

Germany's Changing Perception and its Role in the Alliance - The NATO Warsaw Summit and its Implications -

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On September 24, 2017, German chancellor Angela Merkel's governing party, the CDU/CSU, succeeded in keeping its position as the largest party in the German parliament, the "Bundestag." But the junior partner in her grand coalition, the SPD, suffered a historical defeat. The SPD decided not to continue in the grand coalition. Negotiations among the CDU/CSU, the FDP and the Green Party to form a new coalition, the so-called "Jamaica coalition," failed in November 2017. The new negotiation to form a new grand coalition was opened in January 2018.

The basic foreign and security policies of the new coalition government will not be changed from those of the old grand coalition, and even though Chancellor Merkel will stick to her course, we might have to expect more uncertainties than under the grand coalition government.

During the grand coalition period from 2013 to 2017, German foreign and security policy was characterized by a new activism. As a major economic power, it became increasingly clear to the decision makers in Germany that the country had to share more responsibility in foreign and security policy. Thus, the NATO summits of Wales in 2014 and Warsaw in 2016 can be seen as symbolic occasions to show the transformation in Germany's commitment to its responsibility. Just after the Warsaw summit, in July 2016, the federal government presented a new white paper, "White Paper 2016: German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr." The process involved in putting together this white paper took almost two years. Wide-ranging discussions in the government, and with experts and civil society, showed the way in which foreign and security issues are dealt with in Germany. The renewal of a policy doctrine document white paper for the first time since 2006 symbolizes the new perceptions and policy guidelines of the German government.

Germany is a regional power. Germany's alliance policy has impact on the neighboring partners. In his sense, we cannot regard Germany just as a small power depending on the superior power of the United States.

This paper examines Germany's policy toward the NATO Warsaw summit and developments in its security policy. In the first section, changes in foreign and security policy under Chancellor Merkel's coalition governments (Merkel I: 2005-2009 CDU/CDU and SPD; Merkel II: 2009-2013 CDU/CSU and FDP; Merkel III: 2013-2017) are discussed. In the second section, domestic discussion regarding the NATO summits and security policy are analyzed. As the German military force, the Bundeswehr is often characterized as "the army of the parliament," and an analysis of the Bundestag is at the center of our discussion. In the third section, the implications of Germany's position in NATO will be discussed.

Although a major alliance partner, Germany was neither willing nor capable of leading the alliance by itself. Nowadays, however, Germany's presence and role are having a decisive impact on the alliance.

1. The Reform of the Bundeswehr and German Security Policy - The Road to a New White Paper

Since reunification in 1990, reform of the German military force, the Bundeswehr, was a continuous focus of German security policy discussion. Constructing the European Security and Defense Policy as one of the tools for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union (EU) was a political goal of EU member states. And the contribution of Germany was indispensable. But as the use of its force was restricted during the cold war period to territorial defense purposes, the Bundeswehr did not match the new requirements of a changing international environment.

Though legal restrictions to the use of force were removed by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1994, the Bundeswehr had to be transformed to meet the demands of the new military roles for internal crisis management carried out by the EU's framework as well as by other multilateral frameworks. The Bundeswehr was established in a way that would prevent it from being able to become an independent institution outside of German society. By structuring the newly established force in this manner and binding Germany in a transatlantic alliance, rearmament and subsequent development succeeded. The Bundeswehr introduced the concept of the "citizen in uniform," and its system of conscription served as a connection between the Bundeswehr and German society. As a result, the Bundeswehr received much respect from society and succeeded in being embedded in the postwar German system.

