

The German White Paper 2016: Changing Strategic Culture?

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

The German White Paper 2016: Changing Strategic Culture? by LtCol Heiko Diehl, German Army, 49 pages.

At first glance, the German White Paper 2016 seems to be very close to a US National Security Strategy (NSS) due to its outline and listed topics. On second glance, however, it deviates due to the lack of willingness to present future guidance on security policy. The White Paper 2016 and the US NSS 2015 and 2017 show strong similarities in structures and main topics. The US NSS has a vision and pursues a top-down approach to guide subordinate organizations. In contrast, the White Paper 2016 sets only a minimum common security policy framework. Comparing the German White Paper 2016 with the last two US NSS, all three government security policy documents are not strategies due to the failure to meet the essential criteria for strategy. The White Paper 2016 bears witness to a slowly changing strategic culture and a greater sense of responsibility. The traditional drivers for German strategic culture (restraint and pacifism as well as a diminished will for long-term planning / strategy capability) remain intact, albeit to a lesser extent. If it is desirable, a number of steps could be taken to further develop the white paper as a German NSS.

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Acronyms

DE	Germany (Deutschland)
DoD	US Department of Defense
EU	European Union
MoD	German Federal Ministry of Defense
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSC	National Security Council
NSS	National Security Strategy
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
SWP	German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WW II	World War II

Introduction

We have to decide if we try to shape the world or if we let the rest of the world shape us. Calling for values orientation in foreign policy will certainly not be enough to persist in this world of economic, political and military egoism.

—Sigmar Gabriel, former Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, *Berlin, December 5, 2017*

Gabriel's call for a more active foreign policy in a challenging and changing world can be understood as the expression of a changing culture of German foreign and security policy. The focus of this paper is on the German “White Paper 2016 on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr” in such a changing environment.¹ Is the White Paper a proof of a restored commitment to a more active foreign and security policy, in other words, the expression of a changed German strategic culture? The German White Paper 2016 seems to be comparable to the National Security Strategy of the United States (US NSS) and evidence of Germany's willingness to take more responsibility for its security. However, the effective date of its publication at the end of the government's mandate seems to be a sign that the German White Paper is meant as a statement to inform the public and less as a guidance for the government's future work. Therefore, the intention of this monograph is to answer the central question: “Is the German White Paper 2016 a security policy document comparable to a US National Security Strategy (NSS) and, if not, why not?”

At first glance, the White Paper 2016 seems to be very close to a US NSS due to its outline and listed topics. On second glance, however, it deviates due to the lack of willingness to present future guidance on security policy because of Germany's traditional, restrained strategic culture. The analysis carried out in this monograph highlights differences between the US security policy documents aiming to shape the world order and the German White Paper, which focuses on informing the public.

¹ The German Armed Forces is called the “Bundeswehr.”

The US NSS 2015 and 2017 are regarded as the most suitable benchmark against which to compare the German White Paper 2016 because the US side has had the longest experience in creating national security strategies in the Western world since the end of World War II (WW II). This tradition dates back to the National Security Act of 1947, the National Security Council Report 68 (NSC 68) of 1950, and the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986.² In addition the NSS uses a whole-of-government approach to describe the US security policy. At the same time, the US governments claim to formulate the NSS to achieve and ensure US security, and with the aim of delivering a strategy. These factors in combination make the US NSS a helpful comparison model for “national security-related documents.”³ Alan G. Stoltenberg also emphasizes the US NSS in his work “How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents” compared to other similar documents from five nations (Australia, Brazil, South Africa, United Kingdom (UK) and United States (US)). He highlighted the US approach as follows:

Until the last several years, it was only the United States that had developed whole-of-government national security strategy-type documents on a regular basis... The NSS would establish the strategic vision or grand strategic direction for the administration in power. It is intended to be a stand-alone document that will help guide the national security-related documents of other U.S. Government departments and agencies.⁴

The NSSs of the years 2015 and 2017 bracket the White Paper 2016 in time and thus have the largest temporal relevance. Therefore, they are used as comparisons.

The comparison of the three basic documents (US NSS 2015 and 2017 as well as the German White Paper 2016) is carried out by using the following criteria:

- Overview (Historical and legal background)
- Responsibility (Stakeholder for development and approval)

² The tradition described here will be discussed in detail in the subchapter “What Is the Structure and Purpose of the US NSS 2015 and 2017?”

³ Alan G. Stolberg, *How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 2012), ix.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 98.

- Audience and Relevance (Target groups and relevance for other subordinated departments)
- Structure and Main Topics (Document structuring and key topics)
- Strategic Vision (Analysis of how close the documents come to strategy and grand strategy)⁵

This monograph will begin by examining the US NSS 2015 and 2017 to give examples of a national security strategy as a basis for analyzing the German White Paper 2016. In order to do this, differences among these security documents will be examined. This comparison will give an overview of where and how these documents differ, answering the central question of what the White Paper 2016 is.

A further part will deal with the second part of the question: “If the White Paper 2016 is not similar to the US NSS, why not?” In order to answer this question, key factors influencing German security culture will be examined to describe the challenges German governments have when dealing with security policy and strategy. This monograph finds that Germany is on its way to a more active approach and more responsibility; however, its restraint and pacifistic strategic culture remain intact, albeit to a lesser extent.

Finally, the findings will be summarized and suggestions for improving a possible future White Paper to a German Security Strategy will be given.

⁵ The analysis of whether the documents come close to strategy or grand strategy will be made by comparing the analyzed criteria with the definitions for strategy and grand strategy. These definitions are given at the beginning of the chapter “Is the German White Paper 2016 Comparable to the US NSS 2015 and 2017?”

