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A WEAK LINK?

GERMANY IN THE EURO-ATLANTIC
SECURITY SYSTEM

Justyna Gotkowska

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SECURITY SYSTEM

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KEY POINTS

- The geographic, political, military and economic parameters of German power influence the vision of the international order that the country favours. Due to its central geographic location in the ‘European area of stability’, a direct territorial threat to Germany involving military means is perceived to be unlikely. German susceptibility to asymmetric risks and threats (uncontrolled migrations, social radicalisation, organised terrorism) is also relatively small. Politically, Germany is a regional power in the EU with considerable diplomatic potential. At the same time, Germany’s military potential is limited, the German strategic culture makes the country sceptical about the use of military instruments, and Berlin does not possess nuclear weapons. Economically, Germany is the world’s third largest power with export-oriented economic model that increasingly influences the choice of its strategic priorities. Berlin, which over the last ten years has been focused on economic expansion within the enlarged EU, is now gradually becoming a country with global trade and investment links. Considering this, Germany is essentially interested in maintaining peace and stability, both in Europe and globally, and in developing diplomatic mechanisms to manage crises and conflicts.
- In the global dimension, Germany’s top objective is to develop and strengthen security co-operation with the emerging powers. Berlin does not want their political and economic development and growing international ambitions to prompt global crises or conflicts. Economic security, which for Germany means mainly resource security and global supply chain security, is equally important. In turn, crisis and conflict management outside Europe is of lesser significance for Berlin. Germany transfers responsibility for that to regional powers and organisations in their respective regions. In securing its interests globally, Germany mainly relies on civilian instruments

and bilateral co-operation in specific sectors, as well as co-operation with regional and international organisations, with minimum military involvement on its own part.

- Germany's policy may increasingly pose a risk to maintaining the cohesion of NATO in the global dimension. On the one hand, Germany faces the temptation to put political and economic relations with the emerging powers above relations with the USA. Deepening political and economic relations with emerging powers may leave Germany facing difficult political, economic and military choices in the long term, should global crises or conflicts arise between the new partners (such as China) and the 'old' allies (the USA). On the other hand, Germany's aversion to using military instruments leaves its European partners, particularly France and Great Britain, questioning German solidarity and willingness to participate in crisis management, especially in Europe's southern neighbourhood. Due to the differences in strategic cultures, European military integration simultaneously involving France, Great Britain and Germany is highly unlikely to happen. As a result, the landscape of military co-operation in Europe will be increasingly fragmented in the long run.
- In the regional dimension, Germany has hitherto followed the principle that 'security in Europe is only possible with Russia, not against it'. It has been developing the policy of a 'common neighbourhood' in Eastern Europe and a pursuing a policy of 'not provoking' Russia on NATO's eastern flank. Berlin held the view that Eastern European states should not be offered prospects of membership in NATO and the EU, but should be able to develop economic co-operation with both the EU and Russia. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict has shown two things. On the one hand, it demonstrated that Germany has been willing to make concessions to Russia at the expense of its own interests and those of the EU (postponing the implementation of and modifying the DCFTA) and at the expense of Ukraine

(which has ended up with a *de facto* frozen conflict in its eastern regions). On the other hand, the German government has decided to implement and maintain economic sanctions against Russia. With regard to NATO's eastern flank, Germany considers any measures aimed at considerably strengthening the allied military presence there as provocative and prone to escalate tensions between Russia and the West.

- Germany's policy of de-escalation in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and its efforts to limit NATO's military presence on the eastern flank, combined with the reports about the Bundeswehr's problems with military equipment, is challenging the sense of security on NATO's eastern flank. It gives rise to questions about how Germany would respond politically and militarily if Russia was to undertake more aggressive action in the Baltic Sea region and Central Eastern Europe. Moscow considers Berlin to be a partner who – facing Russian military pressure – might be inclined to negotiate a change to the European security architecture at the expense of the sovereignty of the eastern NATO members. This encourages the Russian leadership to pursue its strategic objective by testing and undermining NATO's ability to meet its commitments in the region. Uncertainty about how Germany would react in the event of a crisis or conflict in the region makes the smaller and medium-sized partners ambivalent about developing deeper military-technical co-operation with Germany.
- Germany is a key ally on whom the stability and peace on NATO's eastern flank largely depend. Increased German political and military involvement in the Baltic Sea region and Central Eastern Europe, as a demonstration to Russia that Berlin is prepared to react strongly, could discourage any aggressive Russian action on NATO's eastern flank. However, it remains an open question as to whether, following the Russian annexation of Crimea and armed intervention in eastern Ukraine, Germany is ready to change its security policy, which in turn

would require unpopular political, military and economic decisions (such as endorsing the policy of deterrence, strengthening the Bundeswehr's military capabilities, and reducing the existing dependencies on Russian companies in key sectors of the German economy).