Since the mid-1990s, many proposals were made to reform the Bundeswehr, but reform was not fully successful. The political discourse that conscription must be maintained to bridge the gap between society and the Bundeswehr, as well as budget constraints, made fundamental structural reform difficult. In July 2011, Germany finally suspended conscription for the Bundeswehr. By making the Bundeswehr a professional defense force, it should be a more effective, efficient and flexible military force suitable for a wide range of international crisis management roles. Defense minister Thomas de Maizière continued reform of the Bundeswehr after the resignation of the popular defense minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, who succeeded in leading the political discussion to suspend conscription. The Defense Policy Guideline document (*Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien*) of 2011 marked the reorientation of the Bundeswehr by setting the personnel ceiling at the lowest level ever. As Gunther Hellmann points out, the older Defense Policy Guideline of 2003 already defined a change in defense strategy¹, but the 2011 Guideline further defined structural change of the Bundeswehr. Through this process, the perception after the end of the Cold War and German reunification that the major security issue for Germany is not territorial defense from an enemy state but rather crisis management contributions to the international community materialized in the Bundeswehr.

¹ Gunther Hellmann, "Normativ Abgerüstet, aber selbstbewusst. Deutsche Außenpolitik im 20. Jahr nach der Vereinigung", *Internationale Politik*, October, 2010, S.1-6.

Though the 2011 Guideline committed to the use of military force if required and made it clear to use the Bundeswehr as an instrument of foreign policy, the capability of the Bundeswehr had still not been updated to the new international environment. And the cautious attitude of the Merkel II government under the CDU/CSU and FDP coalition could meet neither the expectations of other members of the alliance nor of the EU. It can also be argued that the importance of budget discipline in Germany outweighed the commitment to reform of the Bundeswehr. Moreover, the political hesitance to be entangled in military conflict was still strong, as was shown during the Libyan crisis in 2011. Foreign minister Guido Westerwelle of the liberal FDP party maintained his position during the crisis not to participate in military action against Libya. His rhetorical commitment to the alliance was no different from that of his predecessors, but a reluctance to be an important player in security issues made German foreign and security policy seem unreliable from the perspectives of other partners. Local elections and the public mood can also be added to the reasons for abstention in the UN. Thus, Germany's reputation as a reliable partner, which attaches great importance to the principle of solidarity, was damaged.

With the beginning of Chancellor Merkel's third term and another grand coalition government, consisting of the CDU/CSU and the SPD, Germany seemed to shift its course, taking an active role in foreign and security issues. The coalition agreement has stressed the importance of Germany's "responsibility in the world" (Chapter 7 of the agreement) as a reliable partner.

In a speech at the annual Munich Security Conference, German president Joachim Gauck stated: "Germany has long since demonstrated that it acts in an internationally responsible way. But it could – building on its experience in safeguarding human rights and the rule of law – take more resolute steps to preserve and help shape the order based on the European Union, NATO and the United Nations. At the same time, Germany must also be ready to do more to guarantee the security that others have provided it with for decades²." Foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Defense minister Ursula von der Leyen also proclaimed a course of "active foreign policy." Thus, the start of the Merkel III government was characterized by a new activism. And the Ukraine crisis, nuclear negotiations with Iran and crises in the Middle East provided enough opportunities to demonstrate the German commitment. The NATO Wales summit was held under these circumstances.

Defense minister Ursula von der Leyen announced in October 2014 the publishing of a new white paper. Prior to that, a white paper had been published in 2006. At that time, Russia was still regarded as a partner, the Middle East had not yet experienced the Arab Spring and the EU was not faced with multifaceted crises. As a fundamental guideline of the defense ministry, the new white paper should have strategically reviewed new developments and the future of German security policy. The goal of the white paper was defined as follows: "The White Paper defines Germany's ambition to play an active

² <http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Reden/EN/JoachimGauck/Reden/2014/140131-Munich-Security-Conference.html>

and substantial role in security policy. It reflects our identity and understanding of security policy. On the basis of our values, national interests and an analysis of the security environment, it defines Germany's strategic priorities and translates them into key areas of engagement for German security policy³." The white paper has two parts: the first part is dedicated to security policy, and the second to the organization of the Bundeswehr. In this sense, the white paper is not only designed for military and defense issues but also as a foreign and security policy document.

