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**Die Rolle des Bundesministeriums der Verteidigung (BMVg) bei der
Konzipierung deutscher Sicherheitspolitik im 21. Jahrhundert**

(Text in englischer Sprache)

**Role of the Federal Ministry of Defense (BMVg) in designing
Germany's security policy in the twenty-first century¹**

Abstract

The author of this paper analyzes the multi-faceted involvement of the Federal Ministry of Defense in the development of Germany's security policy in the twenty-first century. The main thesis of the article is that the development of Germany's defense potential and its contribution to NATO and the Common Security and Defense Policy depends to a great extent on the ideological principles of the currently ruling coalitions. In the twenty-first century, the German Ministry of Defense and security policy have become hostage to pacifist political parties in the Bundestag and to German society, which has been raised for years in the spirit of 'Zivilgesellschaft' and a 'culture of restraint'. The cuts in the budgetary expenditure on Germany's armed forces have led to their reduced potential and brought Germany's credibility in the eyes of its allies in NATO and the EU into question. This paper employs the descriptive research method, the method of source analysis and decision-making analysis.

Keywords: Germany, Federal Ministry of Defense, defense policy, twenty-first century

Introduction

The Cold War in Europe and the world resulted in Western Germany's economic and military revival. By virtue of Paris Agreements, signed on October 23, 1954, the Federal Republic of Germany was granted sovereignty and permission to join the North Atlantic Pact (NATO) and the Western European Union (WEU). After these agreements were ratified in 1955, Western German armed forces, the Bundeswehr, were established (Christensen, 2002: 176).

¹ This paper was written under the NCN research grant Role of Germany in the decision-making processes of the European Union in the 21st century, UMO-2014/15/B/HS5/00723.

As Western Germany's economic potential increased in Western Europe, so did its ambitions to become one of the main players in the Western security system. At the culmination of the Cold War, there were 500,000 soldiers in the Bundeswehr. Due to international protests, the attempts to equip the Bundeswehr with tactical nuclear weapons failed. Nevertheless, in the 1960s and 1970s it rose to become the most important U.S. ally and partner in the North Atlantic Alliance. As early as 1976, the Bundeswehr was the first European and fourth global conventional armed force. NATO leaders' trust in Western Germany was evidenced by its representatives being appointed to the high echelons of the Alliance structures. In 1957, General Hans Speidel was appointed Commander-In-Chief of the Allied Ground Forces in Central Europe. Four years later, General Adolf Heusinger was named the first Inspector General of NATO forces. In the late 1980s, 24 generals and 1,200 high-ranking officers from West Germany worked in all kinds of staffs and commanding bodies of the Alliance. As a matter of prestige, Manfred Wörner, ex-minister of defense, was appointed NATO Secretary General in 1988-1994 and Klaus Naumann, Chief of Staff of the Bundeswehr, as Chairman of the NATO Military Committee in December 1994, a post he held until he retired in 1999 (Bradley, Würzenthal, Model, 2005).

The growing power of the Bundeswehr was accompanied by the increasing public contestation (inspired by the tragic warfare experience resulting from German militarism) of the necessity to maintain a high potential of West German military forces. The U.S. intervention in Vietnam, student strikes in 1968, anti-war 'Easter march' protests regularly staged in West Germany in the 1970s and resulting in the emergence of the Green Party (1980) all led to the adoption of the concept of a 'civil society' in Germany. West Germans started to describe the status of their state as 'civil power' (*Zivilmacht*). The author of this concept, a political scientist from the University of Trier, Hanns W. Maull understood it in terms of focusing on creating Germany's economic prosperity, strict observation of human rights and civil freedoms, abstaining from using military measures in international security policy, predictable and consistent behavior, preferring multilateral solutions and political trust, and the transfer of sovereignty in the fields of security and defense to communitarian and international institutions (Maull, 2007: 73-84).