Is the German White Paper 2016 Comparable to the US NSS 2015 and 2017?

The White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr describes the cornerstones of Germany's security policy and the framework within which it operates. It identifies for the Federal Government areas where German security policy can be shaped.

—Dr. Angela Merkel, Federal Chancellor of Germany, foreword German White Paper 2016

Is the White Paper 2016 that central document which guides Germany's security policy as described by Chancellor Merkel? Is it a security policy document comparable to the US NSS? The name "White Paper" itself, the effective date of its publication at the end of the government's mandate, and the responsibility of the German Federal Ministry of Defense (MoD) for the development of this document raise doubts about its value and its role as a guiding document to achieve security policy goals. The analysis that examines what the White Paper is finds that at first glance the White Paper 2016 is in structure very similar to a US NSS. However, unlike the US NSS, the White Paper 2016 does not present future guidance on how to achieve its security policy interests and goals. Therefore, it is far from a strategy or even grand strategy.

For the following analysis, the US NSS 2015 and 2017 will be compared to the German White Paper 2016 because these two strategic documents are examples of how two different administrations crafted their highest-level security policy document in a time period relevant for the German White Paper 2016. President Obama's second NSS from 2015 is at the center of the comparative analysis, because it was published at the very beginning of the White Paper's planning phase. The Trump administration's NSS from December 2017 is also considered to identify general statements or peculiarities relevant to the comparison with the White Paper. All three documents will be assessed by analyzing historical and legal background, responsibilities, audiences, relevance for subordinate departments or agencies, and structure in order to determine whether this German document is comparable with the others. Furthermore, the criteria

mentioned before will be used to compare these with the definitions for strategy and grand strategy in order to assess whether these documents are a strategy, grand strategy, or policy.

The definitions for strategy and grand strategy which will be used in this section are derived from different sources. A single and general definition cannot be found by studying this topic. The term “strategy” undoubtedly has its roots in ancient Greek and meant general.⁶ Carl von Clausewitz, the strategist of the 19th century, who is still relevant especially for the US military today, defined “strategy” as “the use of engagement for the purpose of the war.”⁷ The definitions used in this work are based, beside the ideas of the classic theorists, on the thoughts of Arthur F. Lykke Jr.’s definition of (military) strategy:

Strategy equals ends (objectives toward which one strives) plus ways (courses of action) plus means (instruments by which some end can be achieved).⁸

The definition of grand strategy that this work will use is mostly influenced by Liddell Hart and Stephen D. Krasner. Hart’s book titled “Strategy: The Indirect Approach” described his thoughts about strategy. He analyzed hundreds of battles from ancient times until World War I to develop his theories on strategy. His general theory and take away is: “The perfection of strategy would, therefore, be to produce a decision without any serious fighting.”⁹ This indirect approach can be seen as a basis for grand strategy. Krasner’s definition of the term “grand strategy” is the main source for the definition used in this work:

Grand strategies are designed to mold the international environment by regulating international regimes, influencing the foreign policy choices made by other states, and shaping or even determining the domestic regime characteristics of other countries. A successful grand strategy will have the support of some other major states. It will be heuristically powerful: able to guide policy across a wide range of issue areas. It will

⁶ Hew Strachan, *The Direction of War: Contemporary Strategy in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 28.

⁷ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard, and Peter Paret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 177.

⁸ Arthur F Lykke Jr., “Defining Military Strategy,” *Military Review* 77, no. 1 (January 1997): 183, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.questia.com/library/journal/1P3-13134302/defining-military-strategy>.

⁹ Liddell Hart, *The Strategy of Indirect Approach* (London, UK: Faber And Faber Limited, n.d.), 189, accessed December 29, 2017, <http://archive.org/details/strategyofindire035126mbp>.

provide resources — diplomatic, bureaucratic, ideational, military, economic — for specific policies.¹⁰

Finally, the following two definitions are given to be used as criteria to analyze the three strategic documents:

Security strategy combines ways (lines of actions) and means (instruments of power) to reach political goals and end states, on the basis of an estimation of the security situation (risk assessment), driven by specified values, policies, and national interests, in order to protect the country's territorial integrity and its people.

Grand Strategy: A state's security strategy becomes grand strategy if its purpose is to change the world order towards a final state by shaping all major areas of public life (politics, economy, security, etc.) in a regional or global approach.

What Is the Structure and Purpose of the US NSS 2015 and 2017?

Overview: Historical and Legal Background

The US NSS 2015 and 2017 have a clear strategic vision on how to shape the world order to achieve the US national interest. They represent the president's security policy and deliver the basis for subordinated organization's budget claims and strategies. This first section discusses the legal and historical background of this documents.

The development of the NSS follows clear legal regulations. The legal obligation for the creation of the NSS goes back to the National Security Act of 1947. "The President shall transmit to Congress each year a comprehensive report on the national security strategy of the United States."¹¹ This legal basis was adjusted under the Goldwater-Nichols Act to restructure the Pentagon in 1986. The US government shall present the security strategy annually and every new administration must present its NSS to the Congress 150 days after taking office, at the latest. Furthermore, the Goldwater-Nichols Act describes the contents of the document and prescribes a government's declaration on how the government wants to use the various security instruments.¹²

¹⁰ Stephen D. Krasner, "An Orienting Principle for Foreign Policy," *Policy Review*, October 1, 2010, accessed December 30, 2017, <https://www.hoover.org/research/orienting-principle-foreign-policy>.

¹¹ National Security Act of 1947, 50 U.S.C. 3001, § 108.