I. THE DETERMINANTS OF GERMAN SECURITY POLICY

(1) Germany's central location in the 'European area of stability' (i.e. the EU and the European part of NATO) defines the German perception of the risks and threats facing the country. The enlargement of NATO and the EU that included Germany's eastern neighbours made the Germans feel secure. **A direct territorial threat to Germany involving military means has been perceived to be unlikely** in the eyes of the political elite and the German public, as reflected in the Ministry of Defence strategic documents of recent years¹. This perception has not changed in the aftermath of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in 2014. **Thus, Germany has focused on indirect trans-border risks and threats stemming from globalisation**, such as uncontrolled migrations, social radicalisation or organised terrorism resulting from the disintegration of states, civil wars, regional conflicts or natural disasters. However, Germany is exposed to such indirect risks and threats to a much lesser extent than countries like France, Italy or Great Britain. This is most apparent in the fact that no terror attacks have yet been carried out in Germany, and that German counterintelligence has been able to keep the radical Islamist networks under effective surveillance. Germany's central position in the EU and the lack of post-colonial links to Africa or the Middle East are the two factors that diminish the influx of illegal migrants from areas affected by crises and conflicts. The Islamic State's (ISIL/ISIS) offensive in the Middle East in 2014 has resulted in a surge in refugee numbers from the region also in Germany. However, migration to Germany stems mainly from European countries (including Turkey, Russia and countries of the former Yugoslavia).

¹ White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr issued in 2006, the Defence Policy Guidelines of 2011 and the Bundeswehr Concept Paper published in 2013 by the German Ministry of Defence.

Of more than 7.6 million migrants without German citizenship in 2013, up to 6 million came from Europe².

(2) Historical, social and internal factors that shape the preferences of the political elite and the public and define the strategic culture **determine Germany's choice of security policy instruments**. Because of the experience of Nazism and World War II and the political tradition of West Germany defining itself as a 'civilian power', **it is difficult for the German government to win the public's support for the use of the Bundeswehr abroad**. Moreover, it is a widely held view among German decision-makers that **strengthening the Bundeswehr and stepping up Germany's foreign military engagement, combined with the country's economic prowess, could lead to an overwhelming imbalance of power in Europe**. That, in turn, could re-ignite processes unfavourable to Germany, such as the emergence of European coalitions aimed at counterbalancing German political, economic and military strength. Germany's security policy is also shaped by the federal system³ and the culture of consensus, which has been practiced particularly meticulously during Angela Merkel's rule (the CDU/CSU-SPD coalitions in the years 2005–2009, CDU/CSU-FDP in the years 2009–2013 and CDU/CSU-SPD since 2013). The decisions concerning German military (non-)engagement abroad are thus partly a product of the country's internal politics, especially during the periods of federal or state elections. In order to prevent situations in which sensitive issues would be exploited in the political struggle at the federal or state level, **the coalition governments have taken care to obtain broad**

² Around 1 million come from Asia, and 300,000 from Africa. Statistisches Bundesamt, *Ausländische Bevölkerung*, 1 December 2013. <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesellschaftStaat/Bevoelkerung/MigrationIntegration/AuslaendischeBevolkerung/Tabellen/Geburtsort.html>

³ The federal system was imposed on West Germany by the Allies after World War II also as a way to ensure self-restraint in the country's post-war foreign and security policy.

inter-party agreement and the public support on security and defence policy questions, and have avoided controversial decisions.

Finally, historical and social factors also play a role in the way Germany shapes its foreign and security policy with regard to Russia. On the one hand, the course and aftermath of World War II (Germany's defeat on the Eastern front, the Soviet occupation, the Cold War and the division into two German states) make Germany reluctant to undertake any actions that the German public could interpret as a return to wartime or a Cold War-style confrontation with Russia. This attitude is also influenced by Germany's distorted memory of the Russian (but not Ukrainian or Belarusian) victims of the crimes committed by Nazi Germany. On top of that, there is the conviction that the policy of détente towards the USSR was the most important factor in ending the Cold War and in German reunification. This has produced a deeply rooted belief that Germany itself and Europe as a whole should pursue a policy of dialogue and co-operation towards Russia, also in times of crisis.

(3) The German economic model has a great impact on the strategic priorities of Germany's foreign and security policy. The country's highly industrialised economy is characterised by a **strong orientation towards exports** (mainly of investment goods, which accounted for 44.1% of total exports in 2013)⁴ **and is heavily dependent on imports of natural resources** (energy resources and metals).

Germany's foreign trade is still highly 'Europeanised'; its ten main trading partners are Western states (France, the Netherlands, USA, Great Britain, Italy, Austria), with the sole exception of China – Germany's third largest trading partner. In 2013,

⁴ Bund der Deutschen Industrie, Exportstruktur der deutschen Industrie 2013, <http://www.bdi.eu/RD-EXT/ZahlenFakten/Exportstruktur.pdf>

European countries accounted for 69% of Germany's exports, including 59% for the EU countries.⁵ The ten largest sales markets for German goods were also mostly Western countries, again with the exception of China – Germany's fifth largest export destination.⁶ However, **the dynamics of Germany's foreign trade with the emerging powers (in recent years mainly China) is much higher than with the Western partners.** Germany perceives not only the BRICS countries as increasingly important economic and political partners. This applies also to regional players like Vietnam, Mexico, Malaysia, Indonesia, Columbia, Nigeria and Angola.⁷ **Germany, which over the last ten years has been focused on economic expansion within the enlarged EU, is now gradually becoming a country with global trade and investment links.**

Germany imports between 70% and 98% of the energy resources and nearly 100% of the metals it consumes. The country relies increasingly on global interdependencies to import these resources. With regard to energy resources, Germany is seeking to diversify its energy suppliers and supply routes and increase the share of renewables in its energy mix through the *Energiewende* project. As regards metals, since 2010 Germany has been implementing a strategy which aims at greater diversification of

⁵ 16% of exports are destined for Asian countries, and 12% to countries of North and South America.