When the Berlin Wall collapsed in 1989, the two German states were to be reunited by virtue of an agreement signed by Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, and remain in NATO. By 1994, Soviet troops were to be moved from East Germany but neither the troops of the North Atlantic Alliance nor nuclear weapons were permitted to be deployed in the territory of former East Germany. The new status of the

reunited Germany was established in the Moscow Treaty signed on September 12, 1990 by the United States, the Soviet Union, France and the United Kingdom on the one side and West Germany and East Germany on the other. By virtue of this treaty, Germany formally became a sovereign state. In the preamble, the four states declared that upon the reunification “the rights and responsibilities of the Four Powers relating to Berlin and to Germany as a whole” no longer apply and that the “united Germany shall have accordingly full sovereignty over its internal and external affairs.” By virtue of the Moscow Treaty, the Federal Republic of Germany was given the right to exercise its own sovereign foreign policy without any restrictions. One of the most important articles of the treaty, Article 6, gave Germany the right to belong to any alliances it chooses to join (Kaiser, 1991: 264-266).

After the reunification, by virtue of multilateral agreements, German forces were reduced to 340,000 soldiers, but they remained the mainstay of NATO on the continent nevertheless. At that time, they were still well-armed and provided with the cutting edge equipment (Solak, 1999).

After West Germany joined NATO and the Western European Union, on June 7, 1955, the Federal Ministry ‘for’ Defense was established; it acquired its present name – the Federal Ministry of Defense (*Bundesministerium der Verteidigung*) as of December 31, 1961. Its formal headquarters is still located in the Hardthöhe building complex in Bonn, and in Bendlerblock, Berlin. Currently, the latter organizational unit of the ministry is the most important (Mann, 1971).

As part of the federal government, BMVg is a specialized ministry of national defense supervising the entire range of issues concerning the operation of the Bundeswehr. It is the highest body of military command in the state and manages the whole of the administration in the Bundeswehr and individual armed forces.

The ministry’s directorship encompasses the federal minister, two parliamentary state secretaries, two acting state secretaries and the Chief of Defense, who is the highest-ranking soldier in the armed forces. The minister directly supervises the Press and Information Office, the Organization and Internal Audit Staff, Executive Staff and Political Directorate-General. The Executive Staff organizes the day-to-day work of the minister and coordinates the ministry’s cooperation with government and parliament (*Abteilungen*, 2018).

Approximately 2,000 staff members and co-workers work at the ministry. Similar to other ministries, it is structured into directorates-general and branches. A total of ten directorates-general carry out tasks in areas such as policy, equipment, planning, legal affairs

and personnel. One of the most important directorates-general, the Political Directorate-General, designs and coordinates the policy of security, defense and arms control supervised by the Federal Ministry of Defense, and develops strategic guidelines for its implementation. The budget of the ministry amounted to €37 billion in 2017.

The office of Germany's Minister of Defense from 1998-2002 was held by Rudolf Scharping, a former SDP leader and an unsuccessful candidate for Chancellor in 1994. In the second SDP-Green coalition, he was replaced by Pete Struck (SPD) who suffered ill health. The agreement reached by the great CDU/CSU-SPD coalition allowed Chancellor Angela Merkel to appoint Franz Josef Jung (2005-2009), a former member of the federal government in Hesse, as Minister of Defense. He was followed for a short time by Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg (2009-2011), who was implicated in plagiarism of his PhD dissertation and was forced to resign in spite of his unquestionable organizational skills. Out of necessity, his office was taken by the former Head of the Chancellery and Minister for Special Affairs Thomas de Maizière (2011-2013), who concluded the reform of the Bundeswehr started by Guttenberg. The latest head of the ministry was appointed in 2013 and re-appointed in 2018. She is a medially controversial friend to Chancellor Merkel, a physician by profession and a mother of a large family, Ursula von der Leyen.

The Ministry of Defense is one of the most important bodies in Germany that has influence on identifying and designing the tasks for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defense Policy. However, the role of the BMVg has evolved over the years reflecting the ideals and political principles of West Germany and then those of the Germany unified in 1990.

In the 1990s, after the reunification of Germany, a 'culture of restraint' (*Zurückhaltungskultur*) dominated, due to the activities of pacifist parties in the Bundestag, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the Green and part of the leftist wing of the SPD. In spite of EU Treaties from Maastricht and Amsterdam, which promoted the tenets and implementation of Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Ministry of Defense followed the guidelines of the government hindering rather than actively strengthening the EU's military potential. It was not until the ruling of the Constitutional Tribunal of July 12, 1994, that the long dispute on the constitutional and legal principles regulating the use of German armed forces abroad was ultimately resolved. The Federal Republic of Germany was formally 'permitted' to implement its obligation, stated in the preamble to German Constitution, towards its allies in NATO and the European Union and use its armed forces having previously obtained consent from the Bundestag (*Urteil*, 1994: 5).

