Germany's Security Policy: From Territorial Defense to Defending the Liberal World Order?

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Stark differences exist in the strategic culture[1] between Europe and the United States.[2] They concern as much the disparity in military power—all 28 member states of the European Union together spend less on defense than the United States alone—as well as the very different historical experiences.[3] Two devastating wars taught Europe to embrace reconciliation, cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution. The success of European integration, which led arch-enemies such as France and Germany to unite in a democratic and rules-based multilateral system, convinced Europeans to favor soft power over hard power. Likewise, the civilizing force of European integration made Europeans think of the EU as a role model for shaping a peaceful world order. In contrast, the United States as the world leader and in its own words "second to none" has overwhelmingly favored power politics and the maintenance of military superiority to secure peace and stability.

In particular, these strategic differences came to light in the trans-Atlantic crisis that followed President George W. Bush's decision to invade Iraq in 2003. The majority of European countries, led by Germany and France, openly opposed the invasion and instead advocated the continuation of United Nations inspections and a diplomatic solution to the crisis in order to dismantle Saddam Hussein's alleged weapons of mass destruction program. As a result of Bush's failed Iraq policy, the United States, under President Barack Obama has become much more reluctant to intervene militarily in recent years. Nevertheless, foreign policy expert Robert Kagan's comment that "Americans are from Mars and Europeans are from Venus"—oversimplification though it is—is still an apt description of the two distinct approaches in the readiness to use force.[4]

Are Germans Different when it Comes to Issues of War and Peace?

To draw further on Kagan's metaphor, the most "Venusian" country in Europe is probably Germany.[5] Even more than two generations after the Second World War, the trauma of being guilty of a war that had killed the unimaginable number of 70 million people has not been overcome. The pledge of "Nie wieder Krieg, nie wieder Auschwitz!" (Never again war, never again Auschwitz) is deeply ingrained in the German public consciousness. A pacifist, not pathetic, and post-heroic attitude prevails throughout large parts of society and the political sphere.

Accordingly, Germans' relationship with military force and security policy more broadly has always been a sensitive, and sometimes contentious, subject. This relationship has evolved from outright rejection of the build-up of the new armed forces in the Federal Republic of Germany in 1955,[6] to allowing German soldiers to be referred to as murderers,[7] and eventually to mass protests over nuclear armament. These protests culminated in 1979, when more than 500,000 people gathered in Bonn to oppose the NATO Double-Track Decision. The Decision offered the members of the Warsaw Pact a mutual limitation of medium-range nuclear missiles combined with the threat that, in case of disagreement, more American Pershing II missiles would be deployed in Western Europe. The decision came in response to the Soviet build-up of SS-20 medium range nuclear missiles.

An important driving force behind the demonstrations was the German peace movement, which ultimately led to the formation of a new party, the Greens. The ascension of this anti-war and anti-nuclear party into the German Bundestag was astonishing and led to a fundamental change in the balance of power within the West German party system. As a result of Germany´s past, the Greens' agenda of human security, disarmament, conflict prevention and civilian crisis management resonated with many citizens. Accordingly, the two peoples' parties, the Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Union, which since 1949 had formed the government alternately with junior parties or in a grand coalition, saw themselves forced to embrace many of the Greens' demands.

A 2007 survey polled people in the United States, Germany, France and United Kingdom about their views on their respective military forces. The study found that 87 percent of Americans were proud of their military. Sixty-six percent in the United Kingdom said they were proud and 53 percent in France. Germany's rate was the lowest, at only 42 percent.[8]

Recent polling suggests that Germans today are more at ease with the Bundeswehr, the federal armed forces.[9] However, this comfort is not without its limits. The German army is still most esteemed for its role in national defense and providing aid after natural disasters at home and abroad. Citizens remain critical of German participation in military operations and missions outside of the country. Nearly 61 percent of Germans reject the expansion of foreign deployments of German troops in stabilization and peace-enforcing missions, as acting German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen has advocated.[10] Nevertheless, strong resistance to military involvement seems to have given way to resignation, as surveys conducted during the Bundeswehr's mission in Afghanistan show. A majority of Germans feel that their nation's memberships in the EU, NATO and the UN make further engagement—at least in humanitarian crisis contingencies—inevitable.[11]

However, German approval of NATO is in sharp decline. In 2009, 73 percent of Germans supported the alliance, but in 2015, only 55 percent held this view.[12] Furthermore, when asked if their country should help a neighboring NATO partner in the event of a military conflict with Russia, 58 percent of Germans answered no, higher than in any other NATO member. Only 38 percent of Germans would invoke NATO's Article 5, which forms the very basis of collective defense in the alliance and ensures that "an attack against one Ally is considered as an attack against all Allies."

