of its citizens was under dire threat. Now this is the reality we are facing. There is, therefore, the need to rebuild a credible defense and deterrence capability, and industry is ready to provide its contribution.

Today's panelists have in-depth knowledge that will be instrumental to answer these questions. Defense and industrial cooperation, technology transfer, munitions stockpiles, interoperability, and interchangeability will all surely surface as topics of debate throughout the day, as well as other important factors for consideration. You will hear from senior government officials and military officers, public policy analysts, and defense industry representatives, all of whom are incredibly well-positioned to provide their insight and experience to the issue at hand. So, again, welcome.

Let me close by thanking again John Hamre and the talented team of CSIS for organizing today's forum. Leonardo and Leonardo DRS are proud to be associated with CSIS and the Global Security Forum, and we look forward to a compelling and provocative dialogue today. Thanks again. (Applause.)

(END)