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, after the conflict in Kosovo (1998-1999), Germany's allies expected a change in its approach to the implementation of the second pillar of the Maastricht Treaty which necessitated a reform in the functioning of the Ministry of Defense due to the following:

- the European Council accepting the concept of the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) at the summits in Cologne (June 1999);
- the European Council summit in Helsinki (December 1999) initiating the process of providing an institutional framework to the ESDP and its military component; and the formulation of the European Headline Goal (EHG). In general, the EU was obliged to establish European rapid response forces by the end of 2003;
- terrorist attacks in the United States (2001);
- allied operation in Afghanistan (October 2001);
- establishment of the European Union Military Staff and European Union Military Committee operating within the ESDP (2001);
- establishment of the EU Political and Security Committee (2003);
- invasion in Iraq (April 2003) without the participation of Germany;
- the European Council accepting the European Security Strategy (2003) (Woronowicz, 2003; Pin Czang, 2007).

Germany demonstrated enormous solidarity after the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. When President George W. Bush requested military support from Berlin for the planned military operation in Iraq, on November 6, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and the Ministry of Defense made 3,900 troops available to the allied forces, despite protests from the majority of the German public (57%). The Americans selectively applied the forces participating in the counterterrorism operation, which is why German military potential was used only to a limited extent as was also the case with other forces, except the British. Only a 100-strong elite special unit (*Kommando Spezialkräfte*) took part in the operations (Koszel, 2017: 22).

On account of the unilateral approach of U.S. policy during the presidency of George W. Bush and the disbelief in American claims about Saddam Hussein, Iraqi dictator, being in possession of an arsenal of chemical weapons, Germany opposed an armed intervention in Iraq. This decision was beneficial for the SPD-Green coalition. Although it triggered tensions between Berlin and Washington, it was nevertheless the crucial element of the victorious campaign of the ruling coalition in elections to the Bundestag in the fall of 2002.

The resulting turmoil and the need to restore proper transatlantic relations prompted the new government of the 'great CDU/CSU-SPD coalition', established in 2005 and headed by Angela Merkel, to review Germany's security policy on the international arena. The government instructed the Federal Ministry of Defense to draw up a document, which was subsequently presented in October 2006 as *The White Paper on Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*. It emphasized the fact that the security and political stability of the Federal Republic of Germany is founded on the European Union and North Atlantic Alliance for both of whom Germany is a 'reliable partner'. The document identified the challenges and threats to the broadly understood security of Germany, including globalization, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and arms build-up, regional conflicts, illicit trafficking in weapons, fragile states, ensuring safe routes to transport resources and communication, energy security, migration, epidemics and pandemics. German interests were clearly stated, such as protecting and ensuring security, rule of law, freedom, democracy and prosperity to German citizens, protecting sovereignty and the territorial integrity of Germany, preventing or countering crises related to regional conflicts that are significant in view of Germany's security, preventing global threats, supporting human rights worldwide, supporting international organizations and global trade. The document also listed the tasks for the Bundeswehr, such as preventing and countering international conflicts, combating terrorism, supporting allies, protecting Germany and its citizens, participating in rescue and humanitarian operations and internal aiding operations. All this was to be performed within the framework of the EU and its ESDP which had been strengthened after the adoption of the European Defense Strategy and the establishment of the European Security Agency (*Weißbuch*, 2006).

Germany's favorable attitude to the institutional expansion of the CFSP and ESDP did not mean its abandoning the traditional 'culture of restraint' or increased Germany's military involvement abroad, in the areas of conflict. One of the final acts of the SPD-Green coalition was the adoption by the Bundestag on March 18, 2005 of the Act on parliamentary participation in decisions to deploy armed troops abroad, which made the deployment of German troops abroad yet more dependent on the decision by parliament. From then on, the Bundeswehr was somewhat scornfully dubbed a 'parliamentary army' (*Gesetz über die parlamentarische Beteiligung*, 2005).

