

“Leadership from the Center”: German Security Policy in 2016 and Beyond

by

Colonel Peter H. Fechtel
United States Army

Under the Direction of:
Professor Raymond A. Millen



United States Army War College
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Abstract

Germany’s rise in the last five years as a regional and global leader has caused domestic and international elites to question its traditional reticence for foreign engagements. Correspondingly, the German government has begun work on a new security policy, also known as a “White Paper.” This study posits that Germany must align its new security policy to enhance its relevance as an ally and partner for regional and global stability. It examines Germany’s evolving security policy by: 1) analyzing relevant statements from German and other international leaders on the topic; 2) reviewing German security engagement over the last five years; 3) exploring the foundational components of German security thinking; 4) analyzing the current process of developing the new White Paper; and 5) considering what policy changes may be contained within the document, and the associated implications for United States policy makers. This paper concludes that Germany’s proclivity for engagement within international organizations will increasingly make it impossible for Germany to remain a reluctant power. It also concludes that stability operations may be a domestically palatable way for German security engagement.

“Leadership from the Center”: German Security Policy in 2016 and Beyond

Let us not forget, neglect or, worse, betray universal values, but instead uphold them together with our friends and partners. Let us be seen to be living by them, let us defend them.

—President Joachim Gauck¹

Despite a penchant of avoiding foreign entanglements, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) is in the process of revising its security policy, reflecting a recognition of regional and global security realities and its own growth of power. Although the FRG has not made a formal policy change yet, the last 5 years have witnessed the FRG’s increasing involvement within Europe and the world.

In the European Union’s (EU) first existential crisis, the Greek credit negotiations, Germany became the *de facto* political leader among all European countries. As the Greek crisis unfolded, Germany also assumed a European and global political leadership role in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine. Within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Germany agreed to form the core of the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) Reaction Force, as well as contributing more personnel to the NATO multi-national corps headquarters in Szczecin, Poland. Most recently, Germany has also played the part as Europe’s moral leader—accepting hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Middle East, as many other European countries actively turned them away. All of these instances point to the recent growth of Germany’s power and stature beyond its traditional core of economic strength. These examples also help explain Germany’s continued high-regard internationally.²

Over the same period of time, some members of Germany’s political elite have openly called for a commensurate German engagement and leadership in international security affairs, and even a readiness to use the German military (*Bundeswehr*) to

protect and promote German interests. This message has been cautiously encouraged by many allies and partners that have been seeking a different kind of contribution and more leadership from the historically reluctant, modern German state.³ Most tellingly, during this period of political and economic growth, the FRG opted not to join the NATO operation that bombed Libya, the most recent example of traditional German reticence to be involved in offensive military operations. The subsequent refusal by the FRG, “to even start discussing the situation in Syria within the North Atlantic Council raised eyebrows. Even some of Germany’s closest European allies have expressed concern that you cannot rely on the Germans.”⁴

The FRG’s reservation to flex its security and defense muscle has led to friction with its partners, which desire and expect more German involvement.⁵ In view of rising demands for increased strategic engagement, combined with Germany’s growing political and economic power, Germany must align its next security policy to enhance its relevance as an ally and partner for regional and global stability.

Driven by the strategic change since 2010, the FRG has begun work on a new “White Paper.” White Papers, analogous to a combined United States National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and National Military Strategy have defined the orientation for German security policy since 1969. Germany’s rise as a regional and global leader has superseded the last White Paper written nearly a decade ago.

As the United States (U.S.), in particular, continues to look for highly capable partners to assist in the execution of its security policies, the potential of increased German international security engagement and leadership should be welcomed and encouraged.⁶ This opportunity is especially pertinent as traditional security partners

have reduced their defense and security budgets, and have refrained from exercising influence.⁷

This paper examines Germany's evolving security policy by: 1) analyzing relevant statements from German and other international leaders on the topic; 2) reviewing German security engagement over the last five years; 3) exploring the foundational components of German security thinking; 4) analyzing the current process of developing the new White Paper; and 5) considering what policy changes may be contained within the document, and the associated implications for U.S. policy makers.

