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LETTER OF INTENT
BETWEEN
THE FEDERAL MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
AND THE
MINISTER OF DEFENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS
REGARDING
SECURE MILITARY SEALIFT, STRATEGIC TRANSPORT AND SEABASING¹

The Federal Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, herein-after referred to as the "participants":

- considering the Declaration of Intent (DOI) between the Federal Minister of Defence of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Minister of Defence of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on the further Enhancement of Bilateral Relations in the Field of Defence signed on 28 May 2013;
- considering the long-standing cooperation between both navies;
- considering the desire to deepen the cooperation between both navies;
- considering that both navies are (associated) members of the European Amphibious Initiative (EAI);
- considering the German ambition to develop a secure military sealift capability;
- considering the Netherlands pursuit of making full use of the capabilities of the Netherlands Joint Support Ship through internationalisation;
- considering the capabilities of the German Sea Battalion and Royal Netherlands Navy units;

declare the following intent:

1. Objective of the LOI

In the spirit of deepening the bilateral cooperation, the objective of this Letter of Intent (LOI) is to enhance operational capabilities and interoperability in the field of secure military sealift, strategic transport and seabasing, including supporting capabilities.

¹ The German concept for "Secure Military Sealift" is presently under development. Strategic Transport and Seabasing are roles of the Netherlands Joint Support Ship. Whether these terms overlap, differ or coincide is yet to be established. Until then, these terms will be used separately.

2. Background

The German and Netherlands navies benefit from a long-standing and trusted cooperation, e.g. in service support for frigate systems, the combined Centre for Ship Signature Management (CSSM), the combined Air Warfare Course, and the regular cooperation during multi-national operations² and exercises.

Established in 2014, the German Sea Battalion is a specialised unit for the support and protection of forces, the defence of ships and maritime infrastructure against regular and asymmetric threats in ports, the littoral and on the high seas. It provides capabilities for maritime force protection, boarding operations, explosive ordnance disposal, intelligence surveillance and reconnaissance, evacuation and extraction operations, and related training. Similar capabilities are provided by Royal Netherlands Navy units.

Commissioned in 2015, the Netherlands Joint Support Ship (JSS) is designed to provide and combine capabilities for replenishment at sea, strategic transport and sea basing. The JSS with the current crew concept is tailored for replenishment tasks only. The Netherlands pursues optimising the crew concept in order to use the full potential of the JSS by internationalising her use.

The German forces intend to develop a secure military sealift and amphibious capability and regard the Royal Netherlands Navy as the prime partner for this development.

3. Scope

The scope of this LOI is to internationalise the use of the Netherlands JSS by German forces and to combine the capabilities of the German Sea Battalion and Royal Netherlands Navy units in order to contribute to the objective of this LOI by:

- exchanging information on each other's capabilities, developments, planning and intentions in the field of secure military sealift, strategic transport and seabasing, including supporting capabilities;
- cooperating on maritime doctrine development and sharing of Lessons Learned/Lesson Identified in order to ensure commonality of doctrine for secure military sealift, strategic transport and seabasing operations, including supporting capabilities;
- combining training efforts between the Netherlands and German training establishments, ensuring professional connectivity and interoperability;
- coordinating the operational scheduling of the aforementioned and other relevant units to facilitate and identify opportunities for common participation in international exercises and operational deployments;
- integrating the German Sea Battalion into the Royal Netherlands Navy;

² The recent provision of a German command platform for the Netherlands SNMCMG-commander and the Netherlands boarding teams on board German ships operating in EUNAVFOR ATALANTA are examples of these operations.

