

Germany in the New Europe

German–Russian Relations in European and Transatlantic Perspective

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Summary

Diverging narratives of the Cold War have laid the ground for diverging approaches to Russia on both sides of the Atlantic. Germany's Russia policy has pragmatic, material and ideological aspects; a key component is the country's long history of trade and exchange with Russia. Germany's interest in and tradition of cooperation with Russia has pre-war roots and serves multiple interests. Even today, and despite some latent tensions between values and interests, Germany feels it has a special role to play in anchoring Russia to the West. In addition, Germany's high standing and Russia's positive narrative of its old enemy contrast favourably with dominant perceptions in countries otherwise closer to Germany. This complex backdrop has paved the way for a partnership that assumed more institutionalised forms during Gerhard Schröder's term as chancellor, but has otherwise remained largely instrumental, particularly since Angela Merkel took over in 2005.

During Merkel's term, the sobered relationship has highlighted the heavy economic core of the Russo–German relationship. Since well before the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia has been Germany's primary source of oil and gas imports. This long-standing relationship has fostered a nationally defined energy policy which sometimes puts Germany at odds with the wider EU agenda. Not only do Russian exports of raw materials shape economic relations, they have also provided Germany with valuable security policy lessons. Russia has always been a reliable exporter for Germany; in turn, Germany has largely opposed undue securitisation of energy policy, as called for by the USA or by other EU countries.

German reunification was made possible by Russia, and Germany does not intend to be drawn into a new Cold War under any circumstances. However, reconciling transatlantic commitments with overtures to Russia has remained a constant challenge. Germany advocated NATO expansion in the 1990s as a means to achieve stability in Europe, but has also repeatedly defended Russian interests inside the organisation. The Russian–Georgian war in 2008, a delicate test case that required a balancing act for German diplomacy, contributed to cementing a pragmatic Russia policy. While staying loyal to NATO, Germany remains committed to the daunting long-term task of including Russia in a future European security architecture. Combining collective security within NATO with the quest for 'cooperative security' with Russia remains a seemingly ambiguous policy, but it suits Ger-

man interests. Although NATO's Russia policy can obviously not be shaped against the will of Germany, there are still clear limits to the weight that Germany can carry in 'hard security' questions. Ultimately, Germany serves as a moderating element in international politics, and could very well be the best guarantee that any talk of a new Cold War with Russia will not escalate from rhetoric to reality.

The secret of politics? Make a good treaty with Russia

– Otto von Bismarck

Introduction

During the two decades after 1990, Germany and Europe underwent tremendous changes. After German reunification and the eastward expansion of the EU and NATO, Germany went from being the eastern rim of the transatlantic community to centre-stage in Europe, geographically and in terms of political influence.

If anything has re-emerged of the old European order, it is sensitivity to any real or perceived German great-power ambitions. Indeed, some of those who make it their business to analyse foreign policy tend to magnify the implications of German decisions out of all proportion. Shortly after reunification, Germany's unilateral recognition of the breakaway former Yugoslav republics of Slovenia and Croatia sparked fears in some circles that German reunification could pave the way for a renewal of German *Machtpolitik*.¹ These fears were dispelled rather quickly. Today, in connection with Germany's Russia policy and together with the increasing perceptions of declining US influence in Europe, such worries are heard mainly in the United States and in parts of Eastern Europe.²

This discussion has emerged at a time of US 'imperial overstretch' and waning interest in Europe. Barack Obama has sometimes been labelled the first non-European US president.³ This renewed questioning of Germany's role in Europe also comes at a time when the Obama re-set in Russian–US relations has been grinding to a standstill and retired members of the US foreign policy establishment such as Robert Gates, William Cohen and Nicholas Burns publicly question the value of NATO. In addition, Germany, once a 'pillar of NATO', is increasingly perceived as a 'weak link', with departing US Defense Secretary Gates warning that the alliance could slip into 'military irrelevance' unless the European allies were willing to commit greater

¹ For a French perspective, see, for example, Alain Griotteray and Jean de Larsan. 1999. *Voyage au bout de l'Allemagne* (Editions du Rocher); or Yvonne Bollmann, 1998, *La tentation allemande* (Ed. Michalon).

² The management of the euro-crisis is not the subject of this report.

³ The context bears a resemblance to the situation at the end of the Vietnam War. The USA was in a position of relative weakness and Germany had just initiated its *Ostpolitik*, the policy of détente and overtures to the Eastern Bloc. As we shall see, today's discussion has many historical parallels.

resources. While such calls are not new – they echo Cold War-era calls for ‘sharing the burden’ – Germany was among the countries explicitly named by Gates.⁴

Germany’s abstention during the UN Security Council vote on Libya, whereby it effectively sided with the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) against France and the USA, broke an unwritten rule of Germany’s NATO membership: never side against both France and the USA (another unwritten rule, not to side with France against the USA, was broken in 2003). Spurred by an alarmist press and critics prone to crisis-maximisation, the German vote conjured up renewed suspicions of a German *Sonderweg* and of a ‘national-pacifist’ third way. The situation brought grist to the mill and new topicality to the question once posed by Richard Holbrooke, former US ambassador to Germany: ‘How come Germans have this reputation of being reliable [as a NATO ally], when they never quite are, and historically maybe never were?’⁵

Even though subsequent German fence-mending went a long way in relativising these interpretations, German Foreign Minister Westerwelle himself came under strong criticism, also from within his own party. It is noteworthy that the only significant appearance of Germany’s NATO ambassador after the Libya vote in the UNSC was in the NATO–Russia Council, when he went to considerable lengths to express his support for the ongoing NATO operation. Germany’s diplomats must have felt it necessary to give a public demonstration that the country was not siding with Russia.

A sign of the times: during her state visit to the United States, Chancellor Angela Merkel was awarded the prestigious presidential Medal of Freedom. That decision had been made long before the rift over Libya, and the award ceremony came at an awkward moment for both parties. Still, the ceremony did not fail to deliver a highly symbolic message: with the USA engaged in a process of gradual and relative strategic withdrawal from Europe, Germany will have to bear greater responsibility for the continent. Of course, Washington would like Merkel to assume this responsibility in a transatlantic spirit.

In order to assess the perceived German challenge to Atlanticism and evaluate the lessons to be drawn from Russo–German co-operation, several think-tanks on both sides of the Atlantic started taking an in-

⁴ ‘Gates criticises five allies over Libya’, *FT*, 8 June 2011.
<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/042c1152-91ee-11e0-b8c1-00144feab49a.html#axzz1VBjcBQK9> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁵ ‘Awkward moment for Obama and Merkel’, *NYT*, 2 May 2011.
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/03/world/europe/03iht-politicus03.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

creased interest in the question.⁶ After the Russian–Georgian war in August 2008, it was very easy to find alarmist publicists in the USA ready to denounce a ‘Russo–German plan to dismantle NATO’.⁷

Edward Lucas, Central and Eastern European correspondent for *The Economist* and author of a best-seller on an alleged ‘new Cold War’⁸ between Russia and the West, has summed up the weight of the accusations levelled by Germany’s critics:

Germany’s relationship with Vladimir Putin’s Russia is the most puzzling and troubling feature of modern European politics: not only is Germany Russia’s biggest trading partner, it is also her biggest ally. It is Germany that has derailed NATO expansion. Germany reversed the EU’s initially tough line on Russia after the invasion of Georgia. Germany prevents the Council of Europe scrutinising Russia’s flawed elections.⁹

More soberly, to Stephen Szabo, executive director of the Transatlantic Academy, ‘there is a real danger that without a common approach (between the USA and Germany), the latter could increasingly play the role of mediator between Russia and the United States’.¹⁰ This might be exactly the role Germany seeks to endorse.

Seen from a long-term historical perspective, every new chapter of post-war European history is a ritual re-launching of an old debate, with every wave of fresh accusations that Germany is drifting towards Russia met by German reassurances of its continued anchoring in the West. As far back as the days of the ‘Stalin note’ – the Soviet leader’s famous proposal for a reunified and neutral Germany – alarmist voices wary of the ‘finlandization’ of Germany or, alternatively, of a new Rapallo Treaty have been heard on both sides of the Atlantic.

Willy Brandt, Chancellor from 1969 to 1974 and mastermind of *Ostpolitik*, the politics of détente and overtures to the Communist bloc, assured his detractors: ‘*Ostpolitik* is *Westpolitik*’. Later, Helmut Kohl’s long-serving foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher famously explained there was no such thing as a German national interest,

⁶ See, for example, Ingo Mannteufel, ‘Germany is deeply divided on how to deal with Russia’, *Atlantic-Community.org*, 20 July 2011. http://www.atlantic-community.org/index/articles/view/Germany_is_Deeply_Divided_on_How_to_Deal_with_Russia (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁷ The chief editor of the evangelical political magazine *The Trumpet* believes that Germany and Russia conspired to attack Georgia: Brad Macdonald, ‘The Russo-German plan to dismantle NATO’, *The Trumpet.com*, 16 October 2008. <http://www.thetrumpet.com/?q=5598.3914.0.0> (accessed 1 June 2013) Similar conspiracy theories abound.

⁸ Edward Lucas, 2008, *The New Cold War*. London: Bloomsbury.

⁹ Edward Lucas, ‘Bearhugged by Uncle Vlad’, *Standpoint.co.uk*, Bearhugged by Uncle Vlad. <http://standpointmag.co.uk/bearhugged-by-uncle-vlad-january-09> (accessed 1 June 2013)

¹⁰ Stephen F. Szabo, 2009, ‘Can Washington and Berlin agree on Russia?’ *The Washington Quarterly*, 32(4): 23–41.

because ‘German national interest is European interests’. During his milestone January 1990 speech in Tutzing, on the eve of German reunification, Genscher gave formal reassurances that there would be no ‘neutralist united Germany’ (*Gesamtdeutschland*) outside of NATO.¹¹ In 1998, in his farewell speech to the German Parliament, the country’s longest-serving foreign minister delivered a profession of faith, a résumé of Germany’s historical experience at the close of the 20th century: ‘For us, the anchoring of Germany in the Western value community through participation in the European unification and in the Atlantic Alliance with the United States remains a lasting foundation of German politics. It is an irreversible positioning of our country.’¹² The latest in this series of reassurances came from Guido Westerwelle in his maiden speech as foreign minister: ‘Outside of Europe the United States is our strongest, but also our most loyal ally.’¹³

Despite these repeated reassurances, Germany’s transatlantic credentials – its NATO and EU commitments – are still regularly subjected to scrutiny. US scepticism towards Germany’s transatlantic credentials is echoed by the scepticism of Western European elites towards Germany’s EU commitments. At the same time, despite improvements in recent years, Eastern European apprehensions over Germany’s Russia policy are easily re-awakened. All this notwithstanding, in his maiden speech as foreign minister, Guido Westerwelle decided to congratulate German diplomats that ‘today more than ever, the old suspicion that Germany is pursuing a Russia policy over the heads of its direct neighbours and other partners has been overcome’, adding that ‘an effective tool for better embedding of our Russia policy is the trilateral cooperation between Germany, Poland and Russia.’¹⁴

Greater political demands are being made on Germany at all levels. With the on-going euro-crisis, bilateral French–German summits and initiatives have multiplied. German–Russian political initiatives seem more difficult to accept, at least unless they include other countries as well. Germany’s ability to shape the Russia policy of the EU depends on the country’s capacity to build consensus within the EU and the broader transatlantic community. And between Russia, Eastern Europe and the USA, Germany is indeed walking a tight rope.

¹¹ At the same time, Genscher ‘unequivocally’ vowed that there would be ‘no Eastward expansion of NATO towards the borders of the Soviet Union’. See, for example, Stephen F. Szabo, 1992, *The Diplomacy of German Unification*. New York: St. Martin’s Press, pp. 57–58

¹² Plenarprotokoll 13/230, 23 April 1998, *Deutscher Bundestag*, 230 Sitzung. Bonn. <http://www.genscher.de/16843.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

¹³ ‘Deutsche Aussenpolitik ist Friedenspolitik’, *Tagesanzeiger.ch*, 10 November 2009. <http://www.tagesanzeiger.ch/ausland/europa/Deutsche-Aussenpolitik-ist-Friedenspolitik/story/27067511> (accessed 1 June 2013)

¹⁴ Guido Westerwelle, ‘Grundsatzrede bei der deutschen Gesellschaft für Auswärtigen Politik’, 21 October 2010. Berlin. http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/AktuelleArtikel/101021-BM-dgap-grundsatzrede_node.html (accessed 1 June 2013)

Germany has a long history of relations with Russia. As a country that successfully handled the transition to democracy and reconciled itself with the loss of one third of its pre-war territory, Germany sees itself as having a special role to play. In the words of one German parliamentarian, 'If Germany is to have a foreign policy, then it must be directed towards Russia.'¹⁵

Analysing Germany's Russia policy can shed light on a decisive structuring element of contemporary European politics, and provide answers to those seeking signs of a strategic culture in Germany. Delving into Germany's Russia policy is also an invitation to explore Germany's evolving self-understanding in recent decades.

¹⁵ Author's interview with Dr Rolf Mützenich, MP (SPD). Berlin, Bundestag, 20 July 2011.

Reasons for a partnership

A specific approach to Russia

Germany's approach to Russia differs from that of both the USA and Eastern Europe. This is grounded in diverging narratives of the Cold War, different strategic cultures and different interests.

Europe and the USA drew different lessons from the Cold War, and this continues to shape contemporary thinking. The correspondent of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* recalls a heated discussion in 2007 between US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier on the origins of the fall of the Soviet Union: 'Steinmeier, the Social Democrat, explained it (the fall of the Soviet Union) was the consequence of Western détente policies. Rice, the Republican, interpreted the fall of the USSR as a fruit of Western intransigence.'¹⁶ The spokesperson of the victorious superpower paid homage to Reagan's 'peace through strength' strategy, whereas the representative of the formerly divided front-line state praised Willy Brandt's 'change through rapprochement'.¹⁷

US views on Russia might matter less to Berlin today than they did to Bonn. In the closing days of the Cold War, the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) were major issues of times. Nowadays, regardless of their final outcome, the stalled US–Russian talks on nuclear weapons and missile defence will not come close to having the same resonance and leverage as the Reykjavik Summit had in 1987. Bluntly put, Germany will favour and accept any solution negotiated between the USA and Russia – but the absence of a negotiated settlement is unlikely to have an adverse effect on German relations with Russia.

Whereas Germany sees the threat emanating from military arsenals as a question of perceptions, the USA and Russia still assess the threat

¹⁶ Daniel Brössler, 'Zu Besuch im Aufbruch', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 5 February 2009.

¹⁷ Originally coined in 1963 by Egon Bahr, the term 'change through rapprochement' or '*Wandel durch Annäherung*' became the leitmotiv of German *Ostpolitik* in Willy Brandt's years as Chancellor (1969–1974). According to Timothy Garton Ash, when the question of the reasons for the end of the Cold War was put to veteran Soviet diplomat Valentin Falin, he replied: 'without *Ostpolitik*, no Gorbachev' (Timothy Garton Ash, 1993, *In Europe's name: Germany and the Divided Continent*. New York: Random House). But in another interview with the Hamburg weekly *Die Zeit*, Falin also said that the West had arms-raced the Soviets to death. (See Gordon A. Craig, 1994, 'Did Ostpolitik Work?' *Foreign Affairs*, Jan/Feb 1994. <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/49450/gordon-a-craig/did-ostpolitik-work> (accessed 1 June 2013))

largely in terms of capacities. As long as the US–Russian relationship is conceived in terms of nuclear warheads and (re)negotiation of Cold War-era treaties, it runs the risk of becoming increasingly irrelevant to Berlin.

