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## GERMAN 'CIVILNESS' AND RUSSIAN 'COMBATIVENESS' AS FACTORS OF STRATEGIC ORIENTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY\*\*

### 1. INTRODUCTION: GERMANY'S VS. RUSSIA'S SECURITY POLICY BETWEEN IDEALISM AND REALISM

It is not difficult to argue that the political stands and decisions of Germany and Russia are of great importance for security in Europe. It results, inter alia, from their geographical location as well as political and economic position. From the historical point of view, these states were, after the unification of Germany in 1871, the biggest military powers in Europe. Adequately, their importance had impact on the future of Europe and even the world, especially during the World Wars; and the fight between Nazi Germany and the Stalinist Soviet Union in the period 1941–1945 may be called the biggest (so far) clash between two parties ever. Just this period and its consequences, until now, have been an important factor in historical and political-military thinking not only in those states but also in the Central Eastern European countries situated between them. As far as the military dimension is concerned, in case of Germany, little was left of the then military power in 1945; for Russia, however, the army has been (or again is) a political tool having priority. In general, Germany and Russia operate in substantially different external

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conditions today. Germany is a (leading) member of NATO and the European Union, and geo-strategically, as the political circles in Germany are keen to say, it is ‘surrounded by friends’, i.e. as a result of NATO enlargement in 1999, Germany borders only with allied or neutral countries<sup>1</sup>. Russia, on the other hand, after the Cold War and the loss of the Soviet ‘external empire’<sup>2</sup> in Central and South Eastern Europe in particular, was left alone, not to say an isolated country, although continued to be a great power. For many years since 1990, the West, especially Germany, has striven to make Russia a partner, but not in ‘regular’ integration (which is not an interesting option for Russia anyway), but at least in the sense of close links that go far beyond classical diplomatic relations. It is also worth remembering the fact that the process of the German reunification in 1990 (especially in the form of the Two Plus Four Agreement) and the Paris Charter of the same year, signed by all NATO and Warsaw Treaty member states, assigned Russia an important role in the pan-European security structure (although the hopes – on the part of Russia and western pacifists – for a stronger role of the OSCE have not been fulfilled<sup>3</sup>).

Defining the terms of ‘civility’ and ‘combativity’ is an important starting point for this paper. ‘Civility’ defines such a political culture in which ‘civil’ values are most appreciated. They are: constructive relations between citizens, no use of violence to resolve social conflicts, active citizens’ support for the state based on law and democracy etc. It is a concept most closely connected with the idea of *citizen society* or *civil society*<sup>4</sup>. Apparently, it is a stand that is mainly ‘internal’ in character and is often associated with the theory of constructivism in political science, which determines a given state’s foreign policy direction as a result of internal, i.e. social, processes. Such perception influences the area of defence and security in the form of a defensive attitude and avoidance (whenever possible) of such steps that

<sup>1</sup> The cited phrase is attributed to the former (from 1992 to 1998) German Defence Minister, Volker Rühle; see Wilfried von Bredow, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Eine Einführung [Introduction to the Federal Republic of Germany’s foreign policy]*, Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften 2008, pp. 220–221.

<sup>2</sup> H. Spruyt, *Ending Empire: Contested Sovereignty and Territorial Partition*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2005, pp. 81–82.

<sup>3</sup> M. Chalmers, *Beyond the Alliance System*, “World Policy Journal” 1990, no. 2, pp. 215–250.

<sup>4</sup> D. Pietrzyk-Reeves, *Idea społeczeństwa obywatelskiego: Współczesna debata i jej źródła [The Idea of Civil Society: Contemporary debate and its sources]*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2012.

might increase the risk of military escalation. This 'pacifist' character causes that two English words are often confused with one another: 'civil' (meaning 'non-military') and 'civic' (meaning 'non-state' or 'non-governmental').

The concept of 'combaticiveness' is used in two ways here: on the one hand, it describes *physical and technical* readiness of armed forces to a possible fight, which concerns weapons, internal organisation, infrastructure etc., and soldiers' readiness to fight in particular; on the other hand, it refers to *mental* readiness, i.e. decision on a war, which consists in the political leadership and society's political and moral attitudes. The latter is a condition for the former in the same way as, in general, political objectives and visions result in developing material and social resources necessary for achieving them. Moreover, the word 'combaticiveness' may suggest, depending on the ideological character of the circles in power, a more or less evident inclination to use military measures as 'coercive measures'. From the theoretical point of view, 'combaticiveness', unlike 'civility', is associated with the attitude of *realism*, i.e. a suggestion of a long-term 'national interest'<sup>5</sup> and rivalry between states. To some extent, the concept of 'combaticiveness' may be treated as a synonym of a common, e.g. in Poland, term 'defensive capability', however, the latter emphasises the state of defence as a political basis for the possible fight while the former describes readiness to fight in more general terms. Both concepts, and more precisely policies based on them, have inclination to cover all spheres of a nation's life in order to get prepared to a potential conflict. But it also opens the way to considering potential processes of militarizing the society.