Domestic and International Discussion on German International Engagement

Traditionally, security issues have been a lightning rod in German politics. For example, German President Horst Koehler was pressured to resign from office in 2010 after he suggested the German military should be used to advance national interests.⁸

A country of our size . . . with its focus on exports and thus reliance on foreign trade, must be aware that military deployments are necessary in an emergency to protect our interests, for example, when it comes to trade routes, for example, when it comes to preventing regional instabilities that could negatively influence our trade, jobs and incomes.⁹

This controversy occurred even with the hindsight of 15 years of German international military engagement.

Although Koehler's statement was an acknowledgement of German engagement in international security affairs for over a decade and a half, it unleashed a media and political firestorm¹⁰ Ironically, the office of the President in Germany is designed to, "influence public debate, to voice criticism, offer suggestions and make proposals."¹¹ Koehler succeeded in initiating a public discourse on a sensitive topic, albeit at a political cost. In fact, the controversy continues.

Current German President Joachim Gauck reignited the issue at the 2014

Munich Security Conference stating,

Germany must also be ready to do more to guarantee the security that others have provided it with for decades. . . And it is precisely at times when the United States cannot keep on providing more and more that Germany and its European partners must themselves assume greater responsibility for their security.¹²

The dialogue that the two presidents started is now carried by two of Germany's most visible cabinet members in the coalition government: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and Minister of Defense, Ursula von der Leyen. Steinmeier, in 2014, echoed many of Gauck's sentiments regarding a need for increased and different German leadership:

Germany must be ready for earlier, more decisive and more substantive engagement in the foreign and security policy sphere. . . .The use of military force is an instrument of last resort. It should rightly be used with restraint. Yet a culture of restraint for Germany must not become a culture of standing aloof. Germany is too big merely to comment on world affairs from the sidelines.¹³

One year later at the Munich Security Conference, von der Leyen addressed one of the themes for the conference, "Is Germany ready to lead?" and answered it with, "My answer is: Yes, we are."¹⁴ She continued with the theme of German engagement and leadership:

I will tell you what type of leadership Germany is very much prepared to exercise: It is leadership from the centre. This is what our partners expect of us—and what we should expect of ourselves. Leading from the centre means to contribute one's best resources and capabilities to alliances and partnerships. . . . Leadership from the centre also means that two things must come together: The will to act and the capability to act.¹⁵

Von der Leyen's speech acknowledged Germany's history, public reticence for military engagement abroad, and the need to work within NATO and the EU. While her speech

was not as groundbreaking as Koehler's, it did reinforce Gauck and Steinmeier's previous statements.

International voices have echoed the discussions occurring within Germany. In his oft-cited 2011 speech in Berlin, Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski charged that the FRG's reluctance to become embroiled in the Eurozone crisis was unacceptable.

I demand of Germany that, for your sake and for ours, you help [the euro zone] survive and prosper. You know full well that nobody else can do it. I will probably be the first Polish foreign minister in history to say so, but here it is: I fear German power less than I am beginning to fear German inactivity.¹⁶

Similarly, former Polish Minister of Defense Tomasz Siemoniak focused specifically on security and defense issues during his 2014 trip to the German Ministry of Defense. He stated, "We need a strong Bundeswehr that does not shy away from its responsibility of defending its allies."¹⁷

Returning to Berlin in 2013, President Barack Obama focused on the aspirations of freedom and universal values. Speaking in front of the iconic Brandenburg Gate, which during the Cold War symbolized the 'death strip' of the former Berlin Wall, the President stressed the need for states to lead in order to obtain those freedoms:

We must acknowledge that there can, at times, be a complacency among our Western democracies. Today, people often come together in places like this to remember history—not to make it. . . . And that brings with it a temptation to turn inward—to think of our own pursuits, and not the sweep of history; to believe that we've settled history's accounts, that we can simply enjoy the fruits won by our forebears. . . . But I come here today, Berlin, to say complacency is not the character of great nations.¹⁸

Seemingly, it was a message tailor-made for the audience that included German Chancellor Angela Merkel, cabinet members, and political elites. Interestingly, but perhaps reflective of the message the domestic population wanted to hear, the German

media somehow missed that dominating theme and focused on the nuclear and conventional weapons reduction comments of the second half of the speech.¹⁹

What seems clear is that pressure is building, certainly from outside of Germany, for more international security engagement. Either that pressure is feeding the domestic discussion or it is complementing it. Either way, the trend for increased engagement seems linked to the discourse, and the new White Paper may very well formalize this tendency into policy.