From Territorial Defense to "Out of Area" Missions and War Abroad

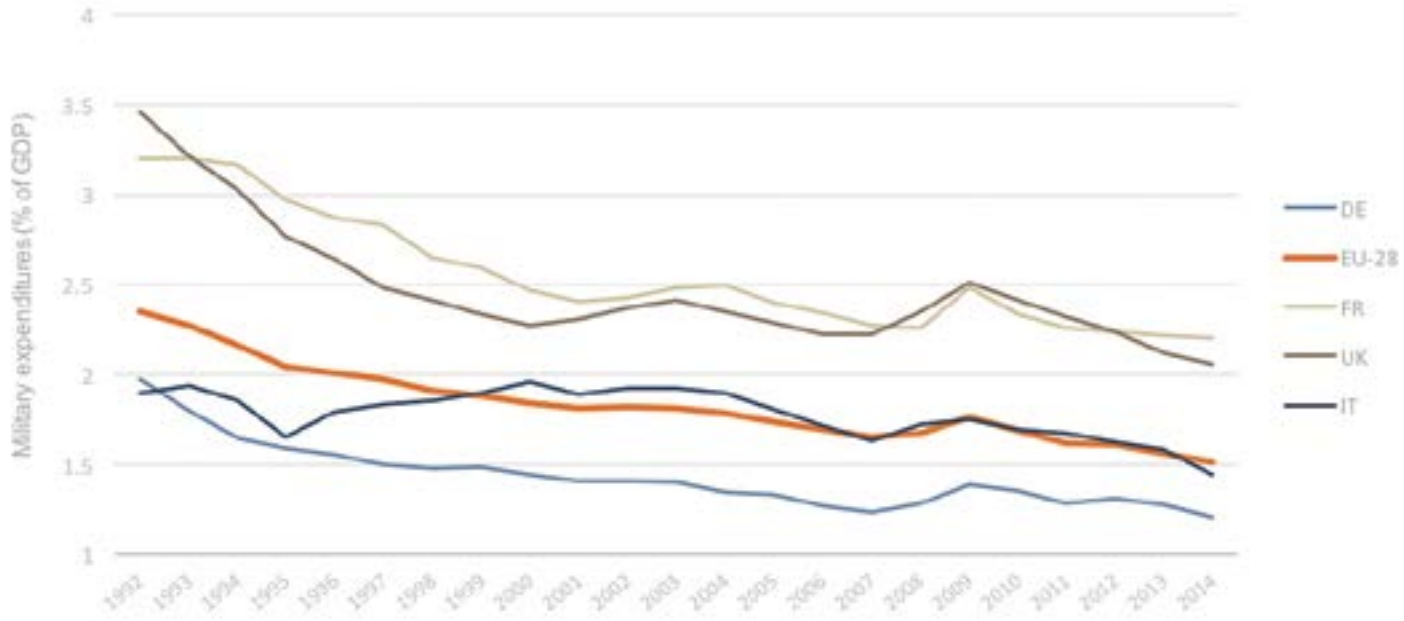
Despite these enduring German attitudes on war, Germany has evolved significantly over the past decades. Successive governments in postwar Germany have made decisions on defense and security matters that were seen as justified by reasons of state (i.e., German alignment with the West, trans-Atlantic solidarity and European integration). At times, these decisions have been out of tune with the demands of voters. On multiple occasions, German chancellors have been forced to link important security policy decisions with a vote of confidence in the Bundestag or await the rulings of the Federal Constitutional Court, Germany's highest court. Above all, lack of public support has made it difficult for government to communicate openly with the public about what is really at stake with these decisions. As a consequence, Bundeswehr engagements have often been portrayed as reconstruction support, post-conflict peacebuilding and development assistance.

Only 38 percent of Germans would invoke NATO's Article 5

The Bundeswehr was a product of the Cold War. In the beginning, it was less under German than NATO command. NATO set the framework for its strategy, its operational plans and armaments. West Germany took on the main burden of conventional defense in Europe with 495,000 soldiers, which could increase to 1.2 million during wartime. The Bundeswehr was established as a purely defensive force meant to deter an attack by the Warsaw Pact. West Germany was well aware that if deterrence were to fail, both its territory and that of East Germany would become the main—and even nuclear battlefield.[13] This influenced West German politics, which was always more oriented toward détente than the containment of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the Bundeswehr did not play any visible role in the foreign policy calculations of the Bonn Republic. It remained unthinkable to use the army in combat missions outside the borders of the alliance. Even UN peacekeeping operations were mostly off-limits.

Only once during the Cold War did West Germany come close to a broader strategic reassessment of its national security policy. Then-Chancellor Helmut Schmidt of the Social Democrats put his weight behind the NATO Double-Track Decision in the late 1970s in order to counter the Soviet buildup of SS-20 medium range ballistic missiles. Schmidt was convinced that without this decision, the credibility of the United States' extended nuclear deterrence for Europe would be at stake. Schmidt lost his case, and neither the people nor his own party followed him. Instead, they fought emphatically against the stationing of American Pershing II missiles

Figure 1: Military Expenditure in Europe



**Defense budgets in France and the United Kingdom include nuclear deterrence costs that are estimated to be above 10% of the defense budget in France and around 6 % in the UK, although they may be more costly.*

Source: Worldbank (Word Development Indicators). Figure shows military expenditures using NATO classification.

in Germany. It was left to his successor, Helmut Kohl, to implement the decision, which eventually—with a weakened Soviet Union—led to the abolition of all intermediate-range and short-range nuclear missiles in Europe.

