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EUROPE’S SECURITY AND DEFENCE: SHAPING GERMAN POLICY IN THE MODERN ERA

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Abstract

This thesis investigates how European security and defence shapes German security and defence policy thinking today; and has policy on a European level and the concept of responsibility within Germany led to the development of military capabilities within the German armed forces. This paper loosely uses discourse analysis to identify motivations and ideas that have shaped German security policy. The paper begins with establishing the theoretical background of European security and defence thinking and illustrates how this is explained in constructivist and realist schools of thought. The next two sections outline the development of German policy from the Cold War till the Crimean conflict. It highlights Germany's involvement in EU policy, conflict resolution, and the motivations within German policy thinking. The final sections directly cover the Ukrainian crisis and the rhetoric within political circles in Germany and the policy of the EU formed by the European Global Strategy in 2016. The importance of Germany in European security and defence cannot be overstated given the economic clout and the geopolitical situation in and around Europe today.

Keywords: Germany, Bundeswehr, CSDP, discourse, security, defence, NATO, EU, foreign policy, Ukraine

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To you reading this paper: thank you for taking the time. I hope you find it helpful and maybe, just maybe it will serve as a good read.

List of Abbreviations and translations

AA: Auswärtiges Amt – The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Germany

AIV: Advisory Council on International Affairs

BMVg: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung – Ministry of Defence in Germany

Bundeswehr: the German armed forces

CFSP: Common Foreign and Security Policy – the foreign policy of the EU

DPG: Defence Policy Guidelines – a document published by the BMVg which guides policy

GDP: Gross Domestic Product – market value of a nation’s final goods and services

ERRF: European Rapid Response Force – a military endeavour planned in the late 90s

ESDP: European Security and Defence Policy – is now known as Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

EU: European Union

EUGS: Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy – simplified to EUGS

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

MSC: Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz – Munich Security Conference

UN: United Nations

U.S: United States of America

WB: *Weißbuch* – literally white book, more commonly known as white papers

1. Introduction

With the fall of fascism at the end of the Second World War, Europe entered a new period of ideological conflict. Over the course of the next 45 years, Germany grew into an economic powerhouse at the heart of Europe. With the expansion of the European Economic Community in 1973 laid the foundations for the EU, an institution heralded as a ‘civilian power’ (Rogers 2009; Schlag 2016; Dembinski and Peters 2018).

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s and the dawn of a new millennium saw the EU become a global power, given that a quarter of the world population lives within its borders and the range of instruments that it can make use of (European Security Strategy cited in Koutrakos 2013). This shift from civilian to global power was facilitated by the harsh lessons from the catastrophic response by the EU to the conflict in former Yugoslavia (Hyde-Price 2006; Mérand 2010).

‘Never again’ became a mantra after the conflict as “[the] EU lacked the cohesion, determination and instruments to bring the crisis under control” (Cameron 2006 cited in Rogers 2009). The EU’s security and defence framework known as the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), formerly European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) is reaching almost two decades of service[1].

The 1991 Maastricht Treaty gave the EU “legal authority to draw upon an institutional framework known as the Western European Union (WEU) to facilitate its ambitions as an international security actor” (Smith 2017, p.4) and the Franco-British summit in 1998 in Saint-Malo, served as the foundations from which CSDP would grow in 1999.

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[1] This Thesis will use the abbreviation CSDP when referring to these policies for the sake of simplicity. ESDP began in 1999 and continued to 2009 where it was renamed to CSDP with the ratification of the Lisbon treaty.

Föhrenbach (2002) argues that the weakness of the Europeans today is partially the fault of the United States, as “the Europeans were not required to provide for their security on their own” (2002, p.13). While at the same time Föhrenbach argues that the ‘fear’ of Germany in the late Cold War was partially reduced by the relationship between the U.S and the fledgling republic as it helped foster trust between the Germans and their European neighbours.

This thesis will evaluate the influence of European security and defence policy on German rhetoric and policy. The aim is to attempt to explain whether European policy has translated into improved capabilities and greater engagement of Germany on a national level. The specific research question for this paper will therefore be: To what extent has the political discourse on security and defence in Europe influenced the policy of Germany? How has this resulted in implementation of defence and security policies on a national level to bolster European defence practices and capabilities?

Chapter two will introduce literature on European security and defence and illustrate the current explanations for greater cooperation within Europe. This academic debate will be analysed to establish a better understanding of the arguments and the theories that explain the European project and the involvement of Germany.

Chapters three and four will outline the defence and security policy thinking throughout the Cold War into the early 21st century. These chapters will show that Germany has had and currently has a focus on multilateral cooperation to reduce financial and political burdens domestically, while appearing as a reliable partner to allies. This section will finish with a description of events that led to the implementation of the European Security and Defence Policy and how Germany involved itself in this process.

Chapter five will function as a case study to illustrate the German engagement with the EU in terms of security, defence, and crisis management. The chapter focuses on the crisis in Crimea and illustrates that the inherent bilateral and multilateral logic of German politics will lead to ad hoc cooperation with allies as political leaders seek to reduce domestic fallout.

The final chapter of the main body, chapter six, will offer an analysis of German public debate and speeches of high-level politicians. Using a condensed discourse analysis methodology, it will illustrate the disjointed nature of domestic thinking in Germany and the negative impact this has on consolidating military and defence policy.

2. Literature Review

"To claim that [CSDP] is simply a product of the Cold War […] misses important pieces in the narrative, which is that soldiers had a capability problem whereas diplomats had a capabilities-expectations problem" (Mérand 2010, p.373).

This section will serve as an overview of the competing schools of thought that seek to explain the emergence of the EU and the CSDP. Academics will generally fall within two camps when attempting to explain CSDP: the realists and the constructivists, or at least subgroupings of these overarching schools of thought (Mérand 2010).

Initially an overview of the core beliefs from constructivist and realist thinking will be outlined, and then critiqued. The International Relations (IR) theoretical debates surrounding the topic all struggle to explain how the EU has emerged into the multinational actor that it has become and further are unable to sufficiently explain the development of security and defence politics within the Union. This, in turn, creates difficulties when attempting to analyse individual aspects and furthermore makes generalisation of findings to the greater EU area problematic.

2.1 Realist Narratives

Realist thinking argues that power and the anarchic international system are what shapes world politics (Hyde-Price 2006). Structural realism, apparently the *en vogue* approach to this academic question, points towards balancing as the main cause of the emergence of a European security institution (Hyde-Price 2006; Posen 2006). Naturally the nation state being balanced against would be the United States (Deighton 2002), the unipolar power in international relations at the time. However, scholars are divided on what type of balancing the Europeans are using and the effectiveness of each type.

Realists would argue that either soft- or hard-balancing is the *modus operandi* of the EU (Hyde-Price 2006).Most thinkers point towards soft-balancing as the main option for Europeans as military capabilities are years behind that of the United States to even be considered a viable threat (Mérand 2010; Zapolskis 2010). Posen points out that "the EU is balancing U.S power, regardless of the relatively low European perception of an actual direct and imminent threat emanating from the United States" (2006, p. 151). His argument extends from Schweller's definition of balancing which would mean that the EU and European states in general are resorting to balancing against the US for fear of losing territorial claims and influence domestically and abroad (Posen 2006).

Posen points towards Pape's argument that among great powers there is an option to 'pass the buck'. This occurs when a great power passes on its own responsibilities to another great power to lessen the strain on its own state, and that in today's international arena there is no such state that could effectively catch the passed buck (Pape in Posen 2006). As a result, small and medium states bandwagon or group together to balance against the possibility of being left with great power responsibilities (Hyde-Price 2006; Schweller in Posen 2006). However, the balancing argument hinges on the idea that European states have a fear of U.S agendas overtaking those of European ones, or that the U.S would threaten the political strength of the EU.

With this realist interpretation in mind, it would be conceivable that European states would expend much greater resources to balance against the U.S. However, statistically speaking, the Europeans have individually barely invested 2% of their GDP to defence and security measures per annum. Most European states, in 2002, spent an average of 1.85% of GDP whereas the United States spent 3.4% of its GDP on military and defence budgeting (Posen 2006).

A result of the lowered military and defence expenditures has been the reduction of financing for research and development which has inadvertently affected interoperability of European militaries amongst themselves and with other allies (Zapolskis 2010). Were it true that

European states feared the U.S the rhetoric in Europe would have a much harsher tone towards Washington, and the defence budgets would have reflected such a fear (Posen 2006). Structural realists expect that those states with the most resources will likely take the lead in formulating and implementing security and defence policy on an EU level; states such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom (Posen 2006).

2.2 Constructivist Narratives

The constructivist narratives of CSDP place a great deal of value in the concepts of ideas, identity and social factors as explanations for state behaviours (Mérand 2010). CSDP was created to nurture a European security identity or at the very least become the fertile grounds from which European security thinking and strategic culture could eventually emerge (Rogers 2009; Meyer and Strickmann 2011; McDonagh 2015).

Criticisms of constructivism from within the constructivist camp have bemoaned the failure of these narratives to include a linkage between ideas and "material structures" (Meyer and Strickmann 2011, p.61). Meyer and Strickmann argue that the developments in Bosnia during the 90s, the move from a NATO to an EU focus in European politics and the widespread abandonment of conscript militaries in favour of professional volunteer armed forces can be explained through the nexus of "ideational and material factors" (2011, p.62).

The balancing theory which realist thinkers have drawn upon is generally questioned at length by constructivist critics (Meyer and Strickmann 2011), while some argue that the idea of balancing was a marginal thought among few policy makers within the – at the time – 14 EU member states (Mérand 2010). Hyde-Price points out that by 2006 few neo-realist studies had been made on CSDP due to the nature of the theory and its practitioners. First, the thinkers tended to shrug off the significance of the multilateral institutional cooperation within the EU in favour of highlighting the problems of cooperating and consensus building under an anarchic international system. Secondly the neorealist approach is generally perceived as state-centric and would therefore have little to offer for an analysis of the EU's security policy. Furthermore, he argues that few scholars of CSDP would be willing to analyse their topic from the perspective of neorealism as it questions some of the inherent "normative and liberal claims that surround the 'European' project" (Hyde-Price 2006, p.219).

The strategic and security culture debate forms a basis for the development of CSDP on an EU level identifying cultural factors as components which help shape the national identity and security thinking of nation states (Rogers 2009; McDonagh 2015). Following on from this argumentation Rogers argues that the EU would be the shaper of strategy in security and defence rather than the nation states (Rogers 2009).

Koivula has argued that through the deployment of national troops on EU security missions a European military culture is developing and changing the national perceptions of military force within EU member states. He questions whether such deployments and military culture could lead to the development of an EU military ethos (Koivula 2009; Rogers 2009; Meyer and Strickmann 2011). Meyer and Strickmann (2011) offer four propositions on how material conditions can affect the creation of ideas in a European security context.

Firstly, the lack of adequate capabilities and the emergence of a new threat will result in the political elites recognising the threat and increasing the willingness of said elites to learn or adapt their policies accordingly.

The second proposition addresses the issues of disproportional distribution of capabilities and resources within alliances and how this can create tensions among members. Hyde-Price argued along the same lines but points out that CSDP and security cooperation within Europe would have likely faltered entirely had there been a distinct asymmetric distribution among the EU members (Hyde-Price 2006).

Proposition three argues that economic changes combined with shifts in domestic spending would result in norm entrepreneurs challenging the current defence norms of the state, supranational institutions would look for opportunities for closer cooperation, and institutions would aim to reduce costs and increase the efficiency of processes.

Finally, Meier and Strickmann propose that a relative distribution of capabilities in non-allied states and institutions results in the lowering of threat perceptions. They argue that the perception of a Russian threat is reduced in the Baltic states due to their integration in EU and NATO (Meier and Strickmann 2011). This perception is flawed based on deployments of NATO military assets to defend the Baltic states and Poland who fear Russian aggression towards them.

Winn argues that within European security and defence there are two extremes that have shaped the debates on the role of CSDP as a policy tool for the EU. He argues that there are minimalists and federalists, both vying for influence (Winn 2003). The minimalists, the Danes and the British, favour including the U.S in Europe and maintaining a strong presence of U.S power within Europe; while the federalists, the French and Benelux states, would like to keep the U.S presence minimal and favour a strong institutionalisation of CSDP which excludes Washington from matters of European security (Winn 2003; Dembinski and Peters 2018). Winn also states that Germany, “the sleeping political and military giant of the EU” (2003, p.49), remains on the fence and attempts to please both Washington and Paris – a valid observation of policy in the last few years, given the mixed signals from Berlin.

Smith has argued that theory uses a “holistic approach which is typically (but not always) associated with social constructivism” (2017, p.11). Theory would argue that identity, either the shaping of or the promotion of an existing one, is the driving force behind the promotion of CSDP and its multitude of facets (McDonagh 2015), to form a "European identity on the world stage" (Smith 2017, p.12). The search or the shaping of such an identity, specifically the policy created in the 1990s aptly named the European Security and Defence Identity (ESDI), aimed to streamline and anchor European ambitions to those of NATO (Smith 2017). At the time NATO was adjusting to the change in the global security environment which featured a dynamic rise in irregular conflicts and crisis (AIV 2010).

ESDI did not however result in European defence taking on a territorial defence paradigm (Smith 2017); partially because this would remain a NATO prerogative (Schlag 2016). Therefore, a constructivist theoretical approach seems unable to adequately explain European cooperation, as practitioners of this school underestimate the disposition of domestic actors in forming CSDP (Mérand 2010). The identity argument also fails to explain how and why the EU becomes actively involved in certain humanitarian missions while seemingly ignoring others.

Additionally, it struggles to propose an explanation for why the advent of the Responsibility to Protect as a norm and the increased frequency of humanitarian military interventions has not resulted in an expansion of CSDP or European military capabilities (Diez 2014; Smith 2017). McDonagh argues that the record of the EU as a security actor has been "mixed at best" (2015, p.637) and that the "selection of and commitment to missions seems to be *ad hoc* and devoid of an overarching strategy" (p.673). He goes on however to reaffirm that there is indeed a European security identity which, though in its infancy, is growing through the ongoing missions of the EU in Africa, Asia and Europe (McDonagh 2015).

Smith argues that theories have not been able to effectively explain the post 2003 evolution of CSDP as a mechanism within the EU. They can examine and offer answers to specific outcomes (Smith 2017). Nitoiu points out that while the European Union upholds a commitment to spreading its shared norms and values around the world, at the same time it would seem that the EU is driven in part by power politics, making a purely constructivist or purely realist explanation of EU actions and CSDP difficult (Nitoiu 2012; Diez 2014). Nitoiu argues that the mismatch between the intentions (rhetoric) and the actions of the EU fall within the purview of constructivist and realist schools of thought respectively (Nitoiu 2012).

3. Germany’s defence policy: domestic interests and multipolarity

The following section serves to give an overview of how security and defence policy thinking has been shaped from the ashes of Germany in 1945 to the 21st century. This overview is vital to understand the logic at the heart of German policy, specifically during the early post-Cold War years, and allows for a contextualisation of the current situation. This Thesis will not attempt a deep dive into the fine details of the Cold War period as this is neither within the scope of the paper nor will it have more added value than an overview[2]. It will be shown that throughout the Cold War era and the years that followed German thinking has been focused on consensus-based multilateralism with partners and allies. This is in part a burden sharing method to enable the spreading of financial burdens among partners, rather than having to shoulder the responsibility by itself.

Following its defeat in the Second World War, Germany had begun building for itself a national identity that stood for the safeguarding of human rights and upholding the rule of law while maintaining a strong anti-militarist stance in international politics. On the few occasions that Germany became involved militarily in international crises, such as Cambodia and Somalia, the participation would be under the auspices of UN missions. The German military took on logistical and support roles in these operations, including provision of field hospitals and transportation for partners and the distribution of aid to crisis regions.

German policy in foreign affairs has been actively pursuing a multilateral approach to all matters (Erb 2003; Winn 2003; Szwed 2019). Multilateralism and consensus-based politics has been a key defining factor for Germany’s involvement on the world stage, occasionally being criticised as excessive (Zaborowski 2004).

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[2] For a well written overview of this period the author recommends Winkler, H.A (2015) *Geschichte des Westens: Die Zeit der Gegenwart.* München: C.H. Beck. An in-depth analysis of the first decade after unification can be found in Meiers, F.J. (2016) *Zu neuen Ufern? Die deutsche Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik in einer Welt des Wandels 1990-2000.* Paderborn: Schöningh

3.1 The Cold War and the 1990s: a new Europe and a reunited Germany

“Perceptions of security based upon one ‘big enemy’ disappeared almost overnight” (Kernic et al. 2002, p.18).

During the Cold War German security and defence policy could hardly be differentiated from that of the North Atlantic Alliance, as the German military was mainly integrated into NATO command structures (Wiltberger 2016). Domestically, this was not without its criticisms as many Germans held a firm antimilitarist view. Despite this, policy makers shaped most German policy along the lines of NATO’s goals and strategies. As Posen puts it “NATO was ‘mother’s milk’ for post-war Germany; Germans did not want to do anything to weaken it and certainly did not wish to be at odds with Washington” (2006, p.170).

Posen (2006) comments that the collapse of the Soviet Union meant that there were no more ‘traditional’ threats to European security which somewhat questions the purpose of CSDP as a security entity in European politics. Furthermore, most EU member states were integrated into NATO which offered them a security umbrella (Meyer and Strickmann 2011).

The collapse of the USSR was a gamechanger, not only for NATO but for European security and more specifically Germany’s security policy (Schlag 2016). NATO had achieved its *raison d’etre* with the end of the Cold War and faced what can only be described as an identity crisis (Wiltberger 2016). German policy needed a new focus: the enemy of the Cold War was no more, and it became clear that for the next few years there would be no imminent threat to the national security of Germany, at least in national defence terms.

Similarly, with no threat to the security of Europe and the West as a whole, NATO needed to rethink its objectives and re-model itself to reflect the needs and interests of the alliance in what would soon become a unipolar era. Marc Otte writes that following the collapse of the Iron Curtain and the Warsaw Pact, worries about the fate of NATO began creeping into the political discourse of Europe. Nevertheless, NATO was able to prove itself during the wars in the Balkans in the late 90s (Haftendorn et al. 2006). The Alliance was the only organisation able to act in a military capacity which reduced the fears of its disappearance as a guarantor of European security (Otte 2002). For Europe the implosion of the USSR raised questions of the future of security in Europe.

For Germany the 1990s were testing times. Solving the German question and unifying the country again promised economic prosperity and brought with its difficult political choices. The economic slump in the 1990s and "increasing public debt levels following massive financial transfers to the East" (Dyson 2007, p.186) shattered those promises. One of these choices was how to shape the *Bundeswehr* in a security landscape where Germany was beset on all sides by friends and allies (Arnold 199; Kriesel 2016; Bulmer and Patterson 2019). Initial plans to merge the East German *NVA*[3] with the West German *Bundeswehr* were quickly scrapped as such an endeavour would have been far too costly for the reborn federal republic, both financially and politically. Reductions in the armed forces was the most effective and operable path chosen by the political masters[4]. Compared to partners like the UK and France Germany's path of adapting its armed forces throughout the 1990s into the mid-2000s was very conservative: doing the bare minimum to adapt to the new security environment, all the while promoting a more active role of Germany in foreign policy.

Initially Germany continued its Cold War policy, keeping NATO as a focus for German defence and security thinking (Posen 2006). By the late 1990s, given the situation within

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[3] Nationale Volksarmee

[4] Ultimately this meant that the NVA soldiers were mostly summarily dismissed from service with minimal retraining and support from the Bonn-Berlin government due to being 'indoctrinated' by the enemy. This in part has attributed to a feeling of abandonment from this section of society which has had knock on effects which are reflected in political participation and voting behaviours today.

NATO, and the intensifying situation in the Balkans, German policy makers began focusing on integration into the European Union.

With the eruption of conflict in Yugoslavia German policymakers and the German public were faced with a difficult decision: either maintaining the purely diplomatic approach to international affairs and upholding the so-called chequebook diplomacy which had been used in the first Gulf War or becoming militarily involved in a bloody civil war (Hyde-Price 2006).

The German response to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia featured heated domestic debate, politically and from the standpoint of public opinion. The political debate on whether to become militarily involved in Yugoslavia divided German society (Erb 2003; Schlag 2016). Even within the political parties there was discord on what the responsible and proportional response to the ongoing crisis would be. The initial condemnations of the violence were accepted by many as the responsible approach. Following the reports of crimes against humanity and the calls for international military intervention such a mild response became difficult to uphold and justify – not just in terms of German pacifist identity, but also to alliance partners within NATO and the EU (Schlag 2016).

The crises in Yugoslavia enabled a national debate “about the acceptability of deploying troops abroad” (Giegerich and Wallace 2004, p.166) which moved from refusal in the early 90s, to an agreement to aid in upholding the fragile peace in Macedonia[5]. A key event during this evolution was the constitutional court ruling in Germany in 1994. It set the precedent for out of area deployments of the Bundeswehr[6] (Nielsen 2006; Szwed 2019). By 1999 policy makers had green lit the involvement of German troops in the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia with the backing of parliament and most Germans (Erb 2003; Giegerich and Wallace 2004; Grevi et al. 2009). The conflict in Kosovo and Germany's involvement and acceptance of the use of force as a tool in politics was seen by academics, particularly realists, as a normalisation of German security thinking (Longhurst 2004) The acceptance of a European security and defence policy and the potential future that such a policy may hold in the politics of Europe was another topic at the mercy of whimsical public opinion. From the onset of both the Common Foreign and Security Policy and CSDP the thinking was, at least at the time, that these political ideas would create a "new 'European Superpower' on the world stage" (Kernic et al. 2002, p.18).

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[5] Today this state is known as North Macedonia

[6] The out of area debate was kicked off when the political level could not reach a consensus on whether the constitution allowed for the deployment of Bundeswehr troops outside of Germany and outside the borders of NATO member states (out of area) and whether these deployments could in fact have a robust mandate of peacemaking and peace keeping rather than the traditional roles of supporting allies from the rear.

The role of the EU in defence have been subject to debates within Germany since the early 90s. Kernic et al. (2002) have drawn on Eurobarometer polls when arguing that the late 90s saw Germany split rather evenly between advocating a more active role of the EU in defence matters (51.7% in favour) and advocating that national governments should remain in charge (42%). This stands in contrast with the earlier part of the decade when scepticism of this policy was rife within Germany. Only as the years passed and faith in the EU grew did Germans begin warming to the EU's security ideas (Kernic et al. 2002).

It needs to be noted that for Germans it may have become more acceptable to contribute militarily to international missions however these decisions are always pre-empted by a hefty national debate[7], and "the justification for these missions is presented primarily on humanitarian and moral arguments" (Giegerich and Wallace 2004, p.172).

Germany decided to take on more responsibility, for security and achieving the aim of world peace (BMVg 2014; Bundespräsidialamt 2014; Bundesregierung 2014a; 2014b). The commitment to multilateral institutions has remained a trademark for German policy "since the establishment of the European Communities" (BMVg 2011, p.7).

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[7] This is partially held within the national parliament, the governing body which has the veto on the deployment of the Bundeswehr.

Posen (2006) quotes a senior official from the *Auswärtiges Amt*[8] who commented that EU policy was a top priority for the foreign policy of Germany (Howorth 2004). This priority of foreign policy has to date been well served in rhetoric and diplomatic action but less so with regards to CSDP and ambitious capability building. Howorth points out that during the initial months of CSDP coming to fruition, position papers circulated within Germany to politicians and the public through the media allowed for the public discourse within the Federal Republic to begin agreeing to the idea of using military force as a policy tool (Howorth 2004).

3.2 After 9/11: *uneingeschränkte Solidarität*[9] to a point

The attacks on the U.S on the 11th September 2001 were a flashpoint for German military politics, as well as a paradigm shift for the international political arena. In response to the attacks the Social Democratic government of Gerhard Schroeder pledged the 'unconditional solidarity' of Germany with the United States and imposed an active role in the impending War on Terror on the German people, and seemingly signalled an end of Germany's culture of restraint. However, as will be shown Germany would not join the military adventures in Iraq, signalling to the U.S. that it would not blindly follow the lines drawn by Washington, all the while reaffirming the German commitment to international peacekeeping through support to humanitarian missions.

Solidarity for the United States extended as far as the invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, with the aim of removing the Taliban regime from power and enforcing punishment on the perpetrators of the attacks. However, German solidarity did not extend to supporting the invasion of Iraq in 2003 with the 'Coalition of the Willing'. Schroeder's 'German way' received heavy criticism from NATO and EU partners as this would only serve to confuse allies and partners (Longhurst 2004); with the side effect of "poisoning U.S-German relations" (Howorth 2004, p.227)[10].

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[8] German Foreign Office

[9] 'unconditional solidarity'

This is not a stance that Germany held alone. Other NATO countries, Spain and the Netherlands for example, had similarly supported an invasion of Afghanistan and either abstained or actively opposed the invasion of Iraq. Joschka Fischer argued in 2003 that the case made by the United States was not convincing, and that he could not stand in front of the German people and argue for a war that he did not believe in (Connolly 2003).

Germany's criticism of Iraq was shaped by the policy choices of Washington which were at odds with how Germany viewed the developing situation. The discontent of the Germans led to the improving of relations between Paris and Berlin which highlighted Germany's commitment to European security but also strengthened CSDP as it meant Franco-German political clout would be backing the project (Posen 2006).

Despite the 'no' to Iraq Germany maintained its support to Afghanistan and contributed a sizeable contingent to the EU mission in Congo (Nielsen 2006). Overall though, German military participation in UN and international peacekeeping missions between 2000 through to 2003 was marked by a decrease in military personnel. During that time numbers dwindled from 8670 to 6800 active military personnel on these types of missions (Giegerich and Wallace 2004).

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[10] An example of this exact poisoning are the comments made by Colin Powell regarding the 'old' and 'new' Europe, a direct dig at the anti-Iraq position which was shared by many older European nations while young nations in eastern Europe supported the U.S actions (Haftendorn et al 2006).

To make matters more interesting, the political leadership in Berlin tried to keep much of military doctrine focused on territorial defence. Even with the precedent set by the 1994 ruling, successive Chancellors and Ministers of Defence throughout the 90s and early 00s managed policy and doctrine based mainly on domestic considerations and sensitivities rather than the global security situation that Germany found itself in (Dyson 2007). This approach only began changing from 2002 onwards when Minister of Defence Peter Struck began enlarging the scope of doctrine to include crisis prevention.

However, despite this increased scope, policy was still very much a closely held issue. Internalising the policy process within the *Bundesministerium der Verteidigung*[11] (BMVg) allowed for the BMVg to shape the debate while avoiding necessarily allowing internal (within the Bundeswehr), external (from partners and allies), and domestic pressures direct the agenda for policy setting (Dyson 2007). Defence ministers may have pushed for NATO and EU capabilities for defence and security, but they attempted to ensure that these processes would not impact German doctrine and policy too heavily.

3.3 Budget cuts and debacles

As has been argued above, Germany wanted to show its solidarity with a key strategic partner, both for the EU and Germany in particular, but would not sacrifice the multilateral approach which it had stood by throughout the Cold War to satisfy the U.S. It can however be argued that the ‘no’ to Iraq was also made on financial grounds. The German military was not able to maintain 3 growing military missions with its current capabilities and assets.

This problematic state of affairs was partially caused by the reduced budgets allocated to the armed forces, and the lack of consolidated leadership. Throughout the 2000s German ministers of defence mismanaged the defence budget on unsuccessful defence projects, such as the extremely delayed A-400M plane and the EuroHawk drone. All this combined lowered the trust of the German public in the armed forces (BMVg 2016; BMVg 2018b).

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[11] Ministry of Defence

Germany’s reduction from a ‘wartime’ spending of over 2.6% GDP to a comparatively meagre 1.2% GDP in 2017 (World Bank 2018) is partially explained by suddenly being surrounded by friendly neighbours and the disappearance of a visible threat. Additionally, public demands for reduced funding of the military, in favour of more public service funding, and reunification, which forced the economy to accommodate the West but also the newly acquired East German territories, also influenced the defence budget (Arnold 1991; Haftendorn et al. 2006; Winn 2003, Wagner 2005). A former director for the European Defence Agency commented that the budget cuts within the EU member states were largely done on a national level, and “without any attempt at consultation or coordination within either NATO or the EU” (Witney cited in AIV 2012, p.7).

The reduced German defence expenditures had a significant impact on the EU strategic airlift project. Heralded as the solution to Europe’s strategic lift shortcomings and the key to the proposed European Rapid Reaction Forces (ERRF), the A400-M transport aircraft was off to a rocky start when order quotas and funding deficiencies threatened the future of the project (Bundesregierung 2014a).

Germany’s difficulty to fund their share of orders, raised serious questions among partners about the commitment of Berlin to the project and to the ERRF (Shepherd 2003). By December 2002 Berlin had scraped together enough funds to fund 60 aircraft, thereby saving the project from total failure, however this was lower than the original German order of 73 planes (Shepherd 2003). The difficulties of funding the critical capabilities of EU military projects by all member states, but particularly Germany given their key role in driving CSDP, threatens to relegate CSDP and military and defence within the EU to “an ineffective addition to EU bureaucracy” (Shepherd 2003, p.51).

The focus on human rights and the rule of law of German foreign policy has been strengthened in the 21st century (Schlag 2016), and the willingness of Germany’s politicians to use military forces to intervene in conflicts has in fact increased (BMVg 2014). European integration and supporting EU and NATO partners in international missions has become a strong driving force for German defence and security thinking. This can be seen in Germany’s participation in civilian and military missions of the EU and the recently established military mission in the Baltic States where Germany is a framework nation (BMVg 2018a, 2018b).

Despite the political rhetoric in support for both NATO and the EU, Germany’s military is still lagging which has been the case for some time already (BMVg 2014, 2018; Dyson 2007; Wagner 2005). The *Bundeswehr* has been plagued with mismanagement affairs, weak political leadership accompanied with political infighting among the different governmental branches in Berlin, reduced budgets, and low recruitment numbers (Noetzel and Schreer 2008). The idea of reducing the financial burden by suspending the *Wehrpflicht*[12] in Germany was too little, far too late. The funds which were freed up from this endeavour did not begin to fill the gaps in the *Bundeswehr*’s capabilities.

The lethargic comprehension in Berlin of operational realities in missions has resulted in issues between German forces and partners. Often, more German commitment both in materiel and personnel is needed to fulfil the requirements on the ground and to increase the effectiveness of the operations (Noetzel and Schreer 2008). Noetzel and Schreer remark that when the *Bundeswehr* took on more responsibility and leadership in Afghanistan it was a “step in the right direction” (2008, p.3) but more needs to happen to ensure that Germany remains a reliable partner.

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[12] Mandatory military service

The main issue which hindered the development of the *Bundeswehr* since the early 2000s revolved around the size of the defence budget (BMVg 2018b). The thinking at the time was along the lines of how small the *Bundeswehr* could shrink and remain ‘operational’ (BMVg 2018b). Over the years the small budget gave rise to a ‘logic of small numbers’: this meant maintaining small forces and integrating more on the EU level to help keep costs low while developing better capabilities (Selden 2010; BMVg 2016; Schütz 2016). This ‘logic’ didn’t quite develop into the tool for improving defence in Europe. One look at the military power that EU states can muster today is a testament to this. It rather impeded the operationalisation of EU policy for organic security and defence growth within the Member States.

To add to the list of debacles the German involvement in Libya, or lack thereof, only eroded the credibility of German rhetoric for more responsibility and increased leadership roles in defence and security. The abstention from the no-fly-zone decision made in the UN Security Council and the following justifications made back home based on costs only served to crack Germany’s image as a nation willing to take on a more active role in international security.

4. Germany and CSDP

"Europe has no foreign policy weight without the corresponding military potential" Michele Alliot-Marie[13] (quoted in Posen 2006).

The concepts behind a collective European defence and the idea of establishing security institutions with regional frameworks originates in the late 17th Century but were never realised (Haas 1948; Schlag 2016). This section will argue that academic debate focusing on the bandwagoning of EU nations and inclusion of Germany into the CSDP framework out of fear of a re-emerging Germany political and military power are both contradictory and do not reflect the domestic conditions which limited the German 'potential' to live up to such fears in the first place. Additionally, this section will underpin the arguments that IR schools of thought struggle to explain the perseverance of security and defence as policy tools of the EU and the German involvement in these affairs.

The EU's development of the institutions and capabilities to take on high-risk security operations has been an unprecedented move by an international organisation which in terms of theory seems counter intuitive (Smith 2017). Many have argued that NATO would have been a more operable alternative to the EU as it already had experience and the capabilities for such operations and most EU member states were already members at the time that CSDP began to develop. Smith states that some critics doubted that the EU would be able to properly develop the capabilities needed for security operations given the difficulties that the EU had faced in the Balkans throughout the 1990s (Smith 2017). To date there has been little change as critics still bemoan the "substantial capability shortfalls" (Meyer and Strickmann 2011, p.62) within the EU which are preventing the deployment of rapid and successful missions (Meyer and Strickmann 2011).

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[13] French Minister of Defence during an interview on Iraq and the European Defence Union in 2002.

The tenacity of the EU to develop security institutions and undertake operations with civil and military capabilities has highlighted the EU's ability to act as a provider of security. It has also shown the European capacity to take on the role of state-building and civilian crisis management (Smith 2017), roles which NATO would not be able to fulfil to the same extent. As a result, the EU has been called upon by international organisations such as the UN and the African Union to become involved in conflict prone areas.

The development of an EU security paradigm was a response to the growing demand for international security assistance and that the EU simply adapted to meet the needs of the international landscape it found itself in (Smith 2017). Deighton counters that CSDP "signifie[d] a fundamental shift away from the civilian nature of the European Union, and its institutional relationship with NATO" (2002, p.719).

The development of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and particularly its CSDP arm has created increased stresses on EU member nations not just in terms of policy decisions but also financially (Smith 2017). This aspect sheds some light on the origins of the sometimes-lacklustre willingness for greater expansion of CSDP institutions and the development of multilateral security and defence capabilities.

In 2002 Deighton argued that "to date, the EU has neither the means nor the political will to create an autonomous foreign policy with military capabilities" (p.720), an assessment which still holds some merit in the current state of affairs in the EU. Schlag states that the it was in fact a German discussion paper submitted in 1999 which engrained the Petersberg Tasks into CSDP, or at least convinced policy makers to push for such tasks in CSDP to bolster the EU's crisis management toolkit while leaving collective defence in the hands of NATO (Schlag 2016). With the ratification of the Nice Treaty in 2001 the EU began including the Petersberg

Tasks[14] into its security thinking and its planning for humanitarian actions and operations (AIV 2010; Smith 2017).

In concert with CSDP, the Nice Treaty included the clause that the European Council could fall back onto member state's or NATO forces "for certain military security operations" (Deighton 2002, p.719).

On the eve of CSDP, Gordon argued that the policy could in fact lead to the alienation of non-EU NATO members or the policy could "duplicate costly NATO structures and assets" which would only undermine both endeavours due to the resulting conflicts of interest between NATO and the EU.

On the other hand, it could promote the image of a self-reliant EU in military terms before this even became a reality (Gordon 2000). The support of Britain and France for a European security institution reflected the expectations of these states as to what the EU should strive for. France wished for integrated security and for Europeans to "get serious about defence and foreign policy" (Gordon 2000, p.13), while London aimed for Europe to regain its lost "political influence and military effectivity" (Gordon 2000, p.14).

Jones (2003) has argued that the rise of CSDP and a consolidation of the EU was attributed to a fear of a strong German influence in Europe. A fear that finds some of its origins in the Cold War when European states feared that a resurgent Germany, would endanger peace in Europe (Hyde-Price 2006) and become a regional hegemon (Schlag 2016). Jones however changed his statement in 2007 to identify exogenous threats which could change the balance of power on a global level, as being the key motivator for closer EU cooperation (Jones 2007; Smith 2017).

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[14] Petersberg Tasks were outlined by the WEU in 1992 at a conference in Petersberg, Germany. These included "humanitarian and rescue tasks, peace-keeping tasks and tasks for combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking" (Deighton 2002, p.719).

A German threat would have likely resulted in more direct mutual defence and security cooperation among the other EU states. German politicians and policy makers have been encouraged by NATO and EU members to become more active in security and defence matters and increase German defence spending (Smith 2017), debunking Jones' initial claims.

Meyer and Strickmann counter Jones' initial claims that France and Britain were balancing against Germany in the Saint Malo agreements as the Federal Republic till then "had continued to pursue its 'culture of restraint' and ha[d] always been open to deeper cooperation in the area of security" (2011, p.63). On this matter Mérand simple states "the suggestion of an attempt to bind Germany did not come up once" (2010, p.346).

Within the CSDP mechanisms there are civilian and military planning and policy institutions. The EUMS and the EUMC[15] were confronted with difficulties upon taking up service in 2000; a lack of guidance resulted in a distinctive lack of purpose und poor coordination. Criticisms at the time were levelled that NATO was organised around their planning divisions and SHAPE while the EU was "organised around nothing" (Smith 2017, p.52).

Around the time the Lisbon Treaty was ratified the EU created the European External Action Service (EEAS) which would serve as an umbrella for all external actions from defence to foreign policy. Rather than structure the Common Security and Defence Policy, the EEAS became the source for further confusion as it fostered an extremely politicised bureaucracy in which officials attempted to garner the most prestigious positions in the EEAS, often without much knowledge of what these roles entailed. CSDP implementation was institutionally complicated by the bureaucratic structures of the EU and the lack of guidance from the Lisbon treaty (Smith 2017).

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[15] European Union Military Staff and European Union Military Committee: military staff comprised of seconded officers from armed forces within the EU charged with facilitating cooperation and liaising between the member states and the EU (Koutrakos 2013; Smith 2017).

According to Smith the performance of CSDP under the Lisbon treaty has been questionable at best (Smith 2017; Riekeles 2016). The birth of the EEAS has not resulted in dynamic change or improvement of CSDP as a policy tool, unlike in 2003-2006 where the European Security Strategy (ESS) nurtured dynamic changes among other things.

Deighton pointed out that the development of military tools and pooling of these within the framework of CSDP has intensified the debate on the structures of the EU and how the interests of the Member States could be brought to bear within EU policy while simultaneously heralding the end of a “civilian norm-based community” (Deighton 2002, p.736).

Dembinski and Peters hold up that the EU has neither the capabilities, nor is it institutionally possible for the EU to be anything other than a civilian power. They argue that based on the consensus-based decision model of the Union it isn’t possible for a military power style of governance to emerge (Dembinski and Peters 2018).

The debate of whether European security would push out NATO and take on the role of a collective defence mechanism within the EU was rather short lived, as most member states agreed that collective defence would remain under the purview of the North Atlantic Alliance. The reasoning for this decision was simple. It partially rested on the idea that NATO would become obsolete if European member states create their own institution based on collective defence. While simultaneously, the decision to leave collective defence to NATO recognised the existing experience and expertise that NATO already had in such matters. Taking on a collective defence role would likely have slowed any attempts to establish meaningful institutions for European security and defence (Erb 2003; Grevi et al. 2009).

4.1 Franco-British foundations with a German touch: 1999-2009

A key supporter and arguably one of the main catalysts for European defence initiatives was the Federal Republic of Germany (BMVg 2016). Many states within the EU signed onto the concept of CSDP due to the guarantees made by Germany both in terms of financing and commitments to institution building and integration into a European defence initiative which would be separate from NATO (Erb 2003). This commitment to CSDP was not just a question of goodwill on the part of the Germans: the following paragraphs will argue that Germany's buy-in to CSDP was partially motivated by the need for Germany to remain relevant in security and defence terms but also to shape the way-ahead within the EU to allow for German sensitivities to be adequately considered.

The Saint Malo summit in 1998 established closer cooperation between the French and British defence institutions and became the foundation for further European security and defence initiatives (Howorth 2002), while putting security in Europe on the agenda of European states, rather than leaving such matters in the hands of the North Atlantic Alliance (Edwards 2006).

The EU failed throughout the 90s to utilise the capabilities of the WEU that were set up by Maastricht "despite numerous opportunities, particularly in the Balkans" (Smith 2017, p.4). It was only in 1999 that the first European Union (EU) plans for utilising EU capabilities were drafted and the first institutions for security and defence were formed and underpinned with the support of most major EU member states.

Howorth (2004) states that a key factor for the successful start of CSDP was Germany as they pushed the security agenda of the EU forward during their presidency of the EU from January 1999 (Howorth 2004; BMVg 2016). The German leadership of the EU practically phased out the WEU as an institution and moved to "promote European political union and to create a genuine [CSDP]" (Howorth 2004, p.224).

Howorth points out that rather than forcing a capability-based approach for CSDP the Germans adapted an institution building stance to facilitate that the concerns of the EU members, but particularly the German's, could be effectively heard on matters of security and defence (2004). Furthermore, the initial thinking of German policy makers and representatives to the EU was that CSDP should "only work in close collaboration with NATO" (Howorth 2004, p.224).

The first missions undertaken under the authority of the CSDP were in 2003 in the Balkans (Smith 2017). EU foreign actions have since then expanded to include Africa, the Middle East, Europe and Asia and have become more complex. Conversely, within Europe there is little public "discord or even awareness" for the ongoing and past missions undertaken by the CSDP institutions (Giegerich and Wallace 2004 in Smith 2017). Critics of the missions themselves mark the limited scale of operations and highlight the "'cosmetic' impact of EU actions" as a point for promoting CSDP rather than actively engaging with problems on the ground (Bickerton et al. 2011).

Smith argues that the EU approach to security and crisis situations has been mainly on the basis of, what he calls, 'institutional improvisation' or as Javier Solana, former High Representative for Foreign Affairs, put it: there was "no EU template for intervening in crisis situations and it was to a large extent a case of learning by doing" (Solana in Fliessenkemper and Helly 2013). This type of approach has allowed for CSDP as a policy to retain a little more of its autonomy and prevents individual states from dominating the processes completely, an aspect which members are rather happy about (Smith 2017). Within the EU and NATO there have been repeated calls for Germany to take on greater responsibility internationally and become more involved (Smith 2017), a motive that was shared by successive governments in Germany during the 1990s (Erb 2003), particularly because of Germany's position as a strong economic power with strong ties to Russia (Erb 2003; Larrabee et al. 2015).

Such a role will have to wait for acceptance from the German electorate; a poll in August 2014 showed that 30% of the German population favoured a greater role of Germany in international affairs while 70% voiced dissent to such a role, some of whom were strongly against Germany engaging more on an international level (Larrabee et al. 2015).

4.2 Committing to European defence and security politics?

This section will offer an overview of German commitments to international security and peace outlining the contributions of Germany to both the EU and to the ISAF mission in Afghanistan. However, this only helps to underline that to date Germany has chosen to engage through bilateral or multilateral means to assist reducing financial and domestic political burdens.

To say that current German policy has reflected the needs of European security and defence policy would be somewhat of a stretch. Germany was a driving force in the late 1990s for the development of security institutions and frameworks in an EU context. As previous sections have argued, European security and defence promoted the integration of EU member states into a collective security institution, however without the facet of collective security.

The German commitment to the European Union has been seemingly unquestionable given the extensive lengths that German policy makers have gone to in support of further integration within Europe both on a multilateral institutional level and with bilateral cooperation among member states. This contrasts however with the slow progression of the German military forces in achieving the promises set out in the mid to late 1990s. Especially the extensive procurement plans of aircraft and other weapons systems (Erb 2003; Grevi et al. 2009), and reforms aimed at modernisation of the *Bundeswehr*.

CSDP was eventually confronted by the stark realities of the capability gaps between "ambitions outlined in the ESS, respective Headline Goals and the reality of available capabilities" (Fischer 2010, p.46) amongst European militaries both within NATO and within the EU. The list of short-falls and gaps has exhaustively been documented in academia and therefore this paper will only mention a few key examples. The starkest shortcoming of the Europeans in military affairs is the combat capabilities of their armed forces which are both limited and vary greatly between the member states. Furthermore, strategic airlift and transportation, surveillance and intelligence networks, and finally command and control capabilities are present within NATO, but not adequately present within the EU (Missiroli 2002; Fischer 2010).

The issue of lacking command structures and Operational Headquarters is partially explained precisely by the rejection of the United Kingdom and the United States for an EU Operational Headquarters in 2003 citing duplication of NATO structures (Fischer 2010). Though these arguments have been overtaken by events in recent years. Currently, EU Operations are led by a few operational headquarters none of which oversee all operations from the strategic level[16].

Support for CFSP and the idea of a common defence has waned and peaked in Europe through the years. In the late 90s an overwhelming majority of Europeans supported a common foreign and security policy. Nearly 80% thought that the EU should "play a decisive peacekeeping role" (Kernic et al. 2002, p.34) while at the same time favouring their national ministries and governments over an EU based military force. Around 50% believed that defence should remain a national field (Kernic et al. 2002). During the same period six countries stood out with overall support for CFSP "Belgium, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands" (Kernic et al. 2002, p.35).

For Germany, Afghanistan became less a military mission and more a civilian mission with military facets (Dirkx 2017), a fact of life which created confusion back home whenever

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[16] For example, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander EURope, based at SHAPE in Mons, is the operational commander for the EUFOR Althea mission.

German soldiers died because the ‘war’ was only called as such years after the first bullets had flown. Germany’s role in Afghanistan has been a police training and supervision one, German police trainers helped develop the Afghan National Police to support, rebuild, and stabilise the country from within under the protection of military forces[17].

4.3 PESCO

Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), a framework established in 2017, EU policy makers hoped would facilitate closer cooperation between the security and defence institutions on a supranational level in the field of arms procurement (Dembinski and Peters 2018; Drent and Zandee 2018). This section outlines the initial intentions of PESCO, while highlighting Germany’s role in undermining the concept to slow down the pace at which the EU would move forward regarding security and defence cooperation.

PESCO was brought into this world amid fierce debate between pro-capability and pro-integration camps (Leonard 2018) and with high expectations of its success. Some saw PESCO as a chance for states to band together and seriously engage with the concept of integrating force structures multilaterally on an EU level, whereby the procurement of arms would be divided among these states and planning would be done on an integrated level (Dembinski and Peters 2018).

However, the European Parliament has reaffirmed in a report on the relationship between the EU and NATO that PESCO would enhance NATO and facilitate closer cooperation between the EU and NATO in the defence fields (European Parliament 2018), rather than becoming a separate entity solely for enhancing CSDP. This is a step into the right direction if further down the line CSDP can decouple itself more from NATO to ensure self-sufficiency of the Europeans in matters of defence and security.

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[17] The reform of the policing sector took a mainly civilian role which caused friction between the United States, who wanted quick results and a large quantity of civilian security forces, and the Germans who focused more on quality rather than quantity (Dirkx 2017).

Since then the initial expectations and facets of PESCO have been diluted in the EU's policy making machinery, with active help from Germany (Bulmer and Paterson 2019), to become more inclusive and thereby less specific (Drent and Zandee 2018). This by itself is not a drawback for an EU initiative but it means that countries which are not able or willing to participate "force countries that are serious about European defence to join coalitions outside EU structures, like France with its newly launched European Intervention Initiative" (Leonard 2018, p.1). PESCO showed promise to propel CSDP forward to seriously engage with capability gaps and European security and defence cooperation. Dembinski and Peters remark: "the first 17 projects […] are not greatly ambitious" (2018, p.21), which raises the question whether member states, especially Germany, are truly serious about bridging the gaps between policy and capabilities.

5. Ukraine: The Crimean Crisis and beyond

"Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and involvement in the Ukrainian crisis further underscored the sad realisation that 'peace and stability in Europe are no longer a given" (Mälksoo 2016, p.380)

The previous chapters have outlined the context of security and defence in Europe and the facets of German engagement on an international and domestic level with the intent of building an active role in shaping the European security landscape. The following chapter will highlight these issues against the backdrop of the invasion of Crimea, outlining the responses of the EU comparatively with those of NATO and the OSCE. The points presented will argue that bilateral and non-EU frameworks responded much faster than the EU, as the Union was beset with diverging opinions on how to adequately counter the crisis.

The invasion and subsequent annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation marked the beginning of what could have been a major catalyst for redefining and rejuvenating European security and defence politics and the development of CSDP (Smith 2017). Smith argues that, similarly to the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), the crisis in Ukraine would have enabled the EU to consolidate and support renewed integration of the existing institutions and frameworks while optimising new political structures. The actions of the EU in the conflict have been mainly economic and diplomatic (Mälksoo 2016; Smith 2017).

On the level of security and defence the EU was unable to form a consolidated front on how to react to the sudden hostilities in Ukraine. The adverse effect of this was that the OSCE and NATO began to act to counter the Russian actions. NATO strengthened its northern and southern borders in the Baltics, Poland, and the Balkans[18]. The OSCE has been committed to urging Moscow to apply pressure on the separatist troops and to cease hostilities against the Ukrainian state

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[18] The missions in the Baltics and Poland have been labelled enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) and tailored Forward Presence (tFP).

The EU's stakes in the Ukrainian conflict are twofold: primarily to maintain European borders as was agreed in the Helsinki Final Act in 1975; but also, to calm a destabilised region on Europe's periphery. The credibility of the EU as an international actor is on the line in Ukraine (Larrabee et al. 2015).

It is important to note that, according to Smith (2017), the EU's advisory mission in Ukraine was for better or worse a political fig leaf as it held little hope of heralding genuine reform of the Ukrainian security sectors, let alone result in Ukraine being able to "defend itself in the face of more aggressive Russian action" (Smith 2017, p.266). The conflict in Ukraine acts as a spotlight for issues within CSDP and the EU, rather than becoming the much-needed catalyst for rejuvenating CSDP and reviewing EU defence structures (Smith 2017).

Ukraine has great strategic value for the Russian government in military and geopolitical terms (Cadier 2014). Militarily Russia relies on the Ukrainian military industrial complex for a number of components, systems, and services for its armed forces (Larrabee et al. 2015). The fear of Ukraine leaving the Russian sphere of influence has been highlighted as a factor which heralded the invasion of Ukraine and the heavy pressure placed on the Ukrainian government in previous years to prevent them from entering the EU's direct sphere of influence. (Larrabee et al. 2015).

A European oriented Ukraine would mean a power shift in Eurasia: Ukraine is a key to the success of the Eurasian Union (Larrabee et al. 2015), Russia's prestige project for an economic union of a selection of former Soviet satellites. A failure of the Eurasian Union would mean that Russia's ascension to becoming a Eurasian power would be jeopardised; additionally, a European Ukraine would mean closer ties with the EU and with NATO, with potential membership in the North Atlantic Alliance, which would be catastrophic for Russian military and security strategy.

The German involvement to the Ukrainian conflict and the events occurring as a result was multilateral. Direct humanitarian aid was distributed through various implementation agencies. Simultaneously, Merkel acted as a mediator between the Kremlin and the Western governments, using the close ties between Germany and Russia that had been fostered since the end of the Cold War. Militarily Germany participated as a leading nation in the Baltics, forming the Headquarters for enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) in Lithuania (European Parliament 2018; NATO 2018) which built pressure against Moscow.

With the downing of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 (MH17), Merkel became a major advocate of the sanctions. Larrabee et al. argue that this change in course resulted from the loss in faith in Putin as it was perceived that he had lied about the extent of the Russian involvement with the separatists. Furthermore Larrabee et al. states that Germany’s policy towards Russia “reflects Germany’s willingness to take on greater international responsibility and leadership” (2015, p.27).

For European states, who heavily rely on the gas and energy exports from Russia, involvement in the Ukrainian situation is difficult. Some states, particularly Germany and Italy, were initially unwilling to openly support sanctions against Russia because of their reliance on Russian gas, though the downing of MH17 served as an incentive for them to join in the sanctioning of Russia.

Prior to the invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces the BMVg issued new Defence Policy Guidelines in 2011. Throughout the Guidelines the importance of remaining a reliable partner is stressed alongside Germany’s responsibility towards peace and freedom as a “strong nation in the centre of Europe” (BMVg 2011, p.3). Specifically of interest in this context is the statement “Germany is prepared to use the complete spectrum of national policy instruments. This includes the employment of armed forces” (BMVg 2011, p.4).

Given that Germany did not in fact utilise military forces to protect Ukrainian sovereign territory – in fairness neither did most EU and NATO states – this can indicate that some allies are closer than others, potentially the Baltic states in which German armed forces are helping to spearhead the defence of NATO members in eFP. Evidently in the case of Ukraine the answer to the question “whether German interests require and justify an operation and what the consequences of non-action would be” (BMVg 2011, p.4) was that the situation did not warrant an operation and that the consequences of in-action would be tolerable.

To summarise, the EU’s attempt to remove Ukraine from the Russian sphere of influence backfired in theatrical fashion, and the EU’s stance in the conflict was further undermined once Crimea had been annexed (Cadier 2014; Smith 2017). The sanctions were a response, though in hindsight these were likely too little, too late. NATO took the lead; despite Ukraine not being a member of the Alliance, leaving the EU to stand on the side-lines (Nováky 2015; Smith 2017). Germany and other EU member states chose to use institutions and frameworks outside of the EU to respond to the crisis as it unfolded.

6. Discussion

"Europe will not, and cannot, *always* share a 'common vision with Washington" (Winn 2003, p.48 emphasis in original)

Given that the European responses to the Ukrainian crisis were sufficiently disjointed and not coordinated through the EU, it is important to note how domestic politics and debate shaped the German response to the crisis and influenced the security and defence policies of the years that followed. The discussion will outline the foundations of German security and defence, as defined by the BMVg and how this is invoked on the national political level by high ranking politicians to justify a rhetoric of more engagement and responsibility. The lack of a unified public standpoint on defence and military issues has resulted in disjointed efforts to attempt to consolidate different strands of policy but have so far only resulted in half measures and, more often than not, hollow words. This culminates in a beak verdict: limited funding, lacking capabilities, and hours of debate which lead to no progress in any way.

The rise of irregular warfare has confronted both NATO and EU member states with increased situations in which their military forces are deployed amongst civilian populations for counterinsurgency and security operations (AIV 2010). This type of crisis management has provided defence planners and policy makers with numerous difficulties and will likely continue to do so until adequate policy is drafted to tackle these situations more comprehensively.

The situation in Ukraine has to date not drastically changed from the stalemate of hostilities between the Ukraine armed forces and the separatist groups, some of which are sponsored in part or fully by Russia.

The increased activity of the EU in the field of security and defence and the positive effect that the EU has had in freeing up American units for other tasks has been noticed and resulted in

Washington "[curing] its allergy of the European Security and Defence Policy" (Mowle and Sacko 2007, p.601).

As the previous sections have shown, CSDP and German security thinking both share a complex past and have been attempting to adapt their approaches to the changing security landscape in Europe and the world. The following sections will look at the political discourse within Germany. Furthermore, to facilitate the analyses the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS 2016) will be included. This should help highlight potential correlations and influences between German security and defence rhetoric and that of the EU following the annexation of Crimea and the outbreak of hostilities in eastern Ukraine.

It would be helpful at this point to outline the texts themselves in terms of their origins and why these eight texts were selected. The earliest text will serve as a foundation to understand the priorities and motives of German security and defence policy prior to outbreak of the Ukrainian crisis. The Defence Policy Guidelines (DPG) from 2011 were selected with the understanding that this document updates the strategic aims and wishes of Germany and serves as a good baseline for the analysis of Germany's security and defence perspective.

The next three texts were selected for their content, the national media coverage which these were given, and the political authority of the authors. These texts originate from prominent German politicians at the *Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz* (MSC) of 2014; these were, at the time, the former President of the Federal Republic Joachim Gauck, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Frank Walter Steinmeier[19], and Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen.

Following on from these texts the *Weißbuch zur Sicherheitspolitik und zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr*[20] and the EUGS are included in the analyses. These two texts were both equally significant as they allow for a retrospective view of the initial stages of the Ukrainian crisis to be included and both documents have a significant importance in terms of policy for Germany and the EU. Finally, the last two texts are both speeches by Minister of Defence von der Leyen from 2018, the first is a speech at the MSC and the second at a conference of the *Bundeswehr* in May 2018[21].

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[19] Steinmeier now holds the position of President of the Federal Republic of Germany.

[20] Whitepaper on Security Policy and the Future of the *Bundeswehr*.

The methodology for the analysis follows the suggestions of Florian Schneider (2013) which builds on research and writings of multiple authors (McLuhan 1964; Fairclough 1995; Mayring 2002; Chilton 2004; Jäger 2004). The source material was first categorised and contextualised, then scrutinised based on which discourses the contents of the documents fit into.

The DPGs address the changing nature of security in the 21st Century and argue that these changes require that the German state must adapt national security tools, and the Bundeswehr, to defend against domestic and foreign threats at home and abroad (BMVg 2011, p.2). The BMVg defines Germany's place in the world: "[as] characterised above all by our international responsibility for peace and freedom […] we are committed to serving world peace as a strong partner in a united Europe" (BMVg 2011, p.3). The German security objectives reflected such a commitment as defined by the DPGs:

- the security and protection of German citizens;
- the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Germany and its allies;
- the fulfilment of international responsibilities (BMVg 2011, p.4)

Table 1: excerpt from the Defence Policy Guidelines 2011, p.4

As can be seen above the German security thinking had embodied the ideology of being an active member in the existing alliances while ensuring that the international responsibilities of the state are serviced to the same degree. The DFGs go on to mention Germany's "responsibility in Europe and the World" which calls for "active participation" in international politics and key organisations such as the OSCE, NATO and institutional frameworks such as the European CSDP.

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[21] All sources originally in German were translated by the author for in text use.

The BMVg identifies five areas as key interests of Germany's politics:

- preventing, mitigating and managing crises and conflicts that endanger the security of Germany and its allies;
- advocating and implementing positions on foreign and security policy in an assertive and credible manner;
- strengthening transatlantic and European security and partnership;
- advocating the universality of human rights and principles of democracy, promoting global respect for international law and reducing the gap between the rich and poor regions of the world;
- facilitating free and unrestricted world trade as well as free access to the high seas and to natural resources. (BMVg 2011, p.4)

Table 2: excerpt from the Defence Policy Guidelines 2011, p.4

The interests and objectives of German international politics then directly flow into the mandate of the *Bundeswehr* of national defence and contribution to the security of Germany's allies while "supporting multinational cooperation and European integration" (BMVg 2011, p.9).

The Framework Nation concept, a mechanism established in 2011, promotes multilateral cooperation and integration among both EU and NATO member states, also finds prominent mention in the DPGs. The federal government must ensure that the *Bundeswehr* is able to take on the responsibilities of being a framework nation to augment other state's contributions.

The term 'capabilities' has been a staple of German defence documents and policies and in recent years this staple has become a nuisance for most Defence Ministers. The *Bundeswehr* is often lacking in most areas from the supply of spare parts to the delivery of equipment and weapons systems[22].

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[22] Such as the A-400M strategic lift aircraft (Wiegold 2018).

Another key idea that is reiterated throughout the texts is the concept of ‘responsibility’. This concept of the EU and particularly of a major European state like Germany is what joins many of these texts together. Since the 1990s German politicians have argued for taking on more responsibility and to act accordingly to the standing that Germany had and still has.

Diplomatically and economically speaking, the Germans can stand beside their partners and shoulder the shared responsibilities. However, in the security sector and specifically the military sector Germany and her European allies are playing catch up. Below are excerpts from the speeches of von der Leyen, Steinmeier, and Gauck at the MSC in 2014 which highlight the importance placed on Germany taking on more responsibility in international politics and for remaining active members of alliances.

Von der Leyen: “If we have the means and capabilities then we also have the responsibility to become involved […] **this means that we have the duty and responsibility to contribute to the steady resolution to current crises and conflicts**” (Emphasis in original) (BMVg 2014, p.5)
Steinmeier: “The tackling of foreign policy responsibilities should always be specific. It should not reduce itself to outraged rhetoric or in the commenting on the efforts and activities of others” (Auswärtiges Amt 2014, p.2)
Gauck: “Politicians always have to take responsibility for their actions. […] We would be deceiving ourselves if we were to believe that Germany was an island and thus protected from the vicissitudes of our age” (Bundespräsidialamt 2014, p.5)

Table 3: Excerpts from the speeches of Ministers von der Leyen, Steinmeier and President Gauck at the MSC 2014

German pacifist ideology has evolved throughout the late 20th and early 21st century to include potentially forceful actions to protect the safety and security of peoples. The *Kultur der Zurückhaltung*[23] has been rejected by political elites and segments of civil society (Auswärtiges Amt 2014; Bundespräsidialamt 2014).

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[23] Culture of Restraint

6.1 MSC 2014

As has been stated above, the MSC2014 created a disturbance within German media and resulted in critical discussions on the core ideas of German security and defence. The purpose of this section is to outline the contents of the coverage and offer main conclusions that can be drawn from this: German opinions at the time had not strictly differed on the use of force since the early 2000s, either the idea was fully supported or opposed. German opinions had very little middle ground on this issue. The concept of responsibility is a generally accepted ideal, though how it should be engaged with is often open to interpretation. It has been commented that a key point in German politics is that there isn't much debate on the 'how' but more on the 'why'.

The statements made by Gauck, Steinmeier, and von der Leyen received a plethora of media attention within Germany and in Europe. The following segment will look at a few articles and op-eds to underline the main discourse which emerged in German media following the MSC. The initial reactions to the MSC statements were generally positive. Points were made by *Die Welt*, that the speeches of Gauck, Steinmeier, and von der Leyen finally were asking the tough questions and making a stand in emphasising Germany's role in Europe and in security and defence (Stürmer 2014).

Slightly more reserved were contributions from the *Spiegel Online*, *Der Tagesspiegel*, and *Zeit* which emphasised the message and overall tone of the speeches and highlighted the key point: Germany must take on more responsibility (Marschall 2014; Spiegel Online 2014; Zeit 2014). The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) quoted Gauck in heralding the end of the culture of restraint and demanding a stronger role of Germany in international politics and security (FAZ 2014).

The FAZ reiterated the statements of von der Leyen the “German government was ready to engage in crises and conflicts in the Middle East”. The FAZ contribution to the overall discourse on the conference remained neutral in its reporting but highlighted the importance that the speakers assigned to emphasizing the responsibility of Germany in international security and that Germany must be ready to do its part (FAZ 2014).

Within the initial responses to the events, were also a few reactions which questioned where such a path would lead. Bittner and Naß (2014) highlighted that demanding more action and more engagement from Germany is, in principle, an interesting idea but leaving the contents of what this could look like open to interpretation without a way ahead was dangerous. They go on to point out that a new foreign policy approach could be suggested by the three that attended the conference, but the buck would stop at Merkel. Given the political context at the time, the point was raised that even with these passionate speeches, Merkel would take a step back and wait for events to unfold and facts to fall into place (Bittner and Naß 2014).

Jakob Augstein from *Der Spiegel* saw in the speeches a dangerous precedent. He argued that for 20 years German troops had been fighting and dying around the globe and questions whether this is not enough. Taking on more responsibility will result in more military deployments, both a financial burden and an emotional one that Germany would then have to shoulder. Augstein argues that the engagements of the Bundeswehr since reunification had already been plentiful and costly, and in the case of Afghanistan completely useless (Augstein 2014). He criticises the tendency to herald the end of the culture of (military) restraint as this only results in “more steel, more meat!” and that such an approach serves absolutely no purpose.

Among the coverage were pieces on a separate discussion panel where retired Chancellor Helmut Schmidt painted a rather grim picture of the future for Germany and NATO. In the panel, Schmidt pointed towards future challenges which would confront Germany and its allies sooner rather than later, such as over population, and the misuse of military forces for issues that would naturally fall within policing (Blumencron 2014; Kreutzer 2014).

Media coverage of this event continued and op-eds referencing the points made are still produced. In 2015 Naß looked back on the events of the MSC 2014, which kicked off a discourse on security politics within Germany and points out that in that year it seemed that allies, partners, and academics had begun considering Germany as a large power. He quotes the director of the Chatham House, Robin Niblett, who stated that Germany had become a medium power within Europe.

Naß underlines that this is in no way the direction that these speeches were meant to go. Germany wishes to remain a reliable European ally, not a power of any magnitude. He also argues that such thinking allows for Cold War thinking to regain a foothold in European politics and emphasises that Germany shouldn’t be drawn into a strategic debate which will inevitably revolve around deterrence, increasing arms and escalating. Wulf Schmiese from Cicero also wrote a piece looking back from December 2014 on the events of the year to contextualise the arguments and asks what had come of the words from the MSC. Schmiese (2014) pointedly illustrates that the Ukrainian crisis had been the first test for Germany’s big words on responsibility and being active in international affairs: and Germany had failed. Miserably.

Schmiese argues that the words from Gauck, Steinmeier, and von der Leyen had had nothing behind them bar ideas. He also comments on the withdrawal of German troops from crises regions. His bottom line is that the withdrawal does not support the key statements from Gauck, Steinmeier and von der Leyen of taking on more responsibility (Schmiese 2014).

6.2 The European Global Strategy

This subsection will outline the core principles and concepts of the EUGS. It will argue that the EUGS could not invigorate CSDP in the same way that the ESS in 2003 did. This is in part as it does not build on known shortfalls, nor does it offer clear guidance on a way ahead for European security and defence. This paper lists discusses the EUGS simply as it is a major policy document which, could have, shaped the security and defence policies of the member nations moving forward.

The EUGS reaffirm a point which has become common knowledge in Europe: the EU member states must become more engaged in security and defence for the EU to remain a respected and reliable actor in the international field and a “responsible global stakeholder” (EU 2016, p.8) This involves shouldering the responsibility of being members of a powerful multinational union with both soft and hard power capabilities (EU 2016). The European Union justifies its actions and motivations as an actor through the norms and values that are enshrined through the treaties of the EU and through adherence to the belief in the universality of human rights, international peace, and the primacy of human and international law.

According to the EUGS[24], resilience, cooperation, multilateralism, unity, partnership with NATO and strategic autonomy for European states form the foundations for future actions and policy. Dembinski and Peters (2018) argue that Brexit and the election of Trump in the U.S gave the restart of CSDP an extra dynamic, as the French and German colleagues pushed a shared agenda. The motivations for Franco-German relations led to both defence ministers lobbying for an EU Headquarters built on the model of the already existent Air Transport Command.

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[24] Published in 2016 following the British referendum for the British exit from the EU.

Through previous consensuses the EU and NATO agreed that EU military capabilities would best be used to complement those of the NATO. The EU calls for strengthening of national and international defence industry in Europe to facilitate the goals of more autonomy for the EU while enhancing the relationship with NATO (EU 2016).

The EUGS appeals to member states to increase their commitments and contributions to Europe's security and defence, which both reflects the operational truth that EU states are currently underperforming in this field and that the security situation in Europe and its peripheries no longer allows for freeriding in military and defence matters.

The crisis in Ukraine has destabilised the eastern frontiers of the EU and NATO and become the topic of greater security concerns among those states directly bordering the Russian Federation. As such the EUGS offers to engage with Russia to "discuss agreements and cooperate if and when our interests overlap" (EU 2016, p.33) while emphasising that a "consistent and united approach must remain the cornerstone of EU policy towards Russia" (EU 2016, p.33). The annexation of Crimea by Russia and the continued intervention in eastern Ukraine are still condemned and criticised[25] (EEAS 2018b).

6.3 The *Weißbuch* 2016

The *Weißbuch* (WB) 2016 is a key stone for German security and defence policy and for the definition of Germany's role and ambitions in the international field as it is the first *Weißbuch* to be published in close cooperation with external sources in Germany[26] and because the last such policy document was published in 2006.

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[25] The response to the conflict has so far only resulted in an advisory mission from the EU with little to no hope of reforming the security sector in a significant way to counter Russian influence and power in the country (Nováky 2015; Smith 2017).

[26] These included think tanks and external specialists.

It is to be expected that Germany’s policy outlooks would reflect the positions of the 2011 DPGs while accounting for the greater need for cooperation within NATO and the EU to remain both multilateral and ensure that German policy can help shape the security landscape both near and far (Linnenkamp and Möllig 2015). The WB specifically states that German identity is inseparable from the European one, while being shaped by Germany’s historical lessons and the constitution (BMVg 2016).

Along with the usual suspects of threats to modern nation states the *Weißbuch* highlights the threat from the cyber realm, the diffusion of power from the state level, and the threat emanating from pandemics and epidemics. The BMVg states that Germany holds on to the long-term goal of a strategic partnership between NATO and Russia while simultaneously the Germans advocate an immediate two-pronged approach of believable deterrence and the willingness for dialogue (BMVg 2016).

On the topic of the future of the EU, or at the very least the future of European defence and security, the German WB aimed for the establishment of a European Defence Union. On the way to this goal German defence and security thinkers banked firstly on the continued development of CSDP; second on the understanding that all mechanisms made available by the Lisbon Treaty would be utilised, such as PESCO; third, on the closed bi- and multi-lateral cooperation in military and defence matters among the EU member states; and finally, on the expansion of capabilities of European NATO states (BMVg 2016).

However, regarding all four of these assumptions, Germany has not been able to follow through or has slowed the development down, as is evident from the development of PESCO. Political rhetoric in Germany has strongly advocated more integration into EU institutions and structures but actual policy pushing such an agenda has not been introduced.

The relationship between NATO and the EU is a prominent aspect within the *Weißbuch* and particularly interesting is the sentence "NATO is reliant on cooperation with the EU" (BMVg 2016, p.69). It places the existence of NATO in direct relation with that of the EU and implies that both organisations can only effectively function in the current threat environment when they work in concert. The term 'responsibility' has been featured in all texts and the *Weißbuch* is no exception to this. The duty of Germany in the modern era is that of a security guarantor, this requires that German policy encompasses the military obligations which this position brings with it, as is expected by partners and allies (BMVg 2016).

In this regard the BMVg proposes that the armaments and defence related expenditures and the processes within the government be streamlined[27]; this proposal is supported by speeches made by von der Leyen in 2018 both at the MSC and at a conference of the *Bundeswehr* (BMVg 2018a, 2018b). The *Weißbuch* states:

> "Therefore, we must plan, develop, purchase, and provide military capabilities together while simultaneously increasing the interoperability of our armed forces to enhance Europe's capability to act." (BMVg 2016)

which emphasises the standpoint of the BMVg and the Federal government that the EU and Europe needs greater cooperation in defence budgets while also strengthening the individual national militaries.

At the MSC 2018 von der Leyen opened her speech with the statement that "Germany must carry more responsibility in questions relating to foreign and security policy" (BMVg 2018a, p.2), a claim which not only echoes the ideas of the 1990s and more recently of the Federal Government in Germany but also continues the rhetoric from the MSC 2014. She goes on to highlight Germany's relationship and engagement in EU, NATO, and UN contexts. This list of operations and roles in world politics signifies a willingness to become involved, though it leaves room for improvement as von der Leyen states later (BMVg 2018a).

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[27] This is to ensure that funds for defence projects which will both improve the capabilities of the *Bundeswehr* and modernise the armed forces as a whole, while enabling a more effective cooperation with partner states (BMVg 2016)

The speech underscores that the discussions on the division on labour between NATO and the EU should not fall into the old rut of arguing that one organisation be solely responsible for the sharp end while the other works on the aftermath, rebuilding and humanitarian aid, both tasks are two sides of the same coin (BMVg 2018a).

The calls for more cooperation in EU security and defence and within the framework of NATO, continue to be reaffirmed very vocally both by German defence minister von der Leyen but also throughout the EUGS and the WB. Von der Leyen affirms that collective defence and national defence have since 2014 become a policy field which needs to be serviced much more than previously. “Territorial and collective defence are the most demanding tasks, where we also have the most backlog” (BMVg 2018b, p.3) especially since the annexation of Crimea and hostilities in eastern Ukraine have brought conflict to the edges of the alliance territories once more (BMVg 2018b).

In line with this assessment she asserts that the capabilities of the *Bundeswehr* will be the focus for many policy initiatives and work groups. The objective of a ready *Bundeswehr* with the ability to employ the full spectrum of operations is a ‘must’ for Germany to remain a dependable partner for the EU, NATO, and the international community (BMVg 2018b). This is also likely a response to the recent issue of missing strategic transportation. The Russian partner company which provided this capability, has unsurprisingly not renewed the leasing contract and it is claimed that this is likely a response to EU sanctions on Russia (Leithäuser 2018).

As a symbol of the German commitment to its alliances von der Leyen has made it the priority of the military and defence policy to prepare for a fully functional and equipped *Bundeswehr* in the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force for 2023 (BMVg 2018b). The requirement of a single set of forces able to employ the full spectrum of defence capabilities is not new either, the EUGS and the European council requested that such a readiness be ensured by its member states in 2016 (EU 2016; Dembinski and Peters 2018).

Therefore, it can be argued that German security and defence policy mirrors that of the European Union and the rhetoric that surrounds this policy reflects the wish of German leadership to remain a viable partner and shaper of security and defence in the international global order. However, the language used by von der Leyen is purposefully ambiguous and offers little concrete substance. The audience will make their own conclusions, while the minister keeps her options open for policy and prevents rustling any feathers. This serves to promoting her own political motives and purpose, as is argued by Rayroux on the topic of speaking European defence (2013), all the while not actively fulfilling the pledges made by Germany in this regard.

6.4 Towards capabilities and a security and defence discourse?

In terms of a whether European policy has enabled a discourse within Germany on matters of defence and security, there is in fact little evidence to fully support this claim. Despite the EUGS Germany has not had an in-depth discourse á la pre-Yugoslavia on security and defence and the capabilities which are being developed currently (mainly within the cyber realms) will likely not be the silver bullet that they are made out to be for bringing the Bundeswehr into the 21st Century. The failure to hold such a discourse has led Berlin to the current situation of half-baked ideas and concepts for engaging at eye-level with partners and allies on security and defence (Ash 2015).

Bulmer and Paterson (2019) argue that Germany is not ready to take on a leadership role in CSDP. Even if Berlin wanted to take on such a role the current situation within Europe, with Brexit on the horizon, political leadership would raise concerns about Germany hegemony. As these authors put it “defence is not an area where Berlin can play the role of hegemon and is unlikely to for the foreseeable future due to resource weakness” (Bulmer and Paterson 2019, p.76). The gap in expectations of Germany in these affairs and the deliverables of the federal republic in shaping the agenda and having willing followers is only widening (Hellman in Bulmer and Paterson 2019).

Germany is an economic powerhouse, but a military dwarf[28]. EU policy and partners urging more engagement and leadership from Berlin have not resulted in capabilities which would permit greater German leadership in security and defence, both within the EU and NATO. Security and defence policy in Germany is currently, and has been for a while, paradoxical. Despite greater interest in foreign policy and engagement this has not translated into actions “in any area where German troops could come into harm’s way” (Bulmer and Paterson 2019, p.223).

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[28] A variation of the popular phrase ‘economic giant, political dwarf’ usually used to describe the EU.

7. Conclusion

"Who will be *in* and who will be *out*? Ultimately that is up to the leaders and the peoples of Europe to decide. But in security and defence, let us believe that strength lies in numbers! (Riekeles 2016, p.23)

To say that Germany has a strategic culture would be a stretch of the imagination, however the foundations for such a culture and the associated active participation in security and defence within Europe and its peripheries are present. The hints of such a culture were forged in the ashes of Germany during the Cold War, maintained during the turbulent 90s and moulded in the early 2000s into a seedling which could eventually germinate into a reliable, credible, and determined German contribution to security with ready, trained, and useable armed forces.

Strength in numbers seems to be the most adequate way to describe German thinking on security and defence. As has been shown above, Germany's defence and security policy has evolved from being a pacifist diplomat to becoming an actor with both soft and hard power capabilities, willing to become involved also militarily in crises management and conflict resolution.

Berlin's politics have always looked towards its allies and partners as a point of reference for its security and defence thinking, and as such the rhetoric and policy making processes have reflected this. However, the implementation from promises and rhetoric to capabilities has been a, painfully, slow process and is far from being complete. It is to be expected that German involvement and active participation within NATO and the EU will increase within the next decade, and, if von der Leyen is to be believed, Germany will be able to shoulder the responsibility of its own security while cooperating with its partners to facilitate an 'Army of Europeans'.

German investment into the armed forces is currently on the rise, with more budget allocated yearly[29], and with this new investment it is likely that the EU and NATO partners will see Germany becoming more involved and vocal in security and defence, while maintaining the voice of reason which promotes diplomatic resolutions followed up with development and stability. The security landscape in Europe is changing at a steady pace, and it remains to be seen if or how Germany will live up to its own expectations and those of NATO and EU allies. Currently, Germany is only weakening western defence with its lethargic contributions. The continued lack of actual public support for a more active Germany limits Germany's ability to support its allies. Germany will likely face difficulties within the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union very soon if nothing is done to reduce the gap between rhetoric and capabilities, given the steady shift of inner European politics towards the right and the continued crises on the European eastern and southern peripheries.

The conclusions of this thesis can be summarised as "[underscoring] the need for a bolder, more assertive Germany" (Larrabee et al. 2015, p.27) in the EU and NATO to adequately reflect the intentions of taking on more responsibility and remaining a reliable partner.

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[29] Though this trend will remain subject to the whims of domestic debate and political bickering in the Bundestag, as recent debates on the 2% GDP goals established in Wales have shown.

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