Besides the importance of history, there is a second, more prosaic reason for the deep-rooted difference in appreciations: whereas the volume of US–Russian trade remains negligible, Russia’s trade with Germany is the most important to Russia. This state of affairs leads Washington to view Russia primarily through a geopolitical lens, whereas Berlin sees its Eastern neighbour through the prism of geo-economics.

Russia and German geo-economics

Germany’s self-understanding in world affairs is determined by two currents: on the one hand, as stated both in the Red/Green coalition agreement of 1998 and by the current Liberal foreign minister, ‘German foreign policy is peace policy’.¹⁸ But Germany is also a trading nation: indeed, the world’s largest exporter from 2003 until 2009, when it was overtaken by China. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder’s Agenda 2010,¹⁹ a controversial series of liberal labour-market reforms launched in 2003, explicitly stated the objective of becoming the world’s leading exporter, and has been the source of considerable pride.

Since the export-driven German economy is dependent on imported raw materials, it is in connection with securing these resources that any signs of German *Realpolitik* should be sought. The ill-fated former federal president Horst Köhler was forced to resign amidst a storm of indignation after he stated in a radio interview in 2009:

a country of our size with this export orientation and thereby also export dependency must also know that in doubt, in emergency cases, military operations are also necessary to protect our interests, for example free trade routes, for example (to prevent) the instability of whole regions, certain to have a negative impact on our chances of securing employment and revenues through trade.²⁰

Less than a year later, then-Minister of Defence Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg proved that Köhler had simply been the expiatory victim of a taboo break. At the Berlin security conference, Guttenberg asked ‘what was so wayward about this (Köhler’s) thesis’ and went on to

¹⁸ See ‘Deutsche Aussenpolitik ist Friedenspolitik’, note above.

¹⁹ Bundesregierung, 2003. *Agenda 2010: Deutschland bewegt sich*. Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung. Berlin. http://archiv.bundesregierung.de/artikel/81/557981/attachment/557980_0.pdf (accessed 1 June 2013)

²⁰ Interview with Horst Köhler, *Dradio.de*, 22 May 2010 <http://www.dradio.de/aktuell/1191138/> (accessed 1 June 2013)

add: ‘the emerging powers’ need for raw materials is constantly on the rise and thereby enters into competition with our needs. That raises questions for our security, which are of strategic importance.’²¹

During the Cold War, German trade flows and the nexus of political and security alliances were largely overlapping, but this picture is changing rapidly. As noted by *The New York Times*, ‘Germany has long sat at the centre of the European economy, but Europe is no longer as central to Germany as it used to be [...] The shift in focus, while still in its early stages, could have profound economic and political implications (...)’.²² At the annual ambassadors’ conference in late August 2011, the embattled German Foreign Minister Westerwelle explained, ‘Germany cultivates its proven partnerships, but will find more with the emerging power centres of the world [meaning China, Russia and others]: That is no rupture with tradition, but mandatory development in a changing world.’²³

Intra-EU trade still makes up almost 60% of German trade, but its principal growth and investment markets are now to be found elsewhere. China is the most important of these, but Russia holds a very honourable position as Germany’s 11th biggest trade partner in 2010, up from 16th position in 1995, and now ranks 13th as regards German exports and 10th for German imports. In 2010, trade with Russia amounted to only 3.9% of total German imports and 2.7% of exports,²⁴ but this still made Russia Germany’s third main trading partner outside the EU (after the USA and China). Seen from the other side of the fence, Germany is Russia’s prime trading partner, with China a close second. However, there is also a significant trend towards lessening importance of traditional trading partners. During the same period, Norway was the only country in Western Europe (i.e. the EU-15 plus Switzerland, Norway and Iceland) to experience an increase in the relative importance of its trade with Germany, and that was due exclusively to exports of hydrocarbons. From 1995 to 2008, the EU-15’s share of total German exports fell from 58.2% to 51.4%.

²¹ ‘Guttenberg will Wirtschaft militärisch absichern’, *Handelsblatt.com*, 9 November 2010. <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/guttenberg-will-wirtschaft-militaerisch-absichern/3632270.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

²² ‘Europe’s Economic Powerhouse drifts East’, *NYTimes.com*, 18 July 2011. <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/19/business/global/Germany-Europes-Powerhouse-Drifts-East.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed 1 June 2013)

²³ ‘Ein fortschreitender Machtverfall’, *FAZ.net*, 30 August 2011. <http://www.faz.net/artikel/C30190/aussenminister-guido-westerwelle-ein-fortschreitender-machtverfall-30493557.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

²⁴ It can be interesting to see these figures in a relative perspective, by comparing with 1932 at the height of inter-war Russo–German economic cooperation: then German trade with Russia represented 11% of German exports and 6% of imports, at the time second only to trade with the Netherlands, which has remained Germany’s biggest trading partner. This relativises the tenants of a Rapallo scenario, but also reminds us of the huge untapped growth potential. See Commandant Korzetz, ‘Les relations germano-russes dans le cadre des relations UE-Russie’, *Diploweb.com*, 2 August 2010. <http://www.diploweb.com/Les-relations-germano-russes-dans.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

The total volume of German trade with the USA is generally stable, but with a growing disequilibrium in Germany's favour.

In reading these figures, we should recall that German economic growth in recent decades has been almost exclusively export-driven, with the share of exported goods in relation to total GDP a staggering 40.1% in 2008, up from 22.3% in 1990. This is comparable to the growth of Chinese export dependency in the same period (89% vs. 79% for Germany, bearing in mind that intra-German trade grew substantially in the first years after reunification), and puts Germany in a totally different category than any other major developed economy (for France, the total growth of export dependency over the same period was 22.4%). The share of Germany's trade surplus in relation to total GNP has also grown, from 0.7% to 7.1%.²⁵

It could be argued that Germany's eastward pursuit of economic interests follows a certain path dependency. Indeed, the history of its post-war political relations with the Soviet Union is closely linked to the influential Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations (*Ostausschuss der deutschen Wirtschaft*). The *Ostausschuss* was founded in 1952 at the behest of Ludwig Erhard, the iconic post-war Minister of Economy. Drawing on pre-war roots, this is the oldest regional business initiative in Germany. In 1979, Otto Wolff von Amerongen, its first chairman, wrote: 'For Erhard, the specific reason for the establishment of such a body was to fill a political vacuum, because the Federal Republic had no diplomatic relations with the countries of the so-called Eastern Bloc.'²⁶ Thus, even before 1955 and the resumption of formal relations between West Germany and the Soviet Union, business interests stood in a symbiotic relationship with politics.²⁷

Germany's policy of openness towards Russia has remained a constant factor over the past two decades. If we accept geo-economics as the fundamental premise of its foreign policy, and assume that the Germany will maintain its current economic model, the importance of its Russia policy is not likely to decrease.

²⁵ Figures and calculations from Statistisches Bundesamt, www.destatis.de and Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, www.bmwi.de (accessed 1 June 2013)

²⁶ Otto Wolff von Amerongen, 'Aussenwirtschaft und Aussenpolitik', *Osteuropa*, May 1979, pp. 3–12

²⁷ This symbiotic relationship between business and politics is very much alive today. Klaus Mangold, honorary consul of Russia, former Chairman of the Board at DaimlerChrysler and chairman of the *Ostausschuss* for 15 years, now heads the commission on strategic rare earths in the industry ministry and leads the working group on economics in the Petersburg Dialogues.

Germany in Russian eyes

The reasons for the end of the Cold War are still debated, but it is beyond doubt that Gorbachev's historical decision to agree to a united Germany in NATO and the peaceful retreat of the Soviet military provided the preconditions for a solution to the German Question. From the recognition of German unity in 1990 and till the withdrawal of all Soviet troops in 1994, Russia was an essential partner. At a bilateral meeting in Stavropol between Kohl and Gorbachev in July 1990, the Soviet leader – much to the surprise of the German chancellor – granted all of Germany's demands, including continued NATO membership for a unified Germany.²⁸ And only two months later, the 'Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany', better known as the 2+4 Agreement, was signed in Moscow, on 12 September 1990.

In the following years, in return for services rendered and out of concern for Russia's inner stability, in addition to financial help, Germany became a leading force in giving assurances and guarantees to Russia, accompanying reforms and lobbying for the inclusion of Russia into international bodies such as the Council of Europe (1996), the EU–Russia partnership and cooperation agreement (1997), the G-8 (1997), the NATO–Russia Permanent Joint Council (1998) and the NATO–Russia Council (2002). Thus, Germany acted not only as an advocate of Russian interests in Europe, but also as an important purveyor of international legitimacy and recognition.

In Russia, the value of close relations with Germany is widely accepted and is basically uncontroversial. From statist to liberals, whether favourable to a multi-vector foreign policy or an alliance with the West, no one would deny the importance of a close partnership with Germany – for its own sake or as a gateway to the Euro-Atlantic community. The economic, technical and political benefits of such a partnership are obvious.

It is therefore no coincidence that Russia uses Berlin as a platform for announcing high-profile political initiatives. For example, Dmitri Medvedev chose Berlin to announce his proposal for a new European security architecture (2008) as did Putin with his proposal for a European free trade zone (2009).

Germany enjoys great confidence and prestige in Russia, where German motives are generally perceived to be more honest than American or Chinese ones. In a poll conducted by the Levada Centre in May 2011, when asked to name Russia's five closest friends and allies,

²⁸ 'Among all, the alliance question seemed to be the squaring of the circle. Only the greatest optimists believed in a miracle, in a historic turning point': H. Kohl, 2009, *Vom Mauerfall zur Wiedervereinigung*. München: Knauer Taschenbuch Verlag, p. 326.

20% of the respondents answered Germany, putting it in fourth place after neighbouring Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. At the opposite end of the scale, 33% of the respondents considered the USA to be among the top five in the list of *least* friendly countries, in fourth place after Georgia, Latvia and Lithuania. Only 4% of the respondents saw Germany as an enemy and 5% the USA as a close friend. Furthermore, 84% of those polled said they had a very good or good opinion of Germany: that puts Germany in first place, even ahead of Russia's post-Soviet neighbours.²⁹

Russia's quest for recognition by Germany carries multiple implications – and is not a one-way street. The more Russia is perceived as a respectable international actor pursuing legitimate interests, the greater the stature of Germany, in the eyes of its Western partners and of its own population, to pursue a more differentiated (i.e., pro-Russian) partnership policy than today. But there is also another element, and that is related to German self-perception.

According to V. I. Daschichev, leading Russian historian and expert on Germany, 'after the reunification in 1990, [Germany] was in reality divided up again, but this time in a new configuration: in an American and a German Germany'.³⁰ To support this view, he argues that the US-led re-education and de-nazification of Germany after the Second World War has led to a 'psychological oppression of the German people through the theory of collective guilt' – which again plays into the hands of US hegemony in Europe.³¹ And thus it should be the task of Russian policy-makers to encourage a less complex-ridden, more self-confident 'German part' of Germany.

Regardless of the real merits of such a theory, it is illustrative that the country which arguably suffered the most from Hitler's invasion seems the least intent on demanding redemptory gestures from its former enemy. A gesture similar to Willy Brandt's falling on his knees in Warsaw in 1970 was unthinkable during the Cold War, but is less conceivable today, not least because Russia itself would not want it.³²

²⁹ Levada Tsentr. 2011. Otnoschenie k drugim stranam (May 2011). *Levada.ru*, 1 June 2011. <http://www.levada.ru/press/2011060103.html>. Further testifying to the enduring prestige of Germany, the number of German language learners in Russia is again on the rise, after a slump and despite the dominance of English: 'Russland lernt deutsch', *Welt.de*, 18 June.

2008. http://www.welt.de/welt_print/article2116977/Russland_lernt_Deutsch.html (accessed 1 June 2013) According to the Goethe Institute, Russia holds an undisputed first position in terms of learners of German as a foreign language, with 2.3 million students out of 15 million worldwide: 'Nemetskiy v Rossii', *Goethe.de*. <http://www.goethe.de/ins/ru/lp/prj/ler/gru/dru/ruindex.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

³⁰ V.I. Daschichev, 2009, 'Germania i Rossia: vzaimootnoschenia v razhnie vremena', in *Rossiysko-germanskie otnoschenie v kontekste evropeyskoy bezopasnosti*. Institut Ekonomiki RAN, Moscow, p. 41. Here and elsewhere: all translations are the author's own.

³¹ Daschichev, 'Germania i Rossia', p. 37 supra.

³² Instead, the Bundeswehr has gone directly from foe to friend, parading in Red Square in 2008.

Instead, respect for the defeated carries a double advantage: not only does it magnify the value of Russia's own victory and great-power status, it also adds legitimacy to and encourages any signs of Germany pursuing a neutralist or 'third way' policy.

A tradition of cooperation across ideological divides

In October 2007, the quiet southwestern German city of Freiburg was the stage for a little-noticed but significant event. The Joseph Wirth Foundation, named after the Weimar-era German chancellor, and the West–East Society organised a convention to celebrate the 85th anniversary of the Rapallo Treaty. This 1922 treaty had initiated a cycle of intense economic and clandestine military cooperation between Weimar Germany and Soviet Russia during the inter-war period, which continued until Hitler decided a change of policy in 1934. This rapprochement between the two pariah states of the day came as a shock to the victors of the First World War.³³

Along with official Germany in the form of State Secretary Gernot Erler (SPD) from the Foreign Office, a specialist on Eastern Europe, the event was attended by Nikolai Portugalov, a prominent historical figure in German–Soviet diplomacy. Portugalov had played a leading role during the 1970 negotiations over the Moscow treaties³⁴ and during the 1990 negotiations on German reunification.

As a lesson for the future, the Russian Foreign Ministry veteran told his audience: 'the German leadership today needn't worry any more about the internal political development in Russia, however it might evolve, than Chancellor Wirth, a centre politician [Wirth represented the Catholic conservative Zentrum party], was frightened off by the excesses of the Communist revolution during the conclusion of the Rapallo Treaty.'³⁵

³³ Critics have repeatedly pointed to the alleged dangers of a 'new Rapallo', meaning a Russo–German deal to overturn the European order. This old analogy is something of a classic. In 1954, noticing dissent in Adenauer's coalition over Germany's Western orientation, *Time* magazine published an article titled: 'Germany: back to Rapallo?', *Time Magazine*, 21 June 1954. <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,860799,00.html> (accessed 1 June 2013). On a similar note, back in 1982, voicing uncertainty about Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's NATO commitments, *New York Times* editor William Safire wrote an essay, 'The New Rapallo', *NYT*, 22 February 1982. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/02/22/opinion/essay-the-new-rapallo.html> (accessed 1 June 2013) In 2009, Polish–French publicist Jaan Kaplinski pondered over the 'the new Rapallo and us' <http://jaankaplinski.blogspot.com/2009/08/new-rapallo-and-us.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

³⁴ The crowning achievement of Chancellor Willy Brandt's détente and cooperation policy during the Cold War

³⁵ N.S. Portugalov, 'Von Rapallo zu den deutsch-russischen Beziehungen heute', speech delivered at the Joseph Wirth Foundation, Freiburg, 19 October 2007. http://www.wogsuedbaden.de/cms/upload/Dateien/Infos/Vortrag_Nikolaj-Portugalov.pdf (accessed 1 June 2013)

Stretching back from Rapallo to contemporary politics, there is indeed a distinct tradition of Russo–German cooperation cutting across ideological divides. After the defeat of imperial Germany in 1918, influential authors such as Karl Haushofer emerged as proponents of Eurasianism, advocating an alliance with Communist Russia to challenge Anglo-American domination in Europe.³⁶ In a striking parallel to how the teachings of Karl Marx were received in early 20th century Russia, Haushofer's ideological offspring is best traced in early 21st century Russia. According to Alexander Dugin, an influential Russian politologist and leading figure of neo-Eurasianism, Russia is predestined to hold an independent pivotal position in world politics as the centre and balancing point of the Eurasian 'Heartland' in its struggle against the American maritime empire. In order to realise this 'manifest destiny', it is necessary to wrench continental Europe in general, and Germany in particular, away from US domination. The perhaps most surprising element of Dugin's analysis is how this is best to be achieved: 'in Germany, the real promoters of the European–Russian alliance [against American hegemony] are economic structures: banks, big industrial groups, energy companies, who conceive the Russian factor in the shape of natural resources, if not as a political model.'³⁷

A bird's-eye view of post-war German history would tend to divide the political spectrum into a more Atlanticist CDU and a more pro-Russia SPD. Both parties, however, have been divided over Russia.