The End of the Cold War Era: Globalization of Insecurity

When the Cold War ended and both German unity and Eastern enlargement of NATO had been achieved, Germany's principled pacifism took a new ground. Surrounded by friends, Germans felt that their national security was well served. Furthermore, the country was absorbed with managing the process of reunification, which came with a hefty price tag,[14] and demanded the reduction in the number of German armed forces from roughly 600,000 to 370,000.[15] Many believed that money spent on defense would be better spent on the economic development of the eastern part of Germany.

Nonetheless, politicians could not ignore that there was no peace dividend to harvest. Instead, new risks and security threats emerged. In the age of globalization, Germany's favorable geographic position in the middle of Europe was no longer a guarantee of security. Instead, growing global interdependence brought about a "globalization of insecurity," meaning that conflicts and crises in faraway regions posed ever-greater risks to the open societies of the Western Hemisphere. These new risks emanated from the many secessionist and independence movements that followed the power vacuum left by the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, the problems of state failure in many parts of Africa as well as the threat posed by international terrorism became more acute. Accordingly, the United States and other NATO partners demanded that Germany not only foot a large portion of the bill, as in the Gulf War of 1991, but also engage their own troops outside of the traditional NATO area.[16]

The end of the Cold War represented an important turning point for a different mission profile for the German armed forces. Beginning in 1991, the Bundeswehr participated in a number of UN missions to demonstrate its readiness and to take on its share of responsibility. In these missions, the Bundeswehr took on exclusively humanitarian tasks, such as the transport of relief goods or the provision of medical aid. There was no involvement in combat missions, and the operational environment was secure enough that the Bundeswehr members would not be forced into action to defend themselves. However, these humanitarian engagements under UN mandate were highly controversial and highlighted Germany's difficult relationship with the use of its military for purposes other than national defense. A

decision by the Constitutional Court in 1994[17] ended political debate, for the time being, ruling that German forces could be deployed outside of NATO territory to help implement decisions of the UN Security Council.

Reunited Germany

Despite these domestic difficulties, the participation of the Bundeswehr in UN or EU-led missions became the new normal after 1992. The involvement remained exclusively humanitarian or limited to advisory or support missions, such as monitoring, transport, training and air or maritime surveillance. Although there were significant exceptions, in most cases the number of soldiers deployed were limited to fewer than 100. What distinguished the Bundeswehr's participation from other EU or NATO partners was the level of risk it was willing to take. Many allies have been critical of the constraints, i.e., caveats, that Germany put on its operations.

Although the "out of area" ruling was a victory for the Christian Democratic-led government,[18] the judgment was no carte blanche. It obliged the executive, under all circumstances, to call for a parliamentary vote before German troops could be sent abroad. This requirement distinguishes Germany from the United States and most other NATO members whose heads of state or government have more latitude to decide on troop deployment before asking legislative bodies for approval. German allies in NATO and the EU continue to look skeptically on this parliamentary reservation, questioning whether Germany could be relied on as a partner when it comes to questions of war and peace that would require quick decision-making.

Further rulings of the constitutional court shaped Germany's path as it adapted to the new security environment. The Bundeswehr transformed itself from a purely defensive army into an international deployable expeditionary force that could run peacekeeping missions as well as combat operations.

The Balkans became the test ground for Germany's readiness to engage militarily together with its allies. Since 1995, Germany has contributed more than 5,000 soldiers to the Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) and later in the Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The real trial for how far Germans were prepared to engage militarily came with the Kosovo War in 1998.[19] It could be called an irony of history that the newly elected coalition government of Social Democrats and Greens led the Bundeswehr into its first war. Both parties, but in particular the Greens—as the trustees of the ideals of the peace movement—were until then the strongest supporters of a German culture of military restraint and exclusively civil crisis prevention and management. It took all of Green Party chief and Vice Chancellor Joschka Fischer's persuasiveness to convince his party that Germany—with its history of the Holocaust—could not wash its hands in innocence anymore in light of an imminent humanitarian catastrophe among the Albanian people.

Participation of the Bundeswehr in UN and EU-led missions became the new normal after 1992

Even today, debate persists about whether or not German participation in NATO's aerial bombing of Serbia, with its civilian casualties, was constitutional.[20] Although the Bundeswehr acted within the framework of a collective security system, the Operation Allied Forces lacked a mandate from the UN Security Council. In the strictest sense, as many experts on international law have argued, the military intervention could be qualified as a war of aggression that was waged without the justification of self-defense and is thus prohibited under the UN Charter and the German constitution.[21]

The Age of Terror

The German government, under then-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Vice Chancellor Fischer, was given no breathing space. The 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States sent shockwaves around the world and changed the political and security landscape once again. Asymmetric warfare, as it has since been called, became the overarching security threat in the new century. Given the many victims and the extent of the destruction, NATO's Article 5 was interpreted in a new way. Alliance solidarity could be called upon not only in case of an attack by a state on a NATO member, but also in the case of major terrorist attacks. The German government fully supported the corresponding NATO Council decision to invoke Article 5 and saw it as its primary duty to join the United States in the so-called "War on Terror."

The federal government believed that a united and sovereign Germany should take on a greater share of responsibility in international affairs. However, Schröder was only able to secure support for sending troops to Afghanistan by linking the decision to a confidence vote in the Bundestag. He won that vote, but the argument that 9/11 was as much an attack on the so-called "civilized world" as it was an attack on the United States, and that accordingly Germany's own security needed to be defended in Afghanistan, never really gained traction in Germany.