¹² Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, 10 U.S.C. 111, § 603.

The president is constrained by law with respect to timing and content of the NSS. In addition, he is obligated to write a document that is a whole-of-government paper.

Until today, no US administration has fully complied all these legal obligations. There have been seventeen NSS published by six US Presidents in nine tenures since 1986. The Reagan, Bush senior, and Clinton administrations, with ten NSS in thirteen years, almost fulfilled the obligation. The following Bush and Obama administrations did not, with only four NSS in sixteen years. President Trump published his first NSS after eleven months in office.

Responsibilities

The number one stakeholder for the NSS is the president. This section analyzes how in general the NSS is developed and who plays which role in this. The president usually tasks the National Security Council (NSC) / NSC staff to develop the document under the coordination of the national security adviser and with a limited level of consultation with executive agencies.

Alan G. Stolberg, in his NSS studies, described this planning approach as follows: "The document was always written in utmost secrecy, with only a handful of senior personnel involved."¹³ A broad-based development process, involving national and international expert groups, policy stakeholders, or allies, was never the intended approach.

A public debate about the NSS is also not the stated goal and does not take place. Neither the political elite nor the general public demands a role in its formulation. Perhaps one reason for this can be found in the consensus for primacy. Benjamin H. Friedman and Justin Logan described this phenomenon in their article, "Why Washington Doesn't Debate Grand Strategy," by saying, "Debate over grand strategy is nearly absent in US politics. Relative military power, over time, generated bipartisan support for primacy, a grand strategy that sees global US military

¹³ Stolberg, *How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents*, 101.

dominance as the basis for US security. The elite consensus in favor of primacy saps political demand for critical analysis of it or consideration of alternative grand strategies.”¹⁴

In an environment without significant interventions, sustained outside pressure or discussion, or intensive involvement of subordinated departments, the president’s NSS planning circle has the chance to develop an uncompromising NSS that clearly describes the security policy of the president. Robert G. Kaufman attributes this directness to President Obama in his book "Dangerous Doctrine" by saying: “President Obama has articulated a clear, consistent national security strategy, which has crystallized into a doctrine during his second term. The president has pursued his transformative agenda with remarkable fidelity, despite the vagaries of practical politics compelling even the most consistent conviction politicians to compromise frequently.”¹⁵

Audience and Relevance

In general, the NSS can be seen as the highest-level, security-strategy-related document of the US government that drives the other subordinated documents, such as the DoD documents and strategies like the military or defense strategy. The fundamental purpose of US NSS is clearly summarized by Stolberg: “The NSS would establish the strategic vision or grand strategic direction for the administration in power. It is intended to be a stand-alone document that will help guide the national security-related documents of other U.S. Government departments and agencies.”¹⁶ The Goldwater-Nichols Act regulates this for the Secretary of Defense as follows:

¹⁴ Benjamin H. Friedman, and Logan Justin. "Why Washington Doesn't Debate Grand Strategy," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 10.4 (2016): 14, accessed January 14, 2018, <http://www.worldaffairsjournal.org/content/why-washington-doesn%E2%80%99t-debate-grand-strategy>.

¹⁵ Robert Gordon Kaufman, *Dangerous Doctrine: How Obama’s Grand Strategy Weakened America* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2016), 2.

¹⁶ Stolberg, *How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents*, 98.

“[T]he secretary shall take into consideration the content of the annual national security strategy report of the President...”¹⁷

The NSS is not directly related to resources. There is a reference to budgeting, because the various departments derive their actions and budgetary demands from the NSS. However, the NSS does not contain a budget. According to Stolberg: “The U.S. NSSs were intentionally drafted to be unconstrained by resources. The belief was that if the strategy was sound, the resources would follow.”¹⁸ James Joyner goes one step further in his article, “National Security Strategy on the National Defense Strategy.” Joyner argues that flaws in the NSS could create problems for subordinate organizations for budgeting and to develop their own strategies. “Naturally, if the foundational document – the NSS – is flawed, it will create ripple effects throughout this chain and either misinform or fail to inform the programming, budgeting and execution phases.”¹⁹

The intended NSS’s target group or audience is closely associated with the described purposes. The Goldwater-Nichols Act identifies the Congress, which wishes to be informed, and the subordinate departments, which have to be coordinated, and states in this regard: “The national security strategy report ... shall be transmitted ... to Congress.”²⁰ In addition to the statutory target groups, there are also other audiences addressed directly or indirectly by the NSS. With his introductory words, “My fellow Americans,”²¹ which President Trump used in the preface to the NSS 2017 and his public speech on the publication of this NSS on December 18th,

¹⁷ Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, § 603(a).

¹⁸ Stolberg, *How Nation-States Craft National Security Strategy Documents*, 106.

¹⁹ James Joyner, “National Security Strategy to National Defense Strategy,” RealClearDefense, February 10, 2015, accessed January 14, 2018, http://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2015/02/11/national_security_strategy_to_national_defense_strategy_107619.html.

²⁰ Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986, § 603.

²¹ The President of the United States, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington DC: The White House, 2017), 1.

2017, it becomes clear that the NSS is also made for the US public. Richard Fontain describes the NSS informational approach as understandable in his “War on the Rocks” article as follows: “The document’s authors tend to aim high: ...They hope the document will serve as internal guidance across the U.S. government, represent a lodestar for foreign observers, and explain the vision and logic to all the world.”²² The NSS should direct the departments with regard to security policy objectives, inform the Congress, the US public, and international partners, and should project strength to international competitors.

