

Unravelling Order, Uncertain Future? The International System and Transatlantic Relations in Transition

Bonn International Security Forum 2017 – Full Report
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„If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.“

*Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa
The Leopard, London: Fontana, 1963*

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Executive Summary

Uncertainty marks the world order. What order will emerge from the current crisis of liberal multilateralism? Can Europe and the U.S. move forward together in spite of significant internal conflict? Are we living in the final days of the liberal order, or is our current system more resilient than doomsayers suggest?

American and European experts and practitioners of foreign and security policy convened in Bonn on October 25, 2017, for the second Bonn International Security Forum to discuss pressing issues in the present and future of European and transatlantic security. The current and former staff of the German and American foreign and defense ministries; members of German, French, Hungarian, American, and Russian research institutions; as well as German policymakers on the regional and national level debated the future of German and American security policy and its repercussions for an international order in three lively sessions.

While some experts at the Forum viewed reduced American engagement in world affairs as a potential trigger for a transformation toward unilateralism and protectionism, others maintained that the institutions and rules embodying liberal multilateralism are both tried and tested enough to withstand current pressures. Managing the current state of the international order is like driving a car with a cracked windshield: a fully functional construction whose entire structural integrity could fail if a major shock occurred. Crises with potential for escalation, shock, and awe are manifold: from North Korea to Iran or the Middle East, the stability of several world regions is currently at a tipping point. Participants agreed: in such uncertain times, resilience is the key to the sustainability of the current order. Not all risks and threats can be

deterred or managed, so the ability to absorb shocks and respond to crises, be they economic, political, or military, is more critical than ever. The gradual withdrawal of the U.S. under President Trump from the world stage means that Europe, in particular, will have to enhance its capabilities for international engagement. No matter how successful a leader Europe might become in foreign affairs, however, the maintenance of a peaceful international order will continue to depend on the U.S. – for better or for worse.

So what can and must Europe do next? European security and defense policy remain in dire need of reform, although the establishment of the European Defense Fund, Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), and other recent advances in European defense cooperation, which attracted much attention throughout the Forum, might just ring in a new chapter in regional integration. Still, not all rhetoric becomes a reality, and long-standing obstacles such as diverging strategic priorities or preferences for national over regional defense will have to be addressed in the near future. While Europe's military capabilities must be enhanced to lend the continent geopolitical weight and credibility as an international leader, a common defense policy, however difficult it may be to achieve, is just as crucial for greater European autonomy and unity in international relations.

Participants reached a broad consensus that the U.S. would nevertheless remain indispensable for European security. As a consequence, several experts suggested that Europe – and Germany in particular – would be well-advised to make itself an indispensable ally to its American partner, emphasizing the need to create more integrated European defense policies and structures that are still sufficiently complementary to



Participants of the 2017 Security Forum

NATO. Other proposals on NATO burdensharing proved to be more controversial. Above all, the Wales Summit agreement on the 2 percent defense spending target remains a point of contention between Europe and the U.S. While Americans underlined that the call for higher European defense spending is near-ubiquitous among U.S. policymakers, Europeans suggested that the American leadership should perhaps adopt a more differentiated understanding of defense spending, including funds spent on development and nation building.

Ongoing crises as well as longer-term power shifts, especially toward the Asia-Pacific, render the necessity for a robust transatlantic security partnership with a strengthened European pillar all the more apparent. Experts' advice at the Bonn International Security Forum is clear: If Europe and the U.S. want to preserve the cornerstones of the liberal order of the past decades, both will have to shoulder greater individual responsibility, become more creative in addressing global crises, and adapt the transatlantic alliance to sustain it for the future.

List of Participants

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Setting the Scene for the International Debate

The **Bonn International Security Forum** is a conference marked by open discussion and direct conversation between scholars and practitioners of international foreign and security policy. Through the thematic and regional expertise of its participants, the Forum offers insights into the most pressing issues confronting policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic. To encourage open discussion, the Forum followed the Chatham House Rule. The second section of this report provides insight into the different voices and perspectives present at the conference through personal comments on selected topics by our experts.

Bonn University's Center for International Security and Governance (CISG) and Johns Hopkins University's **American Institute for Contemporary German Studies (AICGS)** jointly hosted the Forum. The CISG, under the leadership of **Henry-Kissinger-Professor James D. Bindenagel**, is a policy-oriented research institution focused on transatlantic and global challenges and the exploration of innovative dialogue and solutions. AICGS, headed by **Dr. Jackson Janes**, is a research policy center dedicated to better understanding the challenges and choices facing Germany and the United States in a broader global arena.

Professor Bindenagel highlighted in his opening remarks that the unprecedented crisis of the current liberal world order and the myriad conflicts of our time call for discussions of new approaches to German and American security policies. Today, in the former capital of West Germany, the city of Bonn is a city of international and transatlantic dialogue and as such the ideal location for a debate on innovation to meet security challenges of the present and future.

As **Professor Dr. Michael Hoch**, Rector of the University of Bonn, emphasized in his address to the Forum, Bonn, as Europe's third UN city, is also a venue of



Minister-President Armin Laschet opening the conference

interdisciplinary debate. While traditional concepts of security continue to be as relevant as ever, scholarly expertise on climate, energy, food security, agriculture, or sustainable development is just as crucial to the development of comprehensive solutions to today's social and political crises. Rector Hoch highlighted that the CISG and its cooperation with other research institutions plays an essential role in the utilization of scientific knowledge for policy purposes.

Armin Laschet, Minister-President of North-Rhine Westphalia (NRW), noted the timeliness of the Bonn Forum in light of the many challenges facing the next German government. International cooperation and dialogue are crucial for North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), not only because of the global integration of the regional economy, but also because of the cluster of NGOs, UN agencies, and other organizations involved in international policymaking in Bonn and the region. This network advances Germany's role in contributing to global security and sustainable development.

CISG and AICGS wish to thank all partners, supporters, and participants of the Second Bonn International Security Forum and look forward to hosting new international debates shortly.

Session One: The Future of the International Liberal Order: Politics in Flux, Order at Risk?

Key points:

- A lack of U.S. support for international cooperation and multilateralism might open up new opportunities for Europe, but could also destabilize international order and institutions.
- Populist, nationalist, and protectionist agendas are not merely domestic phenomena, but have direct bearing on the conduct of trade and foreign policy.
- Many people have not been able to benefit from megatrends like globalization and digitalization. Policymakers have to rectify social inequalities to mitigate the backlash against international liberalism.

Dedicated to the ongoing crisis of the international liberal order, the first session of the International Security Forum examined and debated causes and effects of the various recent and not-so-recent shocks to the international system, from the rise of authoritarianism in Turkey, Hungary, or Poland to violent conflict in Eastern Europe and the Middle East to the success of nationalist agendas in Europe, Russia, or China. Under conditions of growing global interdependence, the repercussions of domestic challenges such as populism and nationalism extend beyond national boundaries, regional conflicts threaten international peace and stability, and technological progress transforms international order and conflict. Beyond these megatrends, specific instances such as the election of President Trump, Brexit and populist movements in the European Union, or the weakened transatlantic partnership were at the heart of the first session of the Forum.

One year after the election, the presidency of Donald Trump remains a galvanizing point of discussion and at times controversy in the transatlantic security dialogue. There was left no doubt that the policies of the new U.S. administration, for example on Russia, NATO, or North Korea, mark a rift in U.S. foreign policy and the transatlantic partnership. However, views clashed on whether to consider this change a threat

to the international liberal order. U.S. engagement in the transatlantic relationship and beyond has formed the cornerstone of many of the institutions that structure the global system to this day, including the United Nations (UN) and its various specialized agencies and institutions or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). More optimistic commentators argued that the institutions embodying the core values of the international liberal order – free trade, the rule of law, good governance, and pluralism, among others – have long since developed a life of their own and will continue to shape international affairs regardless of U.S. politics.



Kori Schake, Research Fellow, Hoover Institution



The 2017 Bonn Security Forum in progress

Skeptics proposed, however, that continued over-dependence on U.S. engagement might prove to be the current system's fatal weakness. A lack of American support in rhetoric and practice for liberal multilateralism could strengthen those opponents of the tenets of the liberal world order who prefer an international structure marked by unilateralism and competition for influence in a multipolar world. The time available for safeguarding the current global order might be limited and the current state of uncertainty a mere calm before the storm, forcing those countries that benefit the most from a rules-based liberal system, among those Germany, to swiftly adjust their international engagement to a transforming environment. The international community has, in fact, experienced an unprecedented series of challenges in recent years, from the Ukraine crisis to escalating tensions in North Korea or the ongoing humanitarian and security crisis in Syria. Perhaps the current state of the liberal world order could best be likened to a cracked windshield in a moving car: while the resilience of the glass is a testament to the quality of its design, one major blow to its structure could suffice to cause a disaster.

Given the current fragility of international order, many participants voiced concern about the impact of American foreign policy on the transatlantic relationship, which, as one speaker pointed out, has been an essential pillar of the liberal order since its very beginning seventy years ago. President Trump's overt criticism of the European allies and his vocal skepticism of the benefits of multilateral cooperation undermine

efforts to maintain a healthy alliance. The changed role of the U.S. in the world also provides the Europeans with the political maneuvering space to assume a more prominent role in the shaping of the international order of tomorrow. In line with the Transatlantic Manifesto recently published by a group of German and American foreign policy experts, participants emphasized that Europeans should be careful not to adopt President Trump's zero-sum understanding of foreign policy in either rhetoric or practice². Instead, Europe and Germany, in particular, could step forward as an exemplary leader of the international liberal order, cooperate strategically with the U.S. on specific issue areas to jointly support progressive values and structures, while also actively shaping international cooperation beyond the transatlantic relationship.

The rise of unilateralism and confrontational world politics is not the stand-alone cause or symptom of the possible transformation of world order. On the domestic level, populist and nationalist movements are gaining traction not only in the U.S., but many Western countries, indicating that the universal international liberal values underlying mainstream party platforms fail to appeal to a large segment of voters. Forum participants suggested that the supporters of populist parties and candidates often experience a profound alienation from traditional politics and the governmental apparatus. Growing income inequality and a lack of socioeconomic mobility for a significant part of the American population are considered to be significant contributing factors in the rising hostility

² "Trotz alledem: Amerika", Die Zeit, October 12, 2017.



Röttgen, Member of the German Bundestag

toward the Washington establishment, whose political agendas and narratives tend to espouse economic liberalism and globalization without acknowledging their downsides.

The losers of international economic liberalism would perhaps agree with one Forum participant who labelled the current era a “second gilded age,” a time of rapid economic growth and technological advances accompanied by thinly-veiled severe social problems and rising inequality resembling the conditions of the late nineteenth century. If policymakers cannot find a way to reduce inequality and enable more people to participate in economic growth, the populist political backlash against the pillars of international liberalism is likely to gain further momentum. How can this frustration with the seemingly monolithic structures of the liberal order and its lack of inclusion be handled in the meantime? Some participants asserted that regional and local structures might gain in importance as sources of popular identification with political structures and venues for more inclusive social and civic participation.