The political peregrinations of Egon Bahr, the father of *Ostpolitik*, for whom the question of German unity was always primary, can illustrate the rifts dividing post-war West Germany. In stature, Bahr can be compared to Henry Kissinger. After the Second World War, Bahr, who in one interview described himself as the last of the '*Deutchnationale*',³⁸ first sympathised with the Christian Democrat Jakob Kaiser. Kaiser was a proponent of the 'bridge' theory, according to which a neutral and reunified Germany should serve as an honest broker between East and West. In all logic, Kaiser, who at the time was minister for all-German affairs in Adenauer's government, responded positive-

³⁶ In a certain sense, Hitler's infamous foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop, the architect of the German–Soviet non-aggression pact in August 1939, can also be seen as part of this tradition. Ribbentrop opposed the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941. Subsequently, his influence within the Nazi apparatus waned.

³⁷ A.G. Dugin, 2007, *Geopolitika postmoderna*, Saint Petersburg: Amfora 2007, p. 142. Not unlike how Soviet Communists proclaimed that Moscow, and not Berlin, would be the centre of world communism, Dugin has moved the gravitational centre of the 'Heartland' eastwards to Russia. Amateurs of geo-politics could seek parallels to the Churchill-like concept of a 'special relation' between Great Britain and the United States, in which the former has inherited the latter's former role and status in world politics.

³⁸ Interview with Egon Bahr. *ORB-Fernsehen*, 9 April 2001 Deutschland im Blick, Egon Bahr zum 85. Geburtstag, 2007. Berlin: Vorwärts Buch. (ed.D. Münkler).

ly to the 1952 Stalin note, a Soviet proposal for German reunification in return for strict neutrality.³⁹

Chancellor Adenauer, however, made the historic choice of anchoring Germany to the West. In response to the Stalin note, Adenauer delivered a speech on 20 July 1952 where he refuted the European nature of Russia and denounced Communism as an expression of ‘the culturally backward part of Asia’.⁴⁰ Only three years later, West Germany joined NATO and became a driving force for European integration.

With the ensuing marginalisation of Jakob Kaiser within the Christian Democrats, Bahr switched his political allegiance to the Social Democrats. When Willy Brandt became chancellor in 1969, Bahr, as secretary of state and special representative, was able to put his ideas into practice. The ensuing *Ostpolitik*, which prescribed ‘*Wandel durch Annäherung*’ or ‘change through rapprochement’ with East Germany and the Soviet Union, resulted in the signing of the 1970 Moscow treaties. The ensuing détente in East–West relations laid the ground for the 1975 Helsinki Agreement.

According to the views held by Egon Bahr at the time, NATO was due to disappear with the end of the Cold War and German reunification. Valentin Falin, the Soviet ambassador in charge of negotiations, even hoped that the Moscow treaties would pave the way for a future geo-strategic partnership between Germany and Russia.⁴¹

Thus Egon Bahr is part of the long tradition of pragmatic *realpolitik* and cooperation with Russia. In a 2005 interview in the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Bahr explained: ‘I was only ever interested in Germany. I didn’t become a Social Democrat in order to nationalise the banks. No, I became a Social Democrat because I was of the opinion that Adenauer did not mean it seriously and Schumacher [the SPD leader at the time] meant it seriously with the priority given to Germany policy (*Deutschlandspolitik*, meaning reunification)’.⁴²

Just as the SPD’s Russia policy is in the tradition of Egon Bahr, the Willy Brandt House on Berlin’s main thoroughfare, Unter den Linden, stands right in front of the massive building of the Russian embassy.

³⁹ In 1952, the West German political establishment was divided as to the sincerity of the Stalin note. Later disclosed Soviet archives have sparked a new row of debate. See for example: ‘Die Stalin-Note vom 10. März 1952: Neue Quellen und Analysen’, *Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte*, 2002. Oldenbourg (ed. Zarusky).

⁴⁰ Peter Brandt, 2002, ‘Das deutsche Bild Russlands und der russen in der modernen’, *Iablis, Jahrbuch für europäische Prozesse*. http://www.iablis.de/iablis_t/2002/brandt.htm (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁴¹ Deutschland im Blick, Egon Bahr zum 85. Geburtstag (*ORB-Fernsehen*, 9 April 2001)..

⁴² Interview with Egon Bahr. *FAZ.net*, 24 April 2005. <http://www.faz.net/artikel/C30351/egon-bahr-ich-habe-mit-allem-was-geschehen-ist-erreicht-was-ich-wollte-30159563.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

No less symbolically, a portrait of Bismarck adorns the office of ex-SPD chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Since the Iron Chancellor actually outlawed the SPD, but actively pursued a policy of friendship and accommodation with Russia, the portrait can only be meant as an allusion to Schröder's pro-Russia policy and current position as board director for the Nord Stream gas pipeline consortium, the emblematic Russo–German bilateral project which was launched just before Schröder left office.⁴³

Strategic partnership or business partner?

Schröder unceasingly promoted the idea of a strategic partnership with Russia:

Europe, Germany and Russia are pursuing the same or similar central strategic goals – creating a lasting peaceful order for the whole of Europe, stabilising our common neighbourhood in the Middle East, combating terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and finally, developing an 'effective multilateralism'. At the same time, we have the chance to tap the vast potential of the Eurasian economic zone for our mutual benefit.⁴⁴

When Schröder's coalition of Social Democrats and Greens left office in 2005, the grand coalition of Conservatives and Social Democrats (in office 2005–2009) continued with the same Russia policy as that of their predecessors. As part of the informal power-sharing agreement between the two coalition partners, Russia policy remained firmly in the hands of Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who had previously served as Schröder's cabinet secretary. Steinmeier continued the strategy of overtures to Russia summarised in the formula 'Annäherung durch Verflechtung' (rapprochement through interweaving) – a clear allusion to Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr's 'Wandel durch Annäherung'.⁴⁵

The 2005 coalition agreement between the SPD and CDU/CSU includes this statement of intentions with regard to Russia:

Together with our European partners, we are in favour of a strategic partnership with Russia that we will promote at every level of bilateral relations and at the EU level. Germany has a particular interest in supporting the difficult modernisation of the country through reinforced political, economic and civil society cooperation. The objective remains a prosperous Russia, oriented towards the values

⁴³ 'Mächtig viel Freiheit', *Sueddeutsche.de*, 24 October 2008. http://archiv.sueddeutsche.apa.at/sueddz/index.php?id=A42933302_EGTPOGWPP_HOPWSGRWTEEEPW (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁴⁴ Gerhard Schröder, 'Russia and Germany: the core tenet of cooperation', *Russia in Global Affairs*, 4, October–December 2004. http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/n_3875 (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁴⁵ 'Berlin schlägt in der EU-Russlandpolitik "Annäherung durch Verflechtung" vor', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 4 September 2006, p.5

which commit Europe and mindful of its traditions, which will successfully manage its transformation into a stable democracy.⁴⁶

Two instruments were developed during the years of the Red/Green (1998–2005) and Red/Black coalitions (2005–2009) to operationalize the concept of a strategic partnership and *Annäherung durch Verflechtung*: the partnership for modernization, and the Petersburg Dialogues.

These dialogues, launched by Putin and Schröder in 2001, are intended as the civil-society supplement to the strategic partnership, underlying the transformative and norm-diffusing nature of Germany's relationship with neighbouring countries. By accompanying Russia towards democracy, the intention behind the dialogues is to add a positive transformative element to the bilateral relationship. The dialogues take place once a year, alternating between Russia and Germany, and bring together large delegations from both countries. The official Internet web-site presents the main objective of the dialogue as 'furthering understanding between the civil societies of both countries', immediately adding that 'it stands under the patronage of the acting German chancellor and the acting Russian president'. The Petersburg Dialogues have been criticised for being a top-down construction piloted from the Kremlin and the Chancellor's Office, and human rights groups have dismissed the meetings as a window-dressing operation. Given the state of civil society in Russia, the key question is whether the Petersburg Dialogues should be called a 'forum for exchange between civil societies', when they are actually just as much a strategic forum accompanied by high-level bilateral meetings. The names of the different working groups for 2010 leave all options open. Besides working groups on civil society and media, there are working groups on education, science and health, on culture and on churches in Europe. The three most important could well be those on politics, economics and finally the group on 'shaping the future'.⁴⁷

In his opening speech in St Petersburg in 2001, Vladimir Putin made no secret of his expectations: 'The most important is to develop common perspectives, namely perspectives for long-term cooperation. This also encompasses economic cooperation [...]' and added that economic cooperation would be the main content of the upcoming consultations with his German colleague.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Coalition agreement between the CDU, CSU and SPD. *Gemeinsam für Deutschland. Mit Mut und Menschlichkeit*. p.157. <http://www.cducusu.de/upload/koavertrag0509.pdf> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁴⁷ This is the *Zukunftsgestaltung*, led by the many-hatted Alexander Rahr.

⁴⁸ Words of welcome from Russian President Vladimir Putin to the opening session of the Petersburg Dialogues, St. Petersburg 2001. Available at: <http://www.petersburgerdialog.de/grusswort-des-russischen-praesidenten-wladimir-putin-0> (accessed 1 June 2013)

Unwittingly, the ambivalence and essentially instrumental character of the forum was further underlined by Schröder's parallel wish to establish a 'strategic partnership' with China, without any accompanying civil society dialogue.⁴⁹ As it stands today, the Petersburg Dialogues are best understood as a strategic forum to accompany the modernisation partnership, rather than a dialogue of civil societies.

The Russo–German modernisation partnership was formalised in 2008, thus preceding the EU–Russia modernisation partnership of 2010, which has yet to be put into practice. In a joint op-ed, foreign ministers Westerwelle and Lavrov underlined the desire to take the lead in setting the agenda for EU–Russia relations: 'The modernisation partnership currently being built by the European Union and Russia follows the German–Russian model. Our bilateral experiences will benefit the European–Russian project.'⁵⁰

The partnership can boast several concrete achievements, first and foremost within the realm of economics and technology transfer. In 2009, the German–Russian Energy Agency (Rudea) was set up in order to promote cooperation and technology transfers between German and Russian companies.⁵¹ And the German industrial corporation Siemens has been chosen as a key partner for building the Skolkovo science and innovation city, a centrepiece of Russia's modernisation strategy and a project in which President Medvedev invested substantial personal prestige. 'Modernisation' has continued to be a key element of the Russian domestic policy discourse and is at the core of the 'Medvedev doctrine' as expressed in the famous September 2009 article 'Go Russia'.⁵²

Germany thus remains committed to Russian economic reform policy, and the Russian leadership has made repeated statements that Germany is the country's most important modernisation partner. As if to echo the modernisation partnership, 'Germany and Russia – shaping the future together' was chosen as the official slogan of 'Germany's year in Russia', from June 2012 to July 2013.

According to a strategy paper from the Russian Foreign Ministry, Russia would need at least €1 billion until 2013 to upgrade its infra-

⁴⁹ The Petersburg Dialogues have also some concrete achievements of their own, most notably a significant increase in youth exchange programmes.

⁵⁰ 'The German–Russian Modernization Partnership', Federal Foreign Minister Westerwelle and Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov in the FAZ, undated. www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/Presse/Interview/2010/100531-BM-FAZ.html (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁵¹ A particular focus is the crucial field of energy efficiency, as with the establishment of German Science and Innovation Forum in Moscow (DWIH), where Moscow was selected alongside New York, Sao Paolo, Tokyo and Delhi.

⁵² D. Medvedev, 'Go Russia!' *eng.kremlin.ru*, 10 September 2009 <http://eng.kremlin.ru/news/298> (accessed 1 June 2013)

structure as part of its modernisation programme, but also substantial technological assistance and investment from abroad. The paper, published in the Russian edition of *Newsweek*, called for a ‘modernisation alliance’ with Germany that would go beyond the support already given by German industry and government for several major infrastructure projects.⁵³

In this context, we should note the conclusions of Trendmonitor, a periodical survey on the outlook of public opinion on the German–Russian modernisation partnership, which appears very much in phase with the political leadership: ‘If we analyse the shape of public opinion in Russia, we see that Germany remains the preferred ‘modernisation partner’ for Russians.’ Furthermore, ‘Within the EU, Germany is virtually the only country worth considering in the eyes of the Russians: while 20 per cent voice their support for Germany (as primary modernisation partner), for France, which is the second preferred EU country, this figure is not even two per cent’. China and the United States garner 10.8 and 7.8 per cent, respectively, of the favourable opinion.⁵⁴

Alexander Rahr, Senior Programme Director at the DGAP, who ordered the survey, remains confident that ‘the competition from China should not be taken too seriously, because for Russians, China remains a distant culture, while Germany is regarded as a model of civilisation’.⁵⁵

If Germany is viewed favourably by the general Russian public, the sentiment of curiosity so typical of Germans and which prevailed in Germany in the 1980s and 1990s, has now given way to increased scepticism. According to the results of *Transatlantic Trends 2012*, although 71 per cent of the Russians surveyed said they held a positive opinion of Germany, a full 63 per cent of the German respondents now hold an unfavourable view of Russia.⁵⁶ This state of public opinion is a serious obstacle to the Russo–German partnership.

⁵³ ‘Russia seeks tighter ties with Germany’, *NYtimes.com*, 4 June 2010. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/06/05/world/europe/05iht-germany.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁵⁴ ‘Modernization Partnership between Germany and Russia’, *Trendmonitor I*, undated. http://www.eu-russia-forum.net/eu-russia-forum/wp-content/uploads/110224-trendmonitor-i_factsheet_english.pdf (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁵⁵ Modern Russia and Alexander Rahr. German companies thriving in Russia, pioneer ‘modernization partnerships’, *Modernrussia.com*, 26 April 2011. <http://www.modernrussia.com/content/german-companies-thriving-russia-pioneer-%E2%80%9Cmodernization-partnerships%E2%80%9D>

⁵⁶ ‘Country profile: Russia’, *Transatlantic Trends 2012*. <http://trends.gmfus.org/transatlantic-trends/country-profiles-2/russia/> (accessed 1 June 2013)

Bridging values and interests?

The deepening discrepancy between the defence of pluralistic values and the pursuit of economic interests ensures that cooperation with Russia is set to remain a subject of discord in Germany. The quite extraordinary media attention and ensuing intra-Russian ‘culture war’ which broke out after the imprisonment of members of the feminist punk performance group Pussy Riot left an uneasy feeling in the general public and in the political establishment alike.⁵⁷ On 7 August 2012, 121 German parliamentarians representing all factions in the Bundestag addressed a letter of protest to the Russian ambassador calling for mild sentences.⁵⁸

The Pussy Riot case is but the latest of a long series of symbolic clashes pitting values against interests. In 2011, it was announced that the annual German Quadriga prize, an award recognising outstanding contributions to ‘innovation, renewal, and a pioneering spirit’ was to be awarded to Vladimir Putin for his commitment to ‘stability through the interaction of prosperity, economy and identity.’ This decision by influential business members of the prize committee amounted to nothing short of all-out praise for the Putin method. After a barrage of protests, the award of the prize was finally suspended.⁵⁹ At the other end of the spectrum, Werner Schulz of the European Green Party was the driving force behind the nomination of Pussy Riot for the Sakharov Human Rights Prize of the European Parliament.⁶⁰

It is hard to assess the real and lasting damage these and otherwise more serious matters, such as the unresolved murders of journalists or the general climate of political repression, have on Russian–German relations. Regarding the Pussy Riot case, it is worth noting that 499 out of 620 German MPs thought it better to withhold their criticism for another day.