Structure and Main Topics of NSS 2015

The NSS 2015 presents President Obama’s security policy by analyzing the security environment and risks, formulating US interests and priorities, and defining ways to achieve these ideas. In general, the US NSS begins with a preface by the president, followed by an introduction. In the preface, President Obama gives an account of his first tenure. He stresses the values that drive the US security approach and leaves no doubt about the US leadership role. The following quote best describes his approach, which is to be understood as the basis for the NSS 2015:

America leads from a position of strength. ... The United States will always defend our interests and uphold our commitments to allies and partners. ... Moreover, we must recognize that a smart national security strategy does not rely solely on military power. Indeed, in the long-term, our efforts to work with other countries to counter the ideology and root causes of violent extremism will be more important than our capacity to remove terrorists from the battlefield.²³

The guiding words of the president are followed by the introduction, where the US interests are listed:

The security of the United States, its citizens, and U.S. allies and partners; a strong, innovative, and growing U.S. economy in an open international economic system that promotes opportunity and prosperity; respect for universal values at home and around the world; and a rules-based international order advanced by U.S. leadership that promotes

²² Richard Fontaine, “Trump Should Mind the Gaps in His National Security Strategy,” War on the Rocks, December 21, 2017, accessed January 15, 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/12/trump-mind-gaps-national-security-strategy/>.

²³ The President of the United States, *National Security Strategy* (Washington DC: The White House, 2015), II.

peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges.²⁴

In this quote the US expresses the intention to assert a leadership role in the global order, leading by example and based on international law. All security policy instruments are addressed in close coordination with partners to prevent the strategic risks of catastrophic attacks on the homeland as well as attacks on US citizens and allies abroad.²⁵

Four chapters follow, which describe the US areas of security policy (“Security,” “Prosperity,” “Values,” and “International Order”). Each chapter of this type begins with a description of the specific field of action, the environment and specific risks, and guiding principles. Based on this, individual measures are described which are to be assigned to the respective fields of action and which should contribute to the achievement of security policy goals. The chapter “Security” is the principle focus and field of action in NSS 2015. The NSS uses this section to highlight the military's importance. Its special role is clear in the statement, “A strong military is the bedrock of our national security.”²⁶ Furthermore, the US commitment to NATO and collective defense is described in this chapter, especially in regard to Russian aggression.

Structure and Main Topics of NSS 2017

President Trump published a more extensive security policy document with a clear strategic approach in comparison to his predecessor President Obama. In the beginning the president himself gives a clear statement that he wants to change the US security policy. He criticizes the approach of his predecessor, explains that he has taken over during a difficult security situation for the United States, and promises change by executing his “America First

²⁴ The President of the United States, *National Security Strategy 2015*, 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 2–3.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 7.

security strategy.”²⁷ If one compares the topics between Obama’s and Trump’s NSS there are not many differences to be found. This is equally described by Kate Brannen in her article in the comparative analysis of both NSS:

According to the officials, Trump’s NSS, like Obama’s, identifies the security of the U.S. homeland, particularly against terrorist threats and weapons of mass destruction, as a priority; both recognize that promoting economic prosperity is core to sustained U.S. global leadership; both highlight the value of preserving an open and liberal international order that has often times benefited the United States; and both underscore the importance of preserving core American principles and values.²⁸

The NSS 2017 security policy is divided into four pillars. These pillars are the United States’ interests, which become the four NSS lines of action: “Protect the American People, the Homeland, and the American Way of Life,” “Promote American Prosperity,” “Preserve Peace Through Strength,” and “Advance American Influence.” Each interest-based line of action is in general similarly structured to those of the NSS 2015. However, the NSS 2017 goes one step further and breaks the lines of action into several priority actions/single measures. Each priority action is intended to contribute to the target achievement and serve the subordinate agencies in deriving their tasks and strategies.

Strategic Vision

In brief, the NSS 2015 and 2017 have a clear strategic approach, want to shape and influence the world order to achieve US interests but do not fulfill all the criteria for strategy. The NSS defines US interests, describes challenges and risks to US security, and divides security policy into lines of action with a global approach. The president’s guiding principles are clearly expressed. President Obama’s NSS promotes his ideas. These are that the military is the basis for security but not the preferred instrument of power. Crises should be prevented or managed with

²⁷ The President of the United States, *National Security Strategy 2017*, I-II.

²⁸ Kate Brannen, “Trump’s National Security Strategy is Decidedly Non-Trumpian,” *The Atlantic*, December 8, 2017, accessed January 7, 2018, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/12/trump-nss-diplomacy-security-foreign-policy/547937/>.

multinational partners. Lead by example. President Trump’s NSS focuses more on individual countries, which was already evident when he said in his preface: “We will pursue this beautiful vision—a world of strong, sovereign, and independent nations, each with its own cultures and dreams, thriving side-by-side in prosperity, freedom, and peace—throughout the upcoming year.”²⁹

Referring to the criteria for strategy and grand strategy, both NSS have the clear purpose to shape and influence the world order to achieve national interests, an important criterion for grand strategy. These two strategic documents define lines of action (ways) to achieve the security policy goals and national interests. Instruments of power (means) are addressed and not reduced on military power only. However, the NSS do not combine ways and means to achieve security end states. Therefore, the NSS 2015 and 2017 are not strategies, but written government statements on security policy. James Joyner also comes to the same conclusion in his article on the NSS 2015 when he writes: “[I]t’s more a wish list than a strategy. ... Given that it serves as the basis for crafting our National Defense Strategy and dozens of other policy documents across the interagency, that’s a problem.”³⁰

Is the German White Paper 2016 Comparable to the US NSS?