In 2009, the Ministry of Defense and, first and foremost, the foreign missions of the Bundeswehr, once again became the subject of a nationwide debate on the rationale of involving Germany's armed forces abroad. The debate was triggered by German troops,

responsible for the reconstruction of infrastructure in Afghanistan, bombing Taliban fuel tanks and killing several members of the Taliban and around 100 civilians in the process. The BMVg became the target for the media and was condemned by the public. Minister of Labor and Minister of Defense in the former Merkel administration, Franz Josef Jung was forced to resign. A parliamentary investigation committee was established, the work of which resulted in the deposing of General Wolfgang Schneiderhan, Chief of Staff of the Bundeswehr, and the State Secretary in the BMVg, Peter Wichert. This was followed by the resignation of President Horst Köhler on May 31, 2009, after his unfortunate statement that it was necessary for Germany to defend Hindukush in order to protect Germany's economic interests. The media and commentators were in unison saying that the Bundeswehr defending Germany's economic interests abroad was in breach of the Constitution of Germany (*Udział Bundeswehry*, 2009).

The discussion on how to define the role of the Bundeswehr in the world and in implementing Germany's foreign policy intensified after the 2009 parliamentary elections, which resulted in the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition headed by Chancellor Merkel coming back to power. She was aware that the situation in the armed forces had deteriorated and the atmosphere in the Ministry of Defense was difficult. From 1998, the pacifist Green Party alongside the post-communist PDS (after 2007 *Die Linke*) had successfully blocked the necessary reforms and outlays for arms build-up. In 2003, a British taxpayer spent an average of \$722 for defense, a French taxpayer – \$765, whereas a German, not more than \$426. Budgetary expenditure for Merkel's Bundeswehr was frozen at around 1.5% of GDP, which was equivalent to slightly over €24 billion annually. The United Kingdom and France spent €16 billion more each. During the first government of Angela Merkel the expenditure for the military increased only marginally from €24.1 billion in 2005 to €26.2 billion in 2007 (Gotkowska, 2011).

The coalition agreement of October 24, 2009 obliged the Minister of Defense to appoint a commission in charge of developing by the end of 2009 the main tenets of a new organizational structure proposed for the Bundeswehr. In line with these instructions, from June 2010, the BMVg started to work on a range of variants of the reform in the Bundeswehr when the government presented budget cuts planned for the following four years and obliged the ministry to generate savings of €8.3 billion. Such economic circumstances forced the ministry to take serious steps aiming to restructure the army while restoring its attractiveness both as a formation and a workplace (Przybyll, 2010: 5).

To avoid any suspicion of bias the Commission for the Reform of the Bundeswehr Structure was formed outside of the Ministry of Defense. It was supervised by the head of the Federal Labor Agency, Frank-Jürgen Weise and included only one professional soldier, the highest-ranking German officer in NATO, General Karl-Heinz Lather.

The Commission for the Reform of the Bundeswehr Structure authored a 114-page long report entitled *Task-oriented Thinking. Concentration, Flexibility, Efficiency (Vom Einsatz her denken. Konzentration, Flexibilität, Effizienz)* which described the operations of the Ministry of Defense as ‘inefficient’ and forecasted that the Bundeswehr would be ‘thoroughly renewed’, in particular in terms of arms, equipment and the size of the army (*Bericht der Strukturkommission, 2010; Strukturkommission, 2010*).

As a result of numerous arrangements, on July 11, 2011, a reform of the Bundeswehr was launched. Conscription army was replaced by a professional army. By 2010, Bundeswehr forces had shrunk to 250,000 soldiers, a number which was reduced to 185,000 after the reform and faced further cuts down to 175,000. The cuts concerned the personnel of the armed forces base, that is, their logistics and supplies, air force and naval personnel, as well as the medical corps. Staffs were considerably reduced. The New Minister of Defense, Thomas de Maizière sought to reduce the number of Bundeswehr garrisons and bases by 64, and reaching the target number of 264 by 2017 (*Radykalna reforma Bundeswehry, 2013; Gatzold, 2018: 167-169*).