Beyond these in-vogue topics of populism, liberalism, and the future of transatlantic relations, commentators were careful to point out that digitalization and technological progress spur some of the most fundamental upheavals of the international order. Not only do innovations in artificial intelligence systems and robotics transform people’s lives, work, and welfare, they also alter the conduct of international affairs and

change the face of security worldwide. At a time when the pursuit of national self-interest and disregard for internationally accepted rules of peace and order are experiencing a renaissance, new technologies may become instrumental in escalating or aggravating long-standing political conflicts. As participants critically remarked, the impact of technological innovations often lies beyond the expertise of foreign policy analysts, causing them to focus on the traditional core topics of international relations narrowly and to treat the effects of technological revolutions as afterthoughts.

Given the regional and global developments transforming international order, what can Europe and the U.S. expect from the future of global cooperation? Change may be inevitable, but strategic foresight and action could help the West to protect the pillars of global liberalism in spite of fundamental changes in the international order. While bracing for change and mitigating its consequences, policymakers should perhaps also bear in mind that what we understand as the international liberal order cannot and should not be viewed as a global monolith, but as a hugely influential, multiregional structure of transatlantic origin. As such, it has always coexisted with regional structures all over the world. If the international order is to persist, it will have to adapt to new conflicts and rival structures, make its benefits more widely available, and thus maintain its global appeal in times of change.

Session Two: The Future of European Defense and Security Policy

Key points:

- The establishment of new mechanisms to bolster European defense is an important step toward greater European independence in security affairs, but their full potential is yet to be seen.
- Diverging geostrategic priorities and domestic political pressures could threaten the political consensus needed to enhance European defense cooperation.
- An expansion of European defense cooperation is no replacement for the transatlantic partnership. Full compatibility with NATO structures is a necessity.

In light of this broad range of challenges to international order and security, those with the capabilities to protect the pillars of the liberal order must enhance their engagement. Optimists and skeptics at the Forum agreed that Europe, in particular, will have to increase its contributions to regional and global security and governance. Discussions at the Forum focused on recent advances in the fields of defense and security as well as the prospects of and obstacles to greater European strategic autonomy.

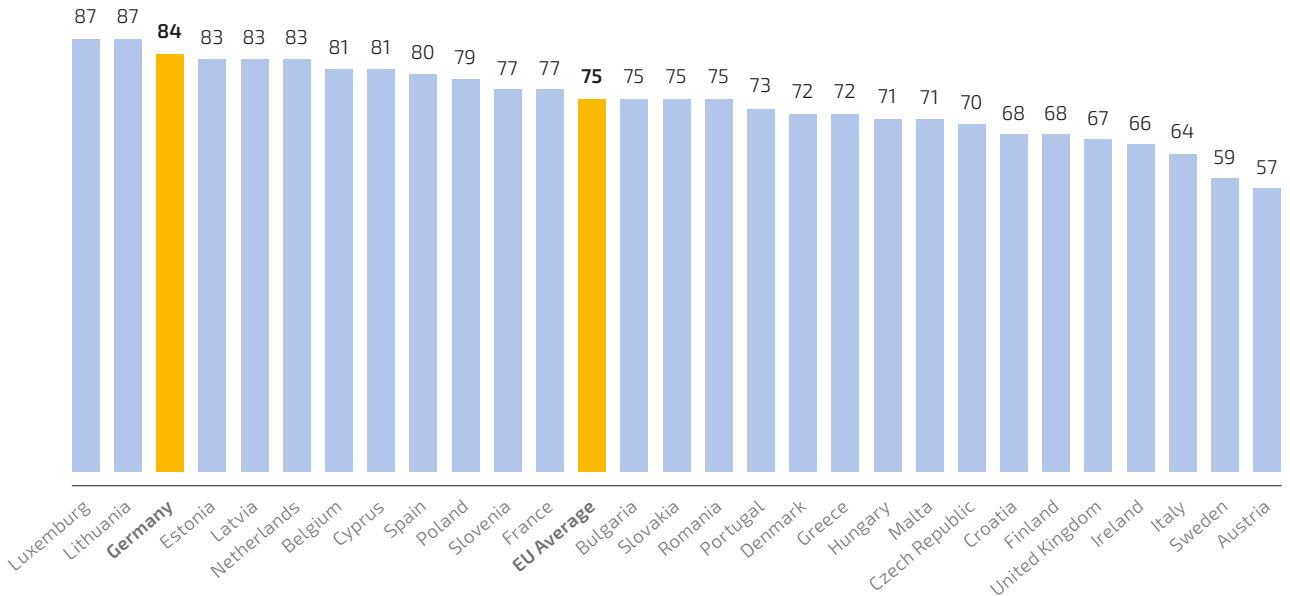
Several factors currently favor progress in the unification of European defense and security. First, the emphasis of the Trump administration on greater European engagement in NATO and beyond is a long-standing American resentment of Europe's quasi-dependence on U.S. military support for European security. While no one at the Security Forum doubted that Europe and the U.S. will continue to be critical strategic partners for mutual and global security, Americans and Germans agreed that the future strength of the strategic partnership critically depends on greater European contributions to the European and transatlantic security posture.

Second, several EU-internal developments boost the political momentum for the integration of security and defense. The UK's persistent opposition to

deepened European cooperation on defense will soon cease to be an obstacle as the country prepares to leave the EU by 2019. Terrorist acts on European territory and uncertainty on the consequences of migration to Europe have sparked heightened awareness of the importance of cooperation on security issues among policymakers and the public. Public support for a common defense and security policy lies at 75 percent, with some countries, such as Germany, even exceeding 80 percent. It thus appears that the time is ripe for Europe to turn decades of consideration and deliberation into a concrete strategy for a more united approach to defense and security in Europe.

Discussions at the Forum quickly centered around the central mechanisms of defense and security integration across the EU. Some Forum participants considered the recent establishment of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) framework, the Coordinated Annual Review (CARD), and the European Defense Fund (EDF) to herald a new era in European defense. Others pointed out that it remains to be seen what these new mechanisms can actually achieve, emphasizing that successful European endeavors in the field of security require strong mandates, binding commitments, and reliable monitoring mechanisms to be implemented effectively.

**Support for common defense and security policy among EU member states
(public opinion poll, percentage of respondents in favor)**



Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future: Security and Defense, Brussels: European Commission, April 2017.

What is clear is that Europe's defense and security deficits cannot be resolved without a substantial increase in investments. So should EU member states aspire to spend a minimum of 2 percent of national GDP on their militaries, as NATO and U.S. officials have agreed for years is the target for defense spending and thereby advance the European and the transatlantic shares in cooperative security at the same time? Some participants suggested that a narrow fixation on spending targets detracts from the real deficits of European defense in the domain of hard capabilities, arguing that efficient spending and closer alignment of national arsenals constitute a much more pressing issue. A stronger emphasis on capability targets, however, might demonstrate that NATO spending targets, in fact, do not even cover the current need for investment.

The role of NATO in the future of European defense is contested beyond spending targets. While there was universal agreement at the Forum that European security cannot and should not be pursued with the goal of full strategic autonomy from NATO and the

U.S., some participants maintained that NATO should remain the clear priority over the creation of a European defense union. Arguments in favor of this position included the possible risk of inefficient parallel structures between NATO and Europe, a lack of trust of individual member states in the potential of European cooperation, and a preference for bilateral cooperation with the U.S., as well as the enormous difficulty of creating a European defense industry that is on par with its U.S. competition. These points will need to be addressed to advance European defense and security cooperation, no matter if the goal is to become a more autonomous, or merely a better partner of the U.S. in NATO. At any rate, full compatibility of any new European defense mechanisms with NATO structures remains a necessary debate for the future of the Alliance. This move toward European security autonomy is all the truer since signaling a desire to gain significant autonomy could give a pretext for American decoupling from the continent for those in the U.S. who consider Europe a strategic afterthought, American commentators warned.



Prof. Dr. Holger Mey, Head of Advanced Concepts, Airbus Group



Dr. Jana Puglierin (DGAP)

An additional problem associated with the enhancement of European defense cooperation is the current lack of a European strategic outlook. This strategy deficit is to no small extent due to the often divergent geostrategic priorities of the EU member states: while European countries bordering the Mediterranean might place high importance on maritime security, Germany, for example, might consider energy and pipeline security an equally significant issue. The political priorities of France, one participant remarked, are yet again differently situated, as it favors interventions, insists on the maintenance of a full-scale national army, and is also preoccupied with a range of other topics for EU reform. As a consequence of this broad range of preferences, it will likely be difficult to develop a joint strategy for the shape and purpose of European defense cooperation. The institutions, structures, and rules currently in place, however, will not suffice to develop and manage new instruments of collaboration to their fullest potential.

What's new in EU defense cooperation?

CARD:

Systematic monitoring of national defense spending plans to identify opportunities for new collaborative initiatives.

EDF:

Provision of financial incentives to foster defense cooperation from research to the development phase of capabilities including prototypes.

PESCO:

Joint development of defense capabilities, projects identified notably through the CARD process in priority areas. Eligible projects could benefit from EDF financing.

Source: EEAS PESCO Factsheet, 14-11-2017, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/pesco_factsheet_14-11-2017_.pdf.



Impressions from the Forum

A related issue is a familiar tension between national and European interests and politics that decision-makers inevitably face. While public support for greater European cooperation on security suggests that voters would likely support policy advances, spending for costly investments needed to enhance capabilities will clash with other domestic priorities. Budget reallocations are most likely to be far less popular measures, particularly in times of social and economic uncertainty, and European politicians are likely to fear losing voter support over substantial defense budget increases. As such, there is a risk that the current boom in talk of European defense and security could remain a mostly rhetorical phenomenon. A failure to build on existing support for joint European security mechanisms, however, could spark further disillusionment with European affairs and trigger a major loss of political capital.

Europe's ability to become a convincing and authoritative partner in international security and leadership thus critically depends both on the political will of European leaders as well as on sufficient and smart investments in joint security structures. The success of this project will not only determine Europe's ability to assert itself as a liberal and cooperative global leader and partner, but also play an essential role in the advancement of the European project in a time of inherent uncertainty and external pressure.

Session Three: German and American Security Policy in a Changing World Order

Key points:

- The broad range of threats and risks confronting the transatlantic security community calls for a greater division of labor between the partners. While the U.S. must increase its capabilities in the Asia-Pacific, Europe must prepare for greater engagement in the East and South.
- Europe and Germany in particular must expand their capabilities for defense. The 2 percent defense spending target remains a necessity in the eyes of U.S. policymakers, while Germans and Europeans view a more differentiated approach to security spending as a preferable strategy.
- In order to maintain the transatlantic relationship despite the skeptical stance of the Trump administration, Europe must develop a creative and flexible strategy for the U.S. and broaden their contacts in Washington. European policymakers must be aware, however, that the political influence of Congress remains in flux, while the U.S. State Department is undergoing a crisis.

As challenges and changes abound for policymakers on both sides of the Atlantic, both countries are challenged to reassess their approach to foreign and security policy. How much responsibility will the two nations be able and willing to carry for the upholding of international order in the future, alone and in partnership?

Throughout the final session of the Forum, experts and practitioners considered the most significant security threats and risks confronting German and American policymakers today more closely. German participants highlighted that a geographic “crescent of crisis” from the Maghreb to the Urals, which is characterized by poor governance, resource scarcity, high unemployment, and other destabilizing factors, currently hosts a range of threats to German security interests, including civil conflict and terrorist groups. The reemergence of the possibility of symmetric, high-intensity warfare as well as the ever-expanding techniques of asymmetrical aggression, such as cyber and information warfare, were also identified as the primary challenges of foreign and security policy in the twenty-first century.

American and European participants agreed that Russia plays a particularly intricate role in the contemporary security architecture. Russian strategic documents, one speaker argued, state that the goal of Russian foreign policy is to weaken the transatlantic relationship and NATO solidarity, which limits a possible constructive, coherent Russia policy toward Europe and the U.S. Combining U.S. and European interests to block Russian interference has led to policy paralysis in the U.S. In Europe, latent pro-Russian sympathies, however, may make a joint transatlantic policy also a challenging goal to achieve. Others disagreed that the West should consider Russian foreign policy confrontational and hostile, arguing that long-standing frustration and miscommunication between Europe and Russia have heavily contributed to current tensions and call for the resumption of a constructive dialogue between East and West. Yet others questioned if talk based on fundamentally opposed worldviews and interests could achieve anything of substance. Nevertheless, exchange – in conjunction with deterrence – should still be part of the Western policy on Russia.



Professor Dmitry Danilov, Head of Department of European Security, Institute of Europe, Russian Academy of Sciences

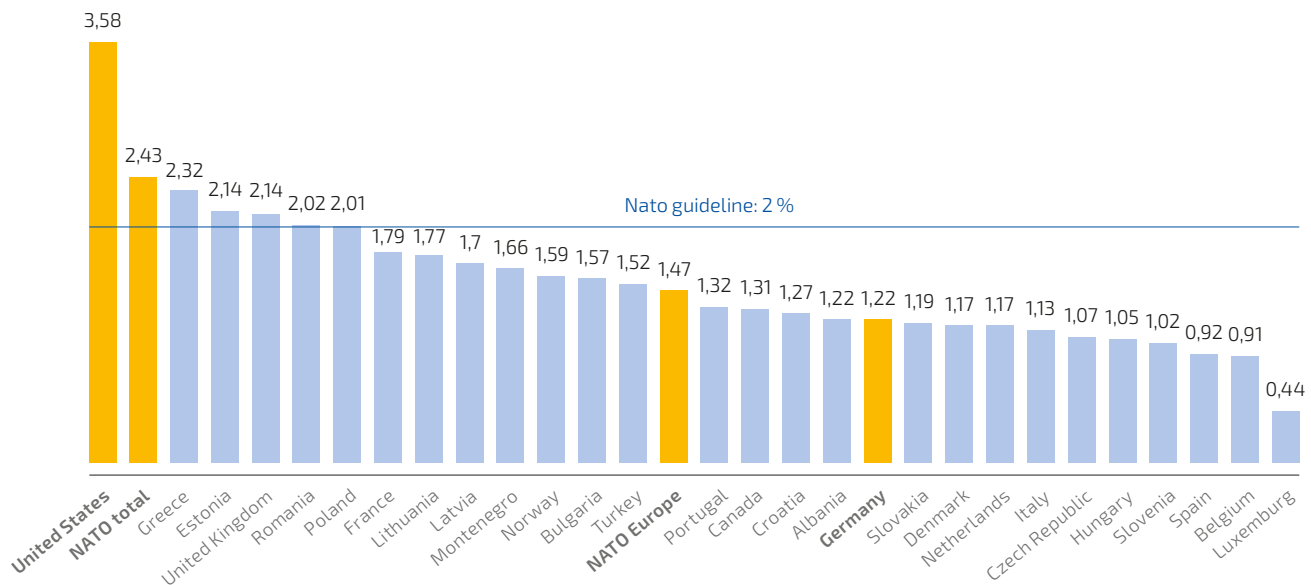


Dr. Christoph Schwegmann, German Federal Foreign Office, and Stephen Hedger, formerly U.S. Department of Defense

American experts were particularly concerned with the implications of the ongoing rise of China as a regional as well as a global power. This global power shift will inevitably also affect the transatlantic relationship, particularly in times of tension between Europe and the U.S., as recent divisions on policies such as climate change or the Iran deal have demonstrated. Participants emphasized that the U.S. currently suffers from an extreme lack of readiness and capabilities regarding Asia, which renders strong transatlantic cooperation as well as greater European capabilities in strategic and security matters all the more important. A more engaged European role is particularly welcome as a strongly commercial view on China persists in Europe in spite of growing evidence that China uses its strategy of bilateral economic ties to influence regional foreign policy, which arguably happened in the case of Greek opposition to a joint EU statement on Chinese aggression in the South China Sea.

Is Germany ready to face these various challenges and take on more responsibility in Europe and the world? Experts pointed out that despite their new narrative of international responsibility, German policymakers still lack a coherent strategy for the practical realization of this idea. This gap in strategic vision is aggravated by a substantial mismatch between Germany's growing international ambitions on the one hand, and its persistent lack of hard power capabilities and long-term investments on the other. Given the fragile nature of high-level international politics as well as increasing popular acceptance of greater German engagement, the extent and longevity of Germany's commitment in the world remain to be seen. At the same time, domestic as well as international policymakers would be well-advised to remember that any increase in Germany's capabilities to back its commitments will not be visible overnight; as one participant argued, substantial improvements in German readiness and capabilities cannot be achieved before the mid-2020s.

Defense expenditure of NATO member states as share of GDP (%)



Press Release – Defense Expenditure of NATO Countries (2010–2017), NATO, Public Diplomacy Division, June 2017.

From the American point of view, a robust German engagement in the world is not so much desirable as necessary, both for the containment of the range of threats facing Western countries as well as for the maintenance of the transatlantic relationship in times of diplomatic discord. The discussion on this matter returned to the question of NATO spending targets, which some U.S. participants considered an absolute necessity for practical as well as strategic reasons. Supporters of this notion argued that Germany and Europe should not misunderstand the 2 percent goal as a demonstration of power, but rather realize that the spending target in fact accurately reflects current investment gaps. Neither should it be seen as a personal political priority of President Trump. Nigh-universal criticism of Europe's contributions to NATO in the U.S. renders the question of spending targets an inadvisable hill to die on, argued one participant, proposing that Europe and Germany should not raise the issue with President Trump but rather acknowledge the inevitability of increased defense spending and act accordingly.

European participants, however, voiced skepticism and even criticism of this notion, pointing out that realistically, nobody in Berlin would be willing to support a 2 percent spending goal for hard capabilities as proposed by the U.S. Others pointed to a differentiated understanding of security spending and argued in

favor of including diplomacy and development spending in the calculation of an overarching security budget. One thing is clear: officials will have to communicate their stance on the matter with caution, as defense spending remains a touchy subject in transatlantic relations, especially under the Trump administration. A confrontational attitude would be unlikely to improve transatlantic ties and could weaken the partnership substantially.

In spite of political tensions and divergent interests and priorities, the security of Europe and the U.S. should and likely will remain deeply intertwined. A mutually beneficial division of labor between both sides of the Atlantic could be crucial to the maintenance of the transatlantic alliance in the Trump era and beyond. If Europe is fully capable of and committed to taking the lead in addressing the challenges on its eastern and southern borders, the U.S. would be able to divert some of its resources away from these contexts and toward its deficient postures in Asia. Provided that there is an agreement between the transatlantic partners on major strategic priorities – which, for the time being, must be considered a challenge in itself – such a division of responsibilities could help make the most of the limited resources and sinking relative influence of the transatlantic partners in the world.



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Wolfgang Rudischhauser, Vice President of the Federal Academy for Security Policy

Related to this notion is the experts' repeated call for Europe and Germany, in particular, to make itself an indispensable partner for the U.S. in the maintenance of regional and international security. Making Germany indispensable would require not only substantial increases in engagement and investments in hard capabilities, but also a more creative and flexible European approach to the transatlantic partnership. To make U.S. policymakers recognize the benefits of maintaining and strengthening the transatlantic partnership in foreign and security affairs, decision-makers in Europe ought to present their counterparts in the U.S. with proposals and initiatives that will catch their attention and bring them back to the discussion table, one participant proposed.

To do so, Europeans will have to develop a multifaceted understanding of the current political landscape in the U.S. to identify possible contact and cooperation partners. President Trump and his administration have demonstrated that creating a coherent transatlantic policy on any major security issue will be a significant challenge, especially since a zero-sum understanding of international relations as well as a lack of trust in multilateral institutions continue to inform the administration's conduct of foreign affairs. At the same time, Congress has begun to reassert its authority after decades of growing concentration of power in the president. Members of Congress and Senators are stepping forward to voice their views on foreign affairs and many other policy issues, reassuring the world of their ability to ensure

proper checks and balances and to restrain the president in the exercise of his power. While the growing involvement of Congress will allow European policymakers to find like-minded politicians for transatlantic cooperation, it will be difficult to determine how much influence their counterparts have on decision-making processes vis-à-vis the president and his administration. Perhaps even more disconcertingly, the most obvious partner for diplomatic cooperation, the U.S. State Department, has been significantly weakened not only by a lack of senior-level appointments, but also by ongoing personnel downsizing across career levels. German participants emphasized that this development in conjunction with general uncertainty over the exact distribution of political authority and influence in Washington will likely become a significant hindrance to the advancement of transatlantic relations.

While maintaining channels of communication and cooperation with the U.S. will remain of critical importance to German security during the Trump era and beyond, it appears clear that German policymakers will soon have to confront the real challenges of shouldering greater international responsibility. Global challenges place growing demands on German engagement not only but especially as the American administration attempts to withdraw from long-standing commitments. The incoming German government will have to find a way to turn the rhetoric of engagement into a strategic practice for national and international security.

Conclusion

The various debates and discussions that took place at the 2017 Security Forum lead to a joint conclusion: The challenges confronting policymakers in Europe and the U.S. will not dissolve anytime soon, but are rooted in fundamental transformations of the global order. In light of this, the maintenance of open and patient dialogue, not only between the transatlantic partners, but between all relevant actors in the current international political environment, is a vital condition for global stability and peace. The risks and threats emanating from various regions of the world cannot be managed unilaterally and require globally concerted action. The transatlantic relationship remains a cornerstone of an international order that fosters such multilateral cooperation, but it must adapt to the realities of an international system that is increasingly shaped by globalization, interconnectivity, and power shifts.

The transatlantic relationship faces a range of internal and external stress tests. Domestic tensions and the rise of populist movements in Europe and the U.S. have begun to affect the respective countries' conduct of foreign relations. The rift remains on points of contention between the U.S. and its European allies and has widened over policy issues such as defense spending or international trade. Transatlantic partners will be challenged to find common policy. Political dialog at several levels is needed in order to maintain cooperation and keep open channels of communication in spite of political differences.

At the same time, foreign policy issues from North Korea to the Middle East, to Iran and Russia constitute major tests of the resilience of international order and could become divisive factors in the transatlantic partnership. Escalation of the already confrontational relationship between North Korea and the U.S. under Trump could prove to be devastating. A reversal of the major advances made on the Iranian nuclear program would similarly not only mark a disruption of coordinated diplomatic efforts, but also threaten the security and stability of an entire region and, by extension, affect global stability. Disagreements between U.S. and European policymakers on how to cope with Russian aggression in Ukraine and Central Europe further illustrate the problem posed by unilateralist policy strategies to the international system and highlight the problems of multilateral policy coordination between longstanding partners.

Transatlantic partnership sustainability is an influential factor in maintaining the multilateral liberal order. The ability of the allies to reinvigorate and modify their engagement to match the needs of the alliance requires a greater division of labor. Especially as the U.S. international engagement shifts toward the Asia-Pacific, Europe must build the capacities to manage security challenges in Europe's East and South more autonomously. Most important, a division of labor must neither mean a division over NATO responsibility, nor must it lead to a lack of coordination between Europe and the U.S. An efficient approach

to security burden-sharing and political solidarity requires close agreement on threat assessments, policy priorities, and preferred engagement strategies. It also necessitates greater and more coordinated investment in defense postures, particularly on the European side, but the other dimensions of international engagement – diplomacy and development – and their immense contributions to international order and stability must not be neglected.

Adjusting to inevitable change and preserving indispensable pillars of the current international system for the future – the dual challenge for policymakers today – is one of unprecedented complexity. While the current international system will change to accommodate new actors and dynamics, its liberal foundation can remain at the core of an order in flux. For this to be achieved, however, Germany, the U.S., and all those states invested in the maintenance of a liberal international order will have to expand their international engagement and develop innovative strategies to enhance coordination and complementarity of tools and measures. All this must be achieved at a time when domestic pressures and global uncertainty render close cooperation more difficult than ever. Political will and open dialogue are keys to master these pressing tasks of renewal and preservation.



Comments and Perspectives

Deutschland: Aber wo liegt es?

Ambassador Prof. James D. Bindenagel, Henry-Kissinger-Professor and Head of the Center for International Security and Governance (CISG)

Germany, whether it wants the leadership job or not, is the best hope to defend the liberal international order. A global power shift of rising nationalism in China and Russia is unraveling the international order. Europe imposed sanctions on Russia for violating Ukraine's border and annexing its territory. Then, in November 2016 Donald Trump was elected president and questioned whether the US would fulfill its defense commitments to Europe. Donald Trump's nationalist, interest-based policies have absented American international leadership from global affairs.

Recently, 88% of Germans surveyed by the Koerber Foundation think Germany's defense partnership with European States should have priority over that with the United States in the future. Gallup has reported Germany had a 41% approval rating as a global power eclipsing the U.S. rating of 30% for the first time. Germany's new international standing marks a historic shift in power relations.

The disruption in world order raises the quest of what kind of order would emerge and who will lead it. After the defeat of democracy in the 1848 Revolution, Chancellor Otto von Bismarck united Germany with "Blood and Iron". From 1871 through World Wars I and II, German militarism dominated German security strategy. After the defeat of National Socialism in 1945, Germany for the past seven decades has risen from the horrors of the Second World War and the Holocaust to become a 'Civilian Power' (Zivilmacht), Europe's leading democracy. The question remains whether this historical Hegelian shift from the one extreme to the other can now find the balance between war and peace.



The debate began in earnest in February 2014 at the Munich Security Conference when President Joachim Gauck and Ministers Steinmeier and von der Leyen called on Germany to accept more international responsibility. Since then, a new white book has been published stating that Germany has to act more proactively; Chancellor Merkel noted that "we (Germany and Europe) really must take our fate into our own hands"; and foreign minister Gabriel said at the Koerber foundation "either we try to shape the world or we will be shaped by it." Tentatively, Germany has agreed in theory to accept responsibility; and is poised to take a leadership role in Europe.

That role is needed. Jürgen Habermas reminded us of the challenge to protect democracy when he stated: "If the European project fails, then there is the question of how long it will take to reach the status quo again. Remember the German Revolution of 1848: When it failed, it took us 100 years to regain the same level of democracy as before."

There are three essential things to bear in mind:

First, since Habermas wrote, Germany has had another revolution. In 1989 Germans in East Germany rediscovered Thucydides secret of freedom, courage. With courage, they brought down the Berlin Wall, elected a democratic parliament and voted to join the West German constitution. In West Germany, the Basic Law created a democracy based on respect for human dignity. In East Germany, a Peaceful Revolution fought for freedom and democracy in the act of national self-determination to unite Germany in 1990. Together the legitimacy of Germany's republic lies in the marriage of West Germany's constitution and the East German revolution that formed united Germany.

Second, Germany has exercised its sovereignty with 'sovereign obligation' to the EU to pool sovereignty in the European Union and to deploy the Bundeswehr only in alliance with the United Nations or NATO and with a parliamentary mandate. The country has rejected a German "Sonderweg" or unilateralism that was practiced in the past led to conflict. It has developed a never alone leadership model that could be called "leaders in partnership," („als Partner führen“).

Third, the German culture of remembrance (Erinnerungskultur) centered on the horrors of the Holocaust, the National Socialist and the Socialist Unity Party (SED) regimes act as a restraint on German leadership excesses. At the same time, Germany accepts more responsibility; it may not use its National Socialist and Holocaust and communist histories as an excuse not to act. As then Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski told the Germans in 2011: "And I demand of Germany that, for your sake and for ours, you help it survive and prosper. You know full well that nobody else can do it. I will probably be the first Polish foreign minister in history to say so, but here it is: I fear German power less than I am beginning to fear German inactivity. You have become Europe's indispensable nation."

Finally, the political debate in Germany seeks a vision to build Europe. They should make Europe the strong transatlantic pillar and not let America's uncertain path question the ideas and institutions of the international liberal order. European security and prosperity rest on this order. Germany has national legitimacy and exercises its sovereignty with a sovereign obligation to Europe and the international order. Germany is called on to lead in Europe and to succeed needs a bold, strategic vision to sustain democracy, peace, and prosperity in Europe.

Germany needs now a National Security Strategy that supports a European Security Strategy. To accomplish that goal, Germany needs a twofold policy of strategic policymaking. One is to overcome the incoherence in security policy between elites and the general public. The other is to create a national institutional forum to coordinate and to strategize German foreign and security policy between relevant ministries and agencies. Such a strategic policy process links well with European initiatives in security including the European Defense Fund and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). More Europe strengthens the Transatlantic Alliance.

Can Germany lead, but not dominate Europe? Will Germany and Europe fill the leadership gap left by absent American leadership? The negotiators have their work cut out for them. As Friedrich Schiller concluded: „Ich weiß das Land nicht zu finden, wo das gelehrte beginnt, hört das politische auf.“ Woody Allen once said that 80% of success in life was in just showing up. All the world is watching to see if Germany shows up for leadership.

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International and European Security: Some Insights from a French Perspective

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The French Strategic Review published on October 13, 2017, and approved by President Macron, gives the main guidelines for France's security and defense policy for the five coming years. The geostrategic environment changed utterly in the last three years. Not only the multilateral order seems to encounter more and more difficulties (the examples are numerous from Russia's annexion of Crimea in 2014 to the American withdrawal from the Paris agreement on climate change and from UNESCO in September and October 2017), but emerging powers (or re-emerging like in the case of Russia) tend to claim more and more military affirmation in international security and technological and cyber issues have become integral parts of international security in the last decade. Therefore after presenting France's strategic priorities in 2017, it seems important to take a short look at what can France and Germany bring to European security.

1. French strategic priorities between continuity and new challenges

What are French strategic priorities in an unstable world? The first priority is the fight against the terrorist threat, which has become a given since the 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris and moreover in many European countries since then. French security is also to be understood in the framework of the state of emergency, a specific legal system adopted after the terror attacks in January 2015, and has been partly integrated



in the French common law on October 3, 2017. France is faced with multiple security challenges ranging from jihadist terrorism to acts of intimidation by Russia in Eastern Europe or China in the South China Sea. In this gloomy context France's main preoccupation is to remain strategically autonomous. Autonomy is France's leitmotiv in foreign and security policy. It is a legacy of the Gaullist era and still underlies France's position on defense and international security issues. De Gaulle's legacy has given the three fundamentals of French foreign and security policy until today: strategic independence, care about the country's rank in international relations, and multilateralism.

The new French president's security policy embraces these fundamentals. Strategic priorities are the protection of the national territory,³ the guarantee of European and transatlantic security (more precisely on the southern and eastern borders of the European Union),⁴

³ The protection of the national territory currently implies the deployment of 7,000 soldiers in France in the framework of the Sentinelle operation and the creation of National Guard since July 2016 composed of reservists from the army.. and the national police force. The National Guard is currently based on 28,700 persons and should reach 40,000 in 2018, with a final objective of 84,000 volunteers in the coming years.

⁴ The latest strategic review show a clear preoccupation for security regarding Russia, Sahel, and the Middle-East.

and the safeguard of multilateralism in international security. The practical applications of this principle of strategic autonomy are the upholding of nuclear deterrence (which represents about 11 percent of France's military expenditures), and the necessity to dispose of a full-spectrum army equipped for high intensity operation as well as peace keeping and territorial protection. These ambitions are backed up with the political will to increase military expenditures. France is currently the most militarily active country in Europe, with several military deployments in Africa and the Middle East, not to mention the Sentinelle internal deployment. The French military budget has therefore been increased since 2015 to reach € 32.7 billion in 2017 and should be increased to € 34.7 billion in 2018. The French government is determined to reach the 2 percent NATO standard of the GDP for defense by 2025 against 1.8 percent in 2018. This also goes hand in hand with more effective industrial cooperation with other European countries. Thus it seems quite clear from President Macron's latest discourses that France will remain strongly involved in collective security as well as European security.

2. France, Germany, and European security: how to bring forward European strategic autonomy ?

In a context of Brexit and of geopolitical uncertainties, European defense resurfaced in political discourse, mainly in the words of French president Emmanuel Macron and German chancellor Angela Merkel. Indeed, during the last decade, despite the ever-intensifying security challenges they face, EU members progressively lost interest in the idea of deepening EU's defense policy. Perhaps the challenges raised by Brexit, but also by the actions of Putin since the annexion of Crimea in 2014 and the election of Donald Trump, serve as drivers for an enhanced CSDP. The European Council stated in December 2016 that Europeans should "take greater responsibility for their security," commit "sufficient additional resources," reinforce

"cooperation in the development of required capabilities," and "contribute decisively to collective efforts" in order to be able to act autonomously when and where necessary.⁵ Thus France and Germany took several bilateral initiatives aimed at revitalizing European defense since 2016. France strongly supports the reinforcement of ESDP's instruments such as PESCO, the development of the MPCC, or the European Defense Fund. The main objective for France is to work at enhancing the EU's strategic autonomy, so that the EU would be able to cope more effectively with security challenges not only at its borders (such as migration, Russia's intimidation strategy, North Africa's instability), but also more globally.

On this road to more EU strategic autonomy, Germany remains a key partner to ensure European security not only through the EU's defense policy, but also through NATO. The Strategic Review 2017 therefore reaffirms France's commitment within NATO in terms of collective defense and reassurance. In order to maintain a high level of capability and increase cooperation with European partners, industrial cooperation is highlighted as an important driver of the development of a more effective European defense. For instance, President Macron and Chancellor Merkel announced during the last French-German summit on July 13, 2017, the creation in the future of a European air combat system based in particular on the development of a French-German combat aircraft and the settlement of a joint air transport unit composed of C130J aircrafts. Technology is also part of the strategic priorities and more precisely the development of cyber instruments both at the national and European level to be able to deter, prevent, and if need be respond to cyber attacks.

In a nutshell, in a multipolar world evolving rapidly, France is determined to bring forward the necessary efforts and work closely with its partners to help develop a comprehensive approach and cope with today's security challenges.

⁵ European Council Meeting – Conclusions, Brussels: European Council, December 15, 2016, p. 3.

How Strong is the United States Commitment to NATO?