It is noteworthy that the process to compile the document took almost one and a half years. This was because of the coordination needed among the related ministries. The comprehensive security concept pursued by the German government requires not only military instruments for security policy but also a wide-ranging combination of diplomatic, economic and social instruments. In the process of discussing the white paper, an inclusive approach was adopted in which civil society and international partners also participated⁴.

The white paper highlights the perception that Germany's security environment has become more complex and volatile and that security policy is facing a wide range of previously unknown challenges, such as transnational terrorism, cybercrimes, fragile states, climate change, migration, etc. Thus, the necessity of a whole-government approach is stressed.

Even though the changing security environment is discussed in detail, the inextricable link of Germany's security to that of NATO and the EU remains unchanged. The alliance's solidarity is defined as a fundamental principle for Germany. And in this white paper, the importance of national and collective defense is again stressed.

The white paper also has the function of informing the alliance partners about the perception and strategic goals of the German government. The final white paper process in 2016 and the preparation process of the NATO Warsaw summit were carried out almost in parallel.

Defense minister de Maizière proposed a new initiative, the Framework Nations Concept (FNC), in 2013. The FNC was endorsed by the NATO Wales summit. Major and Mölling point out that Germany tried to pursue three goals with the FNC: maintaining the spectrum of its capabilities and military structures, coordinating international defense planning at a higher level, and taking a visible initiative at the Wales summit⁵. The white paper appraises the introduction of the FNC and commitment of the German government to increase the relevance and visibility of European alliance members in NATO⁶.

³ The Federal Government, *White Paper 2016: On German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*, 2016, p.15.

⁴ In a similar manner, the review process of the foreign policy ("Review 2014 – Außenpolitik weiter denken") was conducted by the leadership of foreign minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Cf. Annegret Bendiek, "The "2014 Review": Understanding the Pillars of German Foreign Policy and the Expectations of the rest of the World", 2015/05, SWP.

⁵ Claudia Major and Christian Mölling, "The Framework Nations Concept: Germany's Contribution to a Capable European Defence", *SWP Comments*, December 2014, p.2.

⁶ The Federal Government, *White Paper 2016*. p.67.

The FNC is a multilateral initiative and, in this sense, is in line with Germany's foreign policy tradition. But at the same time, with this ambitious initiative Germany has made it clear that it is willing to take a new level of responsibility to contribute to the readiness of NATO within Europe. The white paper demands: "In order to make a tangible and valuable contribution, the Bundeswehr must above all ensure the availability of these capabilities and encourage sufficient interoperability and industrial standardization⁷."

It is also interesting to note that the so-called "two per cent target⁸" of the defense budget ratio to GDP is also mentioned in the white paper, albeit with some reservation: "The Allies have agreed to move towards the long-term goal of spending a minimum of two per cent of their gross domestic product on defense. Germany remains committed to achieving this goal within the framework of its financial potential and resources. The crucial factor is still, however, the concrete result of this expenditure. Greater attention needs to be paid to how nationally invested funds contribute to strengthening NATO capabilities. This relationship between input and output is the guiding principle governing Germany's actions⁹."

2. Domestic Politics and the NATO Warsaw Summit

(1) Change before the Summit

As mentioned, the period from the Wales summit to the Warsaw summit can be described as a period of long transformation in security policy in Germany. More active commitment to security issues and the strengthening of the commitment to the alliance can be symbolized by the FNC initiative. Three core tasks—collective defense, international crisis management and cooperative security—had long been the three pillars of NATO's function. And after the Wales summit, they remained unchanged.

Nevertheless, it was clear that Germany must become more aware of concerns of its eastern and southern partners under the new security environment after Russia broke the fundamental principle of the security order with its annexation of Crimea. To make collective defense more credible, Germany contributed to the realization and implementation of the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) by organizing the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) with the Netherlands and Norway and creating the Multinational Corps Headquarters Northeast in Szczecin¹⁰. This demonstrates how Germany is becoming sensitive to the feelings of its eastern allies.

As the German ambassador to NATO pointed out in reference to the Warsaw summit, it was

⁷ The Federal Government, *White Paper 2016*. p.98.

⁸ Wales Summit Declaration, paragraph 15.

⁹ The Federal Government, *White Paper 2016*. p.67.

¹⁰ Cf. Rede Botschafter Dr. Lucas anlässlich der 11. Petersberger Gespräche zur Sicherheit: „Die Zukunft der deutschen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik“ Einführungsvortrag zum sicherheitspolitischen Rahmen Steigenberger Grandhotel Petersberg, Königswinter, am 24. Oktober 2015, p.8. (http://www.nato.diplo.de/contentblob/4649664/Daten/5974836/20151024_Rede_Die_Zukunft_der_deutschen_Auen_und_Sicherheitspolitik.pdf)

prominent to send a clear message to maintain cohesion and unity within the alliance, to implement the decisions taken at the Wales summit and to proceed with long-term adaptation of NATO in order to meet new challenges and safeguard NATO's ability to act vis-à-vis threats in both the East and the South¹¹.

It is worthy to note that this German return to collective defense is not a unilateral action. As financial resources are limited and the austerity norm is a defined and societally embedded principle in the German constitution, even though the "two per cent" GDP target is an official goal, Germany is not willing to increase its defense budget too rapidly but intends to strengthen its capabilities in the NATO structure with its allies in a multilateral manner. The FNC should also be seen from this standpoint¹².

At the same time, from a German point of view, aspects of cooperative security must be combined with a strengthening of collective defense measures. Though Russia is no longer a trustworthy partner, it is still not an enemy who must be contained. The type of confrontation seen during the Cold War should not be reiterated. In many political speeches, we see that the mention of strengthening collective defense and deterrence is followed by reference to cooperative security, namely dialogue with Russia and trust-building in the NATO-Russia Council.

Ambassador Lucas stresses this aspect, referencing the Harmel Report: "It goes without saying that the answer to the question of how to deal with Russia cannot be purely military. Ever since the Harmel Report was published in 1967, the dual-track policy of deterrence and defence, on the one hand, and détente and dialogue, on the other hand, is engrained in the DNA of the North Atlantic Alliance. NATO is not only a military, but also a political alliance. This requires using political channels of communication, as well as strengthening mutual transparency and building trust. That is why we need a combination of strength and dialogue¹³." This dual-track policy is not only the DNA of NATO but also that of Germany's Ostpolitik.

(2) The Bundestag and Its Control over Security Issues

By analyzing parliamentary discussions in the preparation process for the Warsaw summit, we can further observe a similar structure of discourse in Germany: return to deterrence and defense on the one hand, and dialogue with Russia on the other.

Before looking at the parliamentary debate, it may be useful to mention that Germany tried in a sense to regain control over security issues. As Markus Kaim pointed out, Germany was often entangled in a "multilateralism trap;" this means that if international partners are committed in a multilaterally coordinated operation, either in the EU or in NATO, Germany was almost automatically obliged to

¹¹ Hans Dieter Lucas, "From Wales to Warsaw – Adapting NATO's Setup", p.3.
http://www.nato.diplo.de/contentblob/4763000/Daten/6369435/20160216_Speech_Dr_Manfred_Woerner_Circle_at_NATO.pdf

¹² Ibid., p.4

¹³ Ibid.

participate in such an operation¹⁴. After participating, sometimes unwillingly, in many international operations after the 1994 Federal Constitutional Court's decision on the use of the Bundeswehr in "out-of-area" operations, parties agreed to review the situation. Though Chancellor Merkel's grand coalition government had very stable and wide support in the Bundestag, it was inevitable that foreign and security policy would be formally controlled by the Bundestag if Germany were to escape the negative impacts of the "multilateral trap."

