



German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius EPA

Germany downplays security concerns over leak

TIM STICKINGS

Germany's government was trying to limit damage to its reputation this week after a Russian spy scandal sparked frustration within Nato.

Defence Minister Boris Pistorius played down security fears after Russia leaked an audio recording of an intercepted on-line call between German military officials, discussing how to support Ukraine in its fight

against the Kremlin's invasion. "Of course we are reliable," Mr Pistorius said on a visit to Stockholm.

He found an ally in soon-to-be Nato member Sweden, whose Defence Minister Pal Jonson agreed on Germany's reliability, but others appear less satisfied.

Some British politicians outside government have criticised German security measures. Former UK defence secretary Ben Wallace said that

the incident demonstrated Germany was "neither secure nor reliable".

Mr Pistorius has been calling allies to insist the leak was a one-off security mistake.

Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock hastily added a trip to Paris to her schedule on Tuesday, while German Chancellor Olaf Scholz met an elite commando unit to show his support for the armed forces.

The recording leaked by

Russia had something to aggravate almost everyone. The Kremlin seized on chatter about striking a Crimean bridge to suggest Germany was a party to the war, an impression Mr Scholz has been desperate to avoid.

Talk of Britain having "people on the ground" in Ukraine was the second time in days that Germany appeared to have given that away, sparking irritation with Mr Scholz in

Westminster. At home, his argument that providing Taurus missiles would require German troops in Ukraine seemed to be contradicted by the leak, in which it was said Kyiv's forces could operate them alone.

A further complaint in Berlin is that for all of Mr Scholz's talk about a shift to a more robust security policy (known as the Zeitenwende, or watershed), the military's apparent clumsiness tells quite a different story.

"Instead of following the arguments of his own officers, Olaf Scholz is doing exactly what Putin wants" by not sending the Taurus missiles, said conservative member Norbert Roettgen, a foreign policy specialist.

"That is disastrous as a signal to Moscow, because it shows that Russian pressure works."

German politician Reinhard Brandl, who sits on a defence committee in parliament, said it was time for ministers to strengthen Germany's cyber defence after the latest Russian spy scandal.

An alleged Russian spy in Germany's foreign intelligence service was arrested on suspicion of treason in 2022.

The same year, a guard at the British embassy in Berlin admitted passing secrets to Moscow.

"Russia listened to a conversation among military officers about the deployment of Taurus in Ukraine," Mr Brandl said.

"That shows once more that we're still waiting for the Zeitenwende in cyber defence."

German officials have hit back by accusing Russia of spreading propaganda and trying to sow division among Ukraine's biggest backers.

Mr Pistorius said the leak was a one-off security mistake by a general who dialled into a WeBEx call on an unsecured line

ADVERTORIAL



Waldorf Astoria Residences Dubai Downtown to Mark First Standalone Residence Outside of the U.S.

NABNI Developments and Hilton partner to heighten prestigious luxury brand's global presence Dubai, UAE (March 5, 2024) – Hilton (NYSE: HLT) and NABNI Developments, the visionary real estate developer behind the most sought-after residential and commercial properties in Dubai, have announced plans for Waldorf Astoria Residences Dubai Downtown, set for completion in 2028.

Set to be located in the iconic district of Downtown Dubai, Waldorf Astoria Residences Dubai Downtown will heighten the prestigious hospitality brand's global presence as the first-ever standalone Waldorf Astoria residential address outside of the United States. The residential address marks a significant milestone for NABNI Developments as it continues to redefine luxury living in the Middle East.

The esteemed partnership was made official with a signing ceremony, marking a new era of opulence in the heart of Dubai. In attendance was Daniel Wakeling, Vice President of Development, Luxury & Residential – Europe & Africa at Hilton, Abdulrahman Alsuwaidi, Chairman of NABNI Developments, and Badr Alsuwaidi, CEO of NABNI Developments.

Abdulrahman Alsuwaidi, Chairman of NABNI Developments says: "At NABNI Developments, we strive to deliver exclusive living experiences that will continue to redefine the growing luxury branded residences segment in the UAE.

"With the introduction of Waldorf Astoria Residences, we will deliver exclusive living experiences that set the precedent for sophistication and bespoke services in luxury living."

Set to be situated on a 1.5-acre (65,000-square foot) plot in Downtown Dubai, The Residences will pair world-class design by Carlos Ott Architects and interiors by award-winning hospitality design firm Hirsch Bedner Associates with a Waldorf Astoria-managed luxury hospitality experience.

"It is an honor to bring Waldorf Astoria Residences to the Middle



East, especially to the UAE's thriving real estate sector. Our partnership with Hilton is not just about creating residences but crafting an iconic landmark that reimagines modern day luxury for those who appreciate timeless elegance," continues Badr Alsuwaidi, CEO of NABNI Developments.

"The addition of Waldorf Astoria Residences Dubai Downtown marks a significant milestone in strengthening our presence in the EMEA market," said Dino Michael, Senior Vice President & Global Head, Hilton Luxury Brands.

"This collaboration not only underscores our commitment to delivering unparalleled luxury experiences but also highlights our confidence in the continued growth potential of the region."

The partnership agreement aligns with NABNI Developments' commitment to delivering high-quality luxury residences, and its ambitious expansion plans. The leading real estate developer is dedicated to preserving the alluring and sophisticated essence of Waldorf Astoria, introducing its comforting familiarity and charming allure to Dubai's luxury living segment.

Carlos Ott Architects' previous work with NABNI Developments include Lamborghini Building Dubai, the world's largest brand showroom and dedicated service center, on Sheikh Zayed Road, and the striking gold glass-clad office building Business Avenue office building in Al Khabaisi.

The Residences will further position Hilton's award-winning hospitality brand at the forefront of innovation and luxury.

Along with signature resident services and over 100 years of world-class hospitality and exclusive Residence Owner Benefits including elite Hilton Honors status and more, residents will be able to enjoy the very best of Dubai's most iconic attractions and premier luxury shopping, award-winning dining, and destination offerings such as the Burj Khalifa and world-famous Dubai Mall, all easily accessible within walking distance from Waldorf Astoria Residences Dubai Downtown.

For more information about Waldorf Astoria Residences Dubai Downtown, please visit www.waresidencesdubai.com or contact the sales team at +971 4 2566409.

For media inquiries: Marketing Team at NABNI Developments, media@nabnidevelopments.com



He [Putin] just wanted to embarrass us, and to try to divide our unity and try to undermine our support for Ukraine

BORIS PISTORIUS
German Defence Minister

from Singapore, possibly using hotel Wi-Fi.

The call is believed to have been a "random hit" for Russian wiretappers and German military chiefs do not think that they have a mole, Mr Pistorius said.

The fact that Russia went public with its secret intelligence shows that "Putin is not interested in the information itself that he gathers", Mr Pistorius said.

"He just wanted to embarrass us, and to try to divide our unity and try to undermine our support for Ukraine."

Ms Baerbock will follow her French meeting by hosting the UK's Foreign Secretary David Cameron today.

While UK ministers have refrained from criticising Mr Scholz, leading security voices have not held back after the chancellor implied British and French troops were helping Ukraine to fire missiles.

Alicia Kearns, the head of the UK Parliament's foreign affairs committee, last week described Mr Scholz's comments as "wrong, irresponsible and a slap in the face to allies".