- embarking firstly the German Sea Battalion and secondly other German detachments on the JSS and Landing Platform Docks (LPDs) to further develop secure military sealift, strategic transport and seabasing capabilities and to develop the full potential of the JSS;
- reaching an agreement on preconditioned availability of the Netherlands JSS and reciprocal German compensation;
- providing Netherlands support to the development of a German secure military sealift concept;
- establishing a close cooperation in Research & Development to explore opportunities for the procurement of common equipment, or at least the adaptation of a common standard, especially in areas that are unique to secure military sealift, strategic transport and seabasing operations. This will result in shared risk, improved interoperability, efficient training and reduced costs, in particular in supporting simulation systems;
- creating a combined public affairs effort (media campaign) in order to show our willingness for commonality, mutual support and cooperation.

A roadmap, identifying the steps to the FOC status, is enclosed in the annex to this LOI.

4. Final Arrangements.

This LOI, which does not create any rights and obligations under international law, will become effective upon the date of signature.

Any financial issues between the partners from the intended cooperation will be settled in accordance with the respective STANAG procedures, unless other regulations apply.

This LOI may be amended at any time, in writing, with mutual consent of the participants.

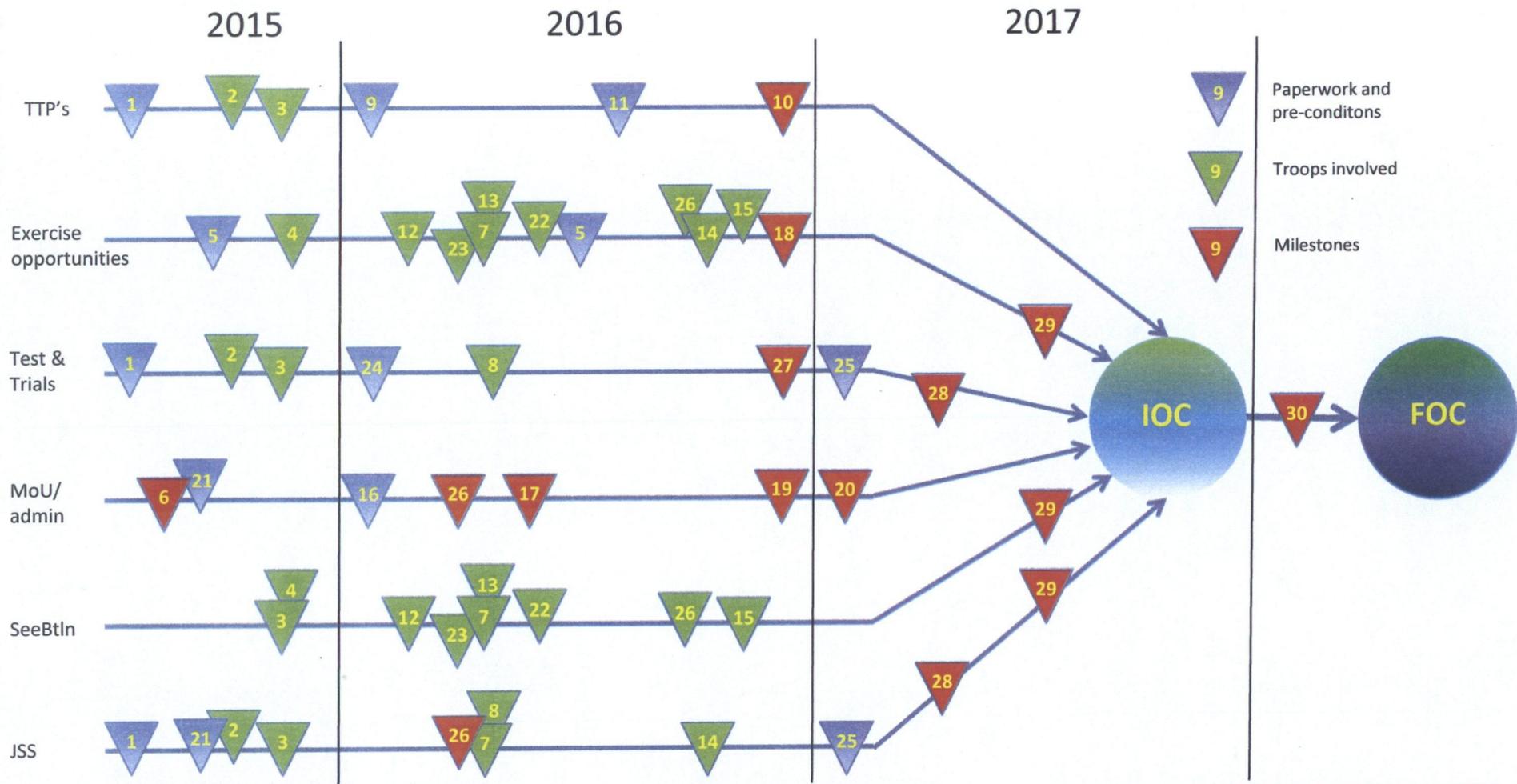
Any disputes regarding the interpretation or implementation of this LOI will be resolved exclusively between the participants.

Annex: Roadmap

Signed in duplicate on board HNLMS Karel Doorman in Amsterdam on 4 February 2016:

Dr. Ursula von der Leyen
Federal Minister of Defence
of the Federal Republic of Germany

Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert
Minister of Defence of the
Kingdom of the Netherlands



1. DEU joint visit to JSS in Den Helder
2. DEU embark JSS at sea for knowledge gathering (wk 47-51)
3. Port visit JSS to DEU port TBD (wk 47/48)
4. SARC 4 HNLMS Rotterdam (wk 47-49)
5. Draft common exercise schedule
6. LNO's exchanged
7. SARC 4/NOST JSS (wk 18-26)
8. Port visit JSS to DEU port TBD (wk 17/18) + exec. initial T&T
9. Draft set of TTP (including safety issues)
10. Set of TTP finalized (including safety issues)
11. GMSV concept reviewed
12. Exercise Cold Response (wk 9-10)

13. Exercise BALTOPS (wk 23-24)
14. SNMG1 JSS (wk 34-48)
15. APS (wk 46-49)
16. Draft MoU
17. MoU signed (May 2016)
18. Common exercise schedule finalized
19. OPEVAL criteria established
20. Roadmap reviewed
21. Draft/investigate other JSS possibilities
- JSS capabilities sec
- RW
- Role2/3

- MIO
- 22. MARSOC certifex + sniper course
- 23. Diving exer/coop (2016 Q2-4)
- 24. Draft test & trials program
- 25. (continue) Execution test & trials
- 26. Other JSS possibilities finalized
- 27. Test & trials program finalized
- 28. Test & trials completed (end 2017)
- 29. OPEVAL IOC completed
- 30. OPEVAL FOC completed

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. Admin = Administrative issues
2. APS = Africa Partnership Station
3. Certifex = Certification exercise
4. Coop = Cooperation
5. DEU = Germany
6. Exer = Exercise
7. FOC = Fully Operational Capable
8. GMSV = Gesicherte Militärische See- Verlegfähigkeit
9. HNLMS = His Netherlands Majesty's Ship
10. IOC = Initial Operational Capable
11. JSS = Joint Support Ship
12. LNO = Liaison Officer
13. MARSOC = Maritime Special Operations Capable
14. MIO = Maritime Interdiction Operation
15. MoU = Memorandum of Understanding
16. NOST = Netherlands Operational Sea Training (period of intensive training in UK during final stage of work-up process)
17. OPEVAL = Operational Evaluation
18. Role2/3 = Specific medical capability
19. RW = Rotary Wing
20. SARC = Safety And Readiness Check (stage in work-up process of ship, leading to full operational readiness)
21. SeeBtl = See Battalion
22. SNMG1 = Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (one of the four Standing NATO Maritime Groups)
23. TBD = To Be Detailed
24. TTP = Tactics, Techniques and Procedures
25. T&T = Test and Trials
26. Wk = Week