German International Security Engagement, 2010-2015

This is not to say that Germany has not been a contributor, or even a leader, in international security matters. It is to say that the FRG's willingness to lead voluntarily and to engage has been reserved, or perhaps even better stated – deliberately selective. Concurrently, the growth of expectations of allies and partners is exceeding the rate of German action.

Germany was the second of four countries that French President Francois Hollande lobbied for support in his counter-Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) effort after the Paris bombings in November of 2015 (Speaking with President Obama first, and thereafter visiting Russia and the United Kingdom). After meeting with Chancellor Merkel, Hollande remarked, “Knowing the rules that exist in Germany in terms of external intervention, if Germany can go further, it would be a very good signal in the fight against terrorism.”²⁰

The German government responded and parliament approved a mandate in a robust, but perhaps somewhat predictable manner, authorizing the deployment of up to 1200 troops, a frigate, six Reconnaissance-Tornado aircraft capable of taking high resolution photos and, an aerial refueling tanker.²¹ There was no public discussion,

offering, or approval of a primarily offensive capability. Of note, some *Bundestag* members and foreign policy experts had been calling for German military involvement in the conflict for months prior to the Paris attacks.²² In a development highly emblematic of the expectations of Germany internationally, only a week later U.S. Defense Secretary Ashton Carter wrote Minister of Defense von der Leyen, requesting even more military support for the mission. However, the letter did not specify what kind of additional contribution would be welcomed.²³

Several days before Hollande's visit, von der Leyen proposed in a Parliamentary hearing the deployment of 650 German troops to Mali to relieve Dutch forces participating in the Multi-Dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission of the United Nations (MINUSMA). This was in addition to a recommendation of an additional 150 troops for the training mission in Northern Iraq, where *Bundeswehr* soldiers advise and mentor Kurdish fighters training to combat ISIS.²⁴

These are only the most recent examples of German involvement in international security operations over the last five years. The largest and most illustrative example of leadership, by far, was Germany's contribution to NATO's International Stability and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. This was the first deployment where forces from the FRG participated in ground offensive operations.²⁵

Germany not only contributed the largest force in ISAF's Regional Command – North (RC North), but also was the lead nation, or framework nation, coordinating contributions and providing command and control for contingents from up to 17 countries, to include the United States. At one point, Germany had deployed up to 5350 soldiers in support of ISAF²⁶ Another noteworthy example of German involvement and

leadership from the Afghanistan deployment was the announcement in 2013 that it would provide 800 soldiers for a post-ISAF mission—the first country to make a public declaration of commitment.²⁷ Additionally, the German military operational command, the *Einsatzführungskommando*, held regular “Director of Joint Operations Conferences,” where military leaders from RC North contributing countries would assemble and discuss the future of their operations and contributions.²⁸ This initiative would appear to have been beneficial for Germany’s efforts to build consensus and solidify its leadership role in the Afghanistan mission.

Germany is also committed to three other enduring missions: NATO’s Kosovo Force (KFOR), Operation Active Endeavor (OAE), and the European Union’s Operation Atalanta. Germany has provided four of the five KFOR commanders since 2010, a mission the Bundeswehr has participated in since its inception in 1999.²⁹ Along with its standard troop contribution to KFOR, Germany has also provided a 700-man Operational Reserve Force (ORF) since 2011 on a rotating basis, along with Austria and Italy. A mixed German and Austrian ORF deployed in 2011 and 2012.³⁰ Operation Active Endeavor has sought to deter terrorist activity in the Mediterranean Sea since 2001. Germany has provided sailors, ships, and boats to the mission, although not without controversy. The current German mandate for OAE provides for up to 500 sailors.³¹ Operation Atalanta, constituted in 2008 after a request to the United Nations (UN) from the Somali government to combat pirates in its territorial water, has also had a large and visible German contribution. The current mission has up to 950 German sailors authorized, and regularly provides a frigate, a corvette, a tender, and a reconnaissance airplane.³²

German commitment to security operations is not always assured though. Because Germany did not support the 2011 intervention in Libya, and NATO's associated Operation Unified Protector, it withdrew its aircrews from NATO's Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) that were operating in the Mediterranean and supporting Active Endeavor. The act, "reminded Germany's allies of the risks in sharing military assets with Berlin."³³

Although the aforementioned deployments illustrate Germany's willingness to participate in large enduring missions, it also contributes military resources to 15 other international missions.³⁴ However, the concern is not necessarily for Germany's lack of international engagement, but rather the kinds of engagement it chooses and its willingness to assume a leadership role. What the level of engagement over the past five years indicates is that there is a basic commitment from the German government for certain types of international military deployments—just not ones that mollify domestic and international critics. What these types of missions are and their basis in law and policy is the next topic of analysis.

Legal and Policy Basis for German Security Engagement

Until the mid-1990s, German legal strictures limited the German military to strictly territorial defense missions within its national boundaries, with provisions to assist in states of "defense" or "tension" within the same borders.³⁵ These missions are enshrined within the German Basic Law (equivalent to the U.S. Constitution as a foundational legal document) as permissible for the armed forces. Although the Basic Law stipulates the use of the armed forces for national defense, there is no mention of international missions, such as the kind Germany has taken part in the past two decades.³⁶

That said, the 24th Article of the Basic Law provides for German membership in a system of international collective defense: “In doing so it shall consent to such limitations upon its sovereign powers as will bring about and secure a lasting peace in Europe and among the nations of the world.”³⁷ This article formed the legal basis for the approval of international deployments in a collective security context.³⁸

During the mid-1990s, only a few years after German reunification, legal decisions by the FRG’s federal courts first allowed for the deployment of German troops outside of national borders—as long as they were part of a system of collective security. This interpretation included United Nations authorized international missions, or multinational NATO or EU forces. Since this legal ruling, there have been a handful of examples of purely national deployments, such as the Non-Combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO) of German citizens from Albania in 1997 and Libya in 2011.

A constant for all of these international missions is the requirement for parliamentary approval for every separate mission. In a stark contrast to some allied countries, like France, which have strong executive powers for the deployment of forces outside of its borders, the German parliament must approve the deployment of forces—hence the moniker of the *Bundeswehr* being a “Parliament’s military.”³⁹ Normally, parliamentary discussion and approval are complete before the movement of troops to a crisis location. However, as was recently ruled on by Germany’s highest court, a deployment may be approved after a deployment has actually been initiated in time critical scenarios—like a NEO, when the well-being of citizens may be at stake, and the time required for a formal debate may not be available, or prudent.⁴⁰

The 2006 White Paper has provided policy guidance over the last decade. It clearly delineates priorities and prerequisites for security and defense engagement. The two main pillars of engagement described in the document are NATO and the EU, with the Trans-Atlantic alliance being the “foundation.”⁴¹ The UN and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are also described as instruments of German security policy, but do not receive as much coverage in the document. What is clear is that Germany is at best hesitant to become involved in a “coalition of the willing.” The FRG would prefer for any foreign military mission, due to the previously discussed legal rulings, the legitimacy of international legal top-cover and participation in an established international security organization’s framework.

The current guidance has been sufficiently broad for recent policy decisions. Accordingly, the German government could commit troops to a post-2014 Afghanistan mission, as well as the controversial delivery of weapons, munitions, training, and advisors to the Kurdish *Peshmerga* in Iraq for their fight against Islamic State forces. Some Germans have viewed this decision and the most recent mandate for participation in the counter-ISIS coalition skeptically because there is not a formalized system of collective security, such as NATO, leading the effort.⁴²

As late as December of 2015, and subsequent to the approval of the counter-ISIS mission, the German government again seemed to be pushing the legal and policy limits of international military deployments. This time, it deployed German airmen as part of a NATO AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) mission to patrol the airspace over Turkey without going to the *Bundestag* for a mandate approval.⁴³ The government’s stance is that the aircraft will operate over a NATO member state’s

territory and are not likely to be engaged in armed conflict. It is also clear that the mission will not only monitor airspace above Turkey, but also has the potential to monitor the conflict zone of Syria. The political opposition will almost certainly challenge this decision in the courts.⁴⁴

Generally, the German population has not clearly and consistently embraced the increased propensity to test traditional policy boundaries. To date, there remains a widespread skepticism of the deployment of German forces outside of federal borders. A poll taken on behalf of a German news morning program shortly before von der Leyen's 2014 Munich speech, found that 61 percent of respondents did not agree with greater *Bundeswehr* engagement in international crisis areas.⁴⁵ A recent Pew Research Center poll reinforced this specific observation. When asked whether Germany should, "limit its military role, or play a more active military role," 69 percent of respondents indicated that the military role should be limited. Only 25 percent indicated that there should be a greater employment of the German military.⁴⁶ This opinion remains more than twenty years after the first such mission and subsequent legal validation of international deployments by the German Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*).

This is a seemingly widespread opinion, and some might even call it ingrained pacifism. In a Pew *Global Attitudes* poll, Germans were the least likely (with 38 percent for and 58 percent against) among respondents from eight NATO member countries to favor their own country's use of their military against Russia, if Russia became involved in a "serious military conflict" with a neighboring NATO ally.⁴⁷

Interestingly, and perhaps somewhat encouragingly for allied decision makers and military leaders, the *Bundeswehr's* counter-ISIS mission enjoys public approval, with 58 percent of poll participants indicating they favor general military support.⁴⁸ This is tempered slightly when analyzing the type of intervention that was favored—as the current method of engagement with reconnaissance aircraft and naval support receiving the most support with 59 percent, but only 34 percent supporting active participation in airstrikes within Syria, and only 22 percent viewing German ground forces as an appropriate option.⁴⁹

The transition that has occurred in the federal polity, the population, and within the security and defense structures over the past 25 years is noteworthy. This engagement has come with strong domestic legal restrictions, but seemingly expanding policy guidance. It is this current state of international engagement that is the starting point for discussions on a new security and defense policy.

The Path to a New German Security and Defense Policy

Minister of Defense Ursula von der Leyen first publicly called for a new White Paper on October 29, 2014 during a speech to the *Bundeswehr's* leadership in Berlin.⁵⁰ The timing of the announcement, not quite a year after she assumed her office, seemed to acknowledge that the 2006 White Paper was becoming outdated in light of Germany's increased stature, increased international expectations, a changing security environment, and a transformed *Bundeswehr*. Since 2011, the *Bundeswehr* has transitioned to an all-volunteer force. It finally fielded new weapons systems that had languished in the acquisition pipeline such as the NH-90 utility helicopter and the Tiger combat support helicopter. It was also on the cusp of receiving the first of its A400M heavy transport planes.

The Ministry of Defense is the lead ministry for the development of the government's policy. However, the development is executed in close coordination with the Chancellor's Office and the ministries that have a stake in the document: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Economic Cooperation and Development, the Ministry of the Interior, and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy.⁵¹ This is critical, for once the White Paper is completed, the entire cabinet must approve it. The White Paper is not only a defense document, but also a policy document for the overall security of Germany and the many facets that this entails, to include cyber-security, international criminal acts, terrorism, etc. The planned title for the document, "White Paper 2016: Security Policy and the Future of the German Armed Forces," accounts for the holistic nature of the paper.⁵²

In contrast to the development of previous White Papers, the latest edition is not the exclusive domain of uniformed officers and ministerial staffs. After von der Leyen's announcement, a public event opened the discussion regarding the proposed contents of the document. The development team has hosted a series of ten expert "workshops" and engagements on topics linked to the document. These included Prospects of the German Armed Forces, the Economy and Security, Cybersecurity, Hybrid Warfare, Whole of Government Approach, the International Security Environment, Partnerships and Alliances, Early Recognition of Crises, the Armed Forces in Society, and Development and Security.⁵³ Think tanks and academics took part in the workshops, and wrote contributions. Also interestingly, the public had a chance to contribute their ideas through a Ministry of Defense internet site. The White Paper internet site subsequently published this content.⁵⁴

The last workshop concluded on October 15, 2015, and the working group associated with actually taking the ideas and putting them to paper set to work. It is the goal of the group to have a completed copy of the document, so the cabinet can review and approve it by the summer of 2016.⁵⁵

Germany's Future International Security Engagement

Based on statements from both German domestic and allied nation political leaders, the increasing trend of German forces to participate in international crisis situations over the past five years, German legal and policy considerations, domestic public opinion, and methodology used to create the new White Paper, one can deduce some critical White Paper outcomes.

