

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY SYMPOSIUM

Chişinău, Republic of Moldova | Friday, 23 October 2026

Symposium: "The Role of Civilian Expertise of Reservists in Military Duties"

Panel III: CIVILIAN EXPERTISE AS A MILITARY CAPABILITY MULTIPLIER

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A European Meridian: From Crisis Management to Future Warfighting The Reserve as a Technology Bridge

1. Reading Project Meridian – Why the US Has Changed Paradigm

On 30 September 2026, the US Secretary of War commissioned Project Meridian: The Future of Warfare. The memo is short, but doctrinally revolutionary.

For the first time since 1991, the Pentagon officially states three things:

- a) Recent successes – Operations MIDNIGHT HAMMER, ABSOLUTE RESOLVE, EPIC FURY – do not guarantee future overmatch.
- b) The character of war is changing faster than the bureaucratic cycle, driven by five converging disruptors: Artificial Intelligence, Autonomy, Directed Energy, Robotics, and Biotechnology.
- c) The solution cannot come from inside the building. The Secretary tasks his Chief Technology Officer, Mr. Emil Michael, to commission the study outside DoW, with technologists, entrepreneurs and policy innovators.

This is not a study. It is a doctrinal break. The US moves officially from "conflict management" to "warfighting dominance". From "de-risking" to "winning". The document calls for mapping future battlefields, identifying capability gaps, and proposing actionable, fieldable solutions within 120 days – by 28 January 2027.

The message to Europe is implicit but clear: if you continue to prepare for crisis management, you will be irrelevant in future warfare.

Critical points:

The Digital Watch Observatory already frames the project as a "blurred boundary between AI governance, cybersecurity, critical infrastructure, and cyber conflict".

The critical issue: Musk and Luckey already hold government contracts through SpaceX and Anduril, sparking a debate over potential conflicts of interest—specifically, how private interests might influence the definition of future military requirements.

2. The European Gap: Why We Need a European Meridian

Europe lives in a different conceptual time. Our entire security architecture since Saint-Malo (1998) and the Petersberg Tasks is built on crisis management, stabilization, and comprehensive approach.

Future warfare as described in Project Meridian does not fit this paradigm.

a) Time compression. Future war will be decided in 72-96 hours by autonomous swarms, AI-driven decision loops and directed energy, not in 6-month deployment cycles for EU Battlegroups.

b) Industrial irrelevance. The US memo speaks of surging production. Europe still procures through 27 national peacetime procedures. We have no "war production authority".

c) Human capital mismatch. Future warfare requires data scientists, AI engineers, biotech researchers, quantum specialists, space operators. No European army can recruit or retain them in uniform permanently. Their cost and career logic are civilian.

This is where the theme of this Symposium – civilian expertise of reservists – becomes strategic, not ancillary.

3. Proposal: A European Meridian – Three Pillars

I propose that this Symposium recommends the commissioning of a European Meridian Project, complementary to the US one, but tailored to EU/NATO European realities.

PILLAR 1 – DOCTRINAL MERIDIAN: From Petersberg to Warfighting.

We need a White Paper on Future Warfare 2035-2040 that redefines EU readiness levels. Not more battlegroups, but a new concept: Civil-Military Technology Reserve. A pool of vetted civilian experts (AI, drone manufacturing, bio-defence, cyber, space) pre-cleared, pre-trained, integrable in 48 hours into EU and NATO HQs. Exactly as Project Meridian asks to look "outside the Pentagon", we must look outside the Ministries of Defence.

PILLAR 2 – INDUSTRIAL MERIDIAN: From Efficiency to Surge.

Project Meridian asks for actionable solutions. For Europe, this means:

- A European List of Critical Future Systems (LCFS): low-cost attritable drones, autonomous counter-UAS, tactical directed energy, battlefield AI decision aids, bio-surveillance kits.
- Pre-negotiated EU framework contracts with dual-use start-ups, not only primes, with a "war clause" for automatic scale-up.
- A European Military Mobility 2.0 that includes data mobility, energy mobility, and drone corridor pre-authorization, not just tanks on rails.

PILLAR 3 – HUMAN MERIDIAN: The Reservist as Capability Multiplier.

This Panel title is visionary. In future warfare, the reservist is not a second-tier soldier. He is the bridge that allows the military to access technology that evolves every 6 months.

My proposal:

- Create a NATO-EU "Meridian Reserve Network": a voluntary, cross-border roster of civilian experts, with common security vetting, common exercise programme, and legal status for rapid activation under Article 3 resilience.
- Transform Reserve training: less parade ground, more integration into tech companies, participation in exercises like Project Convergence / DIANA / Innovation Continuum.
- Use Moldova, here in Chişinău, as a pilot case: a hybrid-threat laboratory where reservist expertise in energy, cyber and strategic communication is tested against real-world scenarios.

4. Conclusion – A Predictive Warning

Project Meridian in the US says: the future battlefield is already here, we are just not ready.

A European Meridian must say: if Europe wants to be a security provider and not a security consumer, it must stop preparing for the last crisis and start preparing for the next war.

The next war will not be won by the army that has the best platforms, but by the system that integrates civilian technological superiority faster into military effect.

The Reserve, and specifically civilian expertise inside the Reserve, is not a nice-to-have. In future warfare, it is the decisive capability multiplier.

As Secretary Hegseth commissioned Meridian outside the Department of War, I propose this Symposium commissions – here in Chişinău – the idea of a European Meridian outside traditional institutional boxes.

The US gave us 120 days to think. Europe should not need more.