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Jens Stoltenberg honored with Germany's order of Merit



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BERLIN: Former NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg was awarded Germany's prestigious "Grand Cross" Order of Merit for his contributions to European security and strengthening transatlantic ties. The award was presented by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier during a ceremony at Bellevue Palace.

President Steinmeier praised Stoltenberg for his leadership during his decade-long tenure at NATO, highlighting how he strengthened the alliance amid growing threats from Russia. "You have made NATO stronger and more united during a time of renewed threats," Steinmeier said.

Stoltenberg played a crucial role in facilitating Sweden and Finland's entry into NATO, which Steinmeier called a historic achievement. "Your efforts in expanding NATO to the north are invaluable to the security of Germany and the alliance," Steinmeier added.

In his acceptance speech, Stoltenberg expressed gratitude, emphasizing that the award is not just a recognition of his personal efforts but also of NATO's collective achievements over the past decade. He acknowledged Germany's significant contributions to European security and thanked Steinmeier for his support and collaboration.

Stoltenberg's tenure at NATO saw significant challenges, yet his leadership has left a lasting impact on the alliance, making it stronger and more unified in a volatile security landscape.