As far as motivation and justification of a potential use of force in foreign policy are concerned, two totally different attitudes can be observed on the part of Germany and Russia. This difference consists mainly in the above-mentioned structural and political parameters of the two states. Apart from that, however, there is also another specific factor that influences Germany and also has impact on the West's policy, namely *moral policy* or 'moralizing'. It is not a purely rational concept, but in some sense an idealistic one, which in Germany mainly refers to the memory of World War II (i.e. mainly the Nazi crimes). This important aspect of Germany's political culture will be further developed below.

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<sup>5</sup> For a theoretical discussion see K. Kałużna, R. Rosicki, *O interesie narodowym i racji stanu – rozważania teoretyczne [On national interest and reason of state – theoretical considerations]*, "Przegląd Politologiczny" 2013 no. 1, pp. 119–128.

Here, however, it is worth mentioning that Russia, described in the German historical perception (in the same way as e.g. Poland) as a ‘victim state’ of the Nazi war, benefits from that stand of the FRG when it causes the softening of Germany’s policy toward a given state even if it carries out a policy different from that of Germany or the West as a whole. One can see some kind of contradiction between ‘ethical principles culture’, which is cultivated in political and social circles in Germany on the one hand, and complaisance in relations with another country because of ‘historical’ reasons on the other hand. As a result, there is a kind of *predominance of history over the present*, in which, however, the same history is treated in a rather selective way. Just against the background of the ‘fight with Nazism’ (and the ‘liberation of Germany’) by the allied forces perceived as the only important element of the history of World War II, in this context the totalitarian character of the Soviet Union over the whole period of the Bolshevik rule is hardly taken into consideration by the German party although it substantially contributed to the outbreak of that war. And the mass crimes committed by Soviet soldiers and special services in the occupied Germany and in other countries have been timidly mentioned only in the recent years<sup>6</sup>.

## 2. GERMANY: FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY IN THE SPIRIT OF PHILANTHROPY

At the very beginning, it is worth mentioning that the Cold War, the threat from the Soviet Union and gradual reconciliation with the former enemies in the West after World War II had a great influence on the political culture of the ‘old’ FRG and the resulting structures of international, or even supranational, cooperation such as NATO and the European Union should be positively assessed. Below, there is mainly a discussion of the situation in the FRG, and little is said about the GDR, as the latter does not affect much Germany’s present foreign and security policy.

But there is another dimension of the issue that has been decisive in the development of the present-day political thinking in Germany. Since the 1960s and especially the 1980s, historical research and common (West) Germany’s historical memory based on it has been more and more focused on the Nazi regime period. While at the beginning it aimed a grantingt

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<sup>6</sup> For more on the topic see H. Knabe, *Tag der Befreiung? Das Kriegsende in Ostdeutschland [Liberation day? End of war in Eastern Germany]*, Propyläen, Berlin 2005.

fair respect and compensation for the victims of that regime at home and abroad<sup>7</sup>, in the course of time the omnipresence of that issue in the media and historical papers dominated almost the whole historical conscience efficiently marginalising the rest of Germany's history. Moreover, around 1985, in connection with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war and the Nazi regime, historical research on a big scale started in the FRG, especially in the field of social history, not only aimed at the elites of the Nazi Germany but also at the seemingly equal co-responsibility of the whole nation. This tendency among some German (and foreign) historians has combined with the political left wing's (and not only in Germany) pursuit of cultural hegemony and, at the political level, gradual erosion of the national identity, which is to end in actual abandonment of national sovereignty and internationalisation of all important issues of the national existence<sup>8</sup>.

As a result of that characteristic combination of interests, a complex process of German national conscience transformation following the 'post-national' and 'supranational' model took place<sup>9</sup>. The political culture of Germany reunited in 1990 resulting from that process favours such an attitude to international matters that is different from the classical *Realpolitik* and represents a European or even global quasi-federalism, in which states treat each other as partners in a uniform political context. From this perspective many commentators interpreted Chancellor Helmut Kohl's decision to accept the European monetary union, i.e. to substitute the euro for the German mark as a 'compensation' for the 'neighbours' concerns' about the stronger position of reunited Germany. However, this 'concern' hid the western allies' interest in continuing the control of Germany, which reached a substantial economic and political development, in fact outrunning the 'victorious powers': France and the UK. Apart from that, the basic decision on the creation of the monetary union was taken in 1988 as a part of the plan

<sup>7</sup> H.G. Hockerts, *Wiedergutmachung in Germany. Balancing Historical Accounts, 1945–2005*, [in:] D. Diner, G. Wunberg (ed.), *Restitution and Memory. Material Restoration in Europe*, Berghahn Books, New York–Oxford 2007, pp. 323–381.

<sup>8</sup> For more on the problem see E. Jesse, K. Löw (ed.), *Vergangenheitsbewältigung [Mastering the past]*, Duncker und Humblot, Berlin 1997. Similar trends can be also observed in other countries (especially western ones), where the Nazi 'original sin' factor does not occur. There, political correctness and 'post-colonial conscience' play the main role.

<sup>9</sup> From the German left wing perspective, the key work is the book by J. Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation. Political Essays*, Cambridge/Mass.: The MIT Press 2001.

for further integration of Western Europe, thus before the turning point in the ‘real socialism’ countries<sup>10</sup>.