Prof. James Goldgeier, Dean, School of International Service, American University

Despite concerns about President Trump's commitment to NATO given the statements he made during the 2016 presidential campaign, and the ambivalence he demonstrated after becoming president to reaffirming Article 5, there is far more continuity than change when it comes to America's policy toward NATO. Support for NATO is one of the few issues in the United States that commands bipartisan backing among the general public and on Capitol Hill. The Trump national security team – H.R. McMaster, James Mattis and Rex Tillerson – is strongly pro-NATO, and despite Trump's seeming misunderstanding of how NATO works, he has allowed their proclivities to prevail. The deeper problem for NATO will be the lack of commitment by the president to American leadership of the liberal world order, which over time has the potential to erode relations between the United States and Europe.

The most notable feature of President Trump's approach to NATO was chastising alliance members over the failure of the vast majority to spend 2% of their GDP on defense. Previous administrations had expressed concerns over European failures in this regard (remember that in his farewell remarks, then U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates argued the alliance was becoming two-tiered, with those willing to bear the necessary burdens in one group and those who simply enjoyed the benefits of the alliance in the other). However, while concerns over burden sharing are longstanding, Trump was making a different argument, suggesting that NATO was somehow akin to a protection racket whereby allies owed the United States money for providing for their security. There were even reports that he presented German



Chancellor Angela Merkel with a bill for what her country owed America. This concern was compounded given his reluctance to state his support for Article 5 seemingly because he believed that only those countries that contributed enough should be provided an American security guarantee.

Despite the concerns, U.S. NATO policy has remained unchanged. In the aftermath of the 2014 Russian invasion of Ukraine, NATO took steps to reassure the Eastern members such as Estonia and Poland that the alliance would defend them against the renewed threat from Russia. The United States continues its strong support for increased air and sea patrols in the Baltic and Black Sea regions and for the rotating deployments in the East to deter Russian aggression. In his December 2016 speech on U.S.-European relations at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson emphasized the American commitment to Europe in the face of what he called a "recently resurgent Russia."

The United States has also maintained its strong commitment to punishing Russia over Ukraine by maintaining the sanctions regime with its European partners. Tillerson appointed former U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO Kurt Volker as his special representative for Ukraine negotiations, and Volker has been collaborating closely with European allies. In late December 2017, the Trump administration even approved the sale of lethal military assistance to Ukraine to raise the costs to Russia of maintaining its support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine, a move Barack Obama declined to take over fears of escalating the crisis.

So perhaps for all the fears of the unpredictability of the Trump presidency, when it comes to transatlantic ties, Europeans can remain assured of the United States commitment to Europe. And while in the case of NATO that should remain true, the central feature of the Trump foreign policy – the emphasis on nationalism as embodied by the phrase “America First” – has the potential to erode the bonds between the United States and Europe. It will be increasingly difficult to maintain strong transatlantic relations if – although the United States maintains a strong commitment to NATO – it is at the same time undermining the European Union. Trump has made clear his disdain for the notion of a liberal international order led by the United States, arguing that allies have simply taken advantage of the United States over previous decades. And his hyper-nationalist approach to international affairs runs against the entire foundation on which the European Union is built.

During his presidential campaign, Trump strongly supported Brexit, seeing a parallel to those who supported Britain’s departure from the EU with his own efforts to put America first. He then had kind words for French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen, who sought a similar path for France. Finally, while he reaffirmed the United States commitment to Europe in his speech in Poland in July 2016, he also sounded the nationalist themes that put him at odds with the European project. Soon after Trump became president, European Council President Donald Tusk went so far as to call the United States a threat to Europe.

Trump’s position on a number of international issues are at odds with sentiment in Europe. The United States gave notice of its formal withdrawal from the Paris Accords, which left the United States alone in the world opposing the multilateral agreement to combat climate change. Trump continues to hint at withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) agreed to in 2015 to halt the Iranian nuclear weapons program. Moreover, aversion to previous free trade agreements led him to not only walk away from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and flirt with doing the same with respect to the North American Free Trade Agreement but also to potentially abandon the World Trade Organization.

The United States commitment to NATO remains strong. It garners broad public and Congressional support, and Trump’s national security team is as pro-Alliance as their predecessors. Trump believes he has galvanized new military spending in Europe, so for the moment, the 2% issue is on the back-burner. U.S. efforts to reassure NATO’s eastern members in the face of Russian aggression continue unabated, and if anything, the United States has strengthened its support for Ukraine.

But all is not well in the transatlantic relationship. Support for NATO is important, but the perception that the United States seeks to undermine the European Union is highly consequential, as are U.S. policies toward the Paris Accords and the JCPOA. Transatlantic ties are more than just NATO, and unless Trump’s views on the value of a liberal international order evolve, the divergence across the Atlantic will increase to the detriment of both sides.

Coping with a Transatlantic Relationship in Flux

Kim R. Holmes, Acting Senior Vice President for Research, The Heritage Foundation

There is a lot of uncertainty in the transatlantic relationship today. President Donald Trump raised doubts about the U.S. commitment to NATO early in his administration. He has made clear since then, in both word and in deed, that the U.S. will indeed stand by its commitments and its promises. But still a residue of mistrust persists.

At the same time the criticism of President Trump from Europe has been highly emotional. Early on German chancellor Angela Merkel distanced herself from President Trump, and the reaction to Trump's presidency from much of the European political class and media has been sharply negative. Relations have stabilized since these early days, as French president Emmanuel Macron welcomed Trump to Paris, and as Chancellor Merkel developed a better personal relationship with the U.S. president.

And yet the mistrust persists.

In helping Americans and Europeans to cope with this new uncertainty in transatlantic relations, I offer some observations and suggestions:

Much of the unease in Europe focuses on President Trump's style and rhetoric, making the criticism of him highly personal. Doubtlessly his style is new and even intentionally disruptive. But it would be a mistake to attribute all the difficulties in transatlantic relations today solely to President Trump's unique approach to the presidency.

Once you discount the novelty of his rhetoric, much of Trump's transatlantic agenda is standard fare for



the Republican Party. His questioning the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, for example, is a long-standing position of the Republican Party. Europe had clearly grown accustomed to President Obama's more liberal approach to international affairs, and now that a Republican president is reversing course – as Democratic and Republican presidents have done repeatedly in the past – there is an urgent sense in Europe that the United States is now doing something radically new. He is even accused of challenging the entire international order. The charge of unilateralism, so familiar to those with a memory of the Iraq War and other transatlantic disagreements going back to the Reagan Era, has resurfaced and is once again being leveled at the United States.

I would counsel caution in drawing these conclusions. Not only has Trump demonstrated his commitment to Europe through support for military deployments in the Baltic States. He also made a major public commitment to Article Five in a speech in Poland. His national security team (McMaster, Mattis, and Tillerson) are known in Europe for their sober and stable leadership.

As mentioned before, Trump's desire to change the JCPOA is a longstanding Republican position. It is important to remember a couple of facts about how the Iran nuclear agreement was approved in the Senate. President Obama quite intentionally refused to submit the agreement as a treaty for ratification because he knew it would not be approved. A majority of the Senate actually opposed the nuclear deal. Fifty-eight senators, including current Democratic leader Senator Chuck Schumer, voted to advance a resolution of disapproval. The Democrats filibustered the measure and prevented the resolution from coming to a vote. They won the political vote, but the substance of the agreement was actually never put before the Senate for a vote. Thus, not only is the JCPOA not legally binding. It has the dubious reputation of being "approved" without a positive vote on its actual terms.

No one should be surprised, then, that President Trump and the Republicans are challenging the agreement. It was a strictly partisan maneuver intended to bypass Republican objections. Republicans believe the agreement to be one sided. Republican Senators repeatedly warned European leaders that a Republican president would challenge and possibly overturn the agreement.

Second, Republicans generally have a different view of the world order than many Europeans, especially West Europeans. U.S. global interests are always broader and more militarily focused than in Europe. Sovereignty is not a dirty word in the United States. Republicans have always been highly skeptical of the United Nations, particularly of its social and economic agendas. Republicans support the European Union as a strategic project, but they do not believe its brand of transnationalism should be applied to the United States, or even to the global order for that matter. Frankly, much of the misperception of a transatlantic crisis stems from the mistaken assumption in Europe that history had somehow ended with Barack Obama, that his progressive liberal approach to international affairs was irreversible. Just as Reagan reversed Jimmy Carter's policies, and George W. Bush did

the same with Bill Clinton's, Donald Trump is doing a similar course correction that nearly always happens after the White House changes parties.

As far as "coping" with this uncertainty is concerned, I would respectfully suggest that Europeans give President Trump the benefit of the doubt. That's what President Macron did when he welcomed Trump to Paris. Basically, I'm counseling not to panic. Changing the Iran deal will be a challenge to transatlantic relations, but frankly President Trump's decision to decertify and turn the issue over to Congress is a middle way. He could have just pulled the U.S. out of the agreement. He could still do so, but at this point my hunch is that he would settle for changes to toughen it up, rather than kill it outright.

Second, I would see this current challenge as an opportunity for Europe. Europeans have been talking about doing more for their own defense for decades. Now is the time to step up and do something serious. The British exit from the European Union will make it easier to integrate some of your defense structures and systems. And you will find less testiness from a Trump administration about European defense integration than you would from a more establishment GOP president.

Finally, I would strongly urge Europeans not to adopt the advice they are hearing from some former Obama officials and supporters – namely, to hunker down and resist Trump's policies in the hopes that a friendlier Obama-like leader will reemerge in the future. Doing so will not only backfire but likely cause even greater tensions in relations. It would also ignore the larger social and political trends that led to Trump's rise in the first place. Trump rode a wave of protest that has social and economic dimensions that exist not only in the U.S., but in Europe. We should try to understand the causes of these protests, and not to dismiss them with tendentious and ideological political arguments. It would be far smarter to understand why voters are behaving the way they are, and to try to come up with a political program that satisfies their concerns.

The EU Global Strategy: From Ambition to Implementation?

Anna Maria Kellner, Policy Advisor on German and European Foreign and Security Policy, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

The Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), published in 2016, sets out very ambitious goals, aptly summed up in one of its key statements: “While NATO exists to defend its members – most of which are European – from external attack, Europeans must be better equipped, trained and organized to contribute decisively to such collective efforts, as well as to act autonomously if and when necessary.”⁶

“Strategic autonomy” in this specific context should not be confused with strategic independence, nor does it mean that the EU wants to turn its back on the United States.⁷ But the EU desires a negotiating position at eye-level, and it wants a stronger footprint in international security – acting as a soft power wherever possible and as a military power wherever necessary to defend its’ citizens security and interests.

Past attempts to strengthen the EU’s security and defense policy have largely failed because the EU member states could not agree on their implementation. This time it is different, not least because of Brexit, terror attacks on European grounds, the refugee crisis, and a rather unpredictable President Trump. The member states have already drawn conclusions and adopted several decisions on the



path toward what is to become a European Defense Union in the end: The Coordinated Annual Review on Defense (CARD), the European Defense Fund, and the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) are likely to usher in a new chapter in the CSDP.

But this progress, of course, harbors certain risks:

There is the risk of deception. The latest EUROBAROMETER survey on security and defense shows huge support for a strong CSDP (75 percent on average), with even 55 percent of persons surveyed voicing their support for a European Army.⁸ People would like to see fewer refugees, fewer terrorist attacks, and less bad news on the whole. Despite the rise of nationalism, citizens of the member states obviously trust the EU more than their respective home countries and they want the EU to take care of things. This is precious political capital that could be quickly lost in the event of failure to deliver.

⁶ *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (Brussels: European Union, June 2016.) p.19.

⁷ On 16 October 2017, Pedro Serrano, deputy secretary of the EU External Action Service, called for a structural dialogue on the development and strengthening of the EU-U.S. partnership on security and defense. He added that “cooperation with the US is essential to meeting (global) challenges” such as North Korea or the Middle East. “The US is the main strategic partner for the EU and its member states – be it in terms of bilateral cooperation or in the framework of NATO.” *Europe Diplomacy & Defense*, No. 1026, October 17, 2017.

⁸ *Special Eurobarometer 461 - Designing Europe's future: Security and Defense* (Brussels: European Commission, April 2017).

This is also true at the military level: PESCO, for instance, is first of all a political project. Designed to facilitate political cooperation and to demonstrate the capacity to act, its integrative impetus must be geared to attend to the most pressing military needs in order to produce true added value in defense.

There is also another risk, namely that of ineffective structures:

The post-EU Global Strategy security architecture does not start from scratch. It builds on a rather complex institutional landscape and a multitude of existing instruments. Whether or not the potential of the new instruments can be fully leveraged or not, largely depends on the following aspects:

1. To properly identify capability gaps, member states must be obliged to participate in the annual defense review (CARD) – which has not been the case to date. The European Defense Agency (EDA), which acts as the secretariat for CARD, needs a strong mandate to monitor, enforce, and assess the member states' commitment.
2. PESCO should primarily address these identified capability gaps. This once again requires an enormous commitment by participating member states – and appropriate assessment mechanisms for the European Council.
3. The European Defense Fund should exclusively be used to fund these projects in order to make PESCO more attractive to smaller member states and help them catch up with regard to European capability benchmarks.

All these preconditions are incorporated into the new instruments. However, strong mandates, binding requirements, and effective monitoring mechanisms are obviously unwanted at present. Thus far the

member states have merely been underscoring “the need for PESCO, the European Defense Fund and CARD to be mutually reinforcing (...)”⁹ – which is not enough.

Another challenging aspect of ineffective structures is the growing number of bi- and mini-lateral initiatives in Europe: NORDEFECO or more recently the recent French proposal for a European Intervention Initiative would appear to be very pragmatic, defense-oriented steps forward that also keep the door open to important EU partners (including the UK). But as long as these initiatives are not supervised by NATO or CSDP structures, they risk making European defense even more complex, fragmented, and ineffective.

However: The new instruments of this “post-EU Global Strategy security and defense policy” of the EU offer huge potential both at the political and military levels. They will help better to coordinate European defense policies, thereby rendering them more effective. They will enhance the interoperability and operational readiness of European armed forces – whether this be for NATO, EU, UN, OSCE, or other multilateral missions.

Of course, concepts and ideas regarding the spirit and purpose of the CSDP still diverge considerably. But as Alice Billon-Galland and Martin Quencez put it in their recent GMF policy paper: “European partners urgently need to provide answers to short-term security challenges and cannot expect to reconcile all the differences in their strategic cultures before engaging a process toward a more coordinated and more ambitious European defense.”¹⁰

9 *European Council Meeting – Conclusions (Brussels: European Council, October 19, 2017), pp. 9-10.*

10 *Billon-Galland, Alice and Quencez, Martin, “Can France and Germany Make PESCO Work as a Process Toward EU Defense?” German Marshall Fund, Policy Brief No. 033, October 2017.*

The Future of German National Security and Defense

Colonel Martin Krüger, Directorate for Political Affairs,
Federal Ministry of Defense



Looking at our current security environment, especially in the center of Europe, we see a number of risks and threats. In particular, complex challenges such as terrorism, hybrid challenges, and cyber threats are relatively new to our societies.

With Russia, however, calling into question the fundamental principles of the European security order, we not only need to reassure our Eastern allies, partners, and friends in NATO, the EU, and beyond. We also need to rethink the implications of hostile power projection or even hybrid destabilization in our very neighborhood.

Based on detailed considerations of these risks and challenges, the German White Paper 2016 is clear that Germany's security is inextricably linked to that of its allies in NATO and the EU.

The unsettling complexity of the new security situation and current threat landscape requires changes within both organizations and calls for active participation in shaping their future.

With Germany's political and economic weight it is our duty to take on more responsibility for Europe's security together with our European and transatlantic partners.

Taking on more responsibility, however, entails the allocation of appropriate resources and manpower. Consequently, the ongoing modernization of the Bundeswehr has meant (among other things) revamping our personnel strategy, establishing a

dedicated cyber command, securing a continuous increase of our defense budget over the next few years, as well as increasing our investment in equipment.

The Decisions on the "Defense Investment Pledge" taken in Wales in 2014 were confirmed in Warsaw in 2016 and in Brussels earlier this year. Budget figures are certainly significant – but what ultimately counts are contributions to current operations and especially capabilities within a truly strategic approach.

Against this backdrop, Germany has acknowledged all NATO planning objectives, which form the basis for the development of the German Armed Forces' capabilities. There are, however, many reasons to doubt, whether in Europe we really need 19 types of infantry fighting vehicles or 29 types of naval frigates.

With rising security challenges on the one hand and limited defense budgets on the other, we need to spend not only more, but also better and more wisely. That means: we need a concerted effort in Europe to increase European defense cooperation, and to better organize defense research and capability development. This will also contribute to better burden sharing in

the Alliance.

Within NATO, the Framework Nation Concept (FNC), initiated by Germany in 2013, serves as an important forum to enable participating nations to align their national capability profiles. The very core of the concept is a harmonized and structured development of military capabilities between European states. This common development not only pursues long-term objectives, but has already improved interoperability between participating nations. By doing so, FNC strengthens the European pillar of NATO and adds to a more pragmatic approach to an improved cooperation between NATO and the EU.

Also, initiatives currently underway to strengthen the EU's CSDP, such as the European Defense Fund and the creation of a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO for short) are to be seen in this context. PESCO, as set out in the Lisbon Treaty, is a crucial step toward a European Defense Union (EDU).

The purpose of PESCO is twofold: Make CSDP more operational and at the same time align our efforts and strategic thinking. In doing so, PESCO provides a more binding framework for the development of defense capabilities and making them available for operations.

Enhanced defense capabilities of EU member states will also benefit NATO. They will strengthen the European pillar within the Alliance and respond to repeated demands for stronger transatlantic burden sharing. With PESCO we can work toward a vision of a coherent full spectrum force package fully interopera-

ble and based on NATO standards.

In conclusion: The future of German national security and defense is highly intertwined with the current changes and initiatives taking place within NATO and the EU. NATO will remain the cornerstone of our common security on the European continent and in the Atlantic arena. It will guarantee collective defense and express our common goal of a world in peace, freedom, and security. But, deeper defense cooperation with and within the European Union – and vice versa – will strengthen the European Pillar of NATO and contribute to a transatlantic burden sharing.

In this context, Germany's national security and defense will – to a large extent – depend on, but at the same time shape, these cooperation initiatives.

European Defense Industries – which Future?

Prof. Dr. Holger Mey, Head of Advanced Concepts,
Airbus Group; Honorary Professor,
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European governments have long opted in favour of maintaining military forces. In order to defend national borders and national interests, but also to best protect the lives of soldiers, these forces require modern weaponry and technology. Whether rifles or fighter aircrafts, someone, somewhere has to produce them: but who? Europe's nations must continually choose how and where they want to acquire the military equipment needed to sustain their forces. They can produce their equipment nationally, or with partners in a framework, as is the case for the Euro-fighter or MEADS, or they can simply purchase the equipment on the global market, from the United States in particular. What is clear is that each route has consequences that go far beyond the quality and suitability of the purchase systems.

Military budgets are shaping the future

Maintaining a national defense technological and industrial base is a political decision with foreign and domestic policy implications. While Europe's defense industries are largely in private hands (with governments sometimes owning shares), they are dependent on governments – European and others – for their revenues. That being the case, military budgets and the political decisions underlying them will continue to shape the future of Europe's defense industries. Government choices on export policy and international cooperation are also crucial. While the diplomatic implications of exports are important, so is their strategic role in maintaining defense industrial base, including production lines, engineering teams and management staff.



How to deal with the United States

Purchasing large amounts of equipment from abroad may appear to be less expensive – but only at first glance. American military equipment seems particularly attractive, benefiting as it does from high levels of US research and development spending and, theoretically, low unit costs due to United States' huge equipment orders for its own use. While US equipment appears inexpensive, the essential services and upgrades – the consumer parallels would be coffee pods and printer cartridges – generate long-term revenue streams for US companies, sustaining them as competitors for decades to come. Whether Europe wishes to directly compete with US products or whether it wants to be a better partner in co-producing equipment and systems together with the United States, the better funded and the more consolidated Europe's defense industries are, the more influence they will have.

Consolidation versus profit orientation

Europe's defense sector has taken great strides toward consolidation, but more needs to be done. Even though consolidation has political and strategic consequences, ultimately, it will be business requirements, market developments, and investor interests that determine the outcome. Companies will stay in the defense business only if it remains a profitable business. And it is government's decisions on grand strategy and military spending that will shape how Europe's defense industrial base compares to the rest of the world, with all the ensuing implications for employment, technological development and sovereignty.

Investing in EU capabilities is the better choice

Maintaining a consolidated, competitive defense industrial base is a choice, not a matter of inevitability. European governments could abandon their defense industrial base, choosing to rely on the United States as the main supplier of military equipment. But this would go against the stated objectives of the European politicians calling for greater European autonomy. A better choice would be for European governments to engage in harmonised investments in (common!) European capabilities, both in order to sustain their shared strategic independence and to make Europe a more influential partner in a wide range of transatlantic and global defense industrial projects. Hence, the future of European defense industries depends on the role that Europe chooses for itself in the world. Others have opted for a strengthening of their defense technological and industrial base. Now it is up to Europe to make a choice!

A Superhero Without Superpowers? Germany and its “Spider-Man Doctrine”

Dr. Jana Puglierin, Head of Program,
Center for European Policy Studies, German Council
on Foreign Relations (DGAP)

Over the past few years, Germany has nominally adopted the superhero’s signature motto – “with great power comes great responsibility.” But without more strategic vision, the country looks more like Batman: a lonely billionaire with high-tech weaponry but no long-term plan.

Germany has certainly taken its time: After years of encouragement – and gentle pressure – from its allies, Berlin finally signaled its willingness to play a greater international role in 2014 when then-President Joachim Gauck spoke of the country’s need to “take on more responsibility” at that year’s Munich Security Conference.

Since then, a “new responsibility” narrative has taken shape based on the following logic: Germany benefits like no other country from globalization and an open, rules-based international order. The country is the 800 lbs. gorilla in the EU in terms of economic strength, political stability, population size, and geostrategic location. Therefore it cannot simply carry on as before in the face of new challenges to the international order – it needs to take resolute steps to preserve and shape that order by shoring up the European Union, NATO, and the United Nations. Patrick Keller and Gary Schmitt of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the American Enterprise Institute, respectively, have called this logic the German “Spider-Man Doctrine”: with great power comes great responsibility.

But four years on, the question remains: Is Germany ready to take on more international responsibility and pursue a coherent foreign and security strategy?