Conscious that German–Russian relations have reached an impasse on the subject of values, the liberal democratic leadership in the Foreign Ministry, a party traditionally built on a dual pro-business and rule of

⁵⁷ On 21 February 2012, members of the group interrupted the church service and staged an illegal performance in the Moscow cathedral of Christ the Saviour, denouncing Putin and the Russian Orthodox Church. On 17 August, three members of the group were convicted of hooliganism motivated by religious hatred and sentenced to two-year prison terms.

⁵⁸ ‘Appell aus dem Bundestag: Deutsche Abgeordnete fordern Milde für Pussy Riot’, *Spiegel.de*, 7 August 2012. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/bundestagsabgeordnete-fordern-mildes-urteil-im-pussy-riot-prozess-a-848704.html#spCommentsBoxPager> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁵⁹ ‘Wundersame Bewunderung’, *Sueddeutsche.de*, 18 July 2011. <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/wladimir-putin-und-die-deutsche-aussenpolitik-die-wundersame-bewunderung-fuer-putin-1.1121321> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁶⁰ ‘Pussy-Riot unter den Kandidaten für den Sacharow-Preis’, *Europarl.europa.eu*. <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/de/headlines/content/20120921FCS52015/1/html/Pussy-Riot-unter-Kandidaten-f%C3%BCr-Sacharow-Preis-f%C3%BCr-Geistige-Freiheit-2012> (accessed 1 June 2013)

law platform, has announced its intention of orienting the human rights dialogue towards dialogue on the ‘rule of law’, with particular attention to economic and administrative law as a complement to the modernisation partnership. In a further step that would be particularly welcomed by the business community, Germany has made repeated, but as yet unsubstantiated, promises to facilitate travel between both countries.

Politically, this approach carries the distinct advantage of bridging values and interests by addressing the real concerns of the German business community investing in Russia, while also providing ready answers to apprehensive human rights and advocacy groups. In the worst-case scenario, it represents a sell-out to business interests; in an unlikely best-case scenario, it would mark the start of a true transformative process. At any rate, the adoption of German legal norms would provide German companies with a competitive advantage and strengthen the already significant market share of German legal consultancies working with and in Russia.

The mild response from the German Foreign Ministry to the growing authoritarianism under Putin-III is proof of Berlin’s continued commitment to the long-standing tradition of partnership and cooperation with Russia. In Parliament and in the powerful office of the Chancellor, there are, however, some signs that this consensus is under pressure.

The wording of a parliamentary resolution on ‘strengthening civil society and rule of law in Russia through cooperation’⁶¹ revealingly displayed the ongoing dispute between the Foreign Ministry on the one side and Parliament on the other. The original draft by the government’s appointed coordinator for German–Russian civil society cooperation, the CDU-MP Andreas Schockenhoff, was heavily amended by the Foreign Ministry. In his original draft, Schockenhoff had written: ‘Germany and Europe have a strong interest in a politically and economically modern Russia, organized and acting in accordance with democratic principles’ (*demokratisch verfassten und handelnden Russland*). In the version amended by the Foreign Ministry, the word ‘democratic’ was simply deleted. This was but the first of a series of changes aimed at defusing criticism. Other sentences, such as ‘after years of controlled democracy and apathy, many people in Russia are again ready to engage themselves actively for their country’ or ‘politically active citizens are perceived by the authorities not as partners,

⁶¹ Durch Zusammenarbeit Zivilgesellschaft und Rechtsstaatlichkeit in Russland stärken. Motion of the CDU/CSU and FDP factions. 17/11327, 6 November 2012. <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/17/113/1711327.pdf> (accessed 1 June 2013)

but as opponents' were also removed.⁶² The final version adopted by the Bundestag on 8 November 2012 was a compromise, with some of the harshest criticism defused, but retaining a list of 17 points demanding (*fordern*) that the government take a critical stand on issues such as democracy, human rights and civil society. The CDU and FDP voted in favour, whereas the Green Party, the SPD and the Left Party chose to abstain. The first found the draft too soft, whereas the latter deemed the wording to be excessive.

Only a week before the Merkel–Putin consultations on 15 November 2012, this war of words did not go unnoticed and ensured a chillier atmosphere than usual in Moscow. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs had voiced strong criticism of Schockenhoff's declarations and had cancelled a planned meeting, even intimating that Schockenhoff was not a legitimate representative of the German government. Prior to the meeting in Moscow, both parties were working hard at mending fences. German government circles gave assurances that the 'strategic partnership' remained the guiding principle of Germany's Russia policy. Angela Merkel, although she did express some criticism, said it was not up to her to work through the details of the 17 points in the Bundestag Declaration during her Moscow meetings.⁶³ And finally, Andreas Schockenhoff could assure his counterparts that the Bundestag had no intention of giving any 'pedantic instructions from abroad'.⁶⁴

The more distant relationship between Merkel and her Russian counterpart certainly stands in stark contrast to the warm camaraderie of the Schröder–Putin years. Although it could well be argued that Merkel's coolness is not reserved solely for Russians, it does mark the end of certain German illusions, if not ambitions, as to the prospects of a rapidly Westernising Russia.

On the whole, there is a lack of tangible elements indicating any real reorientation of Germany's Russia policy. Neither Merkel's recent visit to Moscow nor the Bundestag declaration put into question the existence of the German–Russian strategic partnership, calling instead for cooperation to be expanded beyond the economic-technical field to include such far-reaching goals as 'the promotion of democracy, human rights, rule of law, civil society, active citizenship and the growth

⁶² 'Auswärtiges Amt entschärft Kritik an Putin', *Sueddeutsche.de*, 9 October 2012 <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/deutsch-russisches-verhaeltnis-auswaertiges-amt-entschaerft-kritik-an-putin-1.1490852> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁶³ 'Berlin hält an Partnerschaft mit Moskau fest', *FAZ.net*, 15 November 2012. <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/regierungskonsultationen-berlin-haelt-an-partnerschaft-mit-moskau-fest-11961578.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁶⁴ 'Deutsche Kritik empört Russland', *Handelsblatt.com*, 16 November 2012. <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/petersburger-dialog-deutsche-kritik-empuert-russland/7397962.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

of a broad middle class'.⁶⁵ German policy-makers seem highly apprehensive as to such prospects, and as long as the German leadership keeps talking of 'strategic cooperation', it is safe to bet that Germany's Russia policy will remain basically unchanged.

In pragmatic German eyes, the perhaps most worrying aspect of Russia under Putin's third mandate is more likely to be the increasing state control of the economy, the inability to curb corruption, and budget balancing at an oil price of 113 dollars a barrel. More than anything else, the recent developments bear witness to a sobered and matured German–Russian relationship that has gravitated back to its solid economic core: energy, raw materials and technology transfer. Germany needs Russia for its oil and gas; and for the Russian export market, Russia needs German technology and export revenues from the sales of hydrocarbons.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Supra note 62

⁶⁶ For example, a € 2.5 billion agreement on the sale of high-speed trains by Siemens and a memorandum on the strategic cooperation between the Frankfurt and Moscow stock exchanges, catering for Moscow's ambition to become a leading financial centre, were signed at the November 2012 meeting in Moscow. See 'Deutsche Börse: Strategische Partnerschaft mit Moscow Exchange', *Finanzen.net*, 16 November 2012 (accessed 1 June 2013).

Energy Policy

Statistics and surveys

Germany is the world's largest importer of Russian oil and gas, and Russia has been Germany's primary source for oil and gas imports since before the fall of the Soviet Union.⁶⁷ Total German imports of raw materials amounted to € 83.9 billion in 2009. Fossil energy alone made up 71.6% of the total, with oil and natural gas representing 36.9% and 28.6% respectively and coal another 4.6%. Germany's import dependency is very high: 97% of its total oil consumption and 84% of natural gas consumption

According to statistics published by the Ministry of Economy, Russian gas amounted to 39% of total German gas imports in 2010. When domestic gas production is included, Russian gas thus covers 35% of total German consumption. Despite a 63% growth in volume since 1991 and contrary to widespread impressions, the share of Russian gas in total German consumption has remained remarkably constant over the past 20 years (35% in 2005, 37% in 2000, 37% in 1995 and 33% in 1991). This is due mainly to the sharp increase in Norwegian gas imports, which represented only 12.7% of total consumption in 1991, but is up to 31% today. However, with Germany's decision to abandon nuclear power by 2022 and with the Nord Stream Baltic gas pipeline fully operational, there is an important potential for further growth, in both absolute and relative terms.

For oil, the share of Russian imports has risen from 15.8% in 1991 to 36.3% by 2010 (33.9 million tons), but the growth potential is now exhausted, since German oil consumption peaked in 2005. Energy imports are not restricted to oil and natural gas: Russia is now also Germany's biggest supplier of coal, with 9.5 million tons (up from a negligible 212,000 tons in 1998), representing 24% of total consumption. As for natural gas, the German government's decision to abandon nuclear power has created considerable growth potential.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ The position as leader on the German market was briefly challenged by Norway in 1993 and in 1995, when imports of Norwegian oil exceeded imports of Russian oil.

⁶⁸ All figures and calculations from Bundesamt für Wirtschaft und Ausfuhrkontrolle, www.bafa.de and Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, www.bmwi.de (accessed 1 June 2013).

Dependence or interdependence? The German experience

As shown by the above statistics, German dependency on Russian energy supplies is an irrefutable fact. This also makes Germany Russia's biggest source of foreign currency. When asked whether this situation is actually a challenge or an opportunity, public opinion is divided. On the one hand, in a 2009 survey, 62% of the Germans polled (only 56% of the East Germans in the sample) say they are somewhat or very concerned about dependency on Russian energy.⁶⁹ However, the earlier-mentioned Trendmonitor survey⁷⁰ showed that 72% of the Germans interviewed were positive to further expanding the energy partnership with Russia, even though only 16% of the respondents cited Russia's reliability and stability as a partner as the main reason for pursuing such a policy.

By its very nature, energy policy lies at the crossroads of geography, trade and politics. Diverging interpretations make it a subject for contention between the USA, Germany and Eastern Europe, further complicated by the agenda of the EU Commission. Germany remains the West European country with the longest-standing energy relationship with Russia, thus making its experience unique and distinctive.

The first chapter of the 'energy wars' between Russia and Europe, if there ever was such a thing, was opened by West Germany some 50 years ago. After the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, Bonn retaliated with a pipeline embargo, prohibiting the sale of pipeline tubes to the USSR. This move considerably delayed the commissioning of the 'friendship' oil pipeline, which was to connect East Germany to the USSR. The decision to impose the embargo was reached at the highest level in the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the political body of NATO. The debate over the securitisation of energy policy, an idea raised by the USA and some Eastern European countries prior to the 2010 NATO summit in Lisbon, is thus nothing new.

In 1970, with the adoption of the new *Ostpolitik* and signing of the Moscow treaties, Willy Brandt enacted a radical change of policy and lifted the sanctions. Subsequently, the German company Mannesmann was granted a huge contract for delivering pipeline tubes to the Soviet Union, which in return started supplying ever-increasing quantities of oil to West Germany. A decade later, with increased international tensions following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the so-called euro missile crisis, Bonn and Washington clashed over the construction of a new Soviet gas pipeline, this time intended to supply

⁶⁹ 'The Pulse of Europe 2009', *Pewglobal.org*, 2 November 2009. <http://pewglobal.org/2009/11/02/end-of-communism-cheered-but-now-with-more-reservations/9/#chapter-8-views-of-other-countries-and-organizations> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁷⁰ *Supra* note 54

West Germany. Symptomatically, the title of a research paper written in early 1982 sounds oddly contemporary: ‘Soviet energy imports to the FRG, dependence or political cooperation?’⁷¹ US President Reagan imposed sanctions against Western companies contributing to the pipeline project and clashed with German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and French President François Mitterrand. Later that year, the Western powers reached a compromise;⁷² and from 1984, the Soviet Union became Germany’s single biggest supplier of natural gas, a position Russia has retained ever since.

Independent of general public opinion, experience shows that Russia, and before it the Soviet Union, has been a reliable energy partner for Germany. Supplies have never been interrupted, not even at the height of the Cold War in the early 1980s. This experience has become part of conventional wisdom. At a March 2010 seminar organised by the Russo–German Raw Materials Conference, Minister of State in the Foreign Ministry Cornelia Pieper, recalling the impressive volumes of German oil and gas imports, stated: ‘our allegedly too-high dependency on energy from Russia is therefore often underlined. Still, the fact remains that Russia is at least as dependent on exports to Europe as we are on energy imports from Russia. Both partners, Germany and Russia, therefore complement each other mutually’.⁷³

These declarations came only a year after the Russo–Ukrainian gas dispute in January 2009, when Russian gas monopolist Gazprom, having accused Kiev of stealing gas transiting through Ukraine, briefly cut off supply, sparking a major crisis only months after the August 2008 Russo–Georgian war.

The German government maintained a cautious line. At the height of the crisis, Angela Merkel, although warning about a Russian ‘loss of credibility’, essentially condoned the tenets of the commercial analysis and abstained from any unbalanced accusations: ‘It is absolutely essential for us to see both Russia and Ukraine sit down at the negotiating table and resolve their issues’, the Chancellor said.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Reimund Seidelmann, 1982, ‘Die Sowjetischen Energieimporte in die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, Abhängigkeit oder politische Zusammenarbeit?’ *Beiträge zur Konfliktforschung*, No 1, pp. 27–66.

⁷² ‘Reagan lifts sanctions for Soviet pipeline; Reports accord with Allies’, *NYT*, 14 November 1982. <http://www.nytimes.com/1982/11/14/world/reagan-lifts-sanctions-on-sales-for-soviet-pipeline-reports-accord-with-allies.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁷³ Cornelia Pieper, ‘Die deutsch-russischen Rohstoffbeziehungen im Kontext deutscher Außenpolitik’, *Speech at the third German–Russian energy forum*. Freiburg, 18 March 2010. http://www.rohstoffforum.org/content/images/3_rohstoff_konferenz/vortraege/RohstoffKonferenz_RedebeitragAA_StMinPieper_Protokollfassung.pdf (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁷⁴ ‘Ukraine rejects latest gas requests’, *Sptimes.ru*, 16 January 2009. <http://www.sptimes.ru/archive/pdf/1440.pdf> (accessed 1 June 2013)

Notwithstanding Merkel's leadership, the gas transit conflict was a serious test case for Germany's energy policy and provoked stark Russo-sceptic reactions, not least within the ruling coalition. To strengthen German energy independence, CDU and FDP politicians advocated expanding and prolonging the lifespan of the country's nuclear plants. CDU co-ordinator for energy policy, Joachim Pfeiffer, made the case for an 'exit from the [nuclear] exit', explaining that 'we should not further increase our dependency on individual suppliers'⁷⁵ Similar demands came from the FDP.