In connection with the reorganization of the Bundeswehr and the abandonment of universal military service, the Minister of Defense Thomas de Maizière issued new guidelines on May 27, 2011 (*Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien Nationale Interessen wahren – Internationale Verantwortung übernehmen – Sicherheit gemeinsam gestalten*) which defined new threats and set the directions for transatlantic cooperation and cooperation within the European Union. It was indicated in the document that:

- security is not defined solely in terms of geography. The situation in the peripheries of Europe and in the territories outside of the European zone of security and stability may bear direct influence on Germany’s security;
- growing global networks are conducive to the rapid dissemination and use of high technology, in particular IT. This is associated with great opportunities and risks alike;
- the proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction and improvement of the means to carry them pose an increasing danger to Germany;
- free trade routes and secure supplies of raw materials are essential for the future of Germany and Europe.

It was reiterated in the guidelines that the principles that Germany had pursued in its defense policy in the past would not change after universal military service was abandoned. In its international involvement, Germany would continue to emphasize multilateral operations conducted within the framework of various missions of the UN, NATO and the EU. In the part dedicated to cooperation within the EU it was stressed that the Union:

- has to develop security policy capable of efficient operation and assume responsibility for facing the challenges to joint security inside and outside of Europe;
- should develop an extensive portfolio of civilian and military measures aiming to prevent conflicts, manage crises and ensure recovery after conflicts subside, and use the capacity of NATO as needed. The conceptual framework of the Common Security Policy and Permanent Structured Cooperation are defined in the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty. The strengthened NATO-EU cooperation and reliance on the joint resources and structures remain essential for joint security and will result in increased political significance of the EU;
- EU civilian and military capacity should be consistently developed as well as industrial and technological cooperation within the European Union. Extensive technical foundations should make it possible for the competitive European defense industry to develop (*Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien*, 2011:18).

Germany declared its support for the development of European armed forces under the CSDP, but its weak spot was excessive trust in the ‘soft’ means of influencing foreign and security policy which is the outcome of social sentiment in Germany and the presence of pacifist parties in the parliament. A ‘culture of restraint’ and decreasing the military potential of the Bundeswehr brought Germany to a dead end. It is true that 2,528 soldiers (as on January 2015) took part in foreign missions of the Bundeswehr across the world, followed by 3,262 soldiers in 2019 (as on January 7, 2019), but the results of public polls were unanimous. Surveys commissioned by the *Die Zeit* weekly in December 2014 showed that 51% of Germans rejected any form of Germany’s involvement in armed conflicts abroad, and no more than 31% believed that its participation in international armed campaigns was justified. 82% of respondents were of the opinion that Germany’s armed forces should limit the number of their military missions, and 62% believed that their country should be extremely cautious in foreign policy (*Sollte Deutschland*, 2014). In 2018, the *Die Welt* daily commissioned a survey in which a tricky question was asked of whether the Bundeswehr should take part in an armed mission in Syria if the forces of President Bashar al Asad had carried out a chemical attack on civilians. Even then, over 73% of respondents were against

and only 20% were in favor of such a decision. This operation was ruled out also by the board of the SPD, including the Secretary General of the party, Andrea Nahles (*Fast drei Viertel der Deutschen*, 2018; Glatz /Hansen /Kaim /Vorrath, 2018).

It is beyond doubt that public opinion in Germany is reinforced in its beliefs by the fact that they have proved to be right about the rash intervention in Iraq and irresponsible attempts to topple the Gaddafi regime in Libya. On the other hand, the consistent diplomacy and conciliatory attitude of Chancellor Merkel contributed to achieving the Minsk agreement and ceasefire in eastern Ukraine

However, Germany found itself under strong pressure from its NATO allies and EU partners who expected them to fulfill their commitments both in civilian and military terms of security policy and in line with Germany's role in Europe and globally. The information released in 2015 that due to a disastrous condition of its armed forces, Germany was unable to provide effective help on the NATO eastern flank in case of a threat from Russia stirred public opinion, especially in Poland; while in Germany triggered a wave of criticism against the Ministry of Defense. Pressured by the events in Ukraine, the threat from Islamic state and the wave of refugees, Germany withdrew its reservations about the rotating deployment of NATO forces and bases in Poland and Baltic states. The unpredictable behavior of Russia made the government of Chancellor Merkel realize that it was necessary to increase spending on defense and supply the army with more modern equipment, especially tanks and aircraft. In line with the postulates brought forward at the Newport NATO summit (September, 4-5, 2014), Germany obliged itself to increase its military spending from 1.2% of GDP to the 2% of GDP as requested by NATO. 53% of German citizens were for, but 43% were against it (*Sollte Deutschland*, 2014).