⁶ The top three are France, the USA and Great Britain. Statistisches Bundesamt, Außenhandel. Rangfolge der Handelspartner im Außenhandel der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 2013, Wiesbaden 2014, https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesamtwirtschaftUmwelt/Aussenhandel/Handelspartner/Tabellen/RangfolgeHandelspartner.pdf?__blob=publicationFile; Statistisches Bundesamt, 'Frankreich auch 2013 Deutschlands wichtigster Handelspartner', <https://www.destatis.de/DE/ZahlenFakten/GesamtwirtschaftUmwelt/Aussenhandel/Handelspartner/Aktuell.html>

⁷ Countries named in the federal government's 2012 strategy paper on the development of co-operation with emerging powers. Die Bundesregierung, 'Shaping Globalization – Expanding Partnerships – Sharing Responsibility. A strategy paper by the German Government', 2012, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/cae/servlet/contentblob/616584/publicationFile/190268/Gestaltungsmaechtekonzep%20engl.pdf>

supplies and envisages the conclusion of long-term 'raw material partnerships' with selected countries.⁸

Russia is still perceived as a major export market for German investment goods, even though in reality it is only Germany's 10th or 11th largest trading partner (interchangeably with Poland).⁹ Moreover, as German companies switch to non-European markets, **the relative importance of the Russian market for German exports is decreasing** (despite the rise in German exports to and investments in Russia in recent years). Russia is the largest supplier of resources to Germany; it accounts for a third of the country's oil and gas imports (37% and 32%, respectively) and much of its imports of hard coal and metals. However, due to the diversification of energy supplies and the 'green' energy transformation mentioned above, combined with expanding 'raw materials partnerships', **the importance of Russia as a supplier of resources to Germany will decrease in the long term.**

(4) The political, economic and military parameters of German power influence the vision of the international order

⁸ Within the framework of those partnerships, Germany seeks access to deposits of raw materials in return for investments, technology transfers or development aid. To date, such partnerships have been concluded with Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Chile and Peru, while Russia and China still remain important partners for Germany. Konrad Popławski, 'Germany is consistently implementing its strategy of raw material partnerships', *OSW Analyses*, 6 February 2013, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2013-02-06/germany-consistently-implementing-its-strategy-raw-material>. See also Anna Kwiatkowska-Drożdż, 'The natural resources deficit: the implications for German politics', *OSW Commentary*, 8 February 2011, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2011-02-08/natural-resources-deficit-implications-german-politics>

⁹ A comparison of Germany's foreign trade with Russia and with the countries of the Visegrad Group (Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary [V4]) clearly favours the latter. In 2013 Germany exported a total of €101 billion worth of goods to the V4 and €36 billion worth of goods to Russia. For imports, the proportions are as follows: Germany imported around €100 billion worth of goods from the V4 and around €40 billion worth of goods from Russia. See Statistisches Bundesamt, <https://www.destatis.de/DE/Startseite.html>

that the country favours. Politically, Germany is a regional power in the EU with considerable diplomatic potential. Economically it is the world's third largest power. At the same time, Germany's military potential is limited, and the country does not possess nuclear weapons. Therefore, **Berlin is essentially interested in maintaining peace and stability, both in Europe and globally, and in developing diplomatic mechanisms to manage crises and conflicts.** For these reasons, Germany is willing to involve the emerging powers in the shaping of the global order, even if that entails taking the interests of those powers into account to a greater extent. Germany opts for multilateralism and multipolarity in international relations.

As a result, Germany's **attitude towards the United States has been increasingly ambivalent.** The USA is still an ally within NATO, with whom Germany maintains military links, and an important political and economic partner. However **in the global context,** the USA's ambition to keep its dominant position in the international order, its propensity to act unilaterally and bend international law, and its ambition to contain potential rivals, is seen in Germany as potentially threatening to German interests. **In the European context,** Germany no longer regards the USA as the guarantor of European security. On the contrary, US policy in Europe is at times perceived as a factor that could destabilise European-Russian relations. The German political elites do not consider the shrinking US presence in Europe as a factor that could have a negative impact on European security.¹⁰ Rather, the Germans view this process as a natural consequence of the end of the Cold War. This perception of the USA also stems partly from the fact that Germany is disinclined to undertake high-end military