At first glance, the answer seems to be “yes”: several developments indicate that Berlin is playing a greater international security role. The Bundeswehr is engaged in 13 foreign operations. Germany has taken the lead of the multinational battalion in Lithuania within the framework of NATO’s Enhanced Forward Presence, providing a structure for the successful implementation of the Wales Summit decisions. With next to no debate, the German government decided to deliver arms to the Peshmerga forces in 2014 when Iraq’s Kurdish regions were threatened by the so-called Islamic State, breaking a taboo in German foreign policy. After France requested mutual assistance under Article 42.7 TEU in November 2015, the German government rushed to secure a mandate in the Bundestag for military intervention in Syria, promising France it would deploy up to 1,200 soldiers, a German frigate, and six Tornado reconnaissance jets. Moreover, the country has played a leading role in managing the West’s difficult relationship with Moscow since Russia annexed Crimea and fanned the flames of military conflict in Eastern Ukraine. Germany was also key in negotiating the JCPOA with Iran.

So Germany's foreign policy has indeed come a long way. But does it follow a coherent strategy?

Not really. The evolution of German foreign policy is not primarily the manifestation of a new strategy, but rather a response to the geopolitical crises that overtook Europe shortly after President Gauck delivered his speech. The questions Germany faced back then were whether to send a couple more soldiers to the EU training operation in Mali, or a German MedEvac-Airbus to the Central African Republic – one that would not even have to evacuate German soldiers. Since then, Russian President Vladimir Putin has used the threat of military force to bring a portion of Ukraine back to mother Russia; IS created its “caliphate” in Iraq and Syria; a series of terror attacks shook European capitals; and an unprecedented wave of refugees arrived at the EU's shores.

In short, over the last four years Germany's foreign policy has been reactive and driven by crises, rather than proactive and driven by a coherent strategy. What's more, there is still no common understanding among the German foreign policy elite of what “taking over more international responsibility” should mean in practice. Some argue that Germany should “lead from the center,” others think Germany should be a “reflective power,” a “shaping power” (Gestaltungsmacht), or primarily just a “civilian power”.

The elephant in the room question is: What role should the German military play? So far, there is often a “kinetic gap” between the things Germany does and the things it encourages and enables close partners and allies to do. A good illustration is the Mali operation, where France is actively intervening militarily to prevent Islamist groups from advancing further, while Germany is training Malian soldiers to provide security for their own country.

Germany still lacks a strategic culture that encourages public discussion of military matters. But this discussion will soon be unavoidable: fundamental differences with the British and French remain, and pressure on the Germans to take the same risks as their allies is building up fast.

This helps explain why Germany has yet to live up to its Spider-Man doctrine. Berlin clearly lacks the super-human abilities for which the fictional Marvel Comics superhero is known. In fact, Batman might be a more appropriate role model for Berlin. Unlike most superheroes, Batman does not possess any superpowers; instead, he relies on his physical prowess, martial arts abilities, detective skills, technology, vast wealth, and indomitable will.

However, reading the annual reports of the German Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces, one doubts Germany's ability to be Europe's Dark Knight. Despite reversing a downward trend in defense spending, the German Bundeswehr is still in miserable condition – it is struggling to manage equipment shortages, and remains chronically underfunded. Germany still spends only about 1.2 percent of its GDP on defense, and during the recent election the Social Democrats, invoking fears of “rearmament”, denounced NATO's 2 percent spending target, despite having signed on as part of Merkel's coalition government.

In sum, Germany's foreign and security policy suffers from a major contradiction between its rising ambitions and its meager capabilities. If the next German government does not close – or at least narrow – this gap and make a European security commitment that corresponds to its economic and political weight, Germany will cut a depressing Batman-like figure: a lonely billionaire with a ridiculous costume.

Approximating a Consensus: Core Elements and Constraints of a Transatlantic Russia Policy

Jeffrey Rathke, Deputy Director and Senior Fellow, Europe Program, Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)

Deterrence-and-dialogue forms the central feature of the transatlantic approach to Russia the Trump Administration inherited from its predecessor. The response by NATO to Russia's intervention in Ukraine, which aroused renewed fears about the stability of the European security system has been to go back to basics, namely the Cold War Harmel Report, which set for a generation the policy direction of a strong NATO defense that enabled efforts to develop political dialogue with the Soviet Union. Since 2014, that balance has shifted decidedly toward deterrence as a prerequisite for meaningful political dialogue, which can then play a role in managing tensions. An analysis of transatlantic Russia policy should begin by considering the nature of the threats and challenges from Russia in current circumstances.

Russia's view of its strategic environment is apparent in policy documents such as its national security strategy and its military doctrine.¹¹ Ivo Daalder recently described Russia's objectives: to weaken the bonds between the United States and Europe and within the European Union (EU); to undermine NATO's solidarity; and to strengthen Russia's strategic position in its neighborhood and beyond.¹² Essentially, this means undermining the European order that has prevailed for the past 70 years, in both the post-War and post-Cold War periods. Russia pursues these objectives with a blend of civilian and military tools such as information operations, computer network exploitation, and influence operations directed against



countries across the transatlantic community. In that regard it should be clear that a transatlantic policy is necessary, because the threats from Russia are to the transatlantic community as a whole.

There are, however, interrelated constraints on the ability of the United States and Europe to develop a truly coordinated policy. In Washington, there is a high degree of policy paralysis toward Russia. There is no clear Russia policy, although the administration identifies some objectives such as resolving the Ukraine crisis and finding a way forward in Syria. A second constraint is the slow pace of staffing key positions – progress has been made, but there are still significant gaps. A third factor is the investigation by Special Counsel Robert Mueller of matters related to Russia's interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign. Fourth, the Congress is reasserting its foreign policy prerogatives (and the executive branch in some cases has ceded initiative to Congress). The

¹¹ Olikier, Olga, „Unpacking Russia's New National Security Strategy“, CSIS, Commentary, January 7, 2016.

¹² Daalder, Ivo H., „Responding to Russia's Resurgence. Not Quiet on the Eastern Front“, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 96, Nr. 6, pp. 30-38.

Congressional sanctions law on Russia, Iran, and North Korea, which the administration grudgingly signed in the face of a veto-proof majority, has established significant constraints on the Trump administration. The law, to take just one example, targets significant Russian arms sales to third countries, which are now subject to mandatory sanctions under Section 231 of the law. This adds a new degree of complexity to the executive branch's dealings with Moscow and with Russian arms customers across the globe. Fifth, there is a fundamental uncertainty about key aspects of U.S. policy: because the Trump administration values unpredictability so highly, it engenders confusion not only among U.S. enemies but also among allies and friends. When unpredictability itself is elevated to a strategy, it undermines the credibility of assurances from senior U.S. officials. It is hard to reconcile this with the interests of a global power leading a worldwide system of defense alliances and trade and economic relationships.

In Europe, the constraints are different. First, populist parties have risen in prominence across Europe, many having pro-Russian inclinations or at minimum policy views in harmony with nationalist Russian positions. This goes hand in hand, second, with anti-EU politics in Europe, although Brexit and Marine Le Pen's loss in the French presidential election may indicate a ceiling to euroskepticism. Third, coalition negotiations in Germany continue, and the shape of the government that emerges will have a significant effect on the scope for European policy on Russia. Fourth, there is an asymmetry of foreign-policy tools between the United States and Europe. An example is the U.S. use of secondary sanctions, which historically has been controversial for European allies, but which played an important role in the Iran nuclear diplomacy. Secondary sanctions related to Russia may cause transatlantic friction, but they also highlights the broader range of tools Washington possesses to pursue policy objectives. And fifth, measures of public opinion in Europe

highlight a stark decline in confidence in the U.S. as a partner and critical views of Trump administration policies on issues ranging from climate change to the Middle East. This creates a challenging environment for European governments that want to cooperate with Washington on Russia.

In light of those constraints, it is perhaps better to talk about approximating a consensus rather than forging one on the basis of broadly shared assumptions, tools, and objectives. The mercurial tendencies of the U.S. president only emphasizes the tentative nature of any transatlantic approach, despite the solid transatlantic credentials of key members of his foreign policy team.

Three core elements stand out as central for an effective approach. The first is Ukraine policy. The United States has legislated its sanctions, closing off the president's options unilaterally to lift them. Europe should continue on its course, which has proved more sustainable than many predicted when they were first introduced. The United States' appointment of Ambassador Kurt Volker as Special Representative for Ukraine negotiations is connected with Congressional and allied concern about Ukraine. The administration has accepted and incorporated this into its policy: as administration officials now state, any improvement of U.S.-Russian relations will depend on Russian steps to resolve the Ukraine conflict. The appointment of Ambassador Volker also has the benefit of bringing together three crucial requirements for effective engagement: competence, which Kurt Volker and the U.S. government team clearly possess; credibility, as a result of the Special Representative's close working relationship with the Secretary of State; and a clear executive branch policy supported by Congress. These circumstances, and the fact that Russia blatantly is violating European security order in Ukraine may be sufficient to manage differences with Europe over the scope and reach of U.S. sanctions law.

A second vital element of a transatlantic policy toward Russia relates to the civilian aspects of security. The transatlantic community has been on the right track in its military response, although it requires further refinement. The Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) of NATO tripwire forces along the northeast flank has improved deterrence, but NATO needs to take further steps to ensure that its rapid-reaction forces are able to move quickly in a crisis - the capacity for reinforcement is essential. The transatlantic community lags, though in establishing common policies on the necessary civilian measures related to Russia's subversion and influence efforts. The vulnerabilities in Western societies we have seen exposed so clearly in recent years are flaws of our own creation, not Russia's. Moscow has, however, exploited them effectively. Restoring a framework that neutralizes the troublesome interventions by Russia will depend on our domestic and civilian actions: increased financial and ownership transparency to prevent illicit flows; and spotlighting illicit political funding and other outside attempts to intervene in the political process. Unlike the Ukraine case, the United States and its western partners do not have structures that bring together competence, credibility, and policy to advance our shared aims. The transatlantic community should consider whether there is a role for special representatives to play in focusing national level efforts and coordinating international actions to reassert the integrity of our political and economic systems.

A third essential element is the transatlantic bond outside the military realm. Here I am most concerned: the failure thus far of the United States government to incorporate in its policy the role of the European Union as a security and foreign policy partner is a clear weakness. Across the spectrum, from law enforcement and border security to foreign policy action, the U.S. has an interest in a strong partnership with the EU, the security competencies of which are growing. Searching for a silver lining in this cloud, one recalls

that we have been here before. Previous U.S. administrations have entered office with little room in their policies for U.S.–EU cooperation, only to learn how important it can be in fields as diverse as data-sharing on terrorist threats or the economic sanctions that brought Iran to the nuclear negotiating table. At this point, U.S. policy initiatives in other regions have tested but not yet overburdened the transatlantic relationship, but they could do so. If the U.S. were to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal or otherwise attempt unilaterally to address Iran's security threats, or if Washington sought to resolve the North Korea nuclear and missile threat through the use of force would narrow the scope for transatlantic cooperation on issues that are a priority for the United States.

Transatlantic relations are in an uneasy equilibrium. There have been in 2017 mutually reassuring pledges of commitment to one another's security, and no competing U.S. priorities have yet complicated those central commitments. But the evolving U.S. policy, which will be reflected most clearly in the strategic reviews that will be released in the coming months, and the looming challenges in other parts of the world will complicate transatlantic diplomacy as the U.S. and Europe seek to preserve their security partnership and address the Russia challenge.