At first glance, the White Paper 2016 seems to be very close to a US NSS due to its outline and listed topics. On second glance, however, it deviates due to the lack of willingness to present future guidance on security policy. Although the German Federal Government presents the White Paper 2016 as its basic document of German security policy, it is nevertheless of little relevance to other ministries except for the MoD. The comparison of structures and main topics shows strong similarities between the NSS 2015 and the White Paper 2016. The US NSS has a vision and pursues a top-down approach to guide subordinate organizations. The White Paper

²⁹ The President of the United States, *National Security Strategy 2017*, II.

³⁰ James Joyner, “National Security Strategy to National Defense Strategy.”

2016 sets a minimum common security policy framework, invites a debate on security policy, and assures international partners that it is reliable. Therefore, the white paper is a written government statement with a limited commitment to implementation. Comparing the German White Paper 2016 with the last two US NSS, it can be stated that all three government security policy documents are basically not strategies due to the failure to meet the essential criteria for strategy and grand strategy.

Overview: Historical and Legal Background

“The White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr” was published in July 2016 ten years after the last. The publication of the German white paper does not have to follow legal requirements.

The United Kingdom (UK) tradition to use a white book cover for Parliament Papers was resumed by the West German government after WW II.³¹ These papers can be described as a “book published by the government containing a report”³² with the purpose of informing the members of parliament about specific government or commission topics and work. The term “white paper” suggests that it could be a government document, but the term “white paper” is not exclusively used for state documents. In German dictionaries “Weißbuch” is defined as “a compilation of document on a certain topic as a prerequisite for further planning, for example in politics.”³³ In short, in both German and English, the term “white paper” does not give a clear indication of the purpose of the German White Paper 2016.

³¹ The approach to name documents by colors had arisen in the United Kingdom in the 19th century. These papers were also known as “Parliament Papers.” They had a blue cover, and this is the reason why these documents were called “blue books.” In the end of 19th century, the British Government changed the color of the cover to white. From that point on, these documents were called “white papers.” Anthony James, “Origin of White Papers,” Templates, Forms, Checklists for MS Office and Apple iWork, June 17, 2017, accessed December 18, 2017, <http://klariti.com/white-papers/origin-of-white-papers/>.

³² Albert Sydney Hornby, Anthony Paul Cowie, and A. C. Gimson, *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* (Oxford; UK: Oxford University Press, 1987), 90.

³³ Wortbedeutung.info, “Wörterbuchsuche,” (translated by author), accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.wortbedeutung.info/Weißbuch/>.

The first West German document officially named “White Paper” was published in 1969. Ten more were produced, including the current White Paper 2016. By comparing the number of governments, it becomes clear that after WW II only eleven out of eighteen West German / German governments have published a white paper. Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (Social Democratic Party of Germany/SPD) and his two governments, for example, never published a white paper in his seven year tenure (October 1998 – November 2005). This was the period during which the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001, the statement of full solidarity towards the United States by Chancellor Schröder, and the refusal and non-participation in the Second Gulf War (2003) took place. Security policies were executed without a central security government document. Neither in West Germany nor in reunified Germany was there a constitutional or legal requirement, specific rhythm, or set of situation-related events that require a publication of a white paper or a kind of security strategy-related document.

Responsibilities

Traditionally, the white paper is drafted by the Federal Ministry of Defense (MoD) and approved by the Federal Government of Germany. The latest White Paper 2016 was initiated by the Federal Minister of Defense, Dr. Ursula von der Leyen, and was officially announced at the end of October 2014.³⁴ The reason and the trigger are clear in the German government’s reply to a request by the Bundestag (Parliament) faction of the Green Party:

Starting points for the creation of a new white paper are the significantly changed security situation and the changed dynamics of the global order. As the key security document of the Federal Republic of Germany, the 2016 White Paper on Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr will make a determination of the security position and thus take into account derivable effects for the Bundeswehr.³⁵

³⁴ Ursula von der Leyen, “Bundeswehr-Tagung 2014 – Rede der Ministerin, (speech, Berlin, October 30, 2014), German Federal Ministry of Defense,” (translated by author), accessed November 29, 2017, <https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/bundeswehr-tagung-2014-11640>.

³⁵ German Federal Parliament, “Antwort der Bundesregierung auf die Kleine Anfrage der Abgeordneten Agnieszka Brugger, Dr. Tobias Lindner, Doris Wagner, weiterer Abgeordneter und der Fraktion BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN,” Drucksache 18/5636, (translated by author), January 9, 2015, pt 1, accessed November 1, 2017, <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/18/058/1805899.pdf>

The development of the White Paper 2016 began with the participation of national and international experts on security and foreign policy. Von der Leyen explained this new approach during the official opening event to initiate the drafting of the new white paper on 17th February 2015 by saying: “This approach was designed as a broad and inclusive process to hear many different opinions as possible on this subject.”³⁶ The writing of the document and the coordination of the participation of the other relevant German government departments and agencies were the responsibility of the MoD. The White Paper 2016 was finally approved by the German government in the form of a resolution by the Federal Cabinet on the 13th July 2016 and was published afterwards in German and English.

Audience and Relevance

The purpose of the German White Paper 2016 is not apparent at first glance. The title “White Paper,” as well as the fact that this document was published by the MoD and not by the German government, do not reveal its purpose. In the introduction of the White Paper 2016, the purpose the German government wants to achieve with this document is defined:

- It is the key German policy document on security policy.
- It is thus the principal guideline for security policy decisions and measures.
- It provides the framework for the use of all security policy instruments available to our nation.
- It will lay the foundation for one of these instruments in particular, namely the Bundeswehr.
- It is a contribution by the German government to the security policy debate with the purpose of intensifying and enriching debate.

