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GERMAN VISION OF RUSSIA'S POSITION IN THE MULTIPOLAR WORLD**

1. ANGELA MERKEL'S CHANCELLORSHIP

In 2005 the government in Berlin changed, Gerhard Schröder's red-green coalition was substituted by Angela Merkel's black-yellow one. Merkel's government received a difficult legacy of pro-Russian orientation from the former chancellor. According to Stephan Bierling summarising Schröder's chancellorship: relations with the United States worsened, European integration was hampered, the euro foundation weakened, Germany failed to get a permanent seat in the UN Security Council and Berlin did not have a strategic vision of foreign policy limiting it to economic aspects more and more¹.

After the next election in 2009, because of poor results gained by liberals, CDU had to form a coalition with SPD, which meant Frank-Walter Steinmeier, former close collaborator of Chancellor Schröder, became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. During Angela Merkel's term, international constellation changed but the Chancellor herself was also basically different from her predecessor: she was rational, anticipatory, seeking a compromise and not polarising opinions, strongly focusing on multilateralism, integration and such values as human rights and freedom. Her leadership resulted in the

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¹ S. Bierling, *Vormacht wider Willen. Deutsche Außenpolitik von der Wiedervereinigung bis zur Gegenwart [Leadership against will. German foreign policy since reunification till now]*, Beck, München 2014, pp. 151–153.

restoration of good relations with the United States, a resumption of active European policy of Helmut Kohl and adding value to relations with Israel. What did not change was a reserved attitude toward participation in military interventions, *inter alia*, because of the lack of domestic support for them.

Germany was more and more strongly confronted with the crisis in the EU, first connected with the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, next with the economic-financial crisis. The German influence in Europe was growing because the economy managed well with the crisis that weakened most other member states, especially France, politically and financially. The model of averting the crisis developed by Germany has aroused controversies and been diversely assessed till now. Polish-German relations strengthened, the Civil Platform-Polish People's Party coalition government agreed with Berlin in the area of basic assumptions of the EU economic and financial policy based on budget discipline, deepening of cooperation and strengthening the mechanisms of its control, but also strengthening the EU institutions' democratic legitimisation.

The Orange Revolution in 2004 did not result in re-orientation of Germany's policy towards Ukraine although it triggered a wave of positive interest of German public opinion in that country. The interest disappeared with the fading enthusiasm for reforms in Ukraine and the country's plunge into internal political conflicts. In 2009, the Eastern Partnership started and, although implemented separately, ran parallel to German projects of cooperation with Russia. The German interest in the Eastern Partnership was limited and Berlin, unlike Warsaw, did not aim at these countries' (or at least some of these countries') accession to the EU.

German-Russian relations soured although Steinmeier referred to the idea of strategic partnership. They were no longer based on good Schröder-Putin contacts because Merkel and Putin are two completely different personalities, who lack liking for each other and mutual understanding. One could see German government manoeuvre between economic cooperation benefits and disapproval of Russian political realities. The rising attractiveness of other emerging markets was also important, which considerably weakened links with Russia, where the processes of modernisation were stopped. In 2008, Russia skilfully provoked Georgia to provide a pretext for intervention. However, the situation seemed to change when Dmitry Medvedev became president and announced his programme of modernisation for Russia, which was received with enthusiasm in the West and interpreted as innovative and envisaging democratisation. In fact, the programme was a continuation of the former modernisation attempts, it was limited to economy and soon lost

impetus, and Medvedev remained in the shadow of Putin. It also turned out that the Partnership for Modernisation initiated by Germany in 2008 was too early or a representation of own wishes and values, and did not fulfil the hopes for initiation of fast reforms in Russia. The hopes for cooperation in the field of foreign policy did not fulfil. Moreover, there were successive events mobilising western public opinion against Russia: NGO, Pussy Riot, Greenpeace etc.

Stephan Malerius quoted the following statement from Hannes Adomeit's text of 2008, unfortunately without specifying the date of its formulation:

“According to the American administration, Putin was said to express himself even more clearly at the NATO-Russia Cooperation Council, to question sovereignty of Ukraine and to state that in case of its accession to NATO, Crimea and Eastern Ukraine might be separated from it and annexed by Russia”.

Also in 2008, Robert Kagan wrote in the *Washington Post* that Russia and the EU had a different and contradictory vision of policy, that the EU had substituted geo-economic for geopolitics and imagined the world would do the same and the EU would be a superpower.