In a grand coalition agreement, the establishment of a commission to review parliamentary rights regarding mandates for the Bundeswehr was agreed upon. As the progress of the FNC initiative and other forms of cooperation and integration in the alliance will have significant meaning in the future organization of the Bundeswehr, the so-called "Rühe Commission¹⁵" was established by the Bundestag to examine "how parliamentary rights can be safeguarded on the road to progressive Alliance integration and despite the growing diversity of tasks." The final report was submitted in June 2015. The report recommended that the government should submit annual reports to the Bundestag on "multilateral composite military capabilities." The "multilateral composite military capabilities" refer to "military capabilities formed within the framework of progressive Alliance integration, which require particular political trust on account of the dependencies with which they are associated¹⁶." And the Federal Government should inform the Bundestag of any such instances at an early stage. Though it was a modest recommendation to endorse this political commitment and make decision-making more legitimate by further improving the efficiency of the parliamentary control system, it was symbolic that this issue was formally discussed during this period.

(3) Party Lines and Security Policy

On July 7, 2016, one day before the Warsaw summit, a plenary session of the Bundestag dealt with the European security issue. Chancellor Merkel explained the position of the Federal Government. The discussion showed very clearly the political discourse in Germany.

Chancellor Merkel described the current situation in Europe and showed understanding to the eastern and southern members of the alliance. She emphasized at the beginning of her speech the importance of solidarity in the alliance, mentioning the German contribution to the VJTF and the Multinational Corps HQ. She also explained that the Warsaw NATO summit would supplement the measures decided in Wales, leading to a stronger NATO presence in Baltic states and Poland by enhanced forward presence and improving the capacity to counter cyber and hybrid threats. Then, she mentioned the importance of the NATO-Russia Founding Act of 1997, even if the basic principles

¹⁴ Markus Kaim, 'Deutsche Auslandseinsätze in der Multilateralismusfalle?' in: Stefan Mair, *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr*, SWP-Studie, September 2007, p.43-49.

¹⁵ Deutscher Bundestag, Printed Document, 18/5000, *Commission on the Review and Safeguarding of Parliamentary Rights regarding Mandates for Bundeswehr Missions Abroad*, 16.06.2015.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.4.

defined in the Act were violated by the Russian annexation of Crimea and acts of aggression against Ukraine. Citing the Act, she expressed her wishes that the relationship with Russia would go back to a spirit of developing “a strong, stable and enduring partnership” “on the basis of common interest, reciprocity and transparency¹⁷.” This speech shows again the double strategy of deterrence and dialogue, which is always present when the European security issue and NATO are discussed in Germany.

Parliamentary leader Thomas Oppermann spoke for the SPD, a partner in the grand coalition. He praised the diplomatic efforts of the SPD foreign minister, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and stressed that military strength alone cannot solve the problem in Ukraine and maintain peace in Europe. As the governing party’s representative, he also had no doubt of the importance of readiness for collective defense. But he put slightly more weight on the dialogue with Russia than the chancellor, saying that there can be no security in Europe without Russia and even less if against Russia. The other speaker from the SPD, Niels Annen, gave a textbook-like statement that Germany needs both the strength of the alliance, namely deterrence, and readiness for dialogue. Annen asserted that Germany should act according to the philosophy of the Harmel-Report. The “Ostpolitik” of the Cold War was often mentioned after the Ukraine crisis and the idea of a dual-track strategy was reiterated by many parliamentarians, especially those belonging to the SPD. The Harmel-Report was seen as a symbol of this approach.

It is also interesting to see that the SPD’s Wolfgang Hellmich pointed out the activity in the NATO parliamentary meeting. There, he supported the German government’s approach of a “360-degree perspective.” This 360-degree approach, centered on defense, not only against Russia on the eastern front but also in terms of keeping sufficient defense capability on the southern and other fronts, carried the message that NATO is not organized just against Russia but also for every possible threat, including threats from terrorism or risks from Syria.

During the legislature of 2013-2016, there were only two parties in opposition. And as the leftist party, die Linke, did not share security policy with any other parties in the Bundestag, it was against NATO and its strengthening of deterrence. The party did not have any practical influence on security issues, although it did submit written questions to the federal government. The questions concerning missile defense and NATO nuclear strategy included detailed points on military issues and thus were not answered in concrete terms¹⁸.

