

FACT SHEET

AIR DEFENDER 23



WHAT IS AIR DEFENDER 23?

- Exercise Air Defender is the largest Air Force deployment exercise since NATO was founded. This summer about 100 Air National Guard aircraft from 35 different states will make the leap across the Atlantic to participate in Air Defender 2023. In addition to the world's most modern jets, the F35, more than 20 different types of aircraft and Airmen from 24 nations will practice air warfare operations together over Germany, but also over eastern Europe on the NATO border. Among them Eurofighter, F18, F16, A10, Gripen jets.
- Air Defender 23 will be the key exercise of the German Air Force, underscoring NATO's transatlantic cohesion and the relevance of air forces for national as well as the Alliance's defence.
- With Air Defender we send a clear signal that we absolutely guarantee the security of the alliance. Without ifs or buts.
- We need to train as we fight, so we can fight as we have trained.
- Our cooperation with friends and partners has been proven successful over decades. And in particular, the Air Force's close transatlantic ties are part of our DNA. Air Defender will raise our partnership and cooperation to a new level.

WHAT IS THE STRATEGIC GOAL OF THE EXERCISE?

- With AD23, Lw intends to demonstrate determined Allied Air Power. Together with the US and our allies in Europe, Luftwaffe will send a highly visible and powerful signal of credible deterrence in the air domain as well as an underlining of reassuring our partners in East and South-Eastern Europe.
- AD 23 is the largest deployment of air assets since the foundation of NATO. We want to...
- Promote collective defense of common values (freedom, democracy, prosperity) - Attack on one NATO nation is an attack on all
- Promote responsiveness of airpower - Allied air forces are first responders
- Promote strong resolve of allied nations' airpower - Allied air forces protect European air space against any threat
- Promote defensive nature of Air Defender 2023 - Allied air superiority is key to protect population & own forces
- Air Defender reflects the Russian war of aggression: The war in Ukraine determines our present and shapes our future. The inherent characteristics of airpower - speed, reach and height - have proven to be valid and decisive.



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TIMELINE OF AIR DEFENDER 23

- The truth is that shortly after taking over responsibility for the command of the Air Force, I developed the idea during a trip to the USA in 2018. Preparations for the European Defender exercise were underway at that time. An important exercise that shows the transatlantic link of Army forces.
- For almost two years my AD23 Planning Team is working on the details of the exercise: Gathered force profile and holdings, developed the beddown plan in Germany, created Airspaces suitable for large force employment and developed detailed missions and scenario along the key messages of AD23 and coping with training requirements of participating Nations and forces. In JULY 22 we conducted a very successful Initial Planning Conference, that underlined the interest and willingness of a large number of European Air Forces to participate in AD23.
- The Main Planning Conference took place in DECEMBER 22, where commitments of Troop Contributing Nations were confirmed and planning was consolidated.
- Final Coordination Conference will be conducted mid APRIL and is finally setting the scene for the Conduct Phase.
- AD23 will be conducted from 12 - 23 June 2023 with the deployment of the air assets mostly conducted the week before.

HOW IS NATO INVOLVED?

- It is natural that the interest of the states of Eastern Europe in the exercise is very great and has grown enormously as a result of Russia's war.
- The promise of unity in the alliance and the assurance that forces will be quickly made available for defense is the core of the alliance and the core of our security in Europe.
- Every day, we actively underscore in real terms that we, the German Air Force, protect the NATO airspace on the eastern flank. We patrol NATO airspace side by side with our partners, monitor the closure of German airspace to Russian aircraft with our radar systems, perform reconnaissance flights with our ECR Tornados over the Baltic Sea, and refuel allied combat aircraft with our A400M and A330 tankers, reconnaissance aircraft, our infantry forces and our air defense units. Regardless of the name of the exercise, we are in action as "Air-defenders" every day.
- Air Defender 23, in our own understanding, is not a bilateral exercise between Germany and the U.S., but a clear signal from NATO as a whole.



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HOW IS NATO INVOLVED?

- AD 23 underlines our strong commitment with NATO's effort of reassurance of our eastern partners. First of all, our Eastern partners are participating in the exercise, with air assets and planners in the Air Operations Headquarters. Additionally, we plan and conduct daily missions to show force at NATO's eastern flank.
- And NATO is participating with own assets in Air Defender. First, NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control -AWACS will fly every day and NATO airborne and ground based electronic warfare assets will be incorporated. Second, the deployable NATO Tactical Air Command and Control Centre - the so called DARS - will deploy to Germany and participate.
- Two NATO exercises, RAMSTEIN DUST for NATO's Deployable Air Command and Control capability, the DARS, and RAMSTEIN GUARD for Electronic Warfare are linked into our exercise.



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FACTS ABOUT AIR DEFENDER 23

- We expect more than 220 aircraft to participate in AD23: about 100 aircraft from US Air National Guard, 60 aircraft from our European Partner Nations and further international Partners as well as 60 aircraft of the Lw.
- It is expected that a total of 24 participating nations (18 with air assets and 6 with subject matter experts in the DEU Air Operations Center) and almost 10.000 airmen plus NATO with its E3 A, the DARS and Electronic Warfare assets will be involved in AD23. Forces will be deployed all over Germany with a focus and major contingents on the Luftwaffe's Airbases SCHLESWIG and HOHN in the North, WUNSDORF in the Centre and LECHFELD in the South. Almost all the Luftwaffe's airbases will host exercise participants or employ own assets. Our Air Operations Headquarters at KALKAR/UEDEM plays the very central role as the Air Command and Control Centre for all exercise activity. All missions will be planned, tasked and coordinated from our German Air Operations Center in KALKAR/UEDEM.

AIR NATIONAL GUARD

- AD23 will be composed of national, international and NATO efforts such as the Multinational Air Group Exercise, a strong US ANG contingent with a high number of multirole fighter and support aircraft deploying to DEU. The significant participation of US ANG underlines the strong transatlantic bond between the US and Europe.
- Our contacts with the Air National Guard are excellent. The Air National Guard is impressively equipped, highly modern and professional.
- According to current planning, the ANG is participating: with ~100 aircraft and other air domain related capabilities from 35 different states.
- The Luftwaffe is connected to USA on many levels. We are very proud that we have been able to invite and welcome the Air National Guard with such a large participation across the Atlantic.
- And another thought is that we are pleased to have the F-35 visit us. We are shaping our future with F-35. Joining the F-35 program is an important milestone that will further intensify our ties. Shared weapons systems are the best basis for even closer cooperation. Together with our friends and partners, we will implement the modernization of our Air Force even faster and more consistently.



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EXERCISE AREAS

- There is not one big training space, but several areas that are ideally scaled.
- For Air Defender as a Large Force Employment Exercise we had to create completely new Exercise Airspaces.
- You may know, the airspace over Europe is the most frequented one in the world.
- Together with our civil partners Deutsche Flugsicherung and EUROCONTROL we created three large Exercise Areas in the east, south and north of Germany that will be used every day in sequenced activation.
- Additionally, our neighbours Poland and Czech Republic offered their Military Training Areas for so called continuation training, means smaller Air Defence exercise missions outside the big waves.
- It is estimated that there will be three big Composite Air Operations every day – with about 40-80 aircraft each, and command and control elements. All in all, it is about 250 sorties per day.

DISTINGUISHED VISITORS DAY

- We have soon realized that the interest in the exercise is great and constantly growing.
- In order to make all requests workable, we are holding a main Distinguished Visitors Day and some side events and are pleased to be able to show what we are doing in concrete terms. The acceptance of the Top Level international and national Politicians and Military, such as SACEUR, is a special honor.
- We also coordinate the numerous media requests. It is important to provide an understanding of the scope of the exercise, to avoid misunderstandings.
- Luftwaffe will set up a media centre at all involved Air Bases and the DEU AOC to provide attractive media products and information to local or regional and national and international media. And there will be a main media center at SCHLESWIG AB that especially focusses on international media and the DVDay.
- We want to send a visible signal with the exercise, after all. An exercise without Strategic Communications and public relations would make little sense. Air Defender ensures that there is no room for misunderstanding about our readiness to protect and defend all Allies.

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