The discussed phenomena of Germany’s policy and intellectual life can be exemplified by the German radicalism of thinking (the so-called movement ‘from one extreme to the other’) which developed from the 19<sup>th</sup> century under the influence of the (Left) Hegelian idealism, of which Karl Marx was the most important follower who caused equally radical changes in practical policy many times. The phenomenon occurred for the first time in the Weimar Republic when the Communists – and not the Social Democrats who initially were in power – radically turned away from the state tradition of the German Empire. Then, the radical right wing (including the most extreme Nazi movement) adopted many elements of the leftist analysis and social processes interpretation in order to create post-bourgeois mass society under the leadership of its own elite (i.e. own Fuehrer)<sup>11</sup>. Both those antidemocratic ideological trends, which one after another governed Germany after 1933, and in the GDR even until 1989, have left important traces in Germany’s political culture and defeating them was (and is) one of the main challenges for the new liberal democracy in the Federal Republic of Germany.

In any case, according to the ideology of ‘post-nationalism’, Germany is to serve not its own interests but ‘common’ interests on a global scale, called ‘human’. However, the first step on this way was made in the 1950s. It was the enthusiasm for the European integration not only because of practical (economic and political) profits from the process, but also, and for some even mainly, as a ‘means of escape’ from the ‘burdened national history’ to other supranational forms of political organisation. At the international level, indispensable adjustment of national policy to the globalisation processes and ‘rapprochement between nations’ was discussed. At the end of the development, common justice and some kind of ‘global democracy’ are expected. And Germany’s role in the whole process is to be a model and a pioneer ‘because of our history’.

Apart from that, the above-discussed opinions have resulted in concrete consequences in the form of Germany’s foreign policy ‘self-limitation’ because

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<sup>10</sup> See W. Loth, *Helmut Kohl und die Währungsunion [Helmut Kohl’s attitude toward monetary union]*, ‘Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte’ vol. 61 (2013), no. 4, pp. 455–480.

<sup>11</sup> Today, like then, the Marxist theoretician Antonio Gramsci is one of the most ‘popular’ authors in the circle of the so-called New Right.

of other nations' interests (or even 'feelings'<sup>12</sup>). In order to classify this behaviour of the FRG's elites, political scientists have coined a term 'Kultur der Zurückhaltung', which can be translated into 'culture of modesty'<sup>13</sup>. The so-called 'chequebook diplomacy' was an important element of that 'culture': Instead of taking part in military operations, Germany paid for them. While in the post-war period, the approach was really advantageous in dispelling the doubts of other, mainly smaller, western countries such as Denmark and the Netherlands, which had experienced the German occupation, it caused more and more often problems with the West's cooperation in the field of security and defence after 1990.

An attitude of 'antimilitarism', which is rather common in Germany, was and still is connected with this serious consequence of Germany's 'struggle to overcome the past'<sup>14</sup>. But it does not only refer to the abandonment of real militarism; the condemnation of the Wehrmacht's participation in the Nazi crimes led to a denial, in the already mentioned overemphasised style, of any military values and discredit to all military elements in the history of Germany. While a military dimension is in fact a feature of every nation's history, this development (together with a general phenomenon of the one-sided Nazi era obsession) caused a certain type of deformation and impoverishment of the Germans' historical identity. And what is most important in the discussed context and will be further discussed below, is the fact that because of that the Bundeswehr as a democratic army had and still has enormous problems to overcome in its own country even before it can deal with an enemy abroad. Its biggest enemy is hypocrisy and a lack of knowledge and responsibility on the part of the German political class.

In compliance with this process, and in fact good will, the FRG specified its role at the international level after 1990, which is objectively bigger

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, in 2013 the rightist press in Poland, e.g. "Nasz Dziennik", expressed hopes for the left-wing parties' victory in the election to the Bundestag because a more 'favourable' attitude toward Polish historical memory 'feelings' was expected.

<sup>13</sup> R. Baumann, G. Hellmann, *Germany and the Use of Military Force: 'Total War', the 'Culture of Restraint', and the Quest for Normality*, 'German Politics' 2007, no. 10/1, pp. 61–82.

<sup>14</sup> For the perspective of the 'orthodox', i.e. 'pacifist', and thus critical toward the 'normalisation' of Germany's foreign and defence policy see A. Geis, *Die Zivilmacht Deutschland und die Enttabuisierung des Militärischen [Germany as a civil power versus breaking the taboo of the military dimension]* (HSFK Standpunkte 2005, no. 2), Frankfurt/Main 2005.

than it was before that year, as a ‘civil power’<sup>15</sup>, i.e. a state that uses mainly ‘civil measures’ for ‘civil purposes’ and seeks multilateral cooperation (multilateralism) in the field of security and defence. The same definition was used in relation to the global role of the European Union for many years at that time. The repeatedly occurring irony consists in the fact that in the context of ‘transnationalism’, as e.g. in the EU, the Germans again play the role of a ‘natural leader’, which they hate so much.

Another essential consequence of these trends is the already mentioned ‘moralising’ foreign and security policy. Those of the German political activists who are better educated eagerly refer to Immanuel Kant’s essay on ‘perpetual peace’; however, they do not realise that it is ironic and sceptical in nature. Undoubtedly, the fact that the FRG’s policy regularly seeks and supports constructive and peaceful solutions to crisis situations is a positive element of the ‘moralising’ process. This way Germany contributed to a number of helpful and constructive initiatives within the United Nations or other international organisations<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, Germany is reliable in supporting the use of military force only as a last resort. This may have positive influence on the political culture of smaller states that care about a multilateral attitude; however, it is of little importance for the behaviour of superpowers, i.e. key players in the multipolar world. And Germany’s ‘governmental pacifism’ does not exempt it from taking tough decisions. Here this popular multilateralism may even act diversely if the allies become the ‘hawks’ and want Germany to demonstrate solidarity.

As it was already mentioned above, the ‘anti-militant’ culture also influences civil-military relations in Germany. For many years, in fact since the beginning of Germany’s post-war defence policy, it has complicated the functioning of the military in the society and often denies soldiers respect that they deserve for their service. The reflection over the deficiencies in the Wehrmacht’s activities towards the Nazi government resulted in the

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<sup>15</sup> S. Harnisch, H.W. Maull (ed.), *Germany as a Civilian Power. The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 2001; H.W. Maull, *Deutschland als Zivilmacht [Germany as a civil power]*, [in:] S. Schmidt, G. Hellmann, R. Wolf (ed.), *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2007, pp. 73–84.

<sup>16</sup> United Nations Association of Germany (DGAP), *40 Years of German Membership in the United Nations* (2013), [online], <http://www.dgpn.de/germany-in-the-united-nations/40-years-of-german-membership-in-the-united-nations>, (accessed: 28 November 2016).

development of the conception of *Innere Führung* ('internal command') in the 1950s, which consists in an idea that a citizen obliged to serve in the army was to 'internally' remain a civilian ('a citizen wearing a uniform') and not succumb to 'militant temptation'; this way, instead of militarising the society, 'civilisation of the military' was to take place.<sup>17</sup> This approach reflecting German society's enormous post-war hate of the military system was a novelty in the history of civil-military relations as such principles have never been adopted and applied in any army. Civil control over the army with the maintenance of relative freedom of the internal military culture has been a classical approach in the western states. In Germany, however, the civil elite also wants to control the internal life of the army as if it was a 'necessary evil' type of institution and did not deserve trust.

Against this rather complicated background, a discussion on the enlargement of NATO was conducted in Germany after 1990. Since the collapse of 'real socialism', the accession to NATO had been one of the main objectives of the Central European states and was supported by the USA. Although the German government was concerned about the effects of such a step on the military balance in Europe, it eventually agreed with that because of the obligations towards Poland and other nations, which had ousted the communist regimes from power<sup>18</sup>.

But also at the domestic level, 'governmental pacifism' and 'post-nationalism' caused serious problems for the defence and security policy: the German political class had paid little attention to that issue for a few dozen years as it was not attractive and did not help ambitious politicians in their career; and the Cold War motto stating that 'the Americans will care for that either way' still functioned in the politicians' (sub)-conscience. Scientists representing different fields, history, political science etc., specialising in defence related matters, were also marginalised. This started changing slowly after 1990, but the knowledge of defence and security related matters in Germany, except for the army, is still very poor. Apart from that, the Military Counterintelligence Service (MAD), as all services in the FRG in general, is poorly equipped and thus dependent on the information obtained from the American agencies. As a result, the federal government possesses

<sup>17</sup> K. Naumann, *The battle over 'Innere Führung'*, [in:] J.S. Corum (ed.), *Rearming Germany*, Brill, Leiden–Boston 2011, pp. 205–220.

<sup>18</sup> For more on this issue, with special attention paid to the Polish perspective, see H. Tewes, *Germany, Civilian Power and the New Europe: Enlarging NATO and the European Union*, Palgrave, Basingstoke 2002, pp. 140–197.

efficient officers and enlisted men but it lacks social powerbase and is unable to undertake independent defence activities. In some sense, it is a logical consequence of ‘post-nationalism’ and ‘multilateralism’.

Maybe, one of the advantages of those attitudes was that, after multi-year discussions, they helped to solve the problem of a new challenge that Germany faced after the Cold War as an *out of area* NATO military actor. While every idea of the renewed *national* defence policy was something incredible for the left wing circles, the new, leftist government of Social Democrats and the Greens elected in 1998 managed to convince their powerbase that there was a necessity for a new, more active policy within the Alliance. Apart from that supranational dimension, a specific argument worked for the government, i.e. that the task in Kosovo then was seemingly to prevent ‘the second Auschwitz’, i.e. a slaughter of the Albanese by Serbs. This, and only this, argument of the Greens’ Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joschka Fischer, was able to defeat another ‘eternal’ argument of the FRG’s post-war security policy, i.e. ‘war never again’ and let his party, which had been very sceptical towards NATO for years, to introduce far-reaching changes in the political course toward ‘military altruism’<sup>19</sup>. The decision resulted in enabling the Bundeswehr to take part in the NATO attack on Serbia and was called the ‘leftists’ war’ by some commentators, which was very important for the change in the FRG’ political culture. Since then, the Greens/Alliance ’90 (unlike the post-communist party *Die Linke*) has supported all similar peacekeeping operations (over 40 up till now).

With regard to the subject matter of the article, one can speak about a ‘*new type of combativeness*’ just on the part of the political left wing (while the right wing has always been pro-NATO): the involvement of the German army may be justified – obviously apart from the invocation of Article 5 of the NATO Treaty – by the violation of human rights wherever in the world. Thus, in such a case, its involvement shall even be imperative as the German state has a duty to rescue the world from the evil ‘because of our history’. No wonder, this tendency is sometimes called ‘humanitarian imperialism’ or ‘militarist humanism’<sup>20</sup>. At the same time, it was typical that the Federal

<sup>19</sup> For more on this issue see R. von Rimscha, *Ein Land tut sich schwer: Bundeswehr-Einsätze seit 1991 [Difficult duty: Bundeswehr’s operations since 1991]*, [in:] Ch. Schwegmann (ed.), *Bewährungsproben einer Nation. Die Entsendung der Bundeswehr ins Ausland [A nation’s endurance test: Bundeswehr’s foreign missions]*, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin, pp. 65–76.

<sup>20</sup> E.g. N. Chomsky, *The New Military Humanism. Lessons from Kosovo*, Pluto Press, London 1999.

President of Germany, Horst Köhler, had to resign from his office in 2010 in a controversy over his justification of the Bundeswehr's participation in missions abroad by saying that they also serve to secure economic interests – such a 'non-altruistic' motive was not tolerated.

However, another contradiction in justifying missions abroad soon occurred in Germany's defence policy: when it became obvious that Germany would get involved in more and more overseas peacekeeping missions, in 2005 the Bundestag obliged the federal government to report every initiative in this area (*Parlamentsbeteiligungsgesetz*, i.e. the Act on the parliament's participation in making decision to use military forces in overseas operations)<sup>21</sup>; as a result, the Bundeswehr became a 'parliamentary army'. But it has been visible for a long time that the MPs mainly wanted to control the government and not to enhance their attitude towards the army and soldiers. Neither were the security issues discussed broadly – thus, this 'civil' parliament denies the military dimension of its policy – nor did the Bundestag sufficiently care for adequate equipment of the army and the soldiers' future when they come back from a war with physical and psychological impairments. The situation of veterans in Germany is lamentable not only because of the medical and financial conditions, but even more because of widespread lack of interest in their fate if not the society's open hatred<sup>22</sup>.

Against the background of these sad facts, it is not surprising that it is more and more difficult to find candidates eager to serve in the Bundeswehr now, after the obligatory military service was suspended in 2011. Despite that and serious problems with military equipment, German soldiers fulfilled and are still fulfilling their tasks in peacekeeping operations to the satisfaction of the German supreme command and NATO. As far as this is concerned, the Bundeswehr is a loyal and reliable member of the Alliance. That is why it is necessary to emphasise that the lack of will to active defence of Central Europe on the part of the German society, which a 2016 opinion poll documented, has nothing in common with the soldiers' attitude. It is not, as often suspected, an expression of some kind of aversion to Poland or other nations of the region, but mainly has two reasons: 'anti-militarism' and a serious problem many Germans have with the idea to fight with Russia.

<sup>21</sup> The act text [online], <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bundesrecht/parlbg/gesamt.pdf> (accessed: 26 November 2016).

<sup>22</sup> A. Timmermann-Levanas, A. Richter, *Die reden – wir sterben. Wie unsere Soldaten zu Opfern der deutschen Politik werden [They speak, we die. How our soldiers become victims of Germany's foreign policy]*, Campus Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2010.

And this latest opinion again has two origins: on the one hand, the already discussed memory of World War II, and on the other hand, a specific dispute in Germany over the appropriate approach to Russia. Since the escalation of the crisis in Ukraine, there have been two equally strong political camps standing opposite one another: one of them calls for solidarity with the Central European nations (including Ukraine) against the threat from Russia and to ‘say goodbye to the illusion of democratic Russia’, and the other recalls the German crimes during the war and Gorbachev’s support for the German reunification and warns against the ‘return to the Cold War’. The second camp gathers many supporters of greater independence of Germany and Europe from the USA as opposed to ‘Washington’s egoism’; and this way they favour the idea of a multipolar order to counterbalance the American globalism<sup>23</sup>.

Having in mind all these older attitudes, the German government’s decision of 2015 to support the West’s sanctions on Russia was a real change of direction. It was important that the move was in compliance with the German preference for non-military measures and Berlin, as usual, made every effort to maintain a basis for talks with Moscow. Despite that, one must state that Angela Merkel follows different principles than Helmut Kohl did 25 years ago. He would not have allowed for any ‘anti-Russian’ action and would not have risked serious economic losses on the part of German companies. In this sense, the present government may be described as decidedly ‘western’ or, maliciously speaking, as a submissive branch of American globalism.

### 3. RUSSIA: NATIONALISM AND ITS STRIVING TO MAINTAIN A SUPERPOWER POSITION

The supporters of the above-mentioned political camp in Germany (and other European countries) are ready to accept the Russian perception of the present situation in Europe as the United States’ attempts to control the continent with the use of isolation and encirclement of Russia as the only significant rival. One can see here essential elements of Halford Mackinder’s influential theory of 1904 on the *heartland* (the pivot territory, i.e. Russia)

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<sup>23</sup> See a ‘pro-Ukrainian’ opinion at <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/gegen-aufbruch-im-ukraine-konflikt-osteuropa-experten-sehen-russland-als-aggressor/11105530.html> (accessed: 29 November 2016).

and the fight between *sea power* and *land power*. These ideas cannot be ignored, especially as they are approved of not only in Russia but have also been accepted in the United States for years<sup>24</sup>. It is interesting that until 1945 Germany was one of the major players applying the geopolitical theory and practice, however, this way of thinking and the whole realistic school are discredited in the present era of 'post-nationalism'<sup>25</sup>. This means, however, that many steps taken by superpowers, which tend to use those political paradigms, are either not understood in Germany or misinterpreted.

Speaking about Russia and its 'combativity', however, it is necessary to start with the situation connected with opinions and expectations after the Cold War. In a nutshell, the characteristic features of Yeltsin's era were the loss of a superpower status and, at the same time, hopes that the USA would be grateful for Russia's cooperation and keep the former rival in the superpowers' club and offer it a privileged position. However, these hopes soon had to be buried and the Kremlin returned to a policy of its 'own power'. The system transformation was also very selective and limited because of the lack of social powerbase for the basic changes. The heavy economic crisis and endemic corruption further decreased the majority of the citizens' will to deal with political culture matters and even favoured striving for a new strong rule. It is worth recalling that the main trends in the political development in Russia from the Tsarist era, through communism to Putin's government at present – with some exceptions – have never tended to some kind of liberal-democratic order, but to a system of internal and external use of power; and the armed forces have always played a key role in it.

With regard to that, there are some very important facts that had and still have impact on the situation. The attempts to reappraise at least the Stalinist era were halted in the 1960s and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the era of the new ambitious President Vladimir Putin, there was a total return to uncritical praise of Russia's own history and far-reaching 'colouring' of Stalin's regime as the time of reconstruction and defence of the country, which cost victims

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<sup>24</sup> See e.g. G. Kearns, *Geopolitics and Empire: The Legacy of Halford Mackinder*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2009. The leading work for the present American geopolitics is a book by Z. Brzeziński, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, New York 1997.

<sup>25</sup> For more on this perspective see R. Sprengel, *Kritik der Geopolitik. Ein deutscher Diskurs 1914–1944 [Criticism of geopolitics. German discourse 1914–1944]*, Akademie Verlag, Berlin 1996.

and was sad but inevitable<sup>26</sup>. This trend probably most clearly shows in the systematic hampering of the work of *Memorial* society defaming its members by calling them ‘traitors’. This approach advantageous, inter alia, for the image of the Soviet Army in the fight with external enemies. The above-mentioned Germany’s soft commemorative policy toward the Soviet Army as a ‘liberator from fascism’ (by which the FRG’s middle class follows after the former GDR) and the lack of the world public opinion’s interest (i.e. mainly in the West) in the Gulag victims were clearly conducive to this development of the situation. Anyway, neither the government, nor the military command in Russia has ever seen an important reason to seriously review its self-conscience in relation to military history.

In the context of Russia’s striving to maintain or regain its superpower status in our times, the army is again an essential, and even central, element while Russia, unlike the USA and even smaller western powers such as Germany and the UK, possesses only military power as a feature of a superpower, and not a healthy economy or another type of *soft power*. It is of military importance that after the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, Russia could not (and is still not able to) count on the formation of a new alliance without the support of force because it lacks such an attractive measure as *soft power*, which is the basis for – apart from military and economic power – the position of the United States as a global leader<sup>27</sup>. Russia, as a future hegemon, really has very little to offer to other states; and as it was already said, on the world arena, it can – as a result of a permanent loss of trust to the USA – play the role of one of the world poles but rather that negative one, i.e. as a factor hampering further promotion of American globalism<sup>28</sup>. That is why, without trivializing Russia’s action in Ukraine, it is difficult to finally establish whether Putin’s policy at the western Russian border constitutes ‘classical’ territorial imperialism or perhaps a type of ‘systemic objection’ to

<sup>26</sup> See T. Sherlock, *Confronting the Stalinist Past: The Politics of Memory in Russia*, ‘The Washington Quarterly’ 2011, no. 2, pp. 93–109, and S. Creuzberger, *Stalinismus und Erinnerungskultur [Stalinism and the culture of historical memory]*, ‘Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte’ 2011, no. 49–50, pp. 42–47.

<sup>27</sup> See J.S. Nye, *Soft Power: The means to success in world politics*, Public Affairs, New York 2004.

<sup>28</sup> See A. Zagorski, *The limits of a global consensus on security: the case of Russia*, [in:] L. Peral (ed.), *Global security in a multipolar world*, Chaillot Paper no. 118, October 2009, chapter 5, pp. 67–84 [online], <http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/cp118.pdf>, (accessed: 27 November 2016).

the creation of a new world order. The initiatives to form the Eurasian Union and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation with China and (from 2017) India can be interpreted in a similarly ambiguous way.

In the Soviet Union, the army was the second pillar of the regime (although under strict party control) and had an enormous budget, which also contributed to the state bankruptcy before the end of the Cold War. Although the position of the army in the post-Soviet Russian state decreased at the beginning, mainly because of economic reasons and a short-time trust in the USA, it was also because Yeltsin, after the 1991 Soviet coup d'état aimed at taking control from Gorbachev, presented a reserved attitude toward the military command. However, one cannot speak of any fundamental and lasting changes in the status and importance of the army in the Kremlin's policy. The generals' resistance to serious change combined with the lack of convincing alternative models while the western ones were rejected as inappropriate for Russia<sup>29</sup>. And at the end of Yeltsin's government, i.e. when Vladimir Putin was Prime Minister, there were attempts to strengthen the military again, which became the central element of the superpower re-establishment policy for Putin's presidency in 1999. As far as this is concerned, the president could and still can rely on the support of the uniform Duma as well as the society, for which the memory of the war and victory over Germany is one of a few positive *lieux de memoire*. Interestingly, this process is not connected with anti-German feelings at all; maybe paradoxically, one can observe respect and esteem for the former enemy, including its former military skilfulness.

Despite a big number of conflicts and tensions between Russia and the West, as far as the real potential of the Russian Army and real objectives of the Kremlin's policy are concerned, there are different experts and politicians' opinions. What is certain is that Moscow wants to strengthen its global position, which to a great extent depends on the Washington's perception. According to a semi-formal analysis published within the Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs series, a multi-year adviser to NATO, Stephen R. Covington, describes the importance of the specific 'strategic culture' of the Russian Army, which survived the period of political disorientation and institutional depression after 1990, and

<sup>29</sup> With regard to this, the still up-to-date analysis is one by J.G. Mathers, *Reform and the Russian Military*, [in:] T. Farrell, T. Terriff (ed.), *The Sources of Military Change. Culture, Politics, Technology*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder–London 2002, chapter 8, pp. 161–184.

under Putin's power 'came back to life' in a modern form. The Russian command's belief in the 'non-linear' character of a modern war, its own structural sensitivity and the key importance of speed in the initial stage of a war is its core. According to the author, this mental and structural capability serves the global political offensive, which generally takes into consideration the use of armed forces<sup>30</sup>. A German analyst, Andreas Umland, who works in Kiev and has been observing Russian activities in Ukraine for many years, is of a different opinion. He believes that Moscow's approach toward its neighbours is mainly an attempt to diversify the West's and the society's interest from the economic and political weakness of Russia. In this light, the West's reaction in the form of strengthened armament only serves the Russian strategy of 'reflexive control'. The author recommends that the West should focus on maintaining economic pressure and the support for the Eastern European states<sup>31</sup>.

Regardless of these analyses details, one can observe the Russian Army's striving to increase its soldiers' combativeness, which is strictly connected with the necessity for flexibility and capability to instantly respond to potential crises.

Apart from repeatedly raised budgets, the image and self-satisfaction of the army at the time of Putin's presidency have been substantially enhanced by the victory in the Second Chechen War in 1999–2000. In some sense, this was the main aim of this war, apart from the renewed control over the Caucasus. This war and its brutal conduction by the Russian Army resulted in strong criticism in Germany and other Western states<sup>32</sup>. At the same time, the relations with the West suffered then because of the NATO operation in Kosovo, which Russia joined later as a result of Moscow's criticism and the Alliance enlargement, i.e. accession of the former Warsaw Pact members: Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. The next dispute about the seeming

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<sup>30</sup> S.R. Covington, *The Culture of Strategic Thought Behind Russia's Modern Approaches to Warfare*, Harvard Kennedy School, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs (October 2016) [online], <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/Culture%20of%20Strategic%20Thought%203.pdf>, accessed: 27 November 2016. Also see O. Jonsson, R. Seely, *Russian Full-Spectrum Conflict: An Appraisal After Ukraine*, "The Journal of Slavic Military Studies", 2015, no. 1, pp. 1–22.

<sup>31</sup> A. Umland, *Russia's Strategy: Look Scarier Than You Are*, "The National Interest", June 2016 [online], <http://nationalinterest.org/feature/russias-strategy-look-scarier-you-are-16517> (accessed: 25 October 2016).

<sup>32</sup> For the issue of joining foreign policy with the internal situation in Russia see L.F. Szászdi, *Russian civil-military relations and the origins of the second Chechen war*, University Press of America, Lanham–Plymouth 2008.

American guarantees that after 1990 NATO would not enlarge eastwards, was in fact an argument about Russia's right to the sphere of influence in Eastern and Central Europe<sup>33</sup>. But for many years, nobody has had the slightest idea that this debate might lead to military action.

What proved to be advantageous for Russian policy, however, was the fact that its fight against 'Islamic terrorism' in Chechnya soon coincided with 11 September 2001 and the launch of the American 'war against terror'. For many years Putin was promoted to the position of the USA's 'strategic partner' and was better at this than the Europeans, especially Germany, which seemed to Washington to be too indecisive. In the course of other NATO states' participation in the 'war against terror', this special Russian role weakened but the United States' attitude remained good. It is necessary to mention here the Russian-German agreement of 2003, which enabled Germany to use the Russian air space for transportation purposes to its military base in North Afghanistan. The cooperation continued in different areas but good relations ended more or less around the time of the dispute about Georgia and Ukraine's membership in NATO in 2008. In the successive Russian-Georgian war, Russia for the first time in history after 1990 used military force against another OSCE country<sup>34</sup>. Six years later, the same happened in Ukraine (although Russia was not officially involved in the conflict). Thus, most obviously, Russia does not rely on the Paris order of 1990 and seeks unilateral solutions, of which it has always accused the USA.