The terrorist attacks in Paris and Saint Denis in November 2015 had little impact on German sentiments. On December 4, 2015, the Ministry of Defense managed to persuade the Bundestag to make a decision on Germany's contribution to the fight against Islamic state in support of France, Iraq and the international coalition. This contribution was nevertheless limited to providing tanker aircraft, performing reconnaissance and intelligence tasks on the sea and in the air (with Tornado aircraft), supporting the protection of maritime operations and supporting operational staff. A total of 1,200 soldiers and personnel were to be involved. In a roll-call vote, 445 deputies from the Bundestag were in favor of involving the German military, 146 were against and seven abstained (*Bundestag billigt Einsatz*, 2015).

Germany's perplexity with regard to its military involvement abroad could also be seen during the Warsaw NATO summit on July 8-9, 2016. The German Ministry of Defense

developed its 2D (Deterrence and Dialogue) goals. On the one hand, Germany declared allegiance to its allies and obligations and the intention to strengthen the southern and south-eastern flank of NATO due to a threat from Russia. On the other one (Dialogue), the need to converse with Russia was firmly stressed and to maintain communication channels with Russia on account of its increasing role in the Syrian conflict. In Warsaw, Germany supported all the previously agreed military solutions. It consented to take command of a multinational battalion (composed of French, Dutch and Belgian soldiers) deployed in Lithuania, which was supposed to emphasize Germany's credibility as an ally. It made no reservations about the deployment of a U.S. heavy armored brigade (4,200-4,500 soldiers) with M1A2 Abrams tanks and M2 Bradley armored transporters in the countries of the eastern flank of NATO, or strengthening the U.S. air contingent in Germany. Germany promised to support operations against Islamic state, strengthen the Frontex agency activities in the Mediterranean Sea and maintain the NATO training mission in Afghanistan. Germany also agreed to aid Kiev in modernizing Ukrainian armed forces and continue the 'open door' policy towards Ukraine and Georgia, although no declarations were made as to whether these two states would be encompassed by the Membership Action Plan (*Nato-Gipfel in Warschau*, 2016; Szubart, 2016).

Germany's doubts, reservations, the perception of its own and allies' security and plans for the future were to be resolved and comprehensively presented by a new *White Paper*, officially presented on July 13, 2016, after eighteen months of work. The *White Paper* was primarily authored by the Ministry of Defense alongside the Office for Foreign Affairs and, eventually, the Chancellery. Consultations between ministries were conducted over the period of its drafting, as well as expert and social consultations. Over 1,800 participants in a series of workshops organized internally and abroad discussed a variety of aspects of the German security policy; members of the public could join in, for instance, through an online platform. However, the *White Paper* was not submitted for discussion by the Bundestag which sparked criticism from the parliamentary opposition: the Green and the Left. Similar to the previous *White Paper* of 2006, it comprised two parts: one addressed the matters of security policy while the other discussed the consequences of this policy for the Bundeswehr (*Weissbuch 2016*).

The first part was divided into two subchapters: *Security Policy (Zur Sicherheitspolitik)* and *Germany's Strategic Priorities (Deutschlands Strategische Prioritäten)* which listed the most serious threats to the internal and international security of Germany and its allies, and the role of the main international organizations, such as NATO,