¹⁰ See the speech by Thomas de Maizière at the 48th Munich Security Conference, http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg!/ut/p/c4/NY3BCoMwEET_KDG2Qtt-bxUN7K16svYQYl7hgEtmsFko_vlpwBt7lDYx8ybXBLOgMYwxmLE_ZWrxob9H5xQmPARMD4eyFg2QHtAOD_rsFiAF7dHNwaR_qBMh-anYtC8BC9SboH7Q1-EAhks931IGwMwBsZAuNKR4YjiSkSj5uZiViYjs-JdtpqoyU9ke9T3Vx9ujOeR5dS9rOXl__QGGZ_vr/

operations abroad, and is therefore less reliant on the US military capabilities to support them. This ambivalent attitude towards the US is further reinforced by the anti-Americanism of the German public, a legacy of the pacifist movements co-financed by the USSR during the Cold War, which has been amplified by the negative reception of the US foreign military interventions in the last two decades and recently by the spying scandal from 2013.¹¹

¹¹ According to the Pew Research Center, Germany is in the top-ten of countries that criticise US policy: it occupies 10th place, with 47% of respondents reporting negative attitudes towards the US and 51% reporting a positive attitude. See Bruce Stokes, 'Which countries don't like America and which do', Pew Research Center, 15 July 2014, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/07/15/which-countries-dont-like-america-and-which-do/>

II. THE GLOBAL DIMENSION OF GERMANY'S SECURITY POLICY

1. German concepts for global security

(1) Co-operative security. The concept of co-operative security, based on co-operation and dialogue, was present in Germany's policy with regard to the East-West relations during the Cold War and afterwards. In recent years, its global dimension has gained more significance. Germany's interest is primarily in strengthening and developing co-operation with the emerging powers. Berlin does not want their (especially the BRICS) political and economic development and growing international ambitions to prompt global crises or conflicts that could leave Germany facing difficult choices. For this reason, **co-operative security in the global (and regional) dimension remains the area of NATO's activity to which Germany is most committed.** For Berlin this is in fact more important than NATO's other core tasks: collective defence and crisis management. Germany deems it highly important to develop instruments which strengthen global stability and prevent crises and conflicts between NATO/the USA and the emerging powers. These include political dialogue and military co-operation with elements of arms control, confidence-building measures or joint military exercises. Germany will increasingly pursue such co-operation on a bilateral basis (also to the benefit of its own arms industry) through military-technical co-operation, training support provided by the Bundeswehr or joint armaments projects.

(2) Crisis management the German way - *vernetzte Sicherheit*. Germany's attitude towards the management of regional crises and conflicts (e.g. in the Middle East and Africa) results from German thinking in terms of co-operative security. **Berlin views any direct military intervention into internal or regional conflicts as the last resort.** Germany considers military interventions of this kind to be ineffective, involve a high human

and material cost, and be incompatible with the German interests and strategic culture. **Germany has thus been developing a policy of networked security, the so-called *vernetzte Sicherheit*.** The German leadership prefers regional powers and organisations to assume responsibility for military crisis management in their respective regions. It prefers to support such actors in conflict prevention, crisis and conflict management and post-conflict situations by providing military equipment, organising military training missions, supporting security reforms, or sending in military advisors.¹² Moreover, Germany advocates **a more extensive use of civilian instruments** in the domains of diplomacy, development co-operation, justice (training of police officers, judges, prosecutors), economic co-operation, infrastructure development and environmental protection. This approach is popular with the German public, as demonstrated by the detailed public opinion polls conducted in April and May 2014.¹³ The survey showed that Germans mostly want their government to conduct foreign and security policy using civilian instruments (humanitarian assistance, diplomacy, civil society support, etc.). There is very little support for using military means: 82% of respondents believe that the Bundeswehr's engagement abroad should be limited.

(3) Resource security and global supply chain security. The increase in Germany's global economic interdependencies makes

¹² The German proposals presented ahead of the European Council meeting in December 2013 were in line with this policy: (1) transforming one of the two EU Battle Groups (EUBG) into a training unit for the purposes of training missions (this proposal will probably be partly put into practice in the form of a training module within an EUBG that will retain its current format); (2) the 'enable & enhance' initiative in the EU, which aims at preventative and post-conflict training and material support (armament and military equipment) for regional partners that could contribute to ensuring security in crisis regions (e.g. Nigeria in the context of ensuring security in the Gulf of Guinea, or Kenya with regard to permanent instability in Somalia).

¹³ Körber-Stiftung, Einmischen oder zurückhalten? Ergebnisse einer repräsentativen Umfrage von TNS Infratest Politikforschung zur Sicht der Deutschen auf die Außenpolitik, May 2014, <http://www.koerber-stiftung.de/internationale-politik/sonderthemen/umfrage-aussenpolitik.html>

the country more reliant on international transport routes, especially by air and sea. This is why in security policy debates in Germany, industry representatives (BDI)¹⁴ and expert communities (SWP, KAS)¹⁵ have increasingly emphasised **the need for Germany to become more involved in securing the global flows of goods and services and developing a new security policy narrative on securing the 'global commons'**. Such a strategy should rely on preventative and response instruments, both civilian and military. Since the maritime domain is of particular importance for Germany¹⁶, experts have been calling on Germany to assume an active role in shaping the EU's Maritime Security Strategy, and have been emphasising the need for the following actions: a strengthening of Germany's political and military presence in regions of significant importance from the point of view of the global maritime routes; increasing the capabilities of the German Navy and the Coast Guard; building up maritime and satellite surveillance capabilities; and pursuing a development policy focused on good governance and the rule of law in the relevant regions. Such opinions are likely to gain increasing influence on German foreign and security policy.