“A crisis over Ukraine, which wants to join NATO, could bring confrontation with Russia. Conflict between the Georgian government and Russian-supported separatist forces in Abkhazia and South Ossetia could spark a military conflict between Tbilisi and Moscow. What would Europe and the United States do if Russia played hardball in Ukraine or Georgia? They might well do nothing. Postmodern Europe can scarcely bring itself to contemplate a return to confrontation with a great power and will go to great lengths to avoid it. In the United States, any fundamental shift in policy toward Russia will have to wait for the next administration. Nevertheless, a Russian confrontation with Ukraine or Georgia would usher in a brand-new world, or perhaps a very old world. Many in the West still want to believe this is the era of geo-economics. But as one Swedish analyst has noted, «We're in a new era of geopolitics. You can't pretend otherwise»².

Thinking in terms of geopolitics was also predominant in Poland. In political science expert discussions, also in Germany, there was a tendency to define the EU-Russian conflicts of interests in a more realistic way but it did not influence the politicians' decisions as well as it did not influence the new American President Barack Obama and his conception of policy toward Russia for a long time. In the German policy of that time, one cannot see

² R. Kagan, *New Europe, Old Russia*, “The Washington Post”, 6.02.2008; S. Malerius, *Ring aus Freunden oder Ring aus Feuer? Osteuropa zwischen Europäischer und Eurasischer Union [Ring of friends or ring of fire. Eastern Europe between the European and the Eurasian Union]*, “KAS Auslandsinformationen” 2015, no. 6, pp. 22–41.

reference to the geopolitical debates conducted by experts despite some clear signals that geopolitics determines Russia's policy.

Russian-German roads clearly forked off in different directions; in Berlin, charges were raised against Kremlin. In autumn 2013, Angela Merkel objected to the growing Russian pressure on Ukraine and Russian attempts to block the conclusion of the association agreement between the EU and Ukraine. For the first time, she openly spoke about Russian-German differences and geopolitical competition for influence³.

However, the necessity for cooperation with Moscow constituted an unchangeable element of Germany's foreign policy. There was an assumption, shared by France, that it is not possible to build strong, stable and wealthy Europe without Russia regardless of whether it will be possible to create a basis of common values for that cooperation. That country, as the member of the UN Security Council and the G8 as well as a nuclear and European superpower, plays such an important role that it must participate in taking all the most important decisions. German politicians recalled the experiences of the modern history of Germany and the course of the German reunification. Moreover, the influence of former decisions was evident because, as it was stated, Helmut Kohl and Gerhard Schröder's policy resulted in far-reaching dependence on energy from Russia and energy security is impossible without supplies from it⁴.

In addition, a part of the German discourse, although not dominating, resulted in the perception of the new NATO members as a reason for tensions in the relations with Russia at the early 21st century. Michael Staack's opinion that they want to use their membership in the Alliance to maintain a more decisive stand toward Russia in bilateral relations may be an example.

“Instead of the strategy of inclusion, a policy of limitation is preferred or deemed to be indispensable. Germany's policy toward Russia is accused of too big respect for Russia as well as readiness to reach a bilateral agreement with Russia regardless of fundamental

³ S. Bierling, *Vormacht... [Leadership...]*, p. 246.

⁴ M. Staack, *Normative Grundlagen, Werte und Interessen deutscher Sicherheitspolitik [Normative bases. Values and interests of Germany's security policy]*, [in:] S. Böckenförde, S.B. Gareis (ed.), *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik. Herausforderungen, Akteure und Prozesse [Germany's security policy. Challenges, actors and processes]*, Verlag Barbara Budrich, Opladen–Toronto 2014, pp. 53–88, here pp. 78–82. However, let us add that this cooperation was to refer to areas that are more and more controversial in the relations with Russia: human rights defence, supremacy of international law, war prevention, peaceful resolution of disputes.

interests of Central Eastern European states (Rapallo complex). A «special role» of Germany in the development of the EU-Russia relations is denied”.

Michael Staack consistently referred to Frank-Walter Steinmeier's conception, such as the proposal of broadest multidimensional cooperation with Moscow⁵.

2. CONFLICT ESCALATION AFTER 2013

In 2013, Vladimir Putin formulated his conception of how Russia should cope with the challenges of the contemporary world. This is when a customs union was formed between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan and a decision was made to form the Eurasian Economic Union. Putin emphasised that there was no return to Soviet ideology, nor to that of the times before 1917, which is idealised by many people. Russian national identity is in a very difficult situation after its historical experiences: with no tradition, demoralised, and deprived of trust and responsibility. A new identity and national idea will not be developed by a free market and cannot be imposed by the authorities.

“We need historical creativity, a synthesis of the best national practices and ideas, an understanding of our cultural, spiritual and political traditions from different points of view, and to understand that [national identity] is not a rigid thing that will last forever, but rather a living organism”.

Thus, cooperation of all forces in Russia and reference to the Russian multi-ethnic tradition are necessary. As far as international situation is concerned, he stated:

“We can see how many of the Euro-Atlantic countries are actually rejecting their roots, including the Christian values that constitute the basis of Western civilisation. They are denying moral principles and all traditional identities: national, cultural, religious and even sexual. They are implementing policies that equate large families with same-sex partnerships, belief in God with the belief in Satan”.

In these countries legitimisation of parties propagating paedophilia is considered, people are afraid to speak about religion. There are attempts to

⁵ *Ibidem*, footnote p. 81.

impose this Western model on other countries, the model in which, without Christian values and traditional morality, people lose dignity⁶.

At present, he continued, in Europe, there is a protest against the imposed model of multiculturalism, which also differs from the Russian model in which the maintenance of each ethnic group, its language and culture has always been cared for. Russia is a state-civilisation based on the Russian language and culture, on the Russian Orthodox Church and other religions. All of them must be linked with a common national idea, common values.

At the same time, a unipolar world model is created, where there is no place for sovereign states and international law.

“I would like to touch on another topic. The 21st century promises to become the century of major changes, the era of the formation of major geopolitical zones, as well as financial and economic, cultural, civilizational, and military and political areas. That is why integrating with our neighbours is our absolute priority. The future Eurasian Economic Union, which we have declared and which we have discussed extensively as of late, is not just a collection of mutually beneficial agreements. The Eurasian Union is a project for maintaining the identity of nations in the historical Eurasian space in a new century and in a new world. Eurasian integration is a chance for the entire post-Soviet space to become an independent centre for global development, rather than remaining on the outskirts of Europe and Asia.

I want to stress that Eurasian integration will also be built on the principle of diversity. This is a union where everyone maintains their identity, their distinctive character and their political independence. Together with our partners, we will gradually implement this project, step by step. We expect that it will become our common input into maintaining diversity and stable global development”⁷.

Also in 2013, when Putin presented the above-quoted idea of Eurasia as a system competitive with the Western system, during the Eastern Partnership summit in November, the representatives of the EU proposed the EaP states integration with the EU. Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia accepted the proposal and Armenia rejected it. However, it seems that Berlin and Brussels did not realise what the geopolitical significance of these decisions was in the countries’ situation. Armenia is an evident example: endangered by the conflict with Azerbaijan, it might be given military guarantees from Russia and not from the EU referring to soft power⁸.

⁶ *Transcript: [Putin at] Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club [partial transcript]*, 20 September 2013 r., <http://russialist.org/transcript-putin-at-meeting-of-the-valdai-international-discussion-club-partial-transcript/> (accessed: 28 August 2016).

⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁸ S. Malerius, *Ring aus Freunden oder Ring aus Feuer? Osteuropa zwischen Europäischer und Eurasischer Union [Ring of friends or ring of fire. Eastern Europe between the European and the Eurasian Union]*, “KAS Auslandsinformationen” 2015, no. 6, pp. 22–41.

When Russia started its aggression against Ukraine, the reaction of the German authorities was not clear. As it was mentioned above, Merkel had already decided, for the first time, to openly support Ukrainian aspirations to independently determine its own foreign policy and rapprochement with the European Union. However, the cooling of the relations with Russia did not translate into an increase in the importance of Ukraine in the German policy. When Viktor Yushchenko was in power in Ukraine, the course aimed at reforms stopped, and then Viktor Janukovych came to power. The country plunged into oligarchs' intrigues and it seemed nobody knew what foreign policy to adopt. This caused restlessness, also in Poland supporting Ukraine, and resulted in Ukraine's marginalisation in Germany's policy.

After the annexation of Crimea in 2014, it turned out that German public opinion and expert circles are Russia-centric even if they express critical information about Russia. The knowledge of Ukraine was as meagre as the group of specialists knowing this country and being able to take part in discussions. The protests in Kiev were observed with sympathy and given the media coverage describing it as the Ukrainian movement for democratisation. However, there was no mature politicians' reflection although they had carefully observed the events in Ukraine at the end of 2013.

Among the German politicians, only Joschka Fischer, the former minister in Gerhard Schröder's government, who did not actually have much political influence at that time, assessed the scale of challenges properly. He noticed that the EU had found itself in a totally different situation: repeating the phrases about its soft power for decades, it stopped thinking in a strategic way, did not notice that developing links with Ukraine, it could not avoid confrontation with Putin's Eurasian project. At the same time, a compromise is not possible because the ideas of the European Union and the Eurasian Union contradict each other. Any form of integration with the EU means the end of the Eurasian Union plans.