the EU, OSCE and the UN. In terms of security policy, Germany's interests involved the protection of its citizens and the state's sovereignty and territorial integrity; the protection of territorial integrity, sovereignty and citizens of Germany's allies; maintaining the rules-based international order on the basis of international law; ensuring prosperity for citizens through a strong German economy as well as free and unimpeded world trade; promoting the responsible use of limited goods and scarce resources throughout the world; deepening European integration; and consolidating the transatlantic partnership. When discussing threats, the *White Paper* indicated Russia in the first place, which was breaching the principle of sovereignty and respect for borders; this was directly related to the annexation of Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine. Moscow was stigmatized as an international player that is trying to alter the present architecture of security by using force or threatening to use it. The paper ensured that the long-term goal of NATO was a strategic partnership with Russia. However, the current behavior of Russia requires a dual approach based on "credible deterrence and defence capability as well as a willingness to engage in dialogue." Therefore, the durability of the Euro-Atlantic unity and allies' obligations stipulated in Arts. 4 and 5 of the Washington Treaty were stressed. The paper emphasized the threat of hybrid conflicts and declared that while Germany promotes non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, they should remain one of the most important elements of the military doctrine of nuclear powers. The North Atlantic Alliance, including Germany, must be able to use nuclear weapons as part of an extensive range of deterrence measures against potential aggressors. It was therefore resolved to refer to NATO nuclear policy (*Nuclear Sharing*) which enables some member states to tap into the U.S. tactical nuclear arsenal. Other threats were not neglected, such as breaching cybersecurity, illegal migration, proliferation of WMD, illegal trafficking in conventional weapons, energy security, fragile states and threats to health and life (epidemics and pandemics).

The second part discussed the future of the Bundeswehr and presented development plans for the German armed forces for the following decade. First and foremost, the efficiency of the operations of the Bundeswehr was to increase through a gradual rise in expenditure on arms build-up and maintaining the army to eventually reach the level of 2% of GDP, as agreed in Newport. The Bundeswehr intended to take a more active part in UN peace missions and assume command of such missions. Germany reminded others that the first step was the mission in Mali, where 240 Bundeswehr soldiers trained Malian military. Germany declared itself to be ready to intensify efforts to reform the UN Security Council, including becoming a permanent member of this crucial UN body; a goal Germany had been pursuing

with varied intensity from the reunification. Convinced of significant drawbacks of the Lisbon Treaty in the military dimension, Germany committed itself to strengthen the ESDP in this respect; the core of this strengthening would be the German-French initiative to establish a Joint European Union for Security and Defense. The *White Paper* also provided for the establishment of the European Headquarters, European field hospital, and offered the possibility to serve in the German army to volunteers from other EU states, which sparked a media sensation. French-German cooperation was to be extended to encompass the cooperation with Poland under the Weimar Triangle, and other states that have traditionally cooperated with Germany, such as the Netherlands. The German army was to be provided with modern equipment which was why great importance was attached to supporting research conducted within European arms consortia, such as Airbus Group and MEADS, among others, and in the European Defense Agency (*Weissbuch 2016*; Cziomer, 2017: 37-52; Mischczak, 2017: 11-18).

This most recent approach of Germany to the ESDP corresponded well with the initiative of the European Commission which launched the European Defense Fund on June 7, 2017. The fund had been proposed by the European Commission in September 2016 and supported by the European Council in December 2016. Its task is to co-finance the development of technology and military capacity of the European Union, coordinate, supplement and increase national investment in defense, prototype development and purchase of military equipment and technology (*Der Europäische Verteidigungsfonds*, 2016; Terlikowski, 2017).

Two weeks later, at the EU summit on June 22, 2017, it was decided that a group of volunteering countries could build the core of the EU defense. The Council made a decision allowing the mechanism of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) to be launched, as provided in the Lisbon Treaty, and aiming to enhance defense integration of a group of EU states. On November 13, 2017, ministers from 23 member states jointly signed a notification on Permanent Structured Cooperation, and on December 11, 2017, the Foreign Affairs Council made a formal decision to this effect. Without doubt, this event marked a watershed as previously the EU had lacked the political will to implement such a mechanism. This mainly resulted from the financial crisis in the euro zone which forced governments to make considerable cutbacks in their defense budgets and additionally increased social resistance to closer defense cooperation in the EU. In response to Brexit, deepening divisions inside the Union and increasing transatlantic tensions, Germany, France, Italy and Spain began to promote the idea to launch PESCO in which they were aided by EU institutions. The

signatory states have to be prepared to increase their budgets on arms purchases, harmonize defense planning and enhance practical military cooperation, such as building joint military units, launching multinational arms programs, strengthening the inter-operationality of existing forces, and more cooperation in logistics, training and so on. Programs launched within PESCO will have privileged access to the resources in the European Defense Fund. Following Germany's postulate, in order not to make an impression of further dividing the EU, the Council decided that PESCO should be 'inclusive and ambitious' and involve many states in cooperation while generating measurable outcomes (*Gemeinsam stärker durch „PESCO“*, 2017; *Państwa Unii Europejskiej*, 2017).