There is thus wide agreement in Germany that the Navy will be used more extensively in the future than it has been so far.

¹⁴ Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie, Grundsatzpapier. Sicherheit für das Industrieland Deutschland, June 2013, http://www.bdi.eu/download_content/SicherheitUndVerteidigung/32782_BDI_Sicherheit_5.pdf

¹⁵ Markus Harder, 'Anforderungen an eine Europäische Maritime Sicherheitsstrategie', SWP-Aktuell, July 2013, http://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2013A43_hae.pdf; Peter Hefe, 'Fragile Wertschöpfungsketten: Zur Notwendigkeit eines deutschen maritimen Engagements', Analysen & Argumente. *Perspektiven Deutscher Außenpolitik* KAS, nr 125, July 2013, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_34915-544-1-30.pdf?130709104818

¹⁶ In recent years Germany has reported an increase in the volume and value of goods imported and exported by sea. In 2011 maritime transport accounted for 28.5% of German exports by weight and 56.9% of exports by value. Moreover, Germany is one of the top five largest logistics centres in the world. The position of the German merchant navy is equally strong: it is the third-largest in the world, and the first for container ships.

Thus, compared to the other branches of the Bundeswehr, the German Navy was least affected by the spending cuts implemented as part of the most recent Bundeswehr reform in 2011. The objective of the Navy's capabilities development is to enhance its readiness, armament and equipment, and training levels, with a view to preparing the forces to take part in crisis management and anti-pirate operations and to support land operations from the sea. Regarding the security of international maritime routes, Germany has been participating in the NATO (Ocean Shield) and EU (Atalanta) anti-pirate operations in the Horn of Africa. It also co-operates with the United States; every two years, a German air defence Sachsen-class frigate (F 124) takes its turn to escort a US carrier strike group in the Persian Gulf.

2. Germany's priorities and the challenges for the allies

(1) Between old allies and new partners? The deepening political and economic relations with emerging powers may leave Germany facing difficult political, economic and military choices in the long term, should global crises or conflicts arise between the new partners (China) and the 'old' allies (the USA). The shift in US foreign and security policy towards the Asia-Pacific region has been a source of concern in Germany, which worries about the possible consequences of US-Chinese rivalry for German political and economic relations with China. **In the event of an escalation of the US-China conflict, Germany would have to make a geopolitical choice between supporting its ally, the USA, or remaining neutral. If it chose the latter, the decision could entail the disintegration of NATO in the global dimension.**

Potential scenarios of global crises and conflicts, as well as the possible scope and consequences of Germany's response, are being considered and analysed in Berlin; the policy game with a scenario of a massive Chinese cyber-attack on US critical infrastructure in a tense international situation is a case in

point.¹⁷ In such situations, Germany may differ from the USA in its interpretation of the causes of the conflict and may take different political, economic and military action. It may be more inclined to adopt a neutral position or act as an intermediary between the parties. In a simulation of the above scenario conducted in the autumn of 2011, Germany tried to mediate between the USA and China in the first phase of the conflict; in the second phase, it declared solidarity with the USA but did not commit to unconditionally participating in all US actions.¹⁸ In the longer run, the behaviour of the German government in real situations of this kind will depend on many factors including the status of its relations with the USA and China, the set-up of the ruling coalition, or the internal political situation in Germany.

The signing and implementation of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) will be of key importance for anchoring Germany in the West, including within NATO.

The TTIP is expected to strengthen economic links between the United States and the EU, Germany in particular, and to have far-reaching geopolitical implications. For Germany, the TTIP will cement links with the USA and weaken the temptation to deepen cooperation with the emerging powers at the expense of relations with the West. It is of utmost importance that the TTIP is signed and ratified during the term of the current coalition government led by Chancellor Angela Merkel. Currently, representatives of industry and leading government officials from the coalition parties (the CDU/CSU and the SPD) are in favour of the agreement. However, while the CDU/CSU's party members fully endorse the TTIP, many Social Democrats are sceptical, with the German public

¹⁷ Körber-Stiftung, 'Deutschland zwischen China und den USA: Handlungsoptionen in einer bipolaren Weltordnung', *Körber Policy Game* No 1, October 2011, http://www.koerber-stiftung.de/fileadmin/user_upload/internationale_politik/pdf/2011/Policy%20Game-2011.pdf

¹⁸ In this policy game 'Germany' was represented by young experts and advisers from federal ministries, think tanks and German companies.

being overwhelmingly critical of the agreement.¹⁹ Thus, after the 2017 parliamentary elections in Germany, the government's attitude towards the TTIP may become more distanced. It is also possible that Russia, which is not interested in a greater consolidation of the West, will organise propaganda campaigns that will primarily target Germany and present the balance of costs and benefits of the TTIP in a negative light.