Current Bundeswehr Missions

Germany has started to assume greater responsibility in security politics, including militarily, to work for a free and peaceful global order. The map below shows the current deployments of the German Bundeswehr. This map only lists Bundeswehr missions and does not include civil missions, such as police or judicial efforts.

Kosovo
Up to 700 supporting UN mission to ensure public safety and order

Mediterranean Sea / Italy
130 (can go up to 900) rescuing people being smuggled in unsafe boats/ in shipwrecks

Mali
Close to 1,000 soldiers in two missions to provide military training, advise and support civil-military cooperation

Aegean Sea
Up to 200 supporting local coast guards to fight people smuggling

Syria and Iraq (Turkey)
Tornado jets and up to 1,200 for reconnaissance

Syria and Iraq
Up to 1,200 preventing and suppressing terrorism by Islamic State group

Iraq
Up to 150 training Kurdish fighters, the Peshmerga, who fight the Islamic State group in northern Iraq

Lebanon and Cyprus
Boats and up to 300 preventing arms smuggling and securing sea borders

Afghanistan
Approximately 1,000 doing many tasks including - supporting,consulting and training Afghan forces, security and logistical support

Somalia / Horn of Africa
Up to 600 patrolling sea to prevent pirating, up to 10 advise and provide education on land

Sudan
Up to 50 subject-matter experts providing logistical, medical and technical support

South Sudan
Up to 50 observing human rights situation and ensuring access to humanitarian aid

Table 1: Bundeswehr Deployments since 1990

Country	Name of Mission	Number of Soldiers	Beginning of Mission	End of Mission	Mandate	Completed
Afghanistan	ISAF Mission	5,350	14-Jan-2002	31-Dec-2014	UN, NATO	Yes
	UNAMA Mission	Up to 50	28-Mar-2002	ongoing	UN	No
	Resolute Support	850 - 980	1-Jan-2015	ongoing	NATO	No
Aegean Sea		200	1-Feb-2016	ongoing	NATO	No
Ethiopia / Eritrea	UNMEE	2	Feb-2004	Oct-2008	UN	Yes
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Sharp Guard, Deny Flight, and the Airlift (Luftbrücke) in Sarajevo	600	Jul-1992	Sep-1996	UN	Yes
	UNPROFOR	1,700	8-Aug-1995	19-Dec-1995	UN	Yes
	IFOR/SFOR, later EUFOR ALTHEA	63,500	1996	16-Nov-2012	UN, NATO	Yes
Democratic Republic of Congo	EUSEC RD Congo	24	Jun-2005	30-Sep-2014	EU	Yes
	EUFOR RD Congo	780	30-Jul-2006	30-Nov-2006	UN	Yes
	Artemis	97	18-Jul-2003	25-Sep-2003	UN	Yes
Georgia	UNOMIG	20	1994	Jun-2009	UN Observation Mission	Yes
	OSCE	Up to 15	27-Aug-2008	Jun-2009	OSCE peace mission	Yes
Horn of Africa	EUCAP Nestor		2012	7-Jul-2015	EU	Yes
Indonesia	AMM	4	15-Sep-2005	15-Mar-2006	EU	Yes
Iraq	UNSCOM	37	Aug-1991	30-Sep-1996	NATO	Yes
Cambodia	UNAMIC	145	Oct-1991	12-Nov-1993	UN	Yes
Fight against international terrorism	Counter Daesh (in Syria and Iraq)	Up to 1,200	4-Dec-2015	limited to one year	UN	No
	OEF/OAE - Afghanistan	Up to 100	16-Nov-2001	Nov-2005	UN, NATO	Yes
	OEF- Horn of Africa		Feb-2002	End of 2010	UN	Yes
Kosovo	KFOR	Up to 700	12-Jun-1999	ongoing	UN	No
Kuwait	OEF	250	10-Feb-2002	4-Jul-2003	UN, NATO	Yes
Lebanon/ Cyprus	UNIFIL	Up to 300, average of 150	1978	ongoing	UN	No
Liberia	UNMIL	3	May-2015	30-Jun-2016	UN	Yes

Country	Name of Mission	Number of Soldiers	Beginning of Mission	End of Mission	Mandate	Completed
Mali	EUTM Mali	Up to 300 EU soldiers	28-Feb-2013	ongoing	UN, European Training Mission	No
	MINUSMA	Up to 650	27-Jun-2013	ongoing	UN	No
Macedonia	Essential Harvest	500	29-Aug-2001	27-Sep-2001	UN, NATO	Yes
	Amber Fox	220	27-Sep-2001	16-Dec-2002	UN, NATO	Yes
	Allied Harmony	70	16-Dec-2002	31-Mar-2003	UN, NATO	Yes
	Concordia	70	31-Mar-2003	15-Dec-2003	UN, EU	Yes
Mediterranean Sea / Italy	EUNAVFOR MED Sophia	130, but can go up to 950	1-Oct-2015	ongoing	UN, EU	No
	MEM OPCW	Up to 300	2-Apr-2014	5-Sep-2014	UN	Yes
Rwanda	UNAMIR	30	18-Jul-1994	31-Dec-1994	UN	Yes
Somalia	EUTM SOM	10	Mar-2010	ongoing	UN	No
	EUNAVFOR Somalia Atlanta	Up to 600	2008	ongoing	UN	No
	UNOSOM 2	2,420	21-Apr-1993	Mar-1994	UN	Yes
Syria & Iraq - Turkey	Inherent Resolve - Syria and Iraq	Up to 1,200	4-Dec-2015	ongoing	UN, EU	No
	Inherent Resolve - Iraq	Up to 150	31-Aug-2014	ongoing	Bundestag	No
Sudan	UNAMID	Up to 50	8-Nov-2012	ongoing	UN	No
	AMIS	44 EU soldiers	Jul-2005	ended but no date given	UN, EU, NATO	Yes
South Sudan	UNMISS	Up to 50	8-Jul-2011	ongoing	UN	No
Turkey	AF TUR	Up to 400	14-Dec-2015	30-Dec-2015	NATO	Yes
West Africa	Ebola	No exact number given	3-Oct-2014	10-Mar-2015	UN	Yes
Western Sahara	MINURSO	Up to 4	16-Oct-2013	30-Apr-2016 (last decided time limt from UN Security Council)	UN	Yes
Central African Republic	EUFOR RCA	Up to 80	10-Apr-2014	18-Feb-2015	UN, EU	Yes

The more German soldiers were wounded or killed, the less politicians were able to justify to the general public that this was a humanitarian intervention broadly embraced by the Afghan people

In the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) that formed the backbone of the counterterrorism operations after 9/11, the Bundeswehr was not only involved with naval forces to protect the sea lanes against terrorist attacks in the Red and Arabian Seas, in the Gulf of Oman or off the coast of Somalia, but also with special forces to fight al-Qaida in Afghanistan.

However, the contingent of elite soldiers sent to Afghanistan was small (around 100) and went rather unnoticed by the German public. The involvement only became an issue in Germany in 2009, when the situation in Afghanistan deteriorated further and there was internal debate about how long the right to self-defense, which legitimated OEF's mandate, could be claimed.

Germany's participation with armed forces in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), which since 2003 was under NATO command, garnered far more attention and public discomfort.[22] One reason for this was the size of the contingent. With more than 5,000 soldiers, the German contribution was the third largest in Afghanistan after American and British forces. The more German soldiers were wounded or killed, the less politicians were able to justify to the general public that this was a humanitarian intervention broadly embraced by the Afghan people.[23]

It took a fatal Bundeswehr-ordered airstrike near Kunduz in 2009—which killed more than 100 Afghan civilians—for the German government to struggle to call the situation in Afghanistan an "armed conflict within the parameters of international law." Before the attack, the Bundeswehr's presence in Afghanistan was always discussed as a civil-military stabilization operation, with the emphasis put on civil. Policymakers knew that such qualifications resonated well with a German audience. Accordingly, the Bundestag shied away from establishing a robust Afghanistan mandate that would allow German soldiers to take part in combat operations other than in self-defense. The reclassification in 2010 was thus an important step both in regards to being open with German citizens and allowing German soldiers in Afghanistan to resort to force to fight the Taliban without risking prosecution under German law.

In spite of the many missions Germany has conducted after 1992, the resignation of the German President Horst Köhler in May 2010 showed anew how far away Germany is in even pondering the necessity of the use of force. Moreover, it demonstrated how little these missions were founded in a security strategy that echoes German national interests. Köhler felt compelled to leave office after he said in an interview that in case of emergency, resorting to military force might be necessary to protect German national interests, for example by securing trade routes or by forestalling regional instabilities.[24] The interview prompted an enormous outcry across the party spectrum. His observation in that same interview—that Germany has become much more open and prepared to raise and discuss questions of national interest—was proven wrong.

The international community's sobering experiences in Somalia, the Balkans and Afghanistan have demonstrated the limitations of what humanitarian interventions can achieve even if the military component is embedded firmly in a civilian approach. They provided new arguments for the deep-seated German "culture of reticence." Furthermore, these experiences might have been one of the reasons why Germany abstained in the March 2011 UN Security Council vote on erecting a no-fly zone in Libya that was supposed to protect the civilian population against the atrocities committed by Moammar Gadhafi.[25] The operation became NATO-led.[26] It escalated into a war that ousted Gadhafi, which turned into a civil war. Today, jihadist forces linked to the Islamic State group are in control of large parts of the country, leaving the international community struggling to support a government that could eventually take over state control in Libya.

Although in hindsight Germany might have had sound arguments against a military intervention in Libya, the decision to abstain backfired and damaged Germany's international reputation. Germany could not reclaim the moral high ground as a civil power and found itself isolated from its NATO allies—in a camp with China and Russia. Under these circumstances, Germany's traditional commitment to the EU, NATO and the UN looked increasingly hollow to its partners.