A serious tension occurred in the relations between the Ministry of Defense and Hans-Peter Bartels (SPD), Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces, in February 2018. He presented a report implying that the Ministry was grossly negligent in the field of defense. Bartels indicated that 21,000 officer and NCO posts remained vacant accounting for over 10% of the whole Bundeswehr staff. He called the command of the armed forces and the government to accelerate the reforms aiming to resolve permanent staff and equipment shortages, which held back Bundeswehr training and operations while Germany, along the remaining NATO states, made greater commitment to improve defense in the face of threat from Russia. Bartels indicated that the armed forces were 'overburdened' in many respects. There were not enough operating helicopters, aircraft, ships or tanks, while those that were fully operational were overburdened because they were heavily used in order to make up for shortages. In general, the combat readiness of some weapon systems "dramatically deteriorated" due to the lack of spare parts and intensified use during maneuvers which were organized more often. Supposedly, none of the Bundeswehr six submarines was capable of carrying out combat operations. There were frequent cases of none of the new A400M transportation aircraft being available for the military which resulted in delayed movement of troops, among other things. Numerous pilots of a variety of aircraft, including Eurofighter and Tornado fighters and all the most important types of helicopters, failed to complete training due to an insufficient number of vehicles necessary to fly for the required number of hours. Instead of the declared fifteen frigates and corvettes, the German navy had only nine vessels which needed to be sent for maintenance more often due to their ageing. According to the ministry itself, the wear indicator for tanks and other types of weapons nearly doubled in the previous year due to frequent maneuvers, growing maintenance requirements and the demand for spare parts which were in short supply due to the lack of purchases (Bartels, 2018; *Wehrbeauftragter*, 2018; *Hans-Peter Bartels*, 2018).

The report triggered a poignant retort from the Bundeswehr Chief of Staff, General Volker Wieder, who had formerly denied media reports that the Bundeswehr did not have the resources to participate in the NATO 'eastern picket' (*Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, VJTF*). He admitted that there were some drawbacks in the readiness of the armed forces, especially regarding Leopard 2 tanks; but he also argued that the army had a plan to gradually increase its annual budget for armed forces. All in all, in the opinion of the BMVg, the equipment of the Bundeswehr was sufficient enough to perform its tasks both internally and abroad (in the present 15 missions). He was backed by Minister Ursula von der Leyen, who pointed to positive 'trends' especially regarding the government increasing military spending. She also promised to eliminate the deficiencies and negligence by 2030, as stated in the agenda of Wieder (Jungholt, 2018).

In general, it can be said that the Federal Ministry of Defense and Germany's security policy in the twenty-first century have become hostage to the pacifist political parties in the Bundestag and German society which has long cultivated the spirit of *Zivilgesellschaft* and a 'culture of restraint'. The group of parliamentary parties contesting the development of the Bundeswehr and its involvement in foreign missions was joined in 2017 by the right-wing Alternative for Germany. Pursuing the principle of *sacro egoismo* and driven solely by its own interests it was strongly against Germany's involvement in the international missions in Mali, Afghanistan and Iraq (*AfD-Fraktion lehnt Bundeswehreinsätze*, 2018). It is difficult to predict how this strengthening of the 'anti-militaristic' front in the Bundestag will impact Germany's commitment to enhanced European security (PESCO, European Defense Fund). Before meeting the directorship of the Ministry of Defense and Bundeswehr generals and admirals in Berlin on May 14, 2018, in her televised address to soldiers, Chancellor Merkel promised to continue the gradual (*Schritt für Schritt*) implementation and development of this form of cooperation. At the same time, however, she also implied that building a European army in the immediate future is out of the question and the current programs should be considered as sufficient and it would be enough to continue supporting them. In spite of the difficult relations with the United States ruled by Donald Trump, the North Atlantic Alliance would remain the main point of reference for Germany's activity in the field of security (*Merkel betont Bedeutung von Bundeswehr*, 2018).

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