(2) European solidarity in crisis management? Germany's preference for civilian instruments in dealing with crises and conflicts has led to questions being raised about Germany's solidarity and willingness to participate in crisis management, especially in the EU's southern neighbourhood. **From the French and British perspective, Germany has been 'free-riding'** and taking advantage of French and British military involvement in crisis management which enhances the security of the entire EU. From the German perspective, the results of such involvement have been ambiguous, and the Bundeswehr should not be used to secure other countries', i.e. France and Britain's, interests in their former colonies. Berlin's position on Libya in 2011 was a particularly striking example of Germany's refusal to participate in international crisis management. Germany (along with China and Russia) abstained from voting at the UN Security Council (UNSC) on a British- and French-backed resolution to authorise the military intervention, and decided not to join the operation led by NATO. The decision caused controversy within Germany also, and left the country feeling isolated from its main allies – the USA, France and Great Britain.

¹⁹ Konrad Popławski, 'The SPD presents its conditions regarding the acceptance of the TTIP', *OSW Analyses*, 1 October 2014, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2014-10-01/spd-presents-its-conditions-regarding-acceptance-ttip>; David Böcking, 'Freihandelsabkommen: CDU rechnet sich TTIP-Prognosen schön', 22 September 2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/soziales/ttip-cdu-bewirbt-freihandel-mit-wackligen-zahlen-a-993107.html>

In the aftermath of the Libya crisis, **Germany has thus adopted a strategy of minimum military involvement in international crisis management operations.** Officially, Germany has endorsed operations with the UNSC mandate conducted by NATO, individual allies or regional organisations. Practically, **its actual military involvement in such operations has been minimal and limited to strategic and tactical airlift, logistics, medical support, military training and, more recently, arms deliveries.** Bundeswehr involvement in the operations in Mali, Somalia, the Central African Republic and Iraq offers a good illustration of how Germany has been implementing this strategy since 2011. It seems that future German governments will stick to this course.

(3) Integration of the European armed forces? Due to the significant differences in the strategic cultures and security policy priorities among the largest EU member states, **military integration in Europe involving France, Great Britain and Germany is unlikely to happen. In the long run, this may lead to a growing fragmentation of military co-operation in Europe.** In November 2010, France and Great Britain decided to strengthen their bilateral military co-operation by signing the Lancaster House Treaty for Defence and Security Co-operation, and in 2014 agreed to set their further priorities.²⁰ This was the result of growing frustration at the absence of progress within the existing formats of political, military and industrial co-operation within the EU. Both countries also concluded that it was not worth investing in closer political-military co-operation with Germany. Due to German security policy priorities and internal restraints, Paris and London simply do not see Berlin as a reliable partner who could guarantee that the fruits of closer military co-operation in peace time would translate into real co-operation in

²⁰ Ministry of Defence, 'UK-France Defence Co-operation Treaty announced', 2 October 2010, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-france-defence-co-operation-treaty-announced--2>; Prime Minister's Office, 'UK and France agree closer defence co-operation', 31 January 2014, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-france-agree-closer-defence-co-operation>

military operations at times of crisis. Also, Berlin is reluctant to start far-reaching military co-operation projects with France and Great Britain, since it fears being pressured by these two countries to engage capabilities involved in joint projects in military operations abroad. For this reason, **Germany currently prefers to pursue integration projects with smaller and medium-sized countries in its neighbourhood - in the Benelux, the Nordic-Baltic region or the Visegrad Group, where Germany is the stronger partner and can be a leader which defines the course and objectives of military integration.**

III. THE REGIONAL DIMENSION OF GERMANY'S SECURITY POLICY

1. German priorities in the Baltic Sea region and Central Eastern Europe

'Security in Europe is only possible with Russia, not against it': the principle inscribed into the coalition agreement of the current CDU/CSU-SPD government, says a great deal about German security policy in the regional dimension.²¹ Germany regards Russia as the largest and most important neighbour of the EU, and an important actor in terms of international security. From the German perspective, a confrontation with Moscow is not in the interest of either Germany or the European Union. Despite Russia's aggression against Ukraine, German politicians and diplomats keep reiterating this principle.²² On the other hand, it appears that the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has triggered a (limited) public debate in Germany about the adequacy of this concept. Despite Germany's efforts to secure a political resolution to the conflict, Russia has continued its military operations in eastern Ukraine and carried on with the political measures targeting Ukraine as a whole. This has left Germany increasingly baffled and irritated by Russia's policy and its broken promises. However, **it is too early to say if Germany's increasingly critical perception of Russia will prompt the country to change the guiding principle of its policy towards Moscow. It remains an open question as to**

²¹ The coalition agreement of CDU, CSU and SPD, 'Deutschlands Zukunft gestalten', 16 December 2013, <https://www.cdu.de/sites/default/files/media/dokumente/koalitionsvertrag.pdf>

²² Speech by Michael Roth, Secretary of State for European Affairs at the German Foreign Ministry, 'Germany in a changing EU: Outlining Germany's European Union Policy', 22 September 2014, http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2014/140922_StMR_Dublin.html
See also Anna Kwiatkowska-Drożdż, 'Germany on Russia. Yes to links, no to rapprochement', *OSW Point of View*, February 2014, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/policy-briefs/2014-03-03/germany-russia-yes-to-links-no-to-rapprochement>

whether Germany will be willing to consider the scenario of an act of more or less open Russian aggression against one of NATO's eastern member states. That would require Germany to fundamentally change its security policy, and would necessitate unpopular political, military and economic decisions (endorsing a policy of deterrence, strengthening German military potential, limiting the existing dependencies on Russian companies in key sectors of the German economy).