³⁶ Ursula von der Leyen, “Statement der Ministerin zum Auftakt des Weißbuchprozesses,” (speech, Berlin, February 10, 2016), German Federal Ministry of Defense, (translated by author), accessed January 5, 2018, <https://www.bmvg.de/de/themen/weissbuch/perspektiven/statement-der-ministerin-zum-auftakt-des-weissbuchprozesses-10980>.

- It shows international partners and allies how Germany sees its future role in the world in terms of security policy.³⁷

Although the White Paper 2016 states that it is the highest level security policy document, it is not necessarily binding for ministries other than the MoD. A major reason for this can be seen in the date of publication, which is at the end of the legislative period. Furthermore, the white paper has no correlation with the budget.

Without having a binding effect on the majority of ministries and without any linkages to or statements about resource prioritization, the White Paper 2016 defines only the framework for German security policy, which is described by Chancellor Merkel as follows:

The White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr describes the cornerstones of Germany's security policy and the framework within which it operates. It identifies for the Federal Government areas where German security policy can be shaped. The White Paper sets the basis for the future course of the Bundeswehr as one instrument of German security policy... A further aim of this White Paper is to generate a debate in society on how Germany shapes its security policy in the future.³⁸

The intended audience of the white paper can be derived from this and is described in the article written by the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) by analyzing the audience of the White Book 2016 by saying: "The federal Government aims to inform the public and its allies in NATO and EU precisely what the intentions of its security policy are."³⁹

Structure and Main Topics

The German white paper unites two different consecutive documents. For this purpose, the White Paper 2016 is divided into two parts. The first part is named "Security Policy" and the second part about military policy is named "The Future of the Bundeswehr." The first part

³⁷ German Federal Ministry of Defense, *The White Paper 2016 on Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr* (Berlin: Federal Ministry of Defense, 2016), 15–17.

³⁸ German Federal Ministry of Defense, *The White Paper 2016*, 7.

³⁹ Markus Kaim, and Hilmar Linnenkamp, "The New White Paper 2016 - Promoting Greater Understanding of Security Policy?," *SWP Comments* 47/2016 (November 2016): 1, accessed October 3, 2017, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-49425-2>.

describes Germany's security policy in four chapters. It begins with the guiding principles for German security policy and German interests by saying

The commitment and aims of German governance are to ensure freedom, security and prosperity for our citizens, to promote peace, and to strengthen the rule of law... Pursuing German interests ... always means taking into account the interests of our allies and those of other friendly nations.⁴⁰

The description of the security policy continues with how the authors see Germany's security environment. In this chapter the importance of the international order and institutions (United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), European Union (EU)) for Germany's security policy and the drivers of change (for example, globalization, digitization, radical nationalism, and demographic transformation) are described.⁴¹ Furthermore, the shift from a unipolar to a multipolar world order with a growing China and India as well as with a stronger Russia is pronounced. In this context, the deterioration of the relationship with Russia due to the violation of international law in the Ukraine is highlighted. A noteworthy fact for German security policy after Germany's reunification is that here the White Paper describes Russia as a challenge to the security of Europe,⁴² with a clarity not seen since the end of the Cold War.

In contrast, the transatlantic relationship is underlined and at the same time the authors point out, "The transatlantic security partnership will grow closer and become more productive the more we Europeans are prepared to shoulder a larger share of the common burden, and the more our American partners engage in shared decision-making. Germany embraces the joint responsibility that arises from the common Euro-Atlantic system of values."⁴³ This is a clear statement of intention to assume more responsibility, including to the NATO commitment to meet

⁴⁰ German Federal Ministry of Defense, *The White Paper 2016*, 24–25.

⁴¹ German Federal Ministry of Defense, *The White Paper 2016*, 28–29.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 32.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 31.

the two percent of gross domestic production (GDP) on defense in the long term,⁴⁴ combined with a simultaneous self-confident demand for more involvement in the allies' decision making processes. The German think tank SWP highlighted this point as follows: "The unequal burden sharing between the US and its European allies was either ignored or glossed over. The authors of the White Paper have addressed the US's dissatisfaction with the Europeans and acknowledge that more must be done."⁴⁵ This aspect of the German security statement can be seen as intention to assume more responsibility and a changed strategic culture and will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The third aspect of security policy in the first part of the White Paper 2016 is Germany's strategic priorities. As priority number one, the authors of the White Paper identified the whole-of-government approach to security, which was described in a broader than usual way: "This means intensifying cooperation between government bodies, citizens and private operators of critical infrastructure, as well as the media and network operators."⁴⁶ This can be seen as a logical prerequisite for the prevention of the described hazards, such as cyber threat, and the fact that not all means, instruments, and possible targets (for example critical infrastructure) are in the possession or under control of the German executive branch.

Priority number one is followed by the intentions to strengthen the cohesion of the NATO and EU, and to guarantee the unhindered use of information and communication systems, transport and trade routes, as well as the secure supply of raw materials and energy.⁴⁷ In this context, the clear statement that the EU and especially NATO are fundamental and prerequisite for Germany's security shows the renewed focus on the main purpose of NATO (collective

⁴⁴ Ibid., 67.

⁴⁵ Kaim and Linnenkamp, "The New White Paper 2016 - Promoting Greater Understanding of Security Policy?," 2.

⁴⁶ German Federal Ministry of Defense, *The White Paper 2016*, 48.