The New Narrative: Taking on More Responsibility

In 2014, German political leaders began a new attempt to persuade society—and perhaps themselves—that Germany must assume greater responsibility in security politics, including militarily, to work for a free and peaceful global order.[27]

At least three factors are driving this recent reorientation in German foreign and security policy. First, the ever-deteriorating security situation around Europe has forced Germany to reconsider its approach. The war in Syria and Iraq, with its millions of refugees and the spread of jihadist terrorism, has reached Europe, stirring a previously unknown feeling of insecurity among the German public. In a decision that would have been unimaginable just a few years earlier, Germany engaged outside of NATO in a multilateral coalition—that has no UN mandate—to fight the Islamic State group. The Bundeswehr supports the coalition with reconnaissance sorties over Syria and with naval forces in the Mediterranean Sea. Additionally, the Germans are in charge of a training mission for Kurdish fighters, the Peshmerga, who fight the Islamic State group in northern Iraq. Germany supports these forces with arms deliveries, breaking a longstanding taboo in German export policy against supplying weapons in conflict zones.

Germany's newfound economic strength has presented a challenge for Berlin

Germany has also had to accept that Russia is no longer a reliable partner. On the contrary, Russia violated international law and overrode the established European security order by annexing the Crimean Peninsula. Suddenly, Germany had to realize that war between states is back on the European agenda and national defense, in the classical sense, is an issue once again. This drew new interest in NATO, but also led to a reassessment of the German force posture and military capabilities. Accordingly, Germany is playing a significant role in NATO's Readiness Action Plan (RAP) that was agreed upon at the 2014 Wales Summit and enhanced at the recent NATO Warsaw Summit in July 2016.[28] The Bundeswehr will again form the backbone of conventional defense in Europe. The measures taken shall strengthen deterrence vis-à-vis Russia and reassure Eastern NATO allies with a number of significant military steps, such as the increase of the NATO Response Force to a division-size[29] force, including a new Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF). NATO agreed to permanently deploy military forces on a rotational basis to the Baltic states and eastern Poland starting in January 2017.[30] Germany will lead troops in Lithuania and will probably be the largest force contributor after the United States.

Second, the framework for German politics also within Europe has changed decisively. In particular, Germany had to bury its hope of a further deepening of the European Union. Instead, with the mounting opposition in many member states and the UK voting to leave the EU, the future of this historic project is very much at risk. European integration was instrumental for Germany to convince its neighbors that it has learned the lessons of the past and will never again go it alone. The weakening of the EU runs thus counter to German interests, because it is accenting Germany's economic and financial dominance. Among other issues, Berlin's management of the eurozone crisis as well as the refugee crisis have left bitter feelings and left many to ask again, how much Germany Europe can bare?

Third, the fact that Germany has emerged as the largest, wealthiest and most dynamic economy in Europe has made some of its partners in the EU and NATO even more critical of what they see as Germany's free-riding when it comes to security. Germany's newfound economic strength, as much as the relative weakness of many of its allies in Europe, has presented a challenge for Berlin. This imbalance is pushing the Germans to do something that has long made them uncomfortable, namely to take on leadership—a role that has to be substantiated militarily. Given the existing resentment against Germany in Europe, Berlin would still prefer to exercise its power in concert with others. Unfortunately, the European Union has struggled to find a common approach. Thus the "reluctant" hegemon finds itself in a situation comparable to the United States. It seems damned if it leads and damned if it does not.

The German Foreign Policy Review and the White Paper on Security Policy

Against this backdrop, the German Foreign Minister Frank-Walther Steinmeier ordered a foreign policy review that sheds light on how Germany wishes to define its role in world affairs and how it should run its future foreign policy.[31] The results of the paper were not groundbreaking and may even be frustrating for countries like the United States, France or Britain, whose history differs strongly from Germany's and thus have less issues in using force to achieve political ends. The concluding report did not explicitly draw on security or defense issues. In fact, the emphasis was placed mostly on strengthening civil capabilities for crisis prevention and management as well as peace building, which were implemented in part by a reorganization of the Foreign Office.

What was perhaps most remarkable was the way in which the review process attempted to overcome the lack of strategic culture in Germany. During the process, many experts were invited to contribute to the debate, but the public was also involved from the beginning. In many town hall meetings, online discussions and other fora, ordinary people had a chance to voice their concerns and to have discussions with international relations experts as well as representatives of the Foreign Office on newly evolving security threats such as cyber warfare, the return of geopolitics, the resurgent threat from Russia, terrorism and the challenges of globalization.

This format of broad and inclusive deliberations was also used in drafting the White Paper, essentially a government-wide paper, with the explicit objective of stimulating further public debate on security issues in Germany.[32] Published this summer, the document underscores the evolving role of Germany in Europe and its readiness to assume greater responsibility, not only in its European neighborhood, but also on a global scale to defend the liberal international order.

Reference points for the development of the Bundeswehr put forward in the White Paper are collective defense, international crisis management and cooperative security as outlined in NATO´s Strategic Concept of 2010.[33] As with the foreign policy review, special emphasis was placed on prevention and a comprehensive approach that uses a broad spectrum of instruments including diplomacy, development, military, trade, environmental protection and epidemic control. Accordingly, the Bundeswehr's defense mission shall encompass national defense including homeland counterterrorism operations, defense of its allies, defense against terrorist and hybrid threats, the full spectrum of international crisis management, protection of sea lanes, peacekeeping in the framework of the UN and humanitarian and rescue missions. In order to cover this range of tasks, the Bundeswehr will receive 14,000 more personnel and better equipment.[34] The defense budget will see a steady increase from around 34.3 billion euros in 2016 to 39.2 billion euros in 2020.[35]

The document underscores Germany's willingness to strengthen NATO and its partnership with the United States. The document's authors even asserted that "Alliance solidarity is part of the German reason of state." In this context, Germany reiterates its commitment to the targets set by the Wales NATO Summit in 2014, namely of trying to approach the long-term goal of spending 2 percent of its gross national product[36] on defense and dedicating 20 percent of its defense budget toward investment in research and development and equipment.