The other opposition party, the Green party, was well prepared for the discussion. It had previously submitted 55 written questions to the government and acquired very detailed answers¹⁹.

¹⁷ Deutscher Bundestag, *Stenografischer Bericht*, 183. Sitzung, 7. Juli 2016.

¹⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, Kleine Anfrage, „NATO-Raketenabwehrschirm und NATO-Nuklearstrategie im Umfeld des Warschauer Gipfels“, Drucksache 18/9004, 25.06.2016.

¹⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, Kleine Anfrage, „NATO-Gipfel in Warschau am 8. und 9. Juli 2016“, Drucksache 18/8788, 02.06.2016. Deutscher Bundestag, Antwort der Bundesregierung, Drucksache 18/8904, 05.07.2016.

Anton Hofreiter, the leader of the Green party, pointed out the need for more dialogue and efforts for de-escalation after mentioning the necessity for security and cohesiveness within the alliance. He appreciated the air policing activities of the Bundeswehr but warned of the continuing stationing of forces with Eastern allies, stating that it would violate the NATO-Russia Fundamental Act and escalate the situation.

Hofreiter mentioned the defense expenditure problem. He pointed out that if two per cent of GDP would be spent for defense, as promised by Chancellor Merkel, it would mean that an additional 25 billion euros would have to be spent for armaments. This argument is very often heard in Germany, among security issue experts as well as sometimes even from the governing party's members. There is a consensus among the major parties that Germany should possibly make an effort to increase the defense budget to two per cent of GDP, but it seems to be quite disputable how soon and under what conditions it should be done.

3. Implications from German Security and Alliance Policies

(1) Change of Perception

The period from the NATO Wales summit to the Warsaw summit was a period in which the Merkel III government tried to play a bigger role in world affairs. As Gunther Hellmann points out, a discursive shift took place within Germany. Germany realized and accepted the fact that “Germany is Europe’s ‘leading power’²⁰”. Foreign minister Steinmeier described Germany as a “chief facilitating officer” forging an ambitious and unified response to the challenges Europe is facing²¹. It is obvious that Germany is more and more conscious of its role in Europe. President Gauck described the new situation: “On the path becoming a guarantor rather than merely a consumer of international order and security, Germany has thus already come a long way²².” Germany’s position is perceived both in Europe and in Germany as a leading one.

However, from a military point of view, Germany is still not comparable with the U.S. Moreover, its budget for international engagement is still relatively small. With the goal setting of the Wales summit, the stagnation in defense budget growth ended and Germany spent significantly more in 2016. In addition, continuous efforts are being made to fulfill its responsibility in the alliance, even if the overly

²⁰ Gunther Hellmann, “Germany’s world: power and followership in a crisis-ridden Europe”, *Global Affairs*, 2016,2:1, p.7.

²¹ Frank-Walter Steinmeier, “Save Our Trans-Atlantic Order: The Postwar System Is Under Challenge”, *The New York Times*, March 11, 2015.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/12/opinion/save-our-trans-atlantic-order.html>

²² Speech read on behalf of Federal President Joachim Gauck by State Secretary David Gill, Head of the Office of the Federal President, on the presentation of the Ewald von Kleist Award by the Munich Security Conference in Munich on 18 February 2017.

http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Reden/2017/02/170218-Ewald-von-Kleist-Preis-Englisch.pdf?__blob=publicationFile

rapid increase in military expenditure is being criticized by the opposition.

Former top diplomat and the chairman of the Munich Security Conference, Wolfgang Ischinger, proposed increasing the budget for international engagement to a total of up to three per cent of GDP, a figure derived from the NATO goal of two per cent, a development cooperation commitment of 0.7% and miscellaneous foreign expenditures. So that Germany can flexibly use the budget, and not only just spend more for defense, the crisis management, foreign and development aid budget should be incorporated²³ according to Ischinger. The breakdown among those policy fields must be balanced continuously according to the situation. This idea shows on the one hand that Germany is ready to play a greater role in the international arena, but on the other hand the contribution must correspond with the principles of overall German foreign policy. The military aspect is indispensable, but diplomacy and the development of cooperation for regional stability must be the first tools for action. Germany should not be an unbalanced military power; the military contribution must be organized either within NATO or the EU.