(1) A 'common neighbourhood' in Eastern Europe. In line with the principle that 'security in Europe is only possible with Russia, not against it', **until recently Germany viewed the Eastern European states as a kind of EU-Russian 'common neighbourhood' - without prospects of membership in NATO and the EU, but able to develop economic co-operation with both the European Union and Russia.** In recent years, Germany has unofficially opposed the idea that Ukraine and the other Eastern Partnership countries could join NATO or the EU. At the same time, it has not recognised Russia's exclusive economic dominance in those countries. Germany's objective has been to draw them partly into the orbit of the EU's influence, so that European standards and legislation could contribute to reducing corruption and enhancing the rule of law for German/EU companies doing business there. Thus, Germany has supported the conclusion of Association Agreements between the EU and the Eastern Partnership countries, which are also supposed to include provisions on Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA); in 2007 Germany actually came forward with the DCFTAs' initiative.²³

In the course of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, it became clear that Germany's priority was to prevent the conflict from escalating, and that to this end Berlin was willing to

²³ Justyna Gotkowska, 'Germany and the Eastern Partnership', *OSW Commentary*, 18 June 2010, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2010-06-18/germany-and-eastern-partnership>

make compromises under Russian pressure, giving up on its original vision of the ‘common neighbourhood’. It was of utmost importance for Germany to make sure that talks between Ukraine and Russia continued (even including the separatists), a ceasefire was agreed, and negotiations were opened about a political solution to the conflict – at the expense of concessions on the part of the Ukrainian side. Germany was also prepared to partly give up the plans it had previously endorsed to develop closer economic co-operation between the EU and Ukraine, and was ready to accept Russia’s demands to postpone the implementation of the EU-Ukraine agreement on the DCFTA, and (most probably) also willing to accept modifications to it. **At the same time, while Germany opposed military solutions and arms supplies to Ukraine, it could not afford not to respond to Moscow’s illegal actions, which threatened to unravel international treaties and the post-war security architecture in Europe, because it would lose credibility in relations with Russia and with the EU member states in the region.** Thus, Germany initially offered only limited support for the sanctions against Russia, assuming the role of mediator between those countries that were sceptical about the sanctions, and those calling for a tougher policy on Russia. Germany toughened its own position after the Russian Armed Forces intervened in eastern Ukraine; thanks to pressure from Chancellor Angela Merkel, the EU agreed a new package of sanctions against Russian nationals and entities in September 2014.²⁴

(2) No ‘provocations’ on NATO’s eastern flank. To date, Germany has held the view that Russia could not pose a military threat to any NATO state. Berlin has also been convinced that there should be no reinforcement of the Russian narrative about Russia being

²⁴ The German government has also committed itself to deploying up to 20 experts and police officers as part of the EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform Ukraine (EUAM Ukraine). Moreover, Germany has pledged military equipment (UAVs) and its operators (Bundeswehr soldiers) to monitor the Russian-Ukrainian border as part of the OSCE mission in eastern Ukraine.

encircled and threatened by NATO; thus, any significant military presence of NATO in Central Eastern Europe and the Baltic states should be avoided as it could be regarded by Russia as provocative. Before the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, Germany was cautious about organising any major Article 5 military exercises on NATO's eastern flank, and played a very limited role in such exercises (e.g. NATO's Steadfast Jazz exercise in 2013). **After the Russian aggression against Ukraine, Germany still considered any actions aimed at significantly reinforcing NATO's eastern flank to be too provocative and likely to escalate tensions between Russia and the West.** Ahead of the NATO summit in Newport (in September 2014) Germany insisted that the Alliance should unilaterally respect the provisions of the NATO-Russia political documents of 1997 and 2002. Berlin considered any major permanent presence of NATO forces in the new member states to be incompliant with those documents. Germany also advocated a speedy review of additional NATO activity in the region.

On the other hand Germany deemed it necessary – as part of a policy of reassurance towards Poland and the Baltic states, but not as a policy of deterrence towards Russia – to slightly strengthen the military presence on NATO's eastern flank, including its own engagement, according to the provisions of the NATO-Russia documents. Thus, in 2014 Germany participated in NATO's increased activity in the Baltic states, Poland and Romania: in the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group One (SNMCMG1) operating on the Baltic Sea; in NATO's additional AWACS surveillance flights over Poland and Romania; and in the air policing mission in the Baltic states.²⁵ Along with Poland and

²⁵ In June and July 2014, a German Elbe-class replenishment ship served as a command ship and flagship to the SNMCMG1. Between August and December 2014, a German Frankenthal-class mine hunter participated in SNMCMG1. German soldiers were involved in NATO's additional AWACS flights over Poland and Romania. Between September and December 2014, six German Eurofighter aircraft were on duty as part of the Baltic Air Policing mission: four operated from the Estonian base in Ämari, and two from the Neuburg/Donau base in Germany.

Denmark, Germany also agreed to increase the readiness and capabilities of the Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin, Poland. In 2015 German troops are scheduled to take part in military exercises in Poland and the Baltic states as part of the stepped-up rotating allied military presence on NATO's eastern flank.

2. Germany's regional security policy - challenges for the allies

Germany is a key ally on whom the stability and peace on NATO's eastern flank largely depend. An increased German political and military involvement in the Baltic Sea region and Central Eastern Europe and a demonstration to Russia that Berlin is prepared to react strongly, could discourage any aggressive Russian action on NATO's eastern flank. However, Germany's current policy poses challenges for NATO's cohesion, the security of the Eastern member states and the development of regional military co-operation.

(1) More uncertainty? As the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has demonstrated, for Moscow Germany is the most important NATO and EU member, which is increasingly determining the regional and European security architecture, especially in the face of the US shift towards the Asia-Pacific region, the security problems in other regions, and the perceived weakness of the administration of President Barack Obama. Moscow's moves to date have been aimed at keeping the former Soviet republics within Russia's sphere of political, economic and military influence - through a consolidation within the Eurasian Union, and the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO). However, **Moscow's long-term, maximum objective is to change the European security architecture and to undermine the US-European alliance and the credibility of NATO.** Moscow hopes that Germany will be the main actor in charge of managing the crisis in Europe stemming from more or less open Russian aggressive action against a NATO member state in the Baltic region and Central Eastern Europe.

Moscow expects that in such a case Germany will seek to avoid an escalation of the conflict and will look for 'political solutions', *de facto* to the detriment of the sovereignty of the states attacked, and at the expense of NATO's collective defence principle. **Anticipating this kind of reaction from Germany, Russia may feel encouraged to test NATO's cohesion and its ability to act in the Baltic Sea region and in the Central Eastern Europe, and try to pursue its strategic objectives.**

Germany's policy to date, which has been about de-escalating the conflict in Ukraine on the one hand, and limiting efforts to militarily strengthen NATO's eastern flank on the other, **combined with reports about the Bundeswehr's problems with armament and military equipment, has given rise to questions in Poland and the Baltic states about how Germany would respond politically and militarily if Russia were to undertake more aggressive action.** Despite assurances that Germany will show solidarity and act according to Article 5, its actual reaction is difficult to predict, and may depend on a number of factors determined by internal German politics (e.g. approaching state or federal elections, the composition of the ruling coalition, and the mindset of the German decision-makers), the regional situation (reaction to Russian actions by NATO's eastern members), and by Russia itself (the degree of success of Russian disinformation campaigns in Germany).²⁶ **However, the very fact that the allies in the Baltic Sea region and Central Eastern Europe are having doubts about the possible German reaction in times of conflict is undermining the sense of security on NATO's eastern flank.**

(2) Closer military co-operation in the region? In view of a closer French-British military co-operation, **Germany has been seeking to develop military co-operation with the smaller**

²⁶ Anton Trojanovski, 'Kreml startet Propaganda-Offensive in Deutschland', 22 August 2014, <http://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article131499923/Kreml-startet-Propaganda-Offensive-in-Deutschland.html>

and medium-sized allies and partners, also from the Baltic Sea region and Central Eastern Europe. The ‘framework nation concept’ that Germany has been pushing through in NATO also aims at supplementing Germany’s military capabilities by the militaries of the smaller partners. This would mean the gradual integration of the armed forces, military infrastructures and arms industries in the region, with Germany providing framework capabilities. NATO’s eastern members are thus facing a dilemma. On the one hand, Germany is an increasingly important ally in NATO and – despite the Bundeswehr’s problems as reported in the autumn of 2014 – the ally with the largest military potential and most significant economic interests in the region. Moreover, the German military presence in the Baltic states and Central Eastern Europe is crucial for NATO’s policy of deterrence – irrespective of Germany’s political and military limitations. On the other hand, the NATO’s eastern members are facing the question: is it worth investing in military co-operation with Berlin and becoming militarily dependent on it, when it is unclear whether Germany can be relied on politically and militarily in conflict situations? **The uncertainty about Germany’s reaction in the event of a crisis or conflict in the region has contributed to the ambivalent attitudes of the smaller and medium-sized partners towards developing far-reaching military-technical co-operation with Germany.** As a result, those states are prepared to enhance their interoperability with the Bundeswehr, e.g. through joint exercises and training. However, they are sceptical about increasing their dependence on Germany and about deeper military-technical co-operation and integration, which is Berlin’s long-term objective, for instance in terms of purchasing joint platforms, with joint crews and using them operationally (e.g. in the case of navies) or creating joint units and command structures within the framework of bilateral or multilateral co-operation outside NATO.

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