These individual reactions notwithstanding, German analysts lend limited credence to the thesis of a political-strategic use of the Russian 'energy weapon'. Instead, they explain Gazprom's decisions in commercial terms.⁷⁶ Whereas the Western press generally featured big headlines on the Kremlin's use of 'energy as a weapon', the former director of the Russia programme at the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Roland Götz, dismissed such geo-political interpretations out of hand, and correctly predicted that the on-going 'commercial conflict' would be settled, if not permanently resolved, within a couple of days. Furthermore, according to Götz, the 'vulnerability thesis' (of European dependency on Russian gas translating into political in-feodation to the Kremlin) 'is strongly influenced by US think-tanks like the Heritage Foundation and the Nixon Center who advocate a geo-political approach.'⁷⁷

Some would go even further. As member of the board of the presidium of the German–Russian Raw Materials Conference, and former Minister-President of Bavaria, Edmund Stoiber is one of many influential German ex-politicians with good connections to the Russo–German energy nexus. In an article calling for strengthened cooperation with Russia, Stoiber, having explained how German–Russian energy cooperation should be the starting point for the EU's modernisation partnership with Russia, elegantly reverses the whole litany that critics have generally addressed to Moscow: 'Europe's call for alternative (import) routes for energy and raw materials increases insecurity

⁷⁵ 'Merkel interveniert im Gasstreit', Handelsblatt.com, 7 January 2009. <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/energieversorgung-merkel-intervenierte-im-gasstreit/3083640.html> (accessed 1 June 2013).

⁷⁶ Similarly, one should be careful about drawing hasty conclusions about the composition of the board of, for example, Gazprom Germania (Gazprom's German outlet) and equating it with a hidden political agenda devoid of commercial considerations. The company's long-time director, Hans-Joachim Gornig, was the former vice-minister of energy of the GDR and is thus very well connected in Moscow, but his the former Russian ambassador to Berlin Vladimir Kotenjov, had a very short stint as company director due to lack of business flair and taking personal advantages ('Begrenzte Haltbarkeit', *Der Spiegel*, 11 June 2011, p. 42)

⁷⁷ Interview with Roland Götz. Sueddeutsche.de, 17 May 2010. <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/gas-streit-moskau-nutzt-seine-energie-nicht-als-waffe-1.384566> (accessed 1 June 2013)

ty over the reliability and contract compliance of the Western partners.’⁷⁸

Ultimately, the best indicator of the real importance accorded to foreign policy questions is to measure their impact in the face of a contradicting agenda in domestic policy. Reactions to the March 2011 nuclear accident in Fukushima, Japan, provides a prime example of such a test case. Overnight, the accident created a massive movement in German public opinion in favour of abandoning nuclear energy altogether. In a spectacular turnabout, the ruling Conservative/Liberal coalition promptly aligned itself with public opinion; and the *Atomausstieg*, an ambitious plan for greatly accelerating the total phase-out of nuclear energy, was hastily driven through the Bundestag. At that time, nuclear power accounted for 23% of total German electricity production. Independent of any progress in the field of renewables, it was evident that a significant part of this would have to be compensated by increased reliance on Russian hydrocarbons. German political voices who had been most critical of Russia, citing the possible risks inherent in such a situation, kept silent throughout the debate, thus giving a clear indication of the new priorities.

Nord Stream

The series of gas disputes between Russia and transit countries certainly gave a strong impetus to realisation of the Nord Stream Baltic gas pipeline project, which became operational in June 2011. The pipeline, a 1220km connection under the Baltic Sea between Vyborg and Greifswald, is a joint project between Gazprom (51%), the German companies BASF/Wintershall (15.5%) and E.ON (15.5%) and Dutch Gasunie (9%). In 2010, the French utility company GDF-Suez acquired a 9% stake from E.ON and BASF. When fully operational in the last quarter of 2012, the two lines were to have the capacity to supply 55 billion cubic metres (bcm) of Russian gas a year to the EU for at least 50 years.⁷⁹ The deal, signed just before Schröder left office in 2005, stands as perhaps the most emblematic and lasting monument to the Schröder–Putin years. Soon after, the former chancellor went to become director of the board of the joint company, a move for which he was widely criticised. Because Nord Stream circumvents the Eastern European transit routes and theoretically gives Russia leverage to blackmail its neighbours without hurting gas supplies to Germany and Western Europe, Alexandros Petersen from the Atlantic Council went as far as to dub the project the ‘Molotov–Ribbentrop pipeline’ – a ref-

⁷⁸ Edmund Stoiber, 2010, ‘Kooperation mit mehr Energie’, *Internationale Politik*, January/February 2010, no.1, p. 65

⁷⁹ <http://www.nord-stream.com/pipeline/>

erence to the infamous 1939 agreement between Hitler and Stalin for carving up Eastern Europe.⁸⁰

Schröder himself, however, has refuted any allegations of sell-out to Russian interests. It can at least be argued that, in moving from politics to business, he has not shifted his stance. During the January 2009 gas crisis, Schröder, fully in line with the new German government, explained that ‘Nord Stream is an extremely important project... to strengthen the energy security not only of Germany but of all of Europe’.⁸¹ Michael Sasse, head of public relations at Wintershall, one of the Nord Stream partners, had made clear what German politicians will allude to only indirectly. In an article published in *Internationale Politik*, after reminding his readers that 120 bcm of gas transits Ukraine every year, Sasse writes: ‘the 2009 transit conflict showed the risks of this route’, implying that Russia and Gazprom in itself are less of a problem than is the turbulent relationship between Russia and Ukraine.⁸²

South Stream

In discussing joint pipeline projects, we should also recall that Schröder’s foreign minister from the Green Party, Joschka Fischer, accepted a lobbyist position for the US- and Brussels-backed Nabucco pipeline project. This project seeks to do the exact opposite of the Nord Stream pipeline: namely, to circumvent Russia by transporting gas from Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and possibly Iraqi Kurdistan to Europe through Turkey. In reply to widespread allegations, also by Schröder, that Nabucco would be dependent on Iranian gas to be operational, Fischer stated: ‘Gazprom sees its position of monopolist in the supply of gas to Europe endangered. But the Europeans can’t rely on having only one single gas supplier.’⁸³

Russia has launched the South Stream gas pipeline project as an alternative and direct competitor to Nabucco. As with Nord Stream, the aim is to circumvent problematic transit countries, in this case by a direct route from Russia to Bulgaria through the Black Sea. The consortium involves Gazprom, Italian ENI, French EDF and German

⁸⁰ ‘The Molotov–Ribbentrop pipeline’, *Wsj.com*, 9 November 2009 <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703567204574499150087261242.html> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁸¹ <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/1231466531.2> (accessed 1 June 2013)

⁸² Michael Sasse, 2011, ‘Energie für alle Fälle’, *Internationale Politik*, September/October 2011, no. 5, Vol. 66. See footnote 88 below

⁸³ ‘Joschka Fischer kritiziert Russen und Schröder’, *Handelsblatt.com*, 27 September 2009. <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/joschka-fischer-kritisiert-russen-und-schroeder/3267976.html> (accessed 2 June 2013). Interestingly, Schröder, the social democrat derided as ‘comrade of the bosses’ (*genosse der Bosse*), sceptical to federalist Europe and outspoken friend of Russia, clashes with Fischer, a former leftist activist who later re-invented himself as environmentalist, Euro-federalist and spokesman for military intervention in Kosovo.

Wintershall, and has a planned capacity of 63 bcm per year. Marcel Kramer, CEO of the South Stream consortium and former head of Gasunie, the Dutch company which is also partner in the Nord Stream project, is confident that South Stream is ‘an obvious priority in many EU capitals’ – thereby implicitly admitting that some EU member states do not necessarily share the priorities of the EU Commission.⁸⁴

Once again, German experts and company spokesmen have been more outspoken than the German political leadership. The above-mentioned Michael Sasse from Wintershall has explained that, by establishing a direct connection to Russia, the pipeline would improve energy security for the ‘South Eastern European countries that were directly hurt’ by the January 2009 transit crisis.⁸⁵ In an article titled ‘Forget about Nabucco’, Alexander Rahr, the influential pro-Russian head of the Bertold-Beitz Centre at the German Society for Foreign Policy (DGAP), who also leads one of the working groups of the Petersburg Dialogues, maintains that realisation of South Stream would provide Europe with ‘an additional guarantee’.⁸⁶

At the end of the day, the German utilities company RWE, currently part of both the Nord Stream and Nabucco consortiums, might hold the answer. Allegations put forward in 2010 that RWE had been studying proposals for entering the South Stream consortium proved short-lived, but in May 2012, the company announced it was ‘reviewing the strategic requirements of Nabucco’.⁸⁷ This development coincides with RWE’s decision to form a strategic partnership with Gazprom for joint construction of gas- and coal-fired power plants in Europe, which itself is a result of the German government’s decision to abandon nuclear power by 2022.⁸⁸

Germany’s official backing of the EU’s Nabucco project is at best half-hearted, since Chancellor Merkel has officially supported *all three* projects and has demanded EU backing for South Stream and Nord Stream in return for Nabucco. In a January 2009 letter addressed to the Czech presidency of the EU and the EU Commission, in response to harsh criticism of the Nord Stream pipeline,⁸⁹ Merkel ex-

⁸⁴ ‘Companies sign South Stream Deal’, *Wsj.com*, 16 September 2011. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424053111903927204576574182325712222.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

⁸⁵ *Supra* 90.

⁸⁶ Alexander Rahr, 2011, ‘Vergesst Nabucco’, *Internationale Politik*, September/October 2011, no. 5, 66, p. 121

⁸⁷ ‘RWE says reviews strategic requirements of Nabucco’, *Reuters*, 12 May 2012. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/05/12/rwe-nabucco-idUSL5E8GC26K20120512> (accessed 2 June 2013)

⁸⁸ ‘Ohne RWE ist Nabucco schwer zu realisieren’, *Wirtschaftsblatt.at*, 19 July 2011. http://wirtschaftsblatt.at/home/nachrichten/europa_cee/1202523/index?from=suche.intern.portal (accessed 2 June 2013)

⁸⁹ The EU itself has officially recognised Nord Stream as a priority energy project of European interest and declared it to be part of the trans-European energy networks (TEN-E)

plained that for the sake of ‘more independent and crisis-resistant energy supply [...] it is of great importance that these projects [Nabucco, Nord Stream and South Stream] are politically wished for and backed by all EU member states’.⁹⁰ But building all three pipelines would generate substantial excess capacity – hardly a financially desirable outcome for any of the companies involved.

In the same letter, Merkel also rejected the proposal put forward by the Commission and the EU Czech presidency for cushioning the impact of future gas supply interruptions. That proposal included allocating € 3.5 billion of EU funds to energy security infrastructure such as improved interconnectivity between different national gas networks and increased storage capacity. Further, the Commission proposed € 250 million in direct support to Nabucco. Germany, as the largest single contributor to the EU budget, would have to contribute a total of some € 1 billion. Merkel instead suggested that energy companies should themselves bear the costs involved in developing additional infrastructure, adding: ‘we shouldn’t free the energy business from this responsibility’.⁹¹ Germany has shown itself unwilling to be pressured into financing infrastructure in order to meet alleged security concerns not necessarily seen as real. In an interview with the present author, CDU parliamentarian Karl-Georg Wellmann, a specialist on energy questions, wondered why Poland and Lithuania, who advocate independence from Russian gas as an essential national priority, had so far been unwilling to provide any substantial funding of their own to build interconnected networks.⁹²

A national or European energy strategy?

Even though all EU member states pay lip service to the concept of a common European energy policy, prospects for its realisation remain unclear. In March 2003, a thematic governmental working group on German–Russian energy cooperation was established, supplemented in October 2006 by the German–Russian Raw Materials Conference. These institutions, which alternate between complementarity and rivalry with the EU’s own energy dialogue with Russia, reflect the strategic choices taken by Schröder. According to Kirsten Westphal, ‘the politics of the Schröder government from 1998 to 2005, which are without doubt characterised by a certain shift away from a multilateral approach towards a more unilateral pursuit of interests, reflected the prevailing discourse that managing external energy dependency firstly demands powerful and competitive companies at the international lev-

⁹⁰ *South-stream.info*. <http://south-stream.info/index.php?id=48&L=1> (accessed 2 June 2013)

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² Author’s interview with MP Karl-Georg Wellmann, (CDU/CSU). Berlin, Bundestag, 18 July 2011

el and secondly cannot only be left over to private companies'.⁹³ This point can be interpreted in relation to the opposition of Germany, along with France, to the EU Commission's proposal for fully unbundling all production and distribution activities in the gas sector. The proposal was effectively buried during the German EU presidency in the first half of 2007. In March 2011, a more lenient alternative entered into force, giving member states the choice between allowing companies to establish independent subsidiaries to manage transmission networks, or full unbundling.⁹⁴ The EON Ruhrgas (2003) and GDF Suez (2008) mergers, both of which benefited from strong political backing, are clear cases of vertical integration and promotion of national champions – in stark contradiction to the EU's liberalisation strategy. The unspoken objective of the EU directive – to undermine Gazprom's bid to acquire European downstream infrastructure – was not a sufficient counter-argument for the Germans, especially since the new legislation obliges owners of gas pipelines to grant third-party access.

With respect to Russia, German energy policy could well be described, in line with Kirsten Westfal, as a case of management through joint participation instead of management through rules. By encouraging joint stakes in investment, production and transportation along the whole production line, Germany seeks to link Russia to the European market, and turn energy policy into a very tangible case of '*Annäherung durch Verflechtung*'. Germany seems ready to accept Russian participation in and takeover of European utilities and gas networks, and does not appear opposed in principle to Gazprom's presence along the whole production and delivery chain.

There are already numerous cases of joint participation. Most importantly, RWE and Dresdner Bank are the largest foreign shareholders in Gazprom. Prior to the Merkel–Medvedev meeting on 18–19 July 2011, talks of a possible Gazprom takeover of the hard-pressed utilities group RWE were met with positive signals from Germany's Liberal Minister of Economy Philipp Roesler, but were finally abandoned. Beside the Gazprom–RWE deal, Energie Baden Württemberg offered Novatek, Russia's largest independent natural gas company, control of up to a quarter of Verbundnetz Gas, Germany's third largest natural-gas-importing company and a major energy player in Slovakia

⁹³ K. Westphal, 2007, 'Germany and the EU–Russia Energy Dialogue', in P. Aalto (ed.), *The EU–Russian Energy Dialogue: Securing Europe's Future Energy Supply?* Aldershot: Ashgate.

⁹⁴ German minister opposes EU utility unbundling idea. *Reuters*, 17 January 2007. <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2007/01/20/energy-eu-germany-idUKL2056183720070120> (accessed 2 June 2013).

and the Czech Republic. There are also many examples of joint Russo–German ownership of Eastern European energy infrastructure.⁹⁵

The raw materials dimension of the Russo–German strategic partnership is not confined to energy resources. In October 2010, Germany publicised its raw materials strategy, which aims at ‘[securing] Germany a sustainable supply of non-energy mineral raw materials’, where bilateral partnerships are a key component.⁹⁶ Particular attention is devoted to rare-earth elements indispensable to the German chemical, auto and high-tech industry. At present, more than 95% of the world’s supply of rare earths originates in China, and prices have soared.⁹⁷ Chinese export restrictions have also sparked considerable concern among German industrialists, who have called for government action.⁹⁸

However, even though China currently produces 95% of the world’s supply, only 35% of total exploitable reserves are found in China. In addition to the USA and Australia, major reserves are found in Russia – which opens up new perspectives for further expanding the resource partnership. This topic is strongly promoted by German economic circles and was recently discussed in the working group on economy at a round of the Petersburg Dialogues in Wolfsburg. Germany is interested not only in increasing its imports of Russian rare-earth elements, but also in joint investments with Russia in the exploitation and processing of these resources. Valeri Yasev, Deputy Chairman of the Russian State Duma, was keen to satisfy expectations and explained to his hosts that ‘on the Kola Peninsula, there are a great many deposits of rare earths. There is room for strengthening our cooperation in this area’. Another prominent Russian guest, Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov, underlined that ‘there are very good possibilities to exploit new rare earth deposits’.⁹⁹ Speaking on behalf of the German car industry, Eckhard Schüler-Hanisich, head of the innovation department at Daimler, replied that ‘bilateral raw material partnerships

⁹⁵ In Lithuania, for example, RWE and Gazprom are majority shareholders of the utilities company Lietuvos Dujos: ‘EU will support Poland–Lithuania gas link’, *The Lithuania Tribune*, 3 June 2010. <http://www.lithuaniantribune.com/2010/06/03/eu-will-support-poland-lithuania-gas-link/> (accessed 2 June 2013)

⁹⁶ ‘Rohstoffstrategie der Bundesregierung’, Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie, October 2010. <http://www.bmwi.de/Dateien/BMWi/PDF/rohstoffstrategie-der-bundesregierung.property=pdf,bereich=bmwi,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf> (accessed 2 June 2013)

⁹⁷ ‘China consolidates Grip on Rare Earths’, *NYTimes.com*, 15 September 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/09/16/business/global/china-consolidates-control-of-rare-earth-industry.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed 2 June 2013)

⁹⁸ ‘Mangel an Seltenen Erden: BDI-Chef fordert weltweites Rohstoff-Konzept’, *Spiegel.de*, 22 October 2010 <http://www.spiegel.de/wirtschaft/unternehmen/mangel-an-seltenen-erden-bdi-chef-fordert-weltweites-rohstoff-konzept-a-724788.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

⁹⁹ ‘Seltene Erden: Russland will mit Deutschland kooperieren’, *Handelsblatt.com*, 18 July 2011. <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/seltene-erden-russland-will-mit-deutschland-kooperieren/4405302.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

could certainly ensure a substantial contribution towards securing these objectives' [a better supply of rare earths].¹⁰⁰

This approach to Russian interests certainly does not mean that Germany will automatically accept any Russian position in the absence of mutual benefits. In 2010, on a visit to the new European Energy Exchange in Leipzig, Merkel advocated de-indexation of gas prices and accelerated development of the spot market for natural gas. Until now, the pricing of gas supplied by Gazprom to Germany has been indexed to the oil price, an arrangement generally considered favourable to the supply side. However, with the rise of shale gas and signs of a developing global market thanks to Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), the demand side has increased its leverage to exercise price arbitration, resulting in increased pressure on Russia.¹⁰¹

More generally, Germany has been lobbying hard to secure reciprocity and equal market access. The *Ostausschuss* advocates the creation of a common economic space between Russia and the EU and has been very favourable to Russian WTO membership.¹⁰² E.ON, the biggest foreign company operating in the Russian electricity sector, has also welcomed tentative signs of market liberalisation.¹⁰³

A thorny issue is the row over the European Energy Charter, which aims at providing equal market access to investors. Along with other provisions, the charter would allow foreign oil companies to operate in Russia on an equal footing with national companies, breaking Gazprom's and Transneft's monopoly on Russian gas and oil pipelines. At present, the Russian Strategic Sectors Law makes foreign participation in oil projects conditional to prior approval and limits participation to 49%.

In the words of Minister of State Cornelia Pieper, speaking at the Russo–German Raw Materials Conference, 'we naturally respect Russia's wish to use its natural resources in a manner optimal to itself and Russian industry. The protection of its own market is the good right of every country. However, this shouldn't lead to market distortions. In

¹⁰⁰ 'Russland bietet Hilfe an', *N-tv.de*, 18 July 2011 <http://www.n-tv.de/wirtschaft/Russland-bietet-Hilfe-an-article3837271.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹⁰¹ 'Merkel für Ende der Ölpreisbindung', *Zeit.de*, 19 August 2010. <http://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2010-08/oel-gas-preis-kopplung-merkel> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹⁰² 'Die deutsch–russischen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen', *Position statement by the Ost-Ausschuss der deutschen Wirtschaft*, October 2006. http://www.muenchen.ihk.de/mike/presse/Anhaenge/Positionspapier_OA.pdf (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹⁰³ 'E.ON begrüsst weitere Liberalisierung des russischen Strommarktes', *Finanzen.net*, 3 July 2009. <http://www.finanzen.net/nachricht/aktien/E-ON-begruesst-weitere-Liberalisierung-des-russischen-Strommarktes-506590>

the spirit of the strategic partnership between our two countries, there should be no market barriers'.¹⁰⁴

Although Germany is in favour of Russia ratifying the Energy Charter, it is sufficiently realist to understand that Russia will not accept it¹⁰⁵ as it is and is seeking to develop a bilateral dialogue with Russia. In a reaction analogous to Germany's response to the Russian proposal for a pan-European Security Treaty, which we will discuss later, former President Medvedev's alternative proposal for a European Energy Codex has therefore not been dismissed out of hand.¹⁰⁶

A working group of the German–Russian Raw Materials Conference is seeking to develop common positions. Edmund Stoiber, explains that 'the focus currently is the question of whether and how a revised Energy Charter, enriched with elements of the Russian proposal for an Energy Codex, could be a basis for further cooperation'.¹⁰⁷

Interestingly, in conversations with Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg of Norway, another country which is not bound by the Energy Charter – a point Russia has never failed to underline – Chancellor Angela Merkel is reported to have told her Norwegian colleague that the Russian proposal 'contains many good elements on which we could build on'.¹⁰⁸

De-securitisation of energy policy

Germany's chief concerns are to open up Russia for foreign investment in the energy sector so as to maintain sufficiently high levels of production, and to strengthen mutual dependency by encouraging joint participation. However, Germany does not want to have to bear the political and economic costs of what it deems an unreasonable securitisation of energy issues – and it has successfully promoted this approach.

In view of Germany's general assessment of the low threat potential of Russia using 'energy as a weapon', Berlin's opposition (along with that of Paris) to the inclusion of energy security in NATO's new strategic concept should not come as a surprise. The idea of an 'Energy NATO' originated in 2006, after the first Russo–Ukrainian gas con-

¹⁰⁴ http://www.rohstoff-forum.org/content/images/3_rohstoff_konferenz/vortraege/RohstoffKonferenz_RedebeitragAA_StMinPieper_Protokollfassung.pdf.

¹⁰⁵ Putin had previously described the Charter as 'an unserious document'

¹⁰⁶ 'Berlin sucht Energie-Dialog mit Russland', *Handelsblatt.com*, 13 May 2009. <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/berlin-sucht-energie-dialog-mit-russland/3175686.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹⁰⁷ *Rohstoff-forum.org*. Accessed 2 June 2013

¹⁰⁸ *Supra* 115.

flict, when Poland took the initiative to promote a 'European energy security treaty'. In the run-up to NATO's new strategy concept, which was adopted in Lisbon in November 2010, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton urged that energy security should be made one of NATO's top future priorities. In her strategic concept speech in February 2010, she argued that 'threats to our networks and infrastructure such as cyber-attacks and energy disruptions' should be considered an Article 5 action, in which an attack on one NATO member is an attack on all.¹⁰⁹

In a speech detailing Germany's official position, Minister of State in the Foreign Ministry Werner Hoyer, encouraged NATO to embark 'on a more sober and pragmatic relationship with Russia', and then went on to explain: 'we should cautiously examine the implications of considering Article 5 in connection with new threats and challenges, such as cyber-attacks'— thereby dismissing possible energy disruptions as an Article 5 matter.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ H. Clinton: 'Cyber Security and Energy Security as NATO Priorities', *Acus.org*, 23 February 2010. http://www.acus.org/new_atlanticist/clinton-cyber-security-and-energy-security-nato-priorities (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹¹⁰ Speech by State Secretary Werner Hoyer on NATO's Strategic Concept. Berlin, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 16 September 2010. <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2010/100916-Hoyer-Nato-SWP.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

Security Policy

From front-line state to bridge-builder

The initiative to turn energy disruptions into an Article 5 matter seems to have been effectively buried even before the Lisbon summit. Helped by a relaxation of tensions on the energy market, due to not least to the exploitation of shale gas in the USA, Germany has successfully worked for de-securitising energy policy in Europe. Of equal interest is how Russia and Germany have also been at the forefront of security policy initiatives aimed at each other. While remaining loyal to its NATO obligations, Germany has responded favourably, but in an uncommitted manner, to a series of Russian initiatives. Without seriously compromising its NATO commitments, Germany has also sought to build bridges and partnerships with Russia

Germany spent the post-war period at the front-line of the Cold War. Officially, Berlin dismisses Russia's main argument against NATO expansion, which sees the positioning of military capabilities in the vicinity of Russia's borders as constituting a threat. Official rhetoric aside, Berlin's historical experience as a front-line state makes the Kremlin's argument more credible in German eyes than in those of other countries. Germany has no intentions of being drawn into a new Cold War under any circumstances. This has implications for the future of both NATO–German and US–German relations.

Again, we should recall that present-day German and Russian initiatives have Cold War roots. Back in 1967, Belgian foreign minister Pierre Harmel submitted a report to NATO, 'Future Tasks of the Alliance',¹¹¹ which advocated improved diplomatic relations with Communist states – the starting point of the process that was to lead up to the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act in 1975. The Harmel Report has often been quoted by German politicians on all sides of the political spectrum favourable to détente and rapprochement. Two influential foreign policy-makers, Egon Bahr and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, both believed NATO was destined to disappear at the end of the Cold War, to be replaced by a common European security system. On the Soviet side, the 'Germanist' diplomats in charge of Moscow treaty negotiations in 1970 even envisaged that the treaties would pave the way for

¹¹¹ 'Future Tasks of the Alliance' (the Harmel Report) (1967). Available at: <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/80991.htm> (accessed 2 June 2013)

a future geo-strategic partnership between Germany and Russia.¹¹² Subsequent events were to prove that German and Russian NATO-sceptics alike underestimated the alliance's capacity to reform itself and find new purpose in the post-Cold War world. What NATO has lacked in terms of identity has been counterbalanced by efficiency.

For a short while, it seemed as if Russia could be integrated into the European security system. As noted by Vincent Pouliot, 'in its first years as an independent country, Russia enthusiastically embraced the internal mode of pursuing security even to the point of supporting NATO's transformation in that direction'.¹¹³ In the final months of its existence, the USSR supported the Gulf War and apparently embraced Bush Sr.'s vision of 'a new world order'. In December 1991, Yeltsin wrote a letter declaring his country's readiness to examine the issue of Russia's membership of NATO in the long run. However, no answer ever came.¹¹⁴

Instead of re-founding the European security system, NATO policy-makers reaped the benefits of the stabilisation dividend through an eastward expansion of the alliance. Starting in 1993, German defence minister Volker R  he, battling a lukewarm Kohl and a reticent Genscher, became one of the earliest and most vocal advocates of eastern expansion, which became the position defended by Germany at the NATO Travem  nde summit in 1993.

Volker R  he's unequivocal commitment to eastward expansion was commensurate with his rebuttal of Russia: 'Russia cannot be integrated into either the European Union or in NATO... if Russia were to become member of NATO it would blow NATO apart... It would be like the United Nations of Europe – it wouldn't work.'¹¹⁵

NATO's announcement on 1 December 1994 to proceed with enlargement took the Russians by surprise. Yeltsin's 'cold peace' speech in Budapest echoes with Putin's Munich speech on new dividing lines in Europe in 2007. In the words of Yeltsin: 'Europe has not yet freed itself from the heritage of the Cold War and is in danger of plunging into a Cold Peace. Why sow the seeds of mistrust?'¹¹⁶

¹¹² V.M.Falin, 'Otnoschenie Rossii i Germanii v istoricheskoy perspektive', in *Rossiysko-Germanskoe otnoschenie v kontekste evropeyskoe bezopasnosti*. Institut Ekonomiki RAN, Moscow 2009, pp.19–26.

¹¹³ V. Pouliot, *International Security in Practice. Cambridge studies in international relations*, Vol 113, 2010, p. 155

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 158

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171

¹¹⁶ 'Next, a Cold Peace?' *Time.com*, 19 December 1994
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,982016,00.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

There were voices in Germany receptive to Yeltsin, not least amongst the older generation. In 1997, at the threshold of NATO's eastward expansion, a sceptical Genscher warned against the absence of proposals for a 'pan-European stability order' and asked for a European security council under the aegis of the OSCE.¹¹⁷

The breaking point came with the Yugoslav wars and the eastward expansion of NATO. Since then, Russia has consistently argued that the principle of indivisible, mutual and cooperative security – the basis of the OSCE Charter, the Paris Declaration, the 2+4 Agreement and the UN Charter itself – has been set aside.

For Germany, the constant challenge has remained how to reconcile transatlantic commitments with overtures to Russia. At the 1999 Munich security conference, newly elected chancellor Gerhard Schröder stated: 'The transatlantic partnership and the presence of the United States in Europe remain a guarantee also in the future for security and stability on our continent. But as clear as it may be: it is just as clear that a European security architecture without the participation of Russia is unthinkable.'¹¹⁸

Germany has often been an advocate of Russian viewpoints inside NATO and has invested considerable energy in mending fences with Moscow after spats. Likewise, Merkel and her successive foreign ministers Steinmeier and Westerwelle have always opposed granting the NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) to Georgia and Ukraine. However, there have been considerable nuances in communication. Whereas Steinmeier had few qualms about repeating the Russian argument that NATO expansion should not take place at the expense of Russia, Merkel, who finds Putin and Saakashvili equally unappealing, has preferred the more convenient smokescreen of formalist and procedural argumentation. Shortly before the 2008 Bucharest summit, she declared that 'countries that are directly involved in regional conflicts cannot, in my opinion, become members of NATO.'¹¹⁹

In 2005, during the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, Germany maintained a policy of silent neutrality,¹²⁰ in marked contrast to the Polish or Swedish agenda. In response to a question from a Ukrainian jour-

¹¹⁷ 'Nicht gegen Russland', *Spiegel.de*, 13 January 1997.

<http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-8649758.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹¹⁸ Alexander Siedschlag, 'Ansichten der deutschen politische elite zur europäischen Sicherheitsarchitektur', speech delivered at the conference *Zehn Jahre deutsch-polnischer Partnerschaft: Neue Herausforderungen und Chancen*, Institut Zachodni, Poznan, 8–9 December 2000 <http://www.esci.at/eusipo/poznan.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹¹⁹ 'Berlin's Shifting Policy: Has Merkel Changed her Tune on Georgia?' *Spiegel.de*, 25 August 2008 <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,574227,00.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹²⁰ K. Westphal, 2007. Germany and the EU–Russia Energy Dialogue, in P. Aalto (ed.), *The EU–Russian Energy Dialogue: Securing Europe's Future Energy Supply?* Aldershot: Ashgate

nalist on the country's recent decision to revert to an official policy of neutrality, the German ambassador to Ukraine declared: 'the steps of the new Ukrainian leadership do not surprise us, because we believe that an improved relationship with Russia is advantageous to the situation in Europe.'¹²¹

The argument of democratic governance can serve vicarious motives. On the one hand, the treatment of imprisoned Ukrainian opposition leader Julia Timoshenko reportedly led Angela Merkel to instruct her ministers not to attend the Euro 2012 football championship.¹²² On the other hand, the Yanukovich government's policy of neutrality suits Germany perfectly, since any talk of Ukrainian membership in NATO can now be conveniently dismissed by invoking respect for democratic decisions. In passing, it should also be noted that Germany thereby avoids any possible antagonising of Russia. Similarly, the increasingly authoritarian turn in Georgia has made it easier for Germany to oppose NATO membership for Georgia.

From a German point of view, incorporating Georgia and Ukraine into the alliance would not serve to increase European security. As stated by George Friedman, 'from a military standpoint, NATO membership for the two former Soviet republics is an empty gesture, while from a political standpoint, Berlin sees it as designed to irritate the Russians for no clear purpose'.¹²³ Unlike Central and Eastern Europe, European integration would have to follow the road of EU membership – a distant and unlikely scenario, but one in which Germany, through its economic influence, will play a central role.

