

**Speech to be held by
Minister of the Interior Hans-Joachim Grote
on presentation of the Campaign Streamer to the
Centre of Excellence for Operations
in Confined and Shallow Waters,
Kiel, 15 November 2018**

Time of release: beginning go speech
The spoken word shall prevail.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Land Government has the power to award a Campaign Streamer. To national military units that have a connection with Schleswig-Holstein. And to international units in our state. I am pleased to do so, and I am awarding it to a very special institution.

For in this case, the Campaign Streamer is not being awarded to an institution of the German army, the *Bundeswehr*. The streamer is going to the only NATO institution we have here in Schleswig-Holstein.

That is something rather special, I feel.

The NATO Centre of Excellence for Operations in Confined and Shallow Waters has existed in Kiel for ten years. Largely unnoticed by the public, this think tank carries out important functions in the interests of our security.

With this ceremony we are now drawing your work into the focus of public attention. Of course your tenth anniversary is a good reason to celebrate. But above all, your tasks are so important that we feel it would be interesting for others to know more about them.

The Kiel Centre of Excellence is an important generator of ideas for the Transatlantic Alliance. It is there that the principles and procedures for maritime operations in marginal seas and coastal waters are developed.

The Baltic is one example of such a marginal sea. And it is the sea that connects us with Russia. Against that background, Kiel is certainly the right place for strategic thinking.

Those who concern themselves with questions of defence and warfare in sea areas are unlikely to win popularity with a broad section of the public. But should the worst come to the worst – which we hope will never happen – we will be thankful if experts have devised a good defence strategy in advance.

To advocate a ban on thinking in matters of security policy does not make our world a safer place. On the contrary. Some forms of naivety may seem cute or harmless. This form of naivety is dangerous. It's a risk we can't afford to take. So we in Schleswig-Holstein say: People and institutions that work to strengthen NATO's defence capabilities are welcome here in our state.

The Centre's core assignment is to develop new tactical approaches and adjust existing concepts quickly and flexibly. For instance, the expertise for the Alliance's new anti-submarine warfare concept was drawn up in Kiel.

Moreover, it creates impulses for new technologies in cooperation with research institutions and industry. The staff of the Centre act as service providers to NATO and our own navy. So the team in Kiel is international: around 40 soldiers and experts from ten nations work together at the Centre.

Over the years, the Centre has acquired a high reputation in the world of security policy. By organizing numerous international conferences and other events in the field of maritime security. By doing so, you have helped to put Kiel and Schleswig-Holstein on the map internationally.

I wish to thank you for that on behalf of my state. With your contribution you are helping to ensure that Schleswig-Holstein remains international and open to the world.

Although it is one of 24 institutions of its kind, the Centre of Excellence for Operations in Confined and Shallow Waters is nevertheless unique as far as its tasks are concerned. It makes a valuable contribution to the security precautions of the Alliance and thus to the safety of the citizens of Schleswig-Holstein in general.

And that is the contribution the state of Schleswig-Holstein wishes to honour today. The Campaign Streamer is the only official form in which a German state can award a military unit recognition for its services. And a further intention is to demonstrate solidarity between the state and the units stationed there.

The Campaign Streamer has existed for 40 years. Numerous units of the *Bundeswehr* in Schleswig-Holstein have already received it.

The Centre of Excellence has been with us for ten years. As a unit it is unique in that several nations work together within it towards ensuring peace. But it does not yet have a Campaign Streamer.

That is what we are about to change today.

In recognition and appreciation of your work I now award the Centre of Excellence for Operations in Confined and Shallow Waters the Campaign Streamer of the State of Schleswig-Holstein!