Also the Ukrainian conflict clearly shows that Russia as a hegemon lacks attractiveness. Regardless of the final outcome of the war in Ukraine, one of its results is the deepening isolation of Russia in Europe. The issue connected with the status of Crimea substantially blocks communication and development in the Black Sea region. An alliance with Turkey<sup>35</sup> may be a possible solution if the process of turning away from the West in this country and further development of the Eurasian direction continue.

<sup>33</sup> See J.R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, *Deal or No Deal? The End of the Cold War and the U.S. Offer to Limit NATO Expansion*, 'International Security', vol. 40, no. 4 (Spring 2016), pp. 7–44 [online], [http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/ISEC\\_a\\_00236](http://www.mitpressjournals.org/doi/pdf/10.1162/ISEC_a_00236) (accessed: 28 November 2016).

<sup>34</sup> It is worth emphasising that experts have not finished discussing who was really guilty, Russia or Georgia. This does not change, however, the basic contradiction between Russian and western opinions.

<sup>35</sup> See P. Shlykov, *Russian Foreign Policy in the Eastern Mediterranean since 1991*, [in:] S.N. Litsas, A. Tziampiris (ed.), *The Eastern Mediterranean in Transition: Multipolarity, Politics and Power*, Routledge, Abingdon–New York 2016, chapter 3, pp. 31–49.

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## GERMAN 'CIVILNESS' AND RUSSIAN 'COMBATIVENESS' AS FACTORS OF STRATEGIC ORIENTATION IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

### Summary

Both Germany and Russia play important roles in international security policy, however, their approaches are quite different and sometimes even contrary to one another. During the presidency of Vladimir Putin, Russia is doing its best to regain, at any price, the position (more or less) equal to the USA's, which it lost 25 years ago. Taking risks and acting unpredictably, Moscow questions the weak European order that was formed after the Cold War, undermining Ukraine's and other neighbours' integrity. At the same time Germany is one of the leading states in the Western world and tries to contribute to peacekeeping and stabilisation. It is governed and at the same time hampered by the obsessive reference to the Nazi era and a dissonant attitude toward the use of military force. This weakness not only causes damage to its own army but also limits Germany's value in the eyes of its allies.

## NIEMIECKA 'CYWILNOŚĆ' A ROSYJSKA 'BOJOWOŚĆ' JAKO CZYNNIKI STRATEGICZNEJ ORIENTACJI W KONTEKŚCIE MIĘDZYNARODOWEGO BEZPIECZEŃSTWA

### Streszczenie

Niemcy i Rosja odgrywają w międzynarodowej polityce bezpieczeństwa rolę ważne, jednak dosyć różne, a często nawet sprzeczne. Za rządów Władimira Putina Rosja stara się odzyskać za prawie wszelką cenę pozycję (mniej więcej) równą USA, którą utraciła 25 lat temu. Działając ryzykownie i nieprzewidywalnie, Moskwa stawia pod znakiem zapytania kruchy porządek europejski, który powstał po końcu Zimnej Wojny, podkopując integralność Ukrainy i innych sąsiadów. Zaś Niemcy są jednym z czołowych państw obozu zachodniego i starają się jak najbardziej przyczynić do kroków pokojowych i stabilizacyjnych. W tym działaniu są one kierowane, a jednocześnie hamowane, poprzez obsesyjne odwołanie się do ery nazizmu i wynikający z tego sprzeczny stosunek do stosowania siły militarnej. Ta słabość nie tylko szkodzi własnemu wojsku, ale także ogranicza wartość Niemiec w oczach sojuszników.

## ГЕРМАНСКАЯ 'ГРАЖДАНСТВЕННОСТЬ' И РОССИЙСКАЯ 'ВОИНСТВЕННОСТЬ' КАК ФАКТОРЫ СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКОЙ ОРИЕНТАЦИИ В КОНТЕКСТЕ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ

### Резюме

Германия и Россия играют в международной политике безопасности важные, хотя достаточно разные, а зачастую даже взаимно противоречащие роли. Во время правления Владимира Путина Россия старалась практически любой ценой обрести позицию (более или менее), соизмеримую с позицией США. Эта позиция была утрачена Россией 25 лет назад. Предпринимаемая рискованные и непредсказуемые шаги, Москва ставит под угрозу и так непрочный европейский порядок, наступивший после окончания Холодной войны. Одним из таких шагов, предпринимаемых Россией, является подрыв интегрированности Украины и других соседей. В свою очередь, Германия является одним из ведущих государств западного лагеря и стремится к установлению мира и стабилизации. В этой деятельности государством руководит и одновременно тормозит её развитие факт апеллирования к эпохе нацизма и обусловленное этим противоречивое отношение к вопросу о применении военной силы. Этот слабый пункт не только наносит вред собственной армии, но и преуменьшает значение Германии в глазах её союзников.