⁴⁷ German Federal Ministry of Defense, *The White Paper 2016*, 49–50.

defense) after the Russian intervention in the Ukraine. Finally, the security policy section ends by defining the key areas of Germany's security policy engagement.

In short, the White Paper's first part, "Security Policy," determined the framework for the execution of security policy based on the assessed environment and Germany's interests and priorities. Built on this, Germany's role in this security environment and its part in international institutions (UN, NATO, EU, OSCE) are defined. The particular importance of the UN for future German security policy is already seen by some observers as a shift in prioritization. The previously quoted SWP report sees a new German main effort: "The White Paper also gives the UN priority over both NATO and EU as Germany's international sphere of influence." This assessment by SWP is not fully shared at this point. Germany intends to increase its engagement in the international institutions mentioned before. However, it is undoubtedly clear that the White Paper and therefore the German government give the UN greater importance for solving global challenges and risks due to the fact that the UN is seen as an international institution with various instruments of power. This approach comes close to traditional German security culture and policy. This aspect, which can already be described here as the latent pacifism of German security policy, is dealt with in detail in the following chapter.

The White Paper's second part is focused only on one German security instrument, the Bundeswehr. It can be described as "military policy." In four chapters the White Paper describes the tasks, structure, and the future of the Bundeswehr. As a consequence of the security policy pronounced in part one, the Bundeswehr is committed in the second part to a more whole-of-government approach, and more cooperation with international institutions and partners. An example of this can be seen in the following sentences: "The comprehensive approach must thus be further enhanced and developed in the Bundeswehr. Cooperation between the Bundeswehr and state and non-state actors must be further intensified."⁴⁸ Furthermore, the military policy defines

⁴⁸ German Federal Ministry of Defense, *The White Paper 2016*, 99.

elements of the Bundeswehr's personnel management, including recruitment, talks about acquisition and organization, and stresses the necessity of reforming parts of the soldier's education and training.⁴⁹

In short, the second part of the White Paper can be seen as the German military policy, which defines the tasks and the purpose of the Bundeswehr in order to fulfill one part of a whole-of-government security policy approach. Furthermore, it defines the future development of the Bundeswehr to ensure that the Bundeswehr will have the right quality, the necessary numbers, and this in time for its future tasks. The military policy section of the White Paper comes closest to the initially described historical intent of the white paper.

Strategic Vision

The White Paper 2016 is not a strategy and is not intended to be a strategy. It can be described as a government declaration. In general, the White Paper remains very noncommittal by not saying which security policy instruments are available, it gives no specific tasks for other than military instruments, and offers no ideas about how the departments could work together to achieve certain security goals. The authors of the SWP analysis comment on this as follows: "The White Paper 2016 does not have the final say on any of these topics. It therefore represents the beginning and not the end of the debate on security policy."⁵⁰ In accordance with the definitions for "strategy" and "grand strategy," it becomes clear that the German government has not used the White Paper to define lines of action (ways), or to coordinate instruments of power (means), or to assign specific resources to achieve specific goals. Therefore, this document cannot be called a strategy. It also lacks the essential features of a grand strategy. In this context, it should be noted that the White Paper 2016 was not written with the intention of shaping the international order, it only defines Germany role in it. To sum up, the White Paper 2016 is a German

⁴⁹ Ibid., 108–135.

⁵⁰ Kaim and Linnenkamp, "The New White Paper 2016 - Promoting Greater Understanding of Security Policy?," 1.

government policy document, a kind of government declaration that informs the intended audience at home and abroad about the current security environment conditions and principles of German security policy.

Conclusion

The White Paper 2016 is the primary security policy document of the German government. The German white papers were intended to be military policy documents that define the purpose, tasks, and principles of the Bundeswehr. The military policy part remains one part of the White Paper 2016, but it is no longer the main effort. Its strengths and new focus can be seen in the security policy part. Here, the White Paper 2016 defines German interests, explains the security environment, and highlights the risks that could affect Germany, its institutions, and society. In addition, it defines principles that govern the German government's approach to security. In this regard, the latest White Paper makes a clear statement of the government's intention to execute security policy with a whole-of-government approach by using a mix of different security-related instruments. Military means will be only one instrument of choice and not the principal one. This is further proof of greater inter-ministerial cooperation, while maintaining the same reluctance to use military means. How the instruments of power should work together to achieve national interests is not described by the White Paper 2016.

The comparison of structures and main topics shows strong similarities between the NSS 2015 and the White Paper 2016. The analysis of the security environment, risks (international terrorism and crime, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, unhindered access to markets and raw materials, and the effects of failed states) and potential challengers (Russia, China, and North Korea) are described almost in the same way. Even when defining the interests (protecting the country and its citizens, ensuring prosperity and access to markets and resources) and framework conditions (ensuring security by conducting a whole-of-government approach), it is clear that there are similarities between NSS 2015 and the White Paper 2016. Therefore, it can be

stated that the NSS 2015 strongly influenced the structure and the content of the White Paper 2016.

With regard to the drafting process of the documents, the US documents reflect the language and politics of their president. For this purpose, a working group close to the president is usually set up in the NSC and coordinated by the national security adviser, which creates the NSS with a minimum of external influence and participation. With the development of the white paper as the responsibility of the MoD, and the claim of broad public participation and a cross-governmental consensus, the German Federal Government chooses a completely different methodology. This approach avoids contentious issues and replaces them with compromises that find the widest possible political as well as social approval. This explains why the White Paper 2016 goes into less detail than the NSS.