There is strong consensus on not jeopardising relations with Russia, but an excessively accommodating attitude towards Moscow runs the risk of antagonising Germany's East European partners and endangering the prospects for a broader Euro-Atlantic rapprochement with Russia. The 2008 Russo–Georgian War was a delicate test case that required a balancing act for German diplomacy.

Germany and the Russo–Georgian war of 2008

Before the smoke had lifted from the battlefield, historian and former State Department official Robert Kagan, a prominent US neoconservative, wrote an emphatic article in *The Washington Post*, arguing that, with respect to Russia, 'Historians will come to view August 8, 2008, as a turning point no less significant than November 9, 1989,

¹²¹ Interview with Hans-Jürgen Heimsoeth in *Pervaya krymskaya*. 1k.com.ua, 1 April 2010. <http://1k.com.ua/318/details/6/4> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹²² 'German minister says will boycott Ukraine Euro 2012', *Eubusiness.com*, 7 May 2012. <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/ukraine-politics.gdp> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹²³ G. Friedman, 'The German Question', *Stratfor.com*, 6 October 2008. http://www.stratfor.com/weekly/20081006_german_question (accessed 2 June 2013)

when the Berlin Wall fell.’¹²⁴ In retrospect, we may conclude that Kagan was wrong. In the case of Germany, instead of provoking a rupture, the August 2008 war ultimately cemented Germany’s pragmatic Russia policy.

A parallel can be drawn between 2008 and German reactions to the outbreak of the first war in Chechnya in 1994. President Yeltsin’s decision to opt for a military solution in December 1994 came right after the agreement on the interim Partnership and Cooperation Agreement and in the midst of delicate negotiations with Russia on membership in the Council of Europe.¹²⁵ Just like Kohl and Genscher were essential in securing Russian membership of Europe’s human rights watchdog, Merkel and Steinmeier ensured the NRC resumed talks and the EU–Russian agenda got back on track as fast as possible.

At the outbreak of hostilities, Merkel, who had opposed Georgian NATO membership only months before at the Bucharest summit, took the world by surprise after a meeting with Saakashvili in Tbilisi on 15 August, and announced: ‘we are clearly on track for a NATO membership’. However, the spell of the Georgian leader’s charisma proved short-lived. After meeting with Medvedev in Sochi on 17 August, Merkel instead chose to describe the Russian intervention only as ‘disproportionate’.¹²⁶ Under pressure to use German influence, but more than willing to leave centre-stage to Sarkozy’s mediation, Merkel finally called for a regional conference without Moscow’s participation – which never materialized. Merkel’s positions, particularly her intention to move ahead on Georgia’s membership in NATO, were met with sharp criticism from her own ranks.

Andreas Schockenhoff, the deputy chairman of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group, Angela Merkel’s own party, strictly rejected granting candidate status to Georgia on three grounds: first, awarding MAP would amount to ‘rewarding Georgia’s rather dubious behaviour’. Second, it would be tantamount to ‘breaking with the enlargement strategy’ of NATO, because this enlargement should not be directed against Russia. Finally, he asked if NATO would be ready to step in, should Russia launch another campaign against Georgia. The SPD was even more openly critical to the Georgian president. SPD Parliamentarian Niels Annen was ‘totally opposed to including the country in NATO’ so as not to turn the organisation into an ‘executive organ for American escalation policies’ and added: ‘we don’t want to mobi-

¹²⁴ Kagan, Robert. Putin makes his move. *Washingtonpost.com*, 11 August 2008. http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2008-08-11/opinions/36871972_1_vladimir-putin-georgia-and-ukraine-caucasus/2 (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹²⁵ Katrin Bastian, 2006, *Die Europäische Union und Russland*. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag. pp. 170–171

¹²⁶ ‘Wandel durch Bestürzung’, *Spiegel.de*, 25 August 2008. <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-59403006.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

lise German soldiers to save Mr Saakashvili during his next adventure'.¹²⁷

Although Foreign Minister Steinmeier warned Russia of 'crossing the Rubicon' and remained adamant on the principle of territorial integrity, he refused to take a stance on the question of responsibilities and never changed his scepticism towards Georgian NATO membership. One day after Merkel's meeting with Saakashvili, Steinmeier warned against 'quick shots, for example, by freezing negotiations over a partnership and cooperation agreement' and explained that Russian membership in WTO and the dialogue in the NATO–Russia Council remained indispensable.¹²⁸

The present foreign minister Westerwelle, then leading opposition figure, was very much in line with Steinmeier's position: 'Georgia's military intervention into South Ossetia is just as much to be criticised as Russia's overreaction. We should not revert to the rhetoric of the Cold War.'¹²⁹

After some initial days of confusion, also the German media presented a view of the 2008 conflict markedly different from mainstream English-language media. Whereas *The Economist* ran a front-page article titled 'Russia resurgent – and how the West should respond', which depicted Putin towering over parading troops,¹³⁰ the German *Der Spiegel* ran a front-page article titled 'the cold warrior' featuring a picture of US presidential candidate John McCain.¹³¹

Even more remarkable were the reactions of former chancellors Schmidt and Schröder: according to Schröder, the 'triggering moment' of the war was the 'entry of the Georgians into South Ossetia' and the Georgian president was a 'gambler'. Schröder declared himself 'fully confident' that Russia was not pursuing a policy of annexation and did not see that the latest events should give any reason to abandon the concept of a 'strategic partnership'.¹³²

Egon Bahr also summed up the German consensus and criticised Merkel's declarations in Tbilisi, explaining that Georgian NATO member-

¹²⁷ <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,574227-2,00.html>

¹²⁸ 'Kaukasus-Konflikt: Steinmeier widerspricht Schröders vorwürfen', *Spiegel.de*, 16 August 2008. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/kaukasus-konflikt-steinmeier-widerspricht-schroeders-vorwuergen-a-572546.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹²⁹ Interview with Guido Westerwelle, *Stuttgarter Nachrichten*, 21 August 2008 http://www.guido-westerwelle.de/?wc_c=965&wc_lkm=&id=10948&suche=Interview%20Westerwelle (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹³⁰ *The Economist*, 16 August 2008.

¹³¹ *Der Spiegel*, 25 August 2008

¹³² 'Kritik an Georgien: Schröder gibt Saakaschwili die Schuld', *Spiegel.de*, 16 August 2008. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,572483,00.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

ship would present a risk for the alliance: ‘We cannot risk that Saakashvili might again proceed in his customary fashion and that we should then help him against Russia. That is adventurism.’¹³³

In his book *NATO Totschka RU*,¹³⁴ Russia’s hawkish former NATO ambassador Dmitry Rogozin hints at ties between the Russian and German military. In particular, he seems to have been well informed about the debriefing on the Russo–Georgian War given by the German military to its political leadership in Berlin, which he and the Russian leaders in Moscow regard as objective – contrasting it favourably with the position taken by many other NATO members.¹³⁵ While objectivity is not Rogozin’s strongest side, his testimonial seems to indicate the existence of informal channels between Germany and Russia at a point when NATO–Russia relations were officially frozen. It is also worth noting that the German military seems to have known at an early stage that Russian armoured units did not proceed through the Roki tunnel into South Ossetia before the Georgian assault on Tskhinvali – a key element of the official Georgian position which was subsequently called into question by an article in the *NYT*.¹³⁶

WikiLeaks documents also testify to Germany’s delicate position during and in the aftermath of the August 2008 war. Released US diplomatic cables show that the resumption of meetings in the NATO–Russia Council, at the behest of Germany and France, came about only after a trade-off with the Baltic states and Poland, the latter requesting contingency plans to defend the Baltic states against a Russian invasion. Germany, aware that normal relations with Russia would not be resumed unless the Baltic states were provided with military guarantees, led the diplomatic efforts to strike a compromise with the Eastern member states. Finally, codename ‘Eagle Guardian’, NATO’s secret defence plan to protect Poland against a Russian attack, were expanded to include the Baltic states. The plan, which was to remain top secret, was adopted by the NATO military council on 22 January 2009.¹³⁷ This course of action once more makes clear the German strategic dilemma within the NATO framework: the impossibility of

¹³³ Interview with Egon Bahr, *Das Erste*, 28 August 2008. <http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/archiv/2008/panoramaegonbahr100.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹³⁴ D. Rogozin, 2009, *NATO Totschka RU*. Moscow: Eksmo.

¹³⁵ Henry Plater-Zyberk, ‘Ambassador Rogozin on NATO, Peace and the World’, *Russian Series 11/03, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom*. The briefing was given on 10 September.

¹³⁶ ‘Georgia Claims on Russia War Called into Question’, *NYTimes.com*, 6 November 2008. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/07/world/europe/07georgia.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (accessed 2 June 2013).

¹³⁷ ‘Kaukasus-Krise: NATO schmiedete Geheimplan gegen Moskau’, *Spiegel.de*, 6 December 2010. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/kaukasus-krise-nato-schmiedete-geheimplan-gegen-moskau-a-733190.html> (accessed 2 June 2013).

building cooperative security with Russia without at the same time providing collective defence guarantees to its allies.

Ultimately, the 2008 war cemented Germany's view that a new wave of NATO expansion into former Soviet republics would pose a threat to stability in Europe. Insightful observers have therefore called NATO's 2012 Chicago summit the 'non-enlargement summit'¹³⁸ and noted that none of the aspiring countries could take home news of any tangible progress on the road to membership.

A place for Russia in the European security architecture?

The Russian proposal for a new European security pact has received considerable attention in Germany. The idea of a legally binding new security treaty, a 'Helsinki Two' (referring to the 1975 Helsinki agreement), was first announced by President Medvedev at a bilateral summit in Berlin on 5 June 2008. The initial draft of the new treaty was circulated over a year later. According to the Russian president, it would address the need for 'precise, workable mechanisms for the realisation of the principle of indivisible security.'¹³⁹ Its numerous critics, however, have denounced the security pact as a lure which would effectively grant Russia a veto over NATO operations and halt any prospects for further EU and NATO enlargement to former Soviet countries.

Here we should recall that as a precondition for the 2+4 agreement in 1990, Germany's foreign minister Genscher 'unequivocally' vowed that there would be 'no eastward expansion of NATO towards the borders of the Soviet Union'.¹⁴⁰ However, the pressure from former Warsaw Pact countries and the stability gains that would accrue from NATO expansion proved impossible to resist. German defence minister Volker R  he emerged as one of its earliest advocates, thereby creating a point of lasting contention between Russia and the West.¹⁴¹ Under these circumstances, Kohl did his utmost to reassure his Russian partners, without being committal. At a press conference in Moscow shortly before the first wave of expansions, he declared:

I have made it equally clear that it is not in our interest and certainly not in mine to open new conflict lines in Europe, but that for me a NATO expansion must go

¹³⁸ 'The NATO non-enlargement summit', *Thecable.foreignpolicy.com*, 21 May 2012. http://thecable.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/05/21/the_nato_non_enlargement_summit (accessed 2 June 2013).

¹³⁹ 'European security treaty to end Cold War legacy: Medvedev', *AFP*, 29 November 2009

¹⁴⁰ Speech delivered by Hans-Dietrich Genscher. Tutzing, 31 January 1990 http://www.2plus4.de/chronik.php3?date_value=31.01.90&sort=003-002

¹⁴¹ 'Absurde Vorstellung', *Spiegel.de*, 23 November 2009. <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-67871653.html> (accessed 2 June 2013).

hand in hand with a close system of understanding with our Russian neighbours and friends, so that your legitimate security interests are assured.¹⁴²

For these reasons, Germany could not dismiss the Russian call for a new security architecture in Europe out of hand. In a response reminiscent of the reaction to the Russian energy codex initiative, Berlin responded positively, but made sure to specify that existing institutions – NATO and the OSCE – would remain the cornerstone of European security. The German response can be read in Steinmeier's open letter to president-elect Barack Obama, urging him to '[...] take Russian President Dmitry Medvedev at his word... Today, we need a new basic understanding regarding the alliance's future alignment – something like a new Harmel Report with which NATO gave itself a new orientation 40 years ago in a critical phase.'¹⁴³

Some vocal security politicians were willing to go much further and warm up old speculations on offering NATO membership to Russia. The realignment of Volker Rühle, the leading German architect of NATO's eastward expansion and free-talking former CDU defence minister, is indeed remarkable. In an article co-signed by none other than Dmitrij Rogozin, Rühle speaks of Medvedev's proposal as a 'window of opportunity', reawakens Gorbachev's idea of a 'common European home' and advocates setting in motion a process for 'creating the conditions for a complete membership of Russia in NATO with all rights and duties'. According to the authors, NATO has no vital interests to defend in the Caucasus – defining security as protection against Russia runs contrary to Germany's interests, and 'NATO can solve none of its current missions without or [against] Russia. Finally, lasting and hopefully eternal peace in Europe is possible only on the basis of undivided security, which again sets the precondition for the modernisation of Russia and prosperity for Europe.'¹⁴⁴

To prove that he is not a 'loose cannon', Volker Rühle co-signed another article, now in *Der Spiegel*, titled 'opening the door' with Klaus Naumann, a retired German general and government advisor, who headed the NATO Military Council during the Kosovo war.¹⁴⁵ The

¹⁴² Declaration by Helmut Kohl, Moscow, 20 February 1996, http://helmut-kohl.kas.de/index.php?menu_sel=17&menu_sel2=&menu_sel3=&menu_sel4=&msg=1632 (accessed 2 June 2013).

¹⁴³ <http://dazzlepod.com/cable/09BERLIN34/?rss=1>. The Harmel Report remains an important political reference in Germany. The 'Report of the Council on the Future Tasks of the Alliance' was approved by the NATO Council in 1967. It was a first step towards cooperative security and paved the way for the détente of the 1970s. <http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/80991.htm>.

¹⁴⁴ 'Annäherung ist das Gebot', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15 July 2010. The argument is undercut by the Russian author himself, who is famed for his high media profile. On several other occasions, he has dismissed any talk of Russian NATO membership as unserious (as at the NUPI conference).

¹⁴⁵ 'Debatte: Russland in die NATO?' *Spiegel.de*, 8 March 2010. <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/0,1518,682256,00.html> (accessed 2 June 2013).

two authors regret what they see as a German ‘fear of debate’ and proceed to a geopolitical justification for Russian membership in the Atlantic alliance with a thinly veiled allusion to China: ‘The multipolar world constellation requires striking a balance with the political-economic-strategic dynamics of the great Asian powers.’ Rühle and Naumann conclude that ‘Russian membership in the Atlantic alliance would be the logical conclusion of the Euro-Atlantic order, in which NATO would remain the sustaining security institution.’

Rühle’s argument for NATO’s expansion to Russia now is the same as his argument for Eastern expansion was back in 1993: it would seal the alliance’s mutation into a ‘security community’ and provide an ‘expansion of stability’.

It is difficult to judge the sincerity of such initiatives, where excessive German goodwill competes with hollow grandstanding from the Russian side. Given that replacement of NATO and the OSCE by a new institutional framework is only a remote theoretical possibility and since institutional entry into NATO from the Russian side remain highly unlikely, the potential prospects for a third way must be considered. Any rapprochement between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic structures is bound to pass through Berlin. The Russian embassy in Berlin and the liberal Friedrich Neumann Foundation have initiated a joint ‘security policy discourse’ aimed at exploring ‘the perspectives for a strategic partnership between NATO and Russia’.¹⁴⁶ The first of these debates was organised with the participation of Rühle and Naumann as well as Rogozin. In a follow-up debate on 7 July 2011, State Secretary in the Foreign Ministry, Werner Hoyer, paid at least lip service to Rühle and Naumann by stating in his speech: ‘Russia will never knock at the Alliance’s door, but if NATO invites Russia to join, it will be difficult to decline.’¹⁴⁷

If anything, the security policy discourses of the Neumann Foundation show that German policy-makers realise that NATO’s Russia policy cannot be shaped without Berlin. The question, then, must be to which extent Germany can actively shape NATO policy. German perspectives on NATO’s new strategic concept, which was adopted in Lisbon in November 2010, can shed further light upon this question.