The Demise of Multilateralism Is Overstated



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The liberal international order created by Europe and the United States from the ashes of World War II is unquestionably under significant strain. It has been for years – all of the twenty-first century, really: America’s redirection after the attacks of September 11; bitter divisions over the 2003 Iraq war; economic collapse and slow recovery from the 2008 financial crisis; the trap door of Greek insolvency opening under the European monetary union; recrudescence of the Russian threat evident in Putin’s darkening reign, the Zapad war-games, and invasions of Georgia, Crimea, and Ukraine; deep suspicion of American intelligence agencies in the aftermath of the Snowden revelations; an unprecedented wave of refugees unleashed by the Syrian war; terrorist attacks; the rise of China as a global power to which Western economies are attracted and that seeks revision of

European and American-dominated international institutions; Britain’s rejection of continued union with Europe; Turkey turning away from the West from within the NATO alliance; and the spread of populism within electorates of the West – most worryingly of all in America’s election of President Donald Trump, a vulgar populist who gives every indication of not just disbelieving the major tenets of the liberal international order, but actively working to dismantle it. These have not just been the ordinary wear and tear of history’s passage, abrading order; they have been monumental challenges. So it is not surprising so many of us who value the security, prosperity, and community the existing liberal order provides for us agonize about sustaining it.

What is both striking and too little appreciated, though, is how well the order has actually held up. The monetary union has survived, with Greece in the Union. Angela Merkel managed the amazing feat of moving fast enough to stay ahead of a market run on the currency yet slowly enough the German electorate didn’t balk at the sticker price of preserving the eEuro. The Greek people have endured staggering hardship under German-led austerity but have repeatedly chosen to stay in the EMU rather than leave it. Ireland, Spain, and Portugal have fended off corresponding fates by swift and sound economic policies that garnered widespread public support. And Europe accepted, even largely welcomed, German leadership of the Eurozone that emerged from the crisis. Tensions over the Iraq war did not fracture the NATO alliance. Western publics have not wilted in the face of Russian revanchism, but have pulled together to deploy NATO troops to our most exposed allies’ territories and reinforce our commitment to common defense. Intelligence cooperation has been sustained, despite embarrassing revelations, because leaders made the

case for its continuing importance. Britain's decision to leave the European Union did not precipitate a rush to the exits by other countries; seemingly the opposite as publics weigh the disruption and costs of Britain's choice. The financial crisis did not lead to beggar thy neighbor trade or monetary policies; both the institutions and the informal cooperation of central bankers developed creative tools for keeping economies afloat and coordinated remarkably smoothly. Turkey was willing to make a deal with Europe to impede refugee passage. For all of Donald Trump's brash talk, he has been a threat only to the liberal trading order, and that is proceeding without the U.S.

In fact, it appears that the liberal trading order is being sustained almost without American leadership. Other countries that are also its beneficiaries are finding their voices in the silence America's failure has created. Japan and Australia have determined to sustain the Trans-Pacific Partnership despite America's withdrawal from it. Canada and Mexico have made a common front in NAFTA renegotiation and are pledged to continue its provisions irrespective of America's choices.

Another important buffer against threats to the liberal order has been American federalism. President Trump withdrew from the Paris climate accords, but twenty-three governors – including the governor of California, with its 33 million people and the world's fifth largest economy – have committed to abide by them anyway, as have the CEOs of numerous influential companies like Apple.

On security, the area most difficult to sustain without American leadership, the Trump administration has so far made decisions in line with traditional American policies: seeing through to successful conclusion the Afghan and Iraq wars, focusing narrowly on the anti-ISIS fight, continuing deployments to NATO's eastern states, committing to the defense of Korea and Japan against North Korean threats.

While I'm sure all of us would have preferred not to have the liberal order put to such stern tests, we ought perhaps to give ourselves more credit for its resilience in the face of so many diverse challenges over the past nearly twenty years. Our countries built a system of political relationships and institutions that are persevering and that our publics are largely upholding. Even as we worry and work to sustain it, we ought not lose sight that we are succeeding in that crucial task.

President Trump's Security Policy



Ambassador Dr. Klaus Scharioth, Dean, Mercator Fellowship on International Affairs

A coherent security policy of President Donald Trump is not yet discernable. He has neither made his mark as a distinguished foreign policy thinker, nor is he an ideologue. Many very different schools seem to exert some influence on him. Beyond his family, two groups stand out: One is the antimodern, somewhat nationalist camp around Steve Bannon, Steve Miller, and Sebastian Gorka (some of whom have left government, but still wield some influence informally); the other is represented by Secretary of Defense James Mattis, National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster, and Chief of Staff John Kelly – all very experienced security policy executives who know much about NATO and its advantages to the U.S. These camps share little or nothing with each other. While the following list of observations should not be taken as a conclusive analysis of the erratic security policy of President Trump, I want to share some general and topic-specific insights that can already safely be made.

Donald Trump does not believe in the logic of win-win. If something is good for another country, he believes, it cannot be good for the U.S. He can't imagine solutions which might benefit all involved. He views everything as a zero-sum game. My experience in foreign policy points to the exact opposite: Most international challenges (with the exception of war and aggression) are win-win. Only agreements that are seen by all sides as beneficial to them, will last. Most international organizations and agreements are not zero sum, but based on the idea of mutual benefit: NATO, EU, WTO, the Iran nuclear deal, or the Paris climate accords are just a few examples.

More specifically, Donald Trump is not convinced of the benefits of multilateral agreements and institutions to the U.S., although the current international system was largely invented or at least significantly shaped by the U.S. (UN, Bretton Woods institutions, international courts, NATO, WTO). In this regard, the influence of Steve Bannon is still felt, who believes that the existing multilateral international order is not worth preserving, but rather should be weakened, if not destroyed. In Trump's view, the U.S. is strongest alone, it does not need friends or allies. It should no longer be the guarantor of the liberal international order. Mattis, McMaster, and Kelly disagree.

There is damage done to NATO's standing by Trump calling it "obsolete" and by hesitating for a long time to reiterate clear Article 5 guarantees. But I expect Mattis, McMaster, and Kelly to win the debate on NATO inside the administration, as they fully understand the crucial importance of NATO, also for the U.S.' role as a European power. Germany could help the advocates of NATO by continuing to increase its defense spending significantly. Like many other countries, Germany harvested a prolonged "peace dividend" after 1991 by reducing its military budget decisively.

But now we live in a more dangerous world again: The annexation of Crimea, the destabilization of eastern Ukraine, terrorism and violent extremism, upheaval in the Middle East are just examples. So, by strengthening its defense, Germany acts in its own self interest.

There should be a deal not only with the U.S., but also among EU and NATO members, on an increase in overall international security spending: This includes defense, but also diplomacy, crisis prevention, development cooperation, aid to refugees, and support for multilateral institutions. Not all problems are military problems; in fact, most challenges are of a political, diplomatic, or economic nature. The Balkan wars had to be followed by the Stabilization Pact for Southeast Europe. Europe needs to increase its defense efforts significantly, as the U.S. should refrain from cutting its spending on diplomacy, crisis prevention, international organizations, or development cooperation and live up to its obligations under the Geneva Convention by taking in more victims of civil war.

Trump has been strangely silent on Putin turning in Ukraine against the European Peace Order built together by the Soviet Union/Russia and the West (Helsinki, Charter of Paris, Budapest Memorandum, NATO-Russia Founding Act). It will be crucial to convince the Trump administration that sanctions against Russia have to be continued and look the same on both sides of the Atlantic, until Russia's obligations under the Minsk Agreement have been fulfilled.

Trump might not kill the EU 3+3 agreement directly, but rather undermine it indirectly by introducing new sanctions. Radicals in Iran who never liked the deal would be delighted and try to shed Iran's obligations under the agreement. Less stability in the region would be the result.

Trump's loose rhetoric (encouraging Saudi Arabia, Japan, and South Korea to acquire nuclear weapons) is outlandishly dangerous, might lead to a world with more nuclear weapons, and end efforts of previous U.S. administrations to reduce the spread of them (i.e., Obama's Nuclear Posture Review). In North Korea, nothing should be done without having China on board.

What this means in summary is that Europe must pursue a dual track approach toward the U.S. under the Trump administration. Europe and Germany must strengthen their engagement, especially in the domain of defense. At the same time, European policymakers must reach out toward those influencing President Trump and his advisors in order to convince them to retain the transatlantic partnership and take a stand for a rules-based, multilateral world order.

Germany's Contribution and Perspective on the Future of World Order



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Writing this article in December 2017, Germany has elected a new parliament, but does not yet have a new government. Moreover, it is unsure if the German Bundestag will manage to elect a new government any time soon – or even at all. A minority government or new federal elections seem possible. While such circumstances give a hint on fairly new developments in Germany's domestic politics, speculations about Berlin's future foreign and security policies seem even more difficult and speculative.

Among the few things we do know, are the following:

1. For the moment – and if no new elections are held – Chancellor Merkel is going to stay in power.
2. The German government issued its 2016 White Paper on security policy only a year ago. The paper was well received, overall, and did not earn a great deal of criticism in the German public or in the Bundestag. It seems to reflect a broad consensus that would provide a basis for any future government.
3. Germany's perspective on regional and world order, as well as its contribution to it, was quite stable over the last decades. Germany has been a very committed actor in almost all international fields, from climate to human rights to security. In fact, with the so-called Munich consensus,¹⁴ the government and the federal president promised a greater German role and leadership in European and world affairs. Indeed, it was a promise that was certainly kept if we look at Germany's intellectual and practical contributions to NATO's new role in its eastern states and the contribution to MINUSMA in Mali or in promoting the UN's Agenda 2030 for sustainable development.

However, while it is likely that Germany will continue to stay on course, the world is not. Instead, changes occurred that affected the three main action areas and instruments of Germany's foreign and security policy: the European Union, NATO, and a rule-based international order. Brexit has shaken the EU to its core. And although the EU and the UK will continue

¹³ The thoughts and ideas expressed here are the personal views of the author. they do not necessarily reflect the position of the German government.

¹⁴ The term refers to the speeches of Federal President Joachim Gauck, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen at the Munich Security Conference 2014.

to have a very close relationship in the years to come, this event will remain a challenge for both sides. For the remaining 27 members of the EU, the preservation of European unity should be a major goal.

However, populist political parties and an economic divide within Europe make it difficult to agree on the next steps for further EU integration. Still, France's president Emmanuel Macron has presented interesting ideas for the future of Europe that raised attention in other member states. Moreover, in the field of European Security and Defense Policy, we have seen decisive steps toward more common defense and security cooperation (e.g., PESCO, CARD, European Defense Fund).

While NATO is in good shape, despite the great challenges on its eastern and northern flanks, a new interpretation of American leadership by the U.S. government and disagreements between Turkey and the U.S. on policies in Iraq and Syria raise concern in the alliance. On a broader level, it is observed that the U.S. left a political vacuum in some parts of the world. States like Russia and China are eager to fill such gaps, while the EU, Germany, and other European countries are in most dossiers not yet in a position to compensate for the absence of U.S. leadership. With China rising, North Korea going nuclear, and continuous tensions in the war-ravaged Near and Middle East, international order will remain under stress.

A special thanks to our co-host:



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