Potential partners will continue to seek out Germany for multi-national missions due to the FRG's international standing, its economic strength, and relatively large and capable military. In fact, Germany will likely continue to increase its participation since the precedent has been set. This is not only related to strictly bilateral requests, but more likely related to Germany's legal and policy reliance on, and advocacy for, international organizations like NATO, EU, UN, and OSCE. A clear proclamation of the criticality of the organizations to German international engagement will certainly be a leading component of the White Paper, as it has been in previous editions. A statement linking the legitimacy of the organizations to Germany's contributions to their efforts might also find a place in the document.

Germany's loyalty to these organizations, in particular the EU, will likely begin to influence its decision-making. This will be necessary in order to sustain their credibility. Predictably, allies and partners may use German affinity for multilateralism to draw the FRG into security initiatives, despite its reticence. This is precisely what occurred with

French president Hollande's request to Chancellor Merkel for support to the counter-ISIS mission. Hollande could have tried to appeal for assistance in a number of different venues, but it is interesting that he looked to the EU for collective security—perhaps knowing that Germany would find it very difficult to deny participation in this forum. As one political commentator noted:

François Hollande did not invoke NATO's Article 5 after the Paris attacks. Instead, he invoked the solidarity clause of the European Union treaty, the first leader ever to do so. Ms. Merkel's challenge, then, is to show that the principle behind the treaty, behind the European Union itself, isn't an empty promise—for her sake, and for the Continent's.⁵⁶

As it clearly prefers these international venues for discussing regional and global crises, Germany will increasingly find it difficult to remain aloof or refuse to engage in a constructive manner whenever international security issues are tabled.⁵⁷ Using multilateralism as a leverage, allies and partners will expect meaningful contributions. Hollande's quip that, "if Germany can go further" emphasizes this point exactly. The growing expectation is that Germany must come forth and become a full-fledged partner.

As allies and partners ask Germany to do more, and Germany feels an increasing sense of responsibility to do more, it is likely the White Paper will look for strategic ways that will acknowledge this external and internal pressure and will simultaneously be palatable to German public opinion. This will mean an expansion of missions and responsibility beyond the content of the previous White Paper, and more in line with its recent security contributions and leadership in Afghanistan, Kosovo, the Horn of Africa, Mali, and Northern Iraq that have found acceptance in the polity and the population.

Nevertheless, while Germany may contribute to a mission, it will continue to avoid participating in offensive operations in the foreseeable future. This will not be stated directly in the new document, as such a restraining statement would not be well received in the fora that Germany so values. What might be expected is a clear preference statement for stability operations. These are operations, which Germany has demonstrated a willingness to conduct and a level of competency to accomplish. Furthermore, they are precisely the kind of operations that would most benefit German security directly, as the lack of stability on Europe's periphery is the cause for the massive flow of immigrants and refugees to Central Europe, and a massive strain on European Union internal discourse.

US joint doctrine defines stability operations as:

Various military missions, tasks, and activities conducted outside the US in coordination with other instruments of national power to maintain or reestablish a safe and secure environment, provide essential governmental services, emergency infrastructure reconstruction, and humanitarian relief.⁵⁸

Inside this broad definition, several aspects can be easily associated with the German government's international engagement to date. Although the definition highlights the military nature of stability operations, it also makes clear this characteristic is part of a larger effort integrating other elements of national power—a “whole of government” approach. The inclusion of multiple ministries in the development of the White Paper acknowledges this inclusive approach to international security, and the distillation of the overall policy for a preference for stability operations specifically is not an unreasonable conclusion to make.

Another area that will certainly find inclusion in the new policy document is cyber threats. Germany's development of a national cyber strategy in 2011 acknowledged the

growth and relevancy of the issue. The Edward Snowden leaks regarding National Security Agency (NSA) efforts against the German government and German businesses, as well as NSA cooperation with the German Federal Intelligence Agency (BND), shook the national conscious and forced a difficult discussion regarding Germany's capabilities and responsibilities.⁵⁹ More recently, Russian attacks against the German parliament have only added urgency to the FRG's efforts to improve cyber capability.⁶⁰ The fact that the White Paper staff had one of its ten working groups dedicated to the theme, along with the national-level discourse on the same, makes cyber an area that will likely receive serious consideration in the document. As international cooperation has caused domestic and international problems for Germany in this area already, the further development of a national capability, both civilian and military, will likely be a priority.