¹⁴⁶ See www.freiheit.org

¹⁴⁷ Speech by Minister of State Werner Hoyer on prospects for a strategic partnership between NATO and Russia. Embassy of the Russian Federation, Berlin, 7 July 2011. <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/Presse/Reden/2011/110707-StMHoyer-FNSt-NATO-Russland.html> (accessed 2 June 2013).

German perspectives on NATO's new security concept

The German position was fleshed out by State Secretary Werner Hoyer at the NATO Strategic Review Conference held at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) in September 2010. Here he insisted that NATO should be 'more than a defence alliance', and instead a platform for building cooperative security with Russia. Hoyer opened his speech by asking 'How much article 5 (the 'an attack on one is an attack on all'), does NATO need?'¹⁴⁸

While stressing German commitment to this fundamental NATO principle, Hoyer 'agreed to disagree': 'Given political geography and the different historical experiences of NATO members, it is understandable and legitimate that Allies differ with regard to their need for reassurance.' He went on to explain that 'reassurance and cooperative security with Russia go hand in hand.' Hoyer was in fact restating the compromise which had already been reached in June 2010 by the NATO expert group headed by former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright – bringing Germany back to its contradictions.

One of the expert group's critics was Ambassador Ischinger, the German head of the Munich security conference. In an op-ed to the *NYT*, he wrote:

The expert group attempts to bridge the differences by proposing to reach out to Russia but under the condition that any constructive engagement would have to be based on military reassurances within NATO. This means that defence planning activities – against Russia – would continue to be on the alliance agenda. But how can the view expressed in the very same report – that NATO is not a threat to Russia, nor Russia to NATO – be reconciled with continuous defence planning activities against Russia?¹⁴⁹

The Ambassador concludes that the expert group did not offer a real strategic response to Dmitri Medvedev's proposals on European security – a very predictable outcome.

At the behest of France and Germany, Russia was granted observer status at the Lisbon summit – a significant symbolic novelty, but still only symbolic. In the ensuing NATO–Russia joint declaration, NATO and Russia formally agreed not to consider each other as threats, to cooperate in Afghanistan and to resume discussions on missile defence.¹⁵⁰ On 6 February 2011, the new Treaty on Strategic Arms Reductions (START) entered into force after Presidents Obama and Medvedev exchanged their instruments of ratification at the Munich security conference, at least paying a symbolic geographical tribute to

¹⁴⁸ Supra 119.

¹⁴⁹ 'Getting Russia right', *NYT* 9 June 2010.

¹⁵⁰ NATO–Russia council joint statement, Lisbon, 20 November 2010. http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_68871.htm (accessed 2 June 2013)

Germany's bridge-building efforts. Shortly after the signing, the agenda of the US–Russian 'reset' quickly ground to a halt without Germany being able to weigh in. The summit agreement to pursue talks on missile defence would prove to be an agreement to disagree.

The quest for a European security architecture: squaring the circle?

The NATO summit demonstrated that Germany was incapable of gaining acceptance for many of the ambitions which had been promoted by liberal democrats in the FDP during the 2009 electoral campaign. Three objectives were fleshed out and included in the November 2009 coalition agreement: the removal of US tactical nuclear weapons from German soil, making any NATO out-of-area operations conditional on a UN Security Council mandate,¹⁵¹ and a commitment to general disarmament.¹⁵²

Knowing in advance that getting any NATO out-of-area operations made conditional on a UN mandate and changing the Washington Treaty accordingly would fail, in his aforementioned position speech, Werner Hoyer restricted himself to repeating that 'the Alliance must be committed to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and to international law. And we should say so in the new strategic concept.'¹⁵³ Since the reference to the UN Charter is already included in the Washington Treaty, this amounts to little more than symbolic policy. Similarly, and even though the NATO expert report did mention a tightened nuclear arms control regime, and although the German government had lauded NATO Secretary-General Fogh Rasmussen's mention of nuclear disarmament as part of his plan for NATO's future as a 'great breakthrough', the strategic concept adopted in Lisbon contains no concrete proposals to this effect.¹⁵⁴

Concerning the 30-odd US nuclear warheads thought to be stationed at the Bochum military airbase in North Rhine-Westphalia, the US nuclear posture review revealed in May 2010 flatly dismisses any idea of a pull-out. This is despite the US commission of experts who concluded that the weapons were 'militarily worthless'. The document instead states that nuclear weapons 'contribute to alliance cohesion' and thus have a political value as part of the 'transatlantic link' that Washing-

¹⁵¹ This particular objective, of particular importance to the FDP, received scant attention during the heated debate on Germany's Libya policy.

¹⁵² Supra 47.

¹⁵³ Supra 119.

¹⁵⁴ Germany's failure to advance its nuclear disarmament agenda also bears a French footprint. A nuclear strategy essentially unchanged from 1999 was the price to pay for getting France reintegrated into NATO as a full member.

ton clearly does not want to relinquish.¹⁵⁵ During the 2009 electoral campaign, Merkel herself had argued in favour of pulling out the US warheads, but the Atlanticists in the CDU-led defence ministry quickly backtracked and reaffirmed Germany's commitment to 'nuclear sharing'. Similarly, SPD and FDP foreign ministers Steinmeier and Westerwelle had both pursued the idea after Obama unveiled his ambition of a nuclear-free world, but they achieved precious little.¹⁵⁶

NATO missile defence remains the real litmus test for Germany's declared ambition of building security with Russia, not against it. At a preparatory meeting for the Lisbon summit held in Brussels on 14 October 2010, Germany finally ceded to US pressure that made public its support for US Defence Secretary Gates and Fogh Rasmussen's revamped NATO missile defence. We should recall that the decision to scrap President Bush's 'Missile Defence 1' – a purely US system – had previously been unanimously saluted to by the German political class who feared unduly provoking Russia.¹⁵⁷ In essence, the new system proposes a merger of existing capabilities with US missiles in Eastern Europe.

Two basic factors motivate German policy: the importance Russia gives to the issue, and the hostility of German public opinion nuclear weapons. The substance of the new German argument in favour of missile defence seeks to accommodate both concerns: if the parties could agree on joint cooperation on missile defence, then a link could be established between missile defence and nuclear disarmament. In other words, missile defence would provide leverage to facilitate disarmament.

Against this backdrop, and quite aware of the irreconcilable viewpoints of the USA and Russia, the amount of expedient optimism deployed by the German political leadership seemingly knows no boundaries. Any signs of discussions are enthusiastically hailed as yet another 'crucial breakthrough'.¹⁵⁸

Germany's official argument that a hypothetical joint NATO–Russia missile defence shield could act as a confidence-building measure and pave the way for nuclear disarmament appears as remote from reality

¹⁵⁵ Simon Lunn and Zachary Selden, 'NATO, Nuclear Weapons and the New Strategic Concept', *World Politics Review*, 26 October 2010 reproduced in *Nato-pa.int*: <http://www.nato-pa.int/default.asp?SHORTCUT=2266> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹⁵⁶ 'Yankee bombs go home: Foreign Minister wants US bombs out of Germany', *Spiegel.de*, 10 April 2009. <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,618550,00.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹⁵⁷ 'Beifall aus Deutschland für Obama', *Spiegel.de*, 17 September 2009. <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,649657,00.html> (accessed 2 June 2013)

¹⁵⁸ Those were the words chosen by Westerwelle after the Lisbon summit agreement to 'pursue talks'.

as does the German proposal for conducting joint NATO–Russia missile defence exercises.¹⁵⁹ At any rate, it provides yet another display of Germany’s fundamental ambiguity: a continued commitment to collective defence within NATO, combined with a policy of engagement and building ‘cooperative security’ with Russia. A German government that succeeded in solving this dilemma would be squaring the circle. Then again, Germany might just be quite comfortable with upholding its current ambiguity and status quo.

Limits to German influence

Berlin’s concessions on the US missile defence project in exchange for improbable future reductions in strategic arms stockpiles would seem to be an illustration of the relative powerlessness of Germany.

This same reasoning essentially holds true of the US nuclear warheads in Germany. As long as Washington sees them as an essential part of the transatlantic link, Germany is essentially left to gesticulating. The alliance with other nuclear-free countries calling for a debate on the future of the US weapons has failed to provide sufficient leverage.

On the other hand, as we have seen, Germany has largely succeeded in de-securitising energy as an issue. Here, the *Friedensstaat* was able to call upon the vested interests and influence of the *Handelsstaat* to ensure that energy security would not be turned into a NATO matter. Similarly, Germany managed to delay the further expansion of NATO by offering Georgia economic compensations in terms of market opening and promises of closer integration with the EU – without being accused of outright obstructionism.

On Westerwelle’s trip to the Caucasus in the summer of 2012, economic questions topped the agenda, demonstrating Georgia’s lowered expectations with respect to the question of NATO membership. Westerwelle reaffirmed Germany’s commitment to the territorial integrity of Georgia, but also encouraged the Georgian leadership to maintain open diplomatic channels to the breakaway republics.

Similarly, in an alternative history scenario where the countries of Eastern and Central Europe were not yet full EU members, Germany could have offered additional economic integration in exchange for revising the missile shield plans, which might have resulted in a different outcome.

Where a link can successfully be established between security questions and German economic interests, Germany has the potential to

¹⁵⁹ *Supra* 157.

weigh in with considerable impact. In other instances, when attempting to influence on 'hard security' questions without providing other incentives, it will usually fail, because here Germany wields limited influence on the decision-making of other actors.

Conclusions

With relation to Russia, we have repeatedly seen how the wording of problem-sets relating to German foreign, security and energy policy bears surprising resemblance to issues dating back to the 1960s and 1970s and even earlier. Today's debates echo the discussions on Gorbachev's Common European Home; on Genscher's promise for a new post-NATO European security architecture; on the Harmel Report, which set out to build a 'an enduring and just peace arrangement for all of Europe'; and indeed also the 1954 Soviet proposal for an all-European security framework agreement.

These few examples show how German strategic foreign policy thinking, often discredited as lacking in depth and analysis, has in fact been drawing on a solid tradition. The main difference from other countries is that, in Berlin, any prospects of a new Cold War definitely ended with German reunification.

The weight of history has created a culture of restraint in German foreign policy.¹⁶⁰ This was temporarily challenged in 1999 when the new Red/Green government took a leading role in NATO's first out-of-area operation, the airstrikes on Yugoslavia. In hindsight, the Kosovo war stands out as a failed attempt at an interventionist-humanitarian redefinition of German post-war pacifism. It remains to be seen if German politicians will undertake such ventures in the future. The numerous critics of Foreign Minister Westerwelle's decision to 'side with Russia' and abstain at the UN Security Council vote over Libya did not bring up humanitarian concerns, but instead focused their argumentation on the need for 'alliance solidarity' – another way of saying stability within existing frameworks.¹⁶¹

Some two years after the start of the Libyan civil war, it is worth reflecting that Westerwelle is still in office and Germany is still in NATO, whereas the federal president Horst Köhler, who thought that 'military might was sometimes justified to protect trade routes' was forced out of office almost immediately, even though he had probably been referring only to the need to fight piracy.

¹⁶⁰ See for example Edouard Husson, 2005, *L'autre Allemagne*. Paris: Gallimard.

¹⁶¹ Westerwelle's numerous critics also had to consider the fact that only 5% of Germans surveyed (against 50% of US respondents) agree with the statement 'under some circumstances, war is necessary to bring justice'. See Allen Mann and Deck, *Theuropean.de*, 4 August 2011. <http://www.theuropean.de/alexander-goerlach/7598-schutz-der-handelswege> (accessed 2 June 2013)

Over Syria, German diplomacy has remained low-key. The message is that Germany will remain loyal to existing security organisations such as NATO and the OSCE, but will not be a driving force for NATO's 'out-of-area' operations or legitimising wars outside the UN framework – which is precisely the essence of Russia's diatribes against the West. During Putin's visit to Berlin in May 2012, the Russian president and German chancellor, despite substantial differences, both took care to display a show of unity over Syria, calling for an unlikely 'political solution'.¹⁶² And at their meeting in Moscow in November 2012, Syria was simply not on the agenda, so as not to highlight any differences between the parties.

Through its rational pacifism and well-understood self-interest, Germany will always encourage NATO to keep open channels to Russia. This attitude should not, however, be confused with equidistance or neutrality.

The EU has so far failed to integrate the former Soviet Union into a larger European context. With the possible exception of Moldova, the debate on EU enlargement into the post-Soviet space is essentially off the agenda for the foreseeable future. Likewise, the only effects of EU sanctions have been to reinforce Belarus's economic ties with Russia, thus making strategic reorientation, even in the event of regime change, increasingly unlikely. In this context, Germany's bilateral relations to Russia are set to remain crucial in the coming decade.

It seems increasingly unlikely, however, that this will ever develop into a 'special partnership'. The normative gap between the two is too wide, and special relationships are hard to sustain over time. Still, for all his strongmanship, the pro-German Putin, who looks positioned to remain in charge for the next decade, has also meant a chance for Germany. After Putin's March 2012 election, the German Chancellor chose not to send an official letter of congratulations, instead wishing him 'good luck' upon his re-election. On the other hand, Angela Merkel was one of the first to call him: 'I made it clear that the strategic partnership, and also the modernisation partnership between Germany and Russia, will be pursued in very close contacts.'¹⁶³

As long as official Germany continues to talk of a strategic partnership it is essentially validating Russian policy. Merkel's insistence on human rights and dialogue with civil society is primarily aimed at a German audience, and will not alter the fundamentals of the relationship. The present modernisation partnership is what comes closest to

¹⁶² 'Deutschland und Russland wollen Zusammenarbeit stärken', *DPA*, 1 June 2012

¹⁶³ 'Merkel versichert Putin enge Kooperation', *Wienerzeitung.at*, 5 March 2012.
http://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/politik/europa/441553_Merkel-versichert-Putin-enge-Kooperation.html (accessed 2 June 2013)

reality. Barring any extraordinary developments, such as a US-led war on Iran or revolutionary change in Russia, it seems unlikely that this will develop into a real strategic partnership or a partnership for democratic change. In the end, Berlin may well have understood that the current Moscow leadership is the best that could be hoped for – without saying this out loud.

In its security policy decisions, Germany has no wish to be faced with a radical choice, and will go to considerable lengths to avoid ending up in a ‘we or them’ situation. Traditionally, this meant not having to make a choice between the USA and France. During the Cold War, when Germany itself was in the front-line and was ultimately hoping to change the prevailing status quo, it had little alternative but to align with the USA as a last resort. Some 12 years later, on the eve of the second Iraq war, this disappeared and Germany aligned with France against the USA.

In 2011, freshly re-elected to the Security Council, Germany went further when it chose to cast its vote in the Security Council against both the USA and France. In both cases, the German government’s decision met strong domestic opposition, but had popular support. In both cases, prominent critics predicted that Germany’s ties to the transatlantic or European communities would suffer permanent damage from its stance in the Security Council. These predictions all proved wrong. In fact, the potential cost of alienating Germany is so high that it is hard to imagine a country willing to pay the price.

For Berlin, working within, not challenging, the existing international order is the best way to position itself for the 21st century. Germany is anchored in the West, but with ever-stronger ties in the East: and no country, including Russia, can afford to alienate it. Likewise, partners and allies should know that Germany has no intentions of ever being placed at the front-line of a new Cold War again, nor will it accept any policy aimed at isolating Russia. Ultimately, Germany serves as a moderating element in international affairs. It may prove to be the best and most stable guarantee against the danger of any talk of a new Cold War with Russia escalating from rhetoric to reality.