A report from the defense ministry on operational readiness revealed that fewer than half of the fighters, fighter-bombers, transport aircraft, helicopters, tanks or naval forces are ready for use

Simultaneously, Germany wants to push NATO's Framework Nations Concept, which it proposed in 2013. Its goal was to close NATO's capability gap by forming different clusters of European allies, large and small, that would share their capabilities in order to arrive at a more coherent and capable force.[37] Within this context, Germany is also prepared to make key capabilities available to other nations.

Regarding the European Union, Germany has committed itself to developing the Common Security and Defense Policy into a full-fledged European foreign and security policy that should not only form the European pillar within NATO, but could also act autonomously. To achieve this objective, Germany wants to use the instrument of permanent structured cooperation that allows groupings of member states to proceed with defense integration. The White Paper advocates an independent European Union military headquarters as a European equivalent to NATO's Allied Command Operations/ Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE), and the development of a European defense market including better cooperation in the fields of research and development as well as innovation. Furthermore, the existing sharing and pooling approach garnered new attention in the report.

The projects listed above are only a small part of the many other plans in the White Paper. It is a programatic document that provides guidelines and suggestions for the future, and it remains to be seen which of these new aspirations will come to be. Many experts doubt that the current budget increases will suffice to transform the Bundeswehr into armed forces that can cover the full spectrum of operations.

What truly distinguishes the White Paper from its predecessors is not only the clear-eyed analysis of the many new threats and challenges, but the blunt assessment of the

many deficiencies in operational capabilities that haunt the Bundeswehr after years of budget cuts across almost all weapons categories, not to mention the unassailable lead the United States holds in modern network-centric warfare. A report from the defense ministry on operational readiness revealed that fewer than half of the fighters, fighter-bombers, transport aircraft, helicopters, tanks or naval forces are ready for use, in many cases because of a lack of spare parts.[38] The defense minister has therefore called for the investment of approximately 130 billion euros to rectify the problem.[39] The recently decided-upon increase in defense spending will not satisfy these investment needs, casting doubts about how serious Germany can become after all.

A Final Word

It is not that Germany has been dragging its feet all these years. Just recently, Chancellor Angela Merkel, the longest serving head of government in Europe, and Steinmeier were instrumental in arriving at the nuclear deal with Iran and in brokering the Minsk Agreements. Germany was even prepared to engage in a coalition war in Syria that does not fall within the framework of a collective security system nor is it legitimated by a UN mandate, as the German constitution requires. Although Germany is not fulfilling its defense potential, neither are other European allies that are also "free-riding" on the U.S. security umbrella. That has to change and Germany is prepared to take over its fair share of the burden.

Nevertheless, the use of force will remain the "ultima ratio" in German politics. Instead of a policy of containment or risk control, Germany will seek to continue a policy that rewards positive behavior. This corresponds to Germany's own experience of earning a worthy place among the community of nations following World War II. Accordingly, Germany will strive to tame power not through geopolitics, but through the management of interdependences that can yield win-win situations.

There is yet another facet of this issue that has to be taken into account: It is doubtful if a strong German military buildup and an active foreign and security policy will be in the interest of Germany's neighbors or the United States. Such a ramp up could be a double-edged sword for both Germany's partners and the country itself. Dissatisfaction in Europe is already growing about a Germany that is seen as increasingly pursuing its own interests powered by its economic clout. Accordingly, as much as Germany has been asked to take on greater leadership, suspicion would brew about whether or not Berlin will serve the interests of its partners once it plays a more active role.

There may be an answer to this conundrum: The European Union. As in the past, Germany can only feel as safe as its neighbors do. Therefore, a strong European Union is needed where national armies are united into a European army. That would also make most effective use of ever-shrinking budget resources.[40] Germany appears to be prepared to walk that line. The proposal in the White Paper to open its army to other EU citizens underlines this. But to arrive at such a solution, it will not only be necessary for Germany to overcome its lack of strategic culture, but for other partners, like France, to give up their sovereignty—something that is losing its value in the age of globalization.

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Newpolitik provides in-depth analysis of German foreign and domestic policy issues for policymakers beyond Berlin.

Citations and Notes

1 The term strategic culture was among others defined by Colin S. Gray, one of the most influential American strategists, as "the modes of thought and action with respect to force, which derives from perception of the national historical experience, from aspirations for responsible behavior in national terms of a country", Colin S. Gray, *Nuclear Strategy and National Style* (Hamilton Press, 1986).

2 The paper has profited strongly from the insights of Helmut W. Ganser, Brigadier General (ret.), who has served among other assignments as deputy policy director of the MOD Berlin, military adviser to the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations New York, and defense adviser to the Permanent Mission of Germany to NATO Brussels. I am particularly grateful for all his valuable comments.

