

ПОЛИТИЧЕСКАЯ МОДЕРНИЗАЦИЯ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ ОТНОШЕНИЙ

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ПОСЛЕДНИЕ ИЗМЕНЕНИЯ В ПОЛИТИКЕ ГЕРМАНИИ НА БЛИЖНЕМ И СРЕДНЕМ ВОСТОКЕ

Аннотация. Настоящая статья посвящена последним актуальным изменениям в ближневосточной политике Федеративной Республики Германия. Цель настоящего исследования – выявить и сформулировать основные тренды эволюции внешней политики ФРГ в Ближневосточном регионе. Объект исследования – внешняя политика Федеративной Республики Германия на Ближнем и Среднем Востоке, а также в Северной Африке. Предмет настоящего исследования – основные тренды и закономерности эволюции ближневосточной политики Федеративной Республики Германия на современном этапе развития системы международных отношений и мировой политики. Методологической основой исследования является системный, структурно-функциональный, сравнительно-политический подходы, методы анализа, синтеза, индукции, дедукции, наблюдения. Автор обращает внимание на высокую степень политической динамики в отношениях Федеративной Республики Германия с ведущими странами Ближневосточного региона, позволяющей утверждать о смене внешнеполитической парадигмы ФРГ в отношении указанного региона. Особое внимание уделяется внешнеполитическим сношениям Германии с Ираком и Ираном, касающихся самого широкого спектра вопросов, а также роли ФРГ в урегулировании иранского кризиса (связанного с заключением «ядерной сделки») и участии Германии в коалиционной борьбе с международным терроризмом. В статье также проводятся определенные исторические параллели.

Ключевые слова: международные отношения, глобальная нестабильность, мировая политика, глобальное информационное пространство, политическая система, дипломатия, интересы, государство, безопасность, «цветные революции».

Abstract. This article focuses on the recent changes in the current Middle East policy of the Federal Republic of Germany. The purpose of this study is to identify and formulate the main trends of the evolution of German foreign policy in the Middle East. The object of the study is the foreign policy of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Middle East and North Africa. The subject of this study includes the main trends and patterns of the evolution of the Middle East policy of the Federal Republic of Germany at the present stage of development of the system of international relations and the world politics. The methodological basis of the research is the system, structural and functional and comparative political approaches, the methods of analysis, synthesis, induction, deduction, observation. The author draws attention to the high level of political dynamics in the relations of the Federal Republic of Germany with the leading countries of the Middle East region, which allows us to conclude about the transformation of the paradigm of Germany's foreign policy in this region. Particular attention is paid to Germany's foreign policy relations with Iraq and Iran in a wide range of spheres and the role of Germany in resolving the Iranian crisis (related to the Iran nuclear deal) and Germany's participation in the coalition against international terrorism. The paper also draws certain historical parallels.

Key words: color revolutions, security, state, interests, diplomacy, international relations, global instability, world politics, global information space, political system.

1. The last two years have been marked by major shifts in German approaches towards foreign & security policy. Nowhere has this become more evident than in the Middle East, with Berlin dispatching both military hardware and instructors into Northern Iraq in support of Kurdish forces fighting IS.

As a matter of fact, talk about a more active foreign & security policy had been underway since 'German unification' in the early 90s.

Just remember then-Chancellor Helmut Kohl (from the Christian Democratic Union or *CDU*) emphasizing, after the Gulf War in 1992, "that Germany as one of the great industrial nations of the world – we are being mentioned in one breath with the Japanese & the Americans – has to contribute [to peace in the region] seems absolutely obvious to me ..." [1]

Or then-Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder (from the Social Democratic Party or *SPD*), condemning (in a clever move to win Germany's federal elections)

George W. Bush's Iraq war in 2002: "We have to make sure that international observers can enter the country. But toying with war & military intervention is what I can only warn against. Not with us, ladies & gentlemen, not with us ..." [1]

Or Germany's 2006 Defence White Book defining the *Bundeswehr* as an "army in action" set up to defend German interests, yet taking into consideration, on a permanent basis, the development within "communities and alliances", e.g. the "common global good".

Or in the words of one of Germany's foreign policy gurus, Stefan Froehlich: "Even in countries which lack any legally binding agreement on mutual defence assistance with Germany, it might be necessary to protect the international community against threats with the help of Germany. German interests are therefore identical with the protection of the international community ... Legitimacy for this interpretation comes from a novel concept in international law, the so-called 'responsibility to protect', which is neither a concept of the West nor the North, nor does it violate the principle of national sovereignty ..." [2]

A major shift, however, has occurred only recently.

Since October 2013, top-level politicians have repeatedly spoken out in favour of a more assertive German foreign & security policy – most prominently, German President Joachim Gauck, first in a speech in celebration of the 2013 German national holiday, then during the opening of the 50th Munich Security Conference in early 2014. In it Gauck called on Germany to shake off its sense of guilt stemming from World War II and to take more responsibility in shaping international affairs.

According to the President, "Germany will never support any purely military solution, but will approach issues with political judiciousness and explore all possible diplomatic options. However, when the last resort – sending in the *Bundeswehr* – comes to be discussed, Germany should not say 'no' on principle ..." [1]

The place where this new assertiveness is revealing itself most strikingly is the Middle East. And it is doing so with breathtaking speed.

Practically within a week in August 2014, Germany's previous foreign & security principles were turned upside down:

In response to the worsening condition of the Iraqi Yazidis, Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) pledged prompt humanitarian assistance whereas so far she had been referring to a guideline the former SPD/Greens coalition government had enacted 14 years ago. The export-restricting guideline states that "no approval shall be given for the export of weapons and other lethal military equipment to countries that are involved in armed conflict, where an outbreak of armed conflict is imminent, or where existing tensions and conflicts caused by such exports would perpetuate or exacerbate."

On Monday, August 11th, Government Spokesman Steffen Seibert confirmed that "principally, no weapon transfers [are granted] to crises- and conflict regions. This is a principle to which this government obviously continues to feel committed."

On Tuesday, Minister of Defense Ursula von der Leyen then announced that Germany will support Iraq's army in its efforts to fight the IS terror group by delivering nonlethal military aid, such as armored vehicles, helmets, night-vision equipment and booby-trap detectors.

Simultaneously, von der Leyen continued to reject weapon transfer to Iraq.

Yet Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said on Wednesday that Germany was in principle prepared to bend its restrictive policies on weapon exports and arm Kurdish fighters confronting IS in northern Iraq.

At the end of the week von der Leyen once more added to the general confusion when telling *Bild* (Germany's most influential tabloid) that "if a genocide can only be prevented with German weapons, then we must help ..." [3]

Just two weeks later, on September 1, 2014, Chancellor Merkel announced that Germany would supply Iraq's Kurdish forces, the Peshmerga, with \$92 million in weapons, including rifles, machine guns, grenades, anti-tank systems, and even armoured vehicles ...

Finally, on January 29, 2015, lawmakers in the *Bundestag*, Germany's lower house of parliament, voted by a large majority to send as many as 100 German soldiers as instructors to northern Iraq ...

2. In contrast to these novel trends, the 'special relationship' between Germany and Israel seems to be largely unaffected by change, despite recent criticism of the Netanyahu government by German chancellor Merkel.

Germany is Israel's largest trading partner in Europe (and its third-largest overall, after the United States and China). Germany's relationship with Israel is a very diverse one extending to scientific exchange, security & counterterrorism cooperation as well as weaponry ... [4]

At the same time officials in Berlin increasingly view the Netanyahu government as being both incapable and unwilling when it comes to make peace with the Palestinians. Chancellor Merkel herself seems to have lost faith in Premier Netanyahu as being honest about a two-state solution ...

As for the Israelis, they increasingly feel abandoned by the Germans. "The conflict has deteriorated

to the point that some are questioning the special relationship status between the two countries ...” [5]

Chancellor Merkel’s growing public criticism of the Netanyahu government might in part be explained as a response to changing attitudes among the German public vis-à-vis Israel ... [6]

3. It may be argued, however, that Merkel’s criticism could also be part and parcel of a major effort to clear the way for a more ‘rational’ bilateral relationship beyond the static notion of ‘historical responsibility’ as a precondition for further incorporating Israel into western economic & military structures at Washington’s request.

To be sure, this process has long been underway with two major institutions facilitating it:

1. The European Union:

Though there might be growing political tension, rooted in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (issues such as the political status of Jerusalem, human rights, the humanitarian situation in Gaza and EU funding for left-wing NGOs in Israel have been troublesome), overall relations might be described as positive:

Economic and research links between the EU and Israel are strong. The EU is Israel’s main trading partner, accounting for one-third of its total trade. Large Israeli corporations have sizeable investments in Europe and employ many Europeans, while Israel, despite its small size, is one of Europe’s most important trading partners in the Middle East. It supplies Europe with high-tech products, including software and apps used in most PCs and smartphones, medical devices, chemicals and pharmaceuticals.

Beyond trade, Israel and the EU have been collaborating in fields such as agriculture, aviation, science and in a wide variety of R&D fields (including nanotechnology, health, environment and communications).

There are also defence ties: Israel conducts joint military exercises with Bulgaria, Greece and Italy, while some EU member states, including Germany, the UK and Italy trade defence goods and services with Israel. In addition, Israel’s intelligence agencies and their European counterparts (among them agencies in the UK and Germany) collaborate closely ... [7]

2. NATO:

Israel was among the first countries which were granted (in 1989) *major non-NATO ally (MNNA)* status by the United States government (alongside Australia, Egypt, Japan & South Korea).

In November 2004 in Brussels, NATO and Israel signed an important bilateral protocol which paved the way for the holding of joint NATO-Israel military exercises. A follow-up agreement was signed in March 2005 in Jerusalem.

The 2005 bilateral military cooperation agreement was viewed by the Israeli military as a means to “enhance Israel’s deterrence capability regarding potential enemies threatening it, mainly Iran and Syria.” [8]

The ongoing premise underlying NATO-Israel military cooperation is that “Israel is under attack”. [8]

There is evidence of active military and intelligence coordination between NATO and Israel including consultations pertaining to the occupied territories.

In March 2013 NATO and Israel agreed to enhance military cooperation focusing on issues of counter-terrorism.

“Israel will be happy to share the knowledge it has gained and its technological abilities with NATO. Israel has experience in contending with complex situations, and we must strengthen the cooperation so we can fight global terror together and assist NATO with the complex threats it faces including in Afghanistan.” [8]

Israel is already involved in covert operations and non-conventional warfare in liaison with the US and NATO.

Yet as security analyst Michel Chossudovsky points out, the March 2013 agreement is of particular significance because it deepens the Israel-NATO relationship beyond the so-called “Mediterranean Dialogue”.

The joint statement points to an Israel NATO partnership “in the fight against terror and the search for peace... in the Middle East and the world”. [8]

Chossudovsky: “What this suggests is the participation of Israel in active theater warfare alongside NATO –i.e. as a de facto member of the Atlantic Alliance.

In other words, Israel would be directly involved were US-NATO to launch an outright military operation against Syria, Lebanon or Iran ...” [8]

Now Germany seems ready to play an ever increasing role in this process, most notably, through arms sales to Saudi Arabia:

For many years, Germany’s alliance with Israel as well as its focus on human rights prevented Berlin from exporting arms to Arab states. But as analysts Daniel Wagner & Giorgio Cafiero emphasize: “Recent agreements with the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states should not be seen as the Merkel government placing distance between Germany and Israel. On the contrary, Israel approved of the deepening of German-GCC military ties. This ultimately underscores the reality of Israel and Saudi Arabia’s tacit alliance, largely driven by their mutual interest in countering Iran’s influence in the Arab world, and Tehran’s presumed nuclear weapons ambitions.” [9]

As Wagner & Cafiero see it: “Germany’s relationship with the post-1979 Iranian government has historically been the best among the western European nations, but Germany has aligned itself with the U.S. and Israel vis-à-vis Iran since Merkel became Chancellor in 2005. The German leader joined the American and Israeli bandwagon early on by calling for stringent economic sanctions against Iran. By arming Saudi Arabia at a time when Tehran and Riyadh are competing for influence across the Middle East, Berlin is intent on strengthening Saudi Arabia’s hand at Iran’s expense ...” [9]

4. Pointing at that possibility is a number of recent ‘strategy papers’ published by German think tanks (in close cooperation with US ones) sharing an overtly ‘neotransatlanticist’ thrust.

The most widely debated of them: a paper resulting from a joint project of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) and the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF), as part of a campaign to raise public awareness on foreign policy & security issues – the so-called *Review 2014* process – as well as an attempt by the Foreign Office to sharpen its profile vis-à-vis the Chancellery.

Published in September 2013 and entitled “New Power – New Responsibility” [10], the paper holds the view that Germany, today, has “more power and influence than any democratic Germany in history.” “Germany will have to lead more often and more resolutely in the future” to help the US coping with its vanishing super power status.

Proceeding from such a “neotransatlanticist” perspective, the paper divides the countries of the world into three categories: “allies,” “challengers,” and “troublemakers.”

“Allies” are seen as “power amplifiers”: They extend the playing field, the expanse and the legitimacy of Germany’s power to shape policy. This refers above all to the countries in the EU and NATO – so-called *key partners* – plus so-called *important partners*: Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Mexico & Israel.

The “challengers” are stronger, in many cases, emerging countries, who often do not see the old West as “their role model.” The countries explicitly named are China and Russia as well as India, Brazil, South Africa (the so-called *BRICS* countries), but also Indonesia, Vietnam and Saudi Arabia. Relations with these countries will “inevitably include competition and conflicts.” The paper advises circumspection in relations with these “challengers.” In the future, measures should be

taken to “have them adequately represented” in the “international order” and its institutions, such as the UNO, the IMF and also the World Bank. This will hinder the “formation of a new block” in opposition to the West, as “is already apparent.” Success will not be possible without confrontational means. “Here Germany – in cooperation with like-minded allies – will have to combine integration and containment.”

Finally, the paper warns against “troublemakers”, pointing particularly to Iran, Syria, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Cuba and Venezuela. A “country with global ties, such as Germany,” could have its interests seriously affected, “even by a small or distant troublemaker.” The paper leaves no doubt that – if necessary – “troublemakers” could be fought militarily: “Military operations” of the *Bundeswehr* might range from “humanitarian aid, consultation, support, reconnaissance and stabilizing operations all the way to combat missions.” The sole controversy is whether going to war should be permitted even without a UN Security Council mandate ...

5. Ignorant of major trends in global affairs, the massive rise of anti-westernism throughout Greater Eurasia being one of them, such an approach seems to be fraught with failure. For Berlin, a kind of new, Eurasian thinking might be required to rebalance its long-term political, economic and security priorities.

Surely, part of the debate around the SWP/GMF paper points in this direction:

On the one hand, there are voices warning that Germany should not jeopardize transatlantic ties” – especially for military reasons: “Without the USA, no NATO, no protection,” as one author puts it. On the other, “a multitude of voices ... calling for the German government to play a more assertive role with its own foreign policy profile” demanding, for instance, that Germany’s policy toward Russia be “embedded in a comprehensive Eurasian strategy, which would include such countries as China, India and important Eurasian actors like Turkey and Iran.” [11]

As German-Foreign-Policy.com concludes: “Perhaps the most important lesson to be learned [from the debate around the SWP/GMF paper] ... is a confirmation of the new German self-concept and a summons to continue down this path in and with Europe, within a mature and equal partnership with the USA.” [11]

Sounds all very well – as long as it doesn’t boil down to a modified form of transatlanticism: an exclusive view of the world based on so-called Western val-

ues, or, even worse, a supposedly “Western community of values” (a US Cold-War concept that has long outlived itself), prompting a primitive division of a highly complex world into “allies”, “challengers” and “trouble-makers” ...

What is really needed is a new culture of inclusiveness, for Europe & for the world, a redefinition of European interests along Eurasian thought patterns ... [1]

6. The Middle East could turn out to be the very place for giving this a try, though so far Germany largely lacks both the intellectual and institutional fabric to do so.

Unfortunately, Germany’s foreign policy “thoughtscape” isn’t as diverse as it should be to bring about much needed change in perceptions & approaches. Sure, there is a number of think tanks – beyond SWP there is the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP), the Federal Academy for Security Policy (BAKS), the Center for Applied Policy Research (CAP), the German Association for Defense and Security Policies (GfW) and some others – yet with almost no political thought lexicon of their own. What they are really good at (having refined it for decades) is translating US

political & security wisdom into the local idiom. And they seem intent on leaving it that way ...

Just take a look at what is increasingly referred to as Germany’s “Strategic Community”. Some 50 of its representatives have actively contributed to the above-mentioned SWP/GMF paper, among them top personnel from SWP & DGAP, members of the Bundestag, ministry officials, people from the Konrad Adenauer, the Friedrich Ebert and Bertelsmann Foundations, several university professors, a representative of Daimler AG, a member of the Executive Board of the Federation of German Industries (BDI) and the General Secretary of the German section of Amnesty International. The media was represented by Jochen Bittner, an editor of the influential weekly “Die Zeit” and Nikolas Busse, NATO and EU correspondent of one of Germany’s leading quality daily papers “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”. The largest representation, however, came from the Foreign Ministry and included Thomas Bagger, Head of its Policy Planning Staff ... [13]

All in all: a cohort of bold transatlanticists determined to survive in a time which is obviously no longer theirs ...

(Berlin-Moscow-Tehran, March 2015)

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