“(...) The European citizens turned pale feeling scared that, in case of the EU, it was not only about the common market, an economic community, but participation in a political struggle of superpowers, about a political community based on common values and common security interests”⁹.

It was also obvious that among the European states Germany would play the leading role in developing policy toward Russia, in determining how the

⁹ J. Fischer, *Scheitert Europa? [Will Europe suffer a defeat?]*, Kippenheuer&Witsch, Köln 2014, pp. 109–135, citation p. 121.

EU should respond to the Russian aggression. Germany's policy was based on a few assumptions: it is necessary to include Russia in the activities to develop the future peace order and the activities toward Russia must be long-term ones (strategic patience). The West cannot extort concessions with the use of military force; it must not let the conflict change into a bigger war¹⁰.

Berlin's policy toward Russia was basically agreed on with Washington. The main differences between the two allies concerned the supply of armament to Ukraine, which Berlin consistently opposed. From a broader perspective, however, the differences were greater because, at least from Bill Clinton's term, everything was analysed in Washington in terms of spheres of influence, and initially in American plans Ukraine was to constitute a buffer state between Russia and Central Europe or be integrated into the western structures. With the worsening Russian-American relations, it started to be perceived as a counterbalance to Russia and gained importance in Washington's policy. What is important, neo-conservatives linked the American strategic interests with democratic values (in my opinion, this link also remained during Obama's term). Therefore, the Russian-American conflict was growing, although the American rapprochement with Ukraine was hampered by the lack of reforms changing the oligarchical system¹¹.

3. RUSSIA'S POSITION IN THE GERMAN VISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

How were German-American relations perceived and what was their location in the entire world from the German perspective? The belief dominating German discussions was that Germany's foreign and security policy was carried out in the world that is more and more multilateral, although the United States dominated most regions. Europe and East Asia

¹⁰ A. Kwiatkowska-Drozdź, K. Frymark, *Niemcy w konflikcie rosyjsko-ukraińskim: misja polityczna czy humanitarna? [Germany in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict: political or humanitarian mission]*, OSW, 18 February 2015, <http://www.osw.waw.pl/pl/publikacje/komentarze-osw/2015-02-18/niemcy-w-konflikcie-rosyjsko-ukrainskim-misja-polityczna-czy> (accessed: 30 August 2016), only the first two principles are mentioned.

¹¹ Compare H. Adomeit, *Politik und Strategie der USA in Osteuropa und im Kaukasus: Back to Square One [The US policy and strategy in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus: Back to Square One]*, [in:] E. Reiter (ed.), *Entwicklungsszenarien in Osteuropa – mit Schwerpunkt Ukraine [Development of the situation in Eastern Europe scenarios – centre of gravity: Ukraine]*, Böhlau, Wien-Köln-Weimar 2011, pp. 143–197, here p. 144 and the following.

form economically equal centres. Germany has an opportunity to be an equal player on the international arena only when backed by the European Union. Michael Staack judged that, unlike in history, this multi-centric system was stabilised by institutions and values. However, there were many questions left without answers, including such important ones as about the future relations between Europe and the United States or the stability of the international system with regard to cooperation and distancing itself from forceful solutions¹². There was a rise of concern about instability of some regions (*gewaltoffene Räume*), a loss of the monopoly on violence by some states, which endangers stability and poses a threat of a new type of war outbreak.

The United States remained the most important partner to Germany within these considerations in the same way as from the American perspective, Germany is an economic leader in the European Union and Chancellor Merkel is a politician with a potential to resolve problems that the EU faces even if there is no deep mutual liking between President Obama and the German Chancellor. It is so regardless of occasional tensions such as those connected with the telephone tapping of German politicians by the American intelligence services and the American belief that the EU faces a deep crisis¹³. The above description shows that the Polish attempt to base on the United States and distance from Germany is a difficult, if not to say unfeasible, project.

The American cession of crisis management in Europe to Germany did not raise objections there because the growing power of Germany in the international system was another important change noticed by German experts in spite of the fact that the country does not know exactly what that role should look like. A judgement that the international system and Germany's position in it have changed constituted a constant element of the German discussion in the press and politicians' statements (e.g. Wolfgang Schäuble). At the same time, there was conscience that Germany, which benefits most from the European integration, as a hegemon faces a difficult issue of developing a new EU system and easing the tensions that occur in it¹⁴. There were accusations that Germany's foreign policy lacked orientation and a comprehensive strategic vision of action. Inter alia, Joschka Fischer,

¹² M. Staack, *Normative... [Normative bases...]*, pp. 83–84.

¹³ J. Kiwerska, "On the right side of history". *Wizyta Baracka Obamy w Niemczech [Barack Obama's visit to Germany]*, "Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego", 2 May 2016, no. 238.

¹⁴ Compare E. Crome, *Deutschland in Europa. Eine neue Hegemonie [Germany in Europe. New hegemony]*, [in:] *idem*, R. Krämer, *Hegemonie und Multipolarität. Weltordnungen im 21. Jahrhundert [Hegemony and multi-polarism: World orders in the 21st century]*, WeltTrends, Potsdam 2013, pp. 165–206, p. 168. Citation after: *ibidem*, p. 168.

former Foreign Affairs Minister, as well as Helmut Kohl and Helmut Schmidt expressed such opinions¹⁵.

The authors of a work that was developed in the period 2012–2013 and can be defined as a summary of the America-German discussions did not have doubts that Germany would have to get more involved in the international arena in order to maintain the *status quo* favourable for the country. It will have to play a leader's role more often but due to its position in international institutions:

“lead in order to achieve common goals, lead together with others and taking others into consideration” („führen für gemeinsame Ziele, führen mit anderen und mit Rücksicht auf andere”).

It must take into account its links with undemocratic states but it does not mean a long-term choice between values and interests although, in a short term, conflicts between them will occur. It will also have to better shape and adjust internal political mechanisms to new international challenges. Relations with new powers (that are important economic partners), reforms of the UN and other international institutions and stronger incorporation of these new powers into these institutions are challenges for Germany. In case of international norms violation, Germany should be ready and able to use military power in order to protect them. There is no alternative to the European integration. It must aim at:

“the development of transnational European multi-directional democracy” („die Schaffung einer transnationalen europäischen Mehrebenen-Demokratie”)¹⁶.

From the point of view of the development of a multi-centric international order, questions about the objectives of Russian foreign policy and the perception of Russia's position in the new political system are critical. Russia's role in the new system developing is highly assessed by most discussion participants. Russia's location on the map of Germany's strategic relations is defined as an important challenge, comparable to the Chinese one. At the same time, it is highlighted that there are limitations to the cooperation mechanisms that were efficient in the German *Ostpolitik* of the 1970s but failed completely

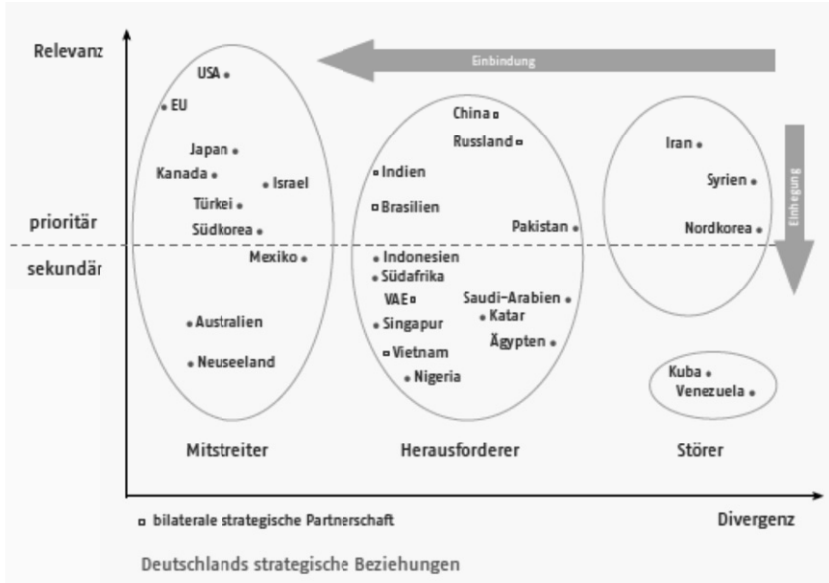
¹⁵ B. Koszel, *Deutsche [German]*, p. 211.

¹⁶ *Neue Macht. Neue Verantwortung. Elemente einer deutschen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik für eine Welt im Umbruch [New power. New responsibility. Elements of Germany's foreign and security policy in the world on the verge]*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik – German Marshall Fund of the United States, Berlin 2013.

toward Russia in the Partnership for Modernisation project. In case of the use of economic sanctions, German policy is more and more essential, mainly in Europe but not only. The role of Germany in the policy of rapprochement with the states neighbouring the EU in the East and the South is emphasised¹⁷.

Map 1

Germany's strategic relations



The horizontal axis shows the growing differences in interests, the vertical axis depicts importance in German politics.

Source: *Neue Macht. Neue Verantwortung. Elemente einer deutschen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik für eine Welt im Umbruch* [New power. New responsibility. Elements of Germany's foreign and security policy in the world on the verge], Berlin 2013, p. 31.

The debate about the German foreign policy became lively again in 2014, when outstanding politicians stated that it was necessary for Germany to pay a bigger role in the development of the international order. It resulted from the fact that during the financial crisis after 2008, Germany turned to be the state shaping the EU policy. The political and military situation after 2004 made Germany define its policy toward Russia, also on the military plane. It happened in the situation when the lack of modernisation of Russia, its policy toward the neighbouring states and the plans to form the Eurasian Union

¹⁷ *Ibidem.* p. 35 and the following.

were assessed critically. Some German political science experts believe, however, that it was Germany that made a mistake because it overestimated the possibilities of modernising Russia and does not understand its internal conditions¹⁸. The perception of Russia as a partner, to tell the truth sometimes a difficult one, but not only an economic one, but also one in stabilising the political situation, which was common after the collapse of the USSR, proved to be invalid. After 2014, in German opinions, Russia became an unpredictable challenge with an enormous military potential, which means that the Polish and German opinions got closer.

However, in an interview for “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” in May 2014, Merkel said that, despite considerable differences in the assessment of the international situation by Moscow and Berlin, she was convinced that in medium-term and long-term perspective partnership with Russia should be continued, which assumes the existence of a certain minimum of common values. She does not see, however, a necessity of new defining policy directions and does not intend to return to the surmounted structures of the 19th and 20th century. In addition, Russia will not be able to avoid the political and economic influence of globalisation in the long term. She unambiguously stated that it was necessary to expect long-term consequences of the sanctions together with the declaration that Germany was not going to decrease its military budget¹⁹.

It is doubtful whether Chancellor Merkel would have repeat this declaration two years later, after the suspension of the Normandy format meetings from autumn 2015 till autumn 2016. The statement that Russia would not be able to avoid the political and economic influence of globalisation was unclear already in 2014. To what extent does Angela Merkel think that Germany’s policy toward Russia cannot be determined only from the perspective of its aggression on Ukraine but must be a part of Eurasian strategy, including such countries as China, India, Turkey or Iran?²⁰ Moreover, the annexation

¹⁸ For different judgements on Russia’s modernisation compare I. Kalinin, *Gesinnung oder Verantwortung in der Russlandpolitik? Deutsche Außenpolitik angesichts der politischen Kultur Russlands* [Opinions or responsibility in the policy toward Russia? Germany’s foreign policy toward Russian political culture], Springer, Wiesbaden 2016, pp. 183–192.

¹⁹ Interview with A. Merkel “Russland wendet sich wieder altem Denken zu” [Merkel returns to the former way of thinking], “Faz.Net”, 16 May 2014, <http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/kanzlerin-merkel-im-f-a-z-gespraech-russland-wendet-sich-wieder-altem-denken-zu-12941544.html> (accessed: 19 May 2014).

²⁰ Compare Überblick: Debatte über Deutschlands Partner [Overview: Debate on Germany’s partners], 2014, <http://www.aussenpolitik-weiter-denken.de/de/blog/article/deutschlands-partner.html> (accessed: 9 May 2016).

of Crimea and the aggression on Ukraine meant that the former perception of globalisation as a phenomenon opening the door to democratisation in authoritarian countries, including Russia, ended in failure. Instead, a question had to be asked whether Russia might use the Ukrainian model of aggressive policy toward Moldova, the Baltic States etc. Destabilisation of the Balkans is potentially even more dangerous as the EU has evident problem with the Western Balkans enlargement. German discussions about what to do in case of a Russian threat against Georgia can be the best example of doubts that appeared.

“The Crimea crisis showed that Russia’s foreign policy activities are incalculable and unpredictable at present. Thus, this is why the EU should consider what to do if Russia starts exert pressure on Georgia. The same concerns Moldova although to a greater extent. There are signals that such a scenario is not improbable. Why shall Russia let Georgia do what it could not accept in Ukraine?”²¹

Merkel’s speeches do not answer the question what shape of the future international order she predicts. They contain repeated statements about the violation of international law and peace order by Russia, the support for Ukraine and the necessity of implementing the Minsk decisions, and the maintenance of economic sanctions until their implementation. They usually also refer, in a concise form, to German historical experiences and certain specific values and actions that result from them.

Horst Teltschik did not even try to answer the question what objectives Russia as one of the international system centres has. When he said that in the future Europe with Russia would be still possible, he did not treat it as a separate competitive centre of the future polycentric world²². In a nutshell, he ignored Putin’s Eurasian project.

A well-known German political science expert, Uwe Halbach, considering Russia to be a separate centre of the international system, adopts a different

²¹ L. Fix, *Warum der nächste Ukraine Konflikt auf dem Kaukasus stattfinden könnte [Why the next Ukrainian conflict will take place in the Caucasus]*, 17 March 2014, <http://www.ipg-journal.de/kommentar/artikel/warum-der-naechste-ukraine-konflikt-auf-dem-kaukasus-stattfinden-koennte-316/> (accessed: 13 June 2014). IPG also published numerous texts presenting Ukrainian issues and letting the readers better understand them from other perspective than Russia’s.

²² Interview *Türen nie zuschlagen. Horst Teltschik: Warum der Westen weiter mit Russland reden muss [Don’t slam the door. Horst Teltschik: Why the West must continue talking to Moscow]*, “Die politische Meinung”, September–October 2014, no. 528, pp. 24–29, http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_39178-544-1-30.pdf?141208152335 (accessed: 3 April 2016).

perspective. Already in summer 2014, he stated that the crisis caused by Russia's policy is not a return to cold war division into two blocks, but is connected with the so-called "De-Westernization". Russia perceives the West as a uniform contrast to its own Russian national values, and thus Putin refers to "the Eurasian school" with long tradition. It has a conservative, anti-liberal character and thus some coincident points with the rightist, populist movements in the European Union countries. It is strengthened by subordination to the authorities and mobilisation of all resources (the media, publications, science) in Russia and stigmatisation of the opponents as traitors to their nation. Vladimir Putin's policy is a reference to the Tsar's rather than the Soviet policy. The Russian centre, together with others: China and India, should oppose to the West's domination²³. However, let us add, the centre being developed around Russia is an area that is evidently economically weaker than the West. Its GDP accounted for 2.7 trillion dollars in 2014 while the EU and the United States registered its level at \$16 trillion each²⁴.

Already in the early 21st century, a German political science expert, Christian Hacke, highlighted dangers occurring at the point of contact between economy and politics when he stated that the German decision (*Sonderweg*) to stop using nuclear energy, apart from direct dependence from Russia, hampers the development of common EU energy policy toward Russia. He belonged to those political science specialists who already then warned against too far-reaching cooperation with Russia and referring to strategic partnership and common values until Putin rules with the use of repression and carries out an aggressive policy abroad. At the same time, he scored Russia's weaknesses: the lack of soft power, civilizational unattractiveness, no will and ability – here he was wrong – to act on a global scale²⁵. He repeated this argumentation after the annexation of Crimea, clarifying his stand. In his opinion, the biggest problem was created not by illusive hopes for strategic partnership, but the existence of two contradictory models: the democratic model of the EU integration and the authoritarian model of the Eurasian

²³ U. Halbach, *Russland im Wertekampf gegen „den Westen“* [Russia in the fight for values with the West], "SWP-Aktuell" June 2014, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik – Deutsches Institut für Internationale Politik und Sicherheit, pp. 1–4, https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/aktuell/2014A43_hlb.pdf (accessed: 1 April 2016).

²⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 3.

²⁵ Ch. Hacke, *Deutschland als Schrittmacher. Über die Risiken eines Sonderweges in der europäischen Russland-Politik* [Germany dictating pace. About the risks of choosing a different way in the European policy toward Russia], 1 December 2006, "Die Politische Meinung" 2006, no. 445, <http://www.kas.de/wf/de/33.9627/> (accessed: 3 April 2016).

Union. Opposing the latter model will be possible only when NATO and the EU act together decidedly. At the same time, Germany should guard its interests, not succumb to pressure and continue its moderate policy, which will enable it to play the role of a mediator and to limit conflict escalation²⁶.

A similar way of thinking was visible in the statements that it is necessary to use the present situation to undertake a more decisive policy in Southeast Europe (Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina), also against Russia, in order to stabilise the situation in this area. In the long run, this might make Russia engage in dialogue and change its policy, and try to develop common long-term goals²⁷. This stand does not draw wider political and social support, however.

It is also not absolutely clear what position in the developing international order Germany assigns to Ukraine. Germany observes the Ukrainian pace with scepticism. KAS publication in March 2015 states that Ukraine is under the pressure of time and the President and the Prime Minister must do their best to accelerate reforms and at the same time show positive results of these reforms to the society, because otherwise social dissatisfaction and tensions will grow²⁸. This stand is similar to the Polish assessments, which notice that reforms are hampered and the oligarchic system is maintained²⁹. Moreover, the war in Syria placed Ukraine in the background.

CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, it may be stated that the above-mentioned discussions continue to be in a specific type of vacuum when Germany, the strongest country in Europe without defined strategic objectives of its policy, does not know what to do with its power. It is a regional superpower but it is afraid of the costs of that, also in the form of military involvement and other countries' dislike of Germany's domination. It does not propose political conceptions that others

²⁶ Compare Ch. Hacke, *Revival der „Hard Power“ [Revival of 'Hard Power]*, “Die politische Meinung”, May–June 2014, no. 526, pp. 107–112.

²⁷ An older politician, Professor Christian Schwarz-Schilling wrote a letter discussing this issue (http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_40349-544-1-30.pdf?150204130748, (accessed: 3 April 2016).

²⁸ G. Baumann, J. Devic, *Reformagenda im Kriegszustand. Das Schicksal der Ukraine [Project of reforms in wartime. Ukraine's destiny]*, Länderberichte, 5 March 2015, <http://www.kas.de/wf/de/33.40630/>, (accessed: 3 April 2016).

²⁹ See papers developed in the Centre for Eastern Studies (<https://www.osw.waw.pl/pl>).

would follow. It is a very dangerous situation when the strongest state in Europe, stabilising the euro zone, cannot define its role.

“Germany is a state that is afraid of risk, a post-military commercial state that focuses on the European Union, prefers peaceful measures of resolving crises and distances itself from the leadership function. It is doubtful if it is enough to maintain the euro zone, to stabilise the European peripheries and to minimise dangers that result from the collapse of states and the Islamic terrorism”³⁰.

One can notice a change, overcoming one-sided geo-economic perception of the world under the influence of the stronger and stronger discussion about a hybrid war. Political circles, experts and the military have realised that Germany faces a new challenge that it was not prepared to.

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³⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 270.

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GERMAN VISION OF RUSSIA'S POSITION IN THE MULTIPOLAR WORLD

Summary

There is a common belief that German society and elites' attitude to Russia differs from the Polish one. It is not the full truth because, as a result of Russia's policy, the attitude towards Russia has become much more critical in Germany of the 21st century than it was before. However, Germany carries out a more global policy than Poland, thus, because of the importance of Germany and Russia in Poland's policy, there is an important question what the German vision of Russia's position in the just developing multipolar world is. The question is even more important as Germany, the strongest state in Europe, stabilising the euro zone, has evident problems with defining its own role on the international arena and overcoming a one-sided geopolitical perception of the world.

NIEMIECKA I POLSKA POLITYKA WOBEC ROSJI A KONFLIKT ROSYJSKO-UKRAIŃSKI

Streszczenie

Do obiegowych praw należy stwierdzenie, że nastawienie społeczeństwa niemieckiego i elit niemieckich do Rosji jest odmienne od polskiego. Nie jest to stwierdzenie w pełni prawdziwe, bo pod wpływem polityki rosyjskiej nastawienie w Niemczech do Rosji stało się w XXI wieku znacznie bardziej krytyczne niż wcześniej. Niemcy prowadzą jednak bardziej globalną politykę niż Polska, dlatego, ze względu na znaczenie Rosji i Niemiec w polityce polskiej, ogromnie ważne jest pytanie, jaka jest niemiecka wizja miejsca Rosji w multipolarnym, kształtującym się obecnie świecie. Pytanie tym ważniejsze, że Niemcy, najsilniejsze państwo w Europie, stabilizujące strefę euro, ma widoczne trudności ze zdefiniowaniem swojej roli na arenie międzynarodowej, przewyciężaniem jednostronnego, geoeconomicznego postrzegania świata.

ПОЛИТИКА ГЕРМАНИИ И ПОЛЬШИ В ОТНОШЕНИИ РОССИИ И РОССИЙСКО-УКРАИНСКИЙ КОНФЛИКТ

Резюме

Утверждение о том, что установка немецкого общества и представителей немецкой элиты в отношении России отличается от отношения в Польше, не является неожиданным. Нельзя, однако, назвать это утверждение достаточно верным, так как в результате российской политики отношение Германии к России в XXI веке стало более критичным, чем ранее. Германия, однако, придерживается более глобальной политики, чем Польша. Исходя из этого, с учётом значения России и Германии в польской политике, во главу угла встаёт вопрос о видении со стороны Германии места России в формирующемся на наших глазах мультиполярном мире. Данный вопрос приобретает особую актуальность в связи с тем, что Германия, самое сильное европейское государство, стабилизирующее зону евро, испытывает трудности как с определением своей роли на международной арене, так и с преодолением одностороннего, геоэкономического восприятия мира.