Although the Federal Government presents the White Paper 2016 as its basic document of German security policy, it is nevertheless of little relevance to other ministries except for the MoD. By contrast, US NSS are used to derive subordinate strategies and budgetary demands. This is the reason why the Goldwater-Nichols Act sets out obligations for timing and content. These legal requirements are missing entirely for the white paper. The consequence is that the German Federal Government is free to draft the white paper when, how, and with the content that it wishes.

Furthermore, the US NSS has a vision and pursues a top-down approach to guide subordinate organizations. In addition, the US government seeks to use the document to motivate partners to participate, and to deter competitors. In contrast, the Federal Government's white paper sets a minimum common security policy framework, invites a debate on security policy, and assures international partners that it is reliable. Therefore, the white paper is a written government statement with a limited commitment to implementation which can be deduced from the nature of the wording and the late date of publication, at the end of the government's term of office.

Comparing the German White Paper 2016 with the last two US NSS, it can be stated that all three government security policy documents are basically not strategies due to the failure to meet the essential criteria for strategy and grand strategy. Nonetheless, the analyzed US NSS, especially the NSS 2017, come close to strategy due to their vision and willingness to shape the world order to achieve their security policy goals and interests. Furthermore, the NSS 2017 breaks down strategic lines of action into subordinated areas of action to achieve the given end state. This detailed approach supports and guides the subordinated organizations to develop their strategies. The White Paper 2016 follows a more restrictive approach because of German security culture. The Federal Government declares in its White Paper only the framework for German security policy and not ways and means to achieve national interests. In short, the White Paper 2016 seeks to inform its audience, whereas the US NSS presents a vision to shape the world order to achieve US interests.

To sum up, at first glance the White Paper 2016 is in structure very similar to a US NSS. However, the White Paper 2016 does not present guidance on how to achieve its security policy interests and goals, unlike the US NSS.

The Role and Reception of the German White Paper Is Different Because of Culture

The following chapter answers the question: “Why does the White Paper differ from the US NSS and why does the German government lack the willingness to present future guidance for its security policy with it? By analyzing Germany’s strategic culture, this chapter is intended to show that the White Paper 2016 bears witness to a slowly changing strategic culture and a greater sense of responsibility. The traditional drivers (restraint and pacifism as well as a diminished will for long-term planning / strategy capability) remain intact, albeit to a lesser extent.

“German government policies on foreign and security issues seem to be inconsistent and hard to classify. Most observers seem to agree that the foreign policy posture of the country has

changed since 1990. Some say it has only changed fairly recently. But into what it has changed to seems to be less clear.”⁵¹ Jan Techau’s problem statement in his work "No Strategy, Please, We're German - The Eight Elements that Shaped German Security Culture" provides a useful framework for understanding why German security policy is less active and less visionary, but rather restrained and reactive.

Strategic culture is a domain of social studies that was originally used in the 1970s to predict (anticipate) the possible behavior of the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Scholars such as Colin S. Gray, Iain Johnston or Jack L. Snyder were engaged with this topic. There are a variety of definitions for strategic culture. This paper uses Jan Techau’s definition because this fits best with the problem examined in this work:

Strategic Culture is that set of shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving foreign policy and security objectives. Strategic culture is that sub-section of the political culture of a state or a nation that relates to all of its external dealings, including the use of military force.⁵²

The German security culture existed prior to reunification and, even after Germany regained full sovereignty, it was decisively influenced by the events of WW II and its consequences. Techau has summarized the formative historical effects for German security culture in eight key factors and says about their relevance: “Remarkably, the key elements that shaped the strategic culture of the country from the very beginning remain largely intact today.”⁵³ This monograph uses a couple of Techau’s key factors to explain reasons for, and consequences of, German security culture and policy.

⁵¹ Jan Techau, “No Strategy, Please, We’re German – the Eight Elements That Shaped German Strategic Culture,” *Carnegie Europe*, NDC Forum Paper 18 (May 2011): 69, accessed January 20, 2018, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/2011/05/01/no-strategy-please-we-re-german-eight-elements-that-shaped-german-strategic-culture-pub-45331>.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 71–72.

⁵³ Techau, “No Strategy, Please, We’re German,” 73.

The most fundamental cultural factor can be called “Shame and the Rejection of Normalcy.”⁵⁴ Because of the negative effects of the loss of WW II, the criminal acts of the Nazi regime, which brought terror and suffering in Europe and beyond, and the division of Germany, a sense of guilt and shame developed. However, guilt and shame became lasting elements of German strategic culture only with the first post-war generation. Techau named this element “Vergangenheitsbewältigung, or the Entitlement to be Left in Peace,” and described this phenomenon:

The process of Vergangenheitsbewältigung, i.e. the coming to grips with Germany’s dark past by intensively analyzing, documenting and debating it, was timidly started by the allies during their de-nazification campaign right after 1945. But it only really got real traction in the mid 1960s when a new post-war generation started to challenge its parents about their role during that dark period.⁵⁵

The long-term effects of this on strategic culture are described by Techau’s remarkable sentence: “Not being normal, i.e. not having the same rights, obligations and maneuvering space as other nations had, became the new norm.”⁵⁶ Its direct effects can be seen for example in the fact that the term “strategy” has been replaced by other words,⁵⁷ or in the avoidance of specific terms like “war” or “geopolitics,” as well as a pacifist and anti-military attitude. Techau describes this attitude by saying: “A logical and direct result of the culture of shame ... was the development of a pronounced and demonstratively embraced pacifism as a cornerstone of the mental constitution of the new country.”⁵⁸ Despite the founding of the Bundeswehr and its missions abroad, a basic pacