

**Address by
Ambassador Hans-Dieter Lucas
on the occasion of the
Farewell dinner to mark the retirement of
General Hans-Lothar Domröse,
Commander Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum,
Brussels, 1 March 2016.**

General Domröse, Mrs Domröse, ladies and gentlemen,

I will start this short speech with a quote that I take from you yourself, General Domröse:

“I am only a simple infantry soldier”

Made by an enlisted man, this statement would not be that remarkable – but when it comes from a 4-star general, the case is different! It perfectly reflects your understanding of what military service means, service during which you have held many different posts, posts that have led you up to the highest achievable rank – of a 4-star general. This dinner is a great opportunity to pay tribute to a remarkable career that is coming to an end -, and, above all, to a remarkable man who has served his country and NATO for 43 years.

You joined the service in 1973 and learned your trade as a soldier in the Bundeswehr at the height of the Cold War, in the Mechanized Infantry – the so-called “workhorse” among the army branches.

During your early military career, you have honourably served in a wide range of national and multinational positions.

Taking and Executing Command has been the theme

throughout your career, as commander of a Mechanized Infantry Brigade and of the German Special Operations Division – a unique formation comprising mainly the Special Forces (the well-known KSK) and all German Army Airborne units.

In terms of senior multinational flag-level command appointments, you have most notably been Chief Of Staff of Multinational Brigade South in Prizren, Kosovo; you have also served as Chief of Staff ISAF in Kabul (in 1999) and as Commander EUROCORPS (in 2008) before beginning your 4-star appointment as Commander of Joint Force Command Brunssum in December 2012.

Like all high-ranking Generals, you, General Domröse, had to 'suffer through' some equally high-profile staff appointments that, in your case, brought you "close to politics", already early in your career when you worked in the Federal Chancellery under Chancellor Kohl.

In 2011, you assumed the position of German Military Representative to MC/NATO and the EU here in Brussels. However – and this is no secret – as opposed to your current assignment as Commander of JFC Brunssum, serving as German Military Representative here in Brussels was not at the top of your list (Gen. Wiermann and the other MilReps may disagree on that).

As Commander of JFC Brunssum since 2012, you hold one of NATO's key posts in particularly challenging times. You played a key role when it came to shaping NATO's response to Russia's aggressive behaviour in Ukraine, above all in the context of the RAP. "Trident Juncture", the largest NATO exercise in many years, was planned and carried out under your command. Afghanistan and its ongoing operations there were always at the top of your

agenda during your time at JFC Brunssum.

Such an outstanding military career requires a number of things: knowledge, expertise, commitment, courage and perseverance. You, General Domröse, have shown all this – and more. You always made clear where you stood, expressed your views in a frank manner – but in full loyalty to the political leadership.

The interviews you gave in recent months on issues such as Afghanistan or NATO's role in the South are an example of this.

You embody an ideal the Bundeswehr is very much committed to: the "Staatsbürger in Uniform", or *citizen in uniform*. That means a soldier who not only executes and takes command, but who is very much aware of the broader political framework he is acting in and the responsibility he must live up to.

I would like to add a second aspect: During your career, in every appointment – and at every level – you have always been an inspirational leader who has particularly cared for those under your command. That is why you have been so popular with your staff.

In this respect, you are an excellent example of what it means to be a soldier, one who has the honour of *Taking and Executing Command!*

And that is why I must correct the quote I mentioned earlier:

General Domröse – you are far from being just a "simple soldier"!

Now, after 43 years of service, you will begin the next

adventure in your life: retirement. I will not speculate about your plans. One thing is for sure: there is always a post-career life. But still, it is not easy to imagine the life of a 4-star General in retirement – commanding trees and plants in your garden in Lower Saxony may be a little more difficult than commanding troops! And I am sure: there will be more than that.

General Domröse, whatever 'retirement' means to you, we wish you good luck, health and every success. More than anything, I thank you for your outstanding and excellent service during the last 43 years!