Though previous White Papers have not included budgetary justification like U.S. strategic documents use (i.e., National Security Strategy, Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review, or Quadrennial Defense Review), such an approach might prove useful and acceptable for the German government. This is due to several reasons. First, more spending will be considered, as evidenced by the previously discussed statements from the political leadership. Secondly, the newly evolving threats on Europe's periphery—specifically from Russia— have already caused a discussion of previous reform efforts, and of increasing the size of Germany's mechanized forces.⁶¹ Thirdly, also due to the Russia's behavior and NATO's subsequent efforts to increase its response readiness to aggression, the *Bundeswehr's* state of readiness and level of equipping were embarrassingly exposed in the media as being potentially hollow during

recent alliance exercises.⁶² Fourthly, in an effort to make the volunteer force more attractive, the Minister of Defense began an initiative that requires long-term expenditures on quality of life improvements for soldiers and their families.⁶³ Finally, the Minister of Defense has publicly called for increased spending (130 billion Euros), spread over fifteen years, to address modernization and equipping issues comprehensively.⁶⁴

Giving impetus to increased defense spending, the Chancellor reported to the parliamentary defense committee that she also views increasing the defense budget as critical.⁶⁵ An inclusion of financing as a key factor in Germany's security could help reinforce the intent of current political leadership for the long term.

Conclusion – Implications for U.S. Policy

As a key partner and ally since 1955, the FRG has played a critical role in diplomatic, military and economic policy for the United States. This was true in the Cold War, but is equally true as Germany has grown accustomed to full sovereignty and growing influence since reunification. Any changes to the FRG's security policy that portend greater international involvement and leadership have largely positive potential for U.S. policy. Some of the previously discussed policy changes may have some direct impacts for the United States in military stability operations, cyber operations, and financial, as well as capability, burden sharing within NATO.

The United States has been heavily involved in stability operations during the same period and in many of the same locations as the German government. U.S. policymakers and planners should account for Germany's presumed readiness to take on more of these missions, however, without the expectation that Germany would conduct offensive operations. It is not difficult to envision future scenarios in crisis

regions that will require a highly capable international coalition that is capable of conducting the wide variety of stability operations tasks necessary to bring order. Germany has shown through previous peacekeeping, peace support, and humanitarian assistance missions that it can be an integral contributor and leader in situations where competent and capable forces are required.

Germany's attention to cyber issues presents similar opportunities. Although continued negative fallout from the Snowden disclosures makes this area highly sensitive, Germany will still likely seek international cooperation bilaterally and in collective security frameworks like NATO. As the FRG is a technologically advanced state and develops its own high-end communications and computer technology, the potential for increased U.S. cyber cooperation with Germany may not only help heal old wounds, but could also provide assistance from a near-peer in the cyber arena. The contentiousness of this issue within Germany will make any new initiative in this area difficult for the near term.

As the German government has long been the target of US political leaders for inequitable defense burden sharing, the statements regarding greater financial commitment to security and defense spending should be broadly supported by US policy and defense elites. The potential inclusion in the White Paper of such a commitment in terms of minimum spending (i.e., 2 percent of the GDP), or an associated political deduction that more spending is essential will assist financial and capability burden sharing within NATO-long a goal of U.S. policy makers. The promise of Europe's largest economy committing more funding to employable defense capabilities could significantly assist in NATO deterrence efforts. It would also allow

U.S. military planners to focus U.S. forces' employment more precisely, and not to spread these capabilities so thinly across the European theater.

The future of Germany's security policy lies in a document still likely in draft form. The path to that future document is well defined, and illuminated with political intent and a history of previous action. Germany has increasingly shown that it is ready, "to lead from the center," as Ursula von der Leyen so elegantly stated. Now it must pull together the two elements she cited as essential for that leadership—"The will to act and the capability to act." The 2016 White Paper provides Germany that chance. If Germany does indeed fulfill the potential that so many domestic and international leaders believe that it has for greater international responsibility, than U.S. policymakers can find reason to anticipate the new policy document as well.

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