3 Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), "SIPRI Military Expenditure Database," *https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex.*

4 Robert Kagan introduced this analogy first in his essay "Power and Weakness" in *Policy Review* 113 (June and July 2002), before he expanded on it in his book *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003).

5 For better understanding, it is important to recall that Germany after 1949 was a divided country mirroring the East-West-division of the Cold War days on its territory. Reunification between West- and East-Germany took place only in 1990 and it was only then that Germany fully regained its sovereignty from the four victorious powers of the Second World War (United States, Soviet Union, United Kingdom and France).

6 The West German parliament decided in 1949 against German rearmament, and only with the beginning of the Cold War was a new West German military structure, firmly anchored in NATO, set up. Under Soviet occupation, the same took place in East Germany, the German Democratic Republic, where the National People's Army (NVA) was founded.

7 This remark stems from an article published in 1931 by the German author Kurt Tucholsky. It was, since the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, used as a campaign slogan in conflicts about the Federal German Army. Thereby it is settled case law that this remark is not an insult but is covered under freedom of expression.

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9 Bundeswehr, "Umfrage: Hohe Zustimmung zu Auftrag und Missionen der Bundeswehr," *https://www.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/bwde/!ut/p/c4/NYvBDoIwEAX_qEuDEeMNQkw86kXxttAN2Vhasmzl4sfbHnyTzGXy4AWZgB-eUTkG9PCEYeLzuJtxd2TwrYm8p81s-mhxTgEd55DLFQFqsFJSzZ0GNYtYo6ktJIrkYdjBUtu9sU_1nv-3peLk19aHur90d1mVpf7KvcZE!/.*

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11 Renate Köcher, "Unterstützung für die multifunktionale Truppe," *Frankfurter Sonntagszeitung, December 1, 2002.*

12 Katie Simmons, Bruce Stokes and Jacob Poushter, "NATO Publics Blame Russia for Ukrainian Crisis, but Reluctant to Provide Military Aid," Pew Research Center, June 10, 2015, *http://www.pewglobal.org/2015/06/10/nato-publics-blame-russia-for-ukrainian-crisis-but-reluctant-to-provide-military-aid/.*

13 In peacetime, 250,000 American soldiers were stationed in Germany. British, French, Belgian, Dutch and Canadian forces added up to another 150,000 NATO troops on German soil.

14 Reunification needed, among other things, to integrate more than 16 million people that were raised under communist rule, to transform a centrally planned economy into a market economy and not least to assimilate the East German army that had been trained to fight NATO.

15 About 90,000 NVA troops had to be incorporated.

16 Operation Desert Storm was the second phase (January-February 1991) of a war waged by a U.S.-led coalition force against Iraq in response to Saddam Hussein's annexation of Kuwait.

17 "BVerfGE 90, 286 - Out-of-area-Einsätze," *http://www.servat.unibe.ch/dfr/bv090286.html.*

18 It is worthwhile mentioning that it was the Christian Democrats' own coalition partner, the Liberals, that called upon this court decision.

19 The Kosovo war started in February 1998 and ended in June 1999. NATO started its operation against Serbia in March 1999.

20 This time the parliamentarian group of the “Linke,” in parts successor of the former East German state party SED, appealed to the constitutional court. The complaint was dismissed without a decision taken on the matter. Nevertheless, there is broad consensus in Germany that the Kosovo intervention without an UN mandate was not setting a precedence but constitutes the very exemption.

21 UN Charter Article 53; Grundgesetz (German Constitution) Article 26.

22 The UN Security Council has mandated ISAF as a peace-enforcing mission to assist democratic transformation and reconstruction in Afghanistan.

23 Germany led the Regional Command North based in Mazar-i-Sharif. The task of the German forces was to assist the Afghan government with security and reconstruction in the four northern provinces of Kunduz, Takhar, Baghlan and Badakhshan. It was also responsible for the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in the provinces of Kunduz and Badakshan.

24 Rücktritt von Köhler, “Das umstrittene Interview im Wortlaut,” *Suddeutsche Zeitung, May 31, 2010, http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/ruecktritt-von-koehler-das-umstrittene-interview-im-wortlaut-1.952332.*

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26 For more information about Operation Unified Protector, see: *http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_11/20111108_111107-factsheet_up_factsfigures_en.pdf.*

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28 Warsaw Summit Communique, July 9, 2016, *http://www.ndc.nato.int/news/news.php?icode=965http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.*

29 A division is a large military unit or formation, usually consisting of between 10,000 and 20,000 soldiers that is able to run operations independently.

30 Four battalions are foreseen, each encompassing between 3,000 to 4,000 troops.

31 Federal foreign Office, “Conclusions from Review 2014,” *http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/AAmt/Review2014/Schlussfolgerungen_node.html.*

32 “The White Paper 2016 On German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr” can be downloaded here: *https://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/!ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP3I5EyrpHK9pNyydL3y1Mzi4qTS5Ay9lPzyvJz8xJRi_YJsR0UAlHdqGQ!!/.*

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34 The Bundeswehr will encompass 185,000 soldiers, but currently has 177,000, meaning that the planned increase does not look as significant as the number implies on first glance. See: *https://www.tagesschau.de/kommentar/kommentar-bundeswehr-101.html.*

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