The difficulty facing Germany during the period before and after the Warsaw summit was the problem of strengthening cooperation in the European Security and Defense Policy. Any potential initiative within the EU was made difficult by issues of sovereign debt and the subsequent Euro crisis, the refugee crisis and the move toward Brexit. In the face of these multifaceted crises, there was not much room for a new vision of the future. For Germany, it would be ideal if NATO and the EU could cooperate and coordinate their efforts as then military and civilian aspects of international security could be seamlessly coordinated.

At the Warsaw summit, the NATO-EU Joint declaration was adopted²⁴. The declaration contains commitments to strengthen the ability to counter hybrid threats, enhance maritime cooperation, expand coordination on cyber security, develop interoperable defense capabilities, etc. As the German ambassador to NATO pointed out, Europe cannot take care of its defense alone for the foreseeable future and the transatlantic link and NATO are inevitable, but “Europe has to deliver more than it did in the past²⁵.” The importance of the European contribution to the alliance will have more weight in the future. And the EU must also restart more intensive discussion regarding defense issues after a series of national elections in 2017.

(2) Implications for New Transatlantic Relations

²³ Wolfgang Ischinger, “Mehr Eigenverantwortung in und für Europa”, Wolfgang Ischinger and Dirk Messner (Hrsg.), *Deutschlands neue Verantwortung: Die Zukunft der deutschen und europäischen Außen-, Entwicklungs- und Sicherheitspolitik*, Econ, 2017, p.276.

²⁴ https://www.nato.int/cps/ic/natohq/official_texts_133163.htm

²⁵ Ambassador Hans-Dieter Lucas, “NATO after the summit in Warsaw: adapting to new security challenges – a German perspective”, September 28, 2016.

http://www.nato.diplo.de/Vertretung/nato/de/01/2016-09-28_Key-note_address_Adenauer_Forum.html

The unexpected election of Donald Trump as the president of the U.S shook the alliance. But it was fortunate for Germany that in the run-up to the Warsaw summit important preparations were done to accept more responsibility in NATO: defining Germany as a Framework Nation, increasing the defense budget, and participating in the VJTF among other measures. The white paper was published as a new doctrine. The Wales and Warsaw summits served as milestones transforming security and defense policy, with Germany managing to catch up to changes in the security environment in time.

After the Warsaw summit, to operationalize the strategic aims of the white paper, a new concept paper for the Bundeswehr was formulated. This so-called Bühler-Paper aims to reform the Bundeswehr twofold: together with the British and French armed forces, the Bundeswehr is to form the backbone of European defense within NATO; in addition, through the Framework Nations Concept, the Bundeswehr is to contribute to Europe's capacity to act as part of NATO²⁶. Though the paper originally came from a ministry intern, it proposed a total turn from the reform of 2011, which aimed to make the Bundeswehr suitable for international crisis management. According to this new concept, the army should be reorganized and collective defense will be at the center of its strategic objectives²⁷.

As it is still being negotiated among the possible coalition partners, it is not clear whether the Bühler-Paper's direction will be maintained under the new government. As long as Germany will not have a stable government, the fundamental structural military reform cannot be fully implemented. The Green party's reservations concerning higher disproportionate military spending might have an impact on the discussion in the parliament.

Nevertheless, if the stable government will be formed, the emergence of Germany as one of the European pillars of collective defense, both in its will and capability, contributes to the stabilization of transatlantic relations.

²⁶ Rainer L. Glatz and Martin Zapfe, "Ambitious Framework Nation: Germany in NATO: Bundeswehr Capability Planning and the "Framework Nations Concept"", *SWP Comments*, 35, September 2017.

²⁷ "Verteidigungsministerium will das Heer umstrukturieren", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 06.04.2017, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/verteidigungsministerium-will-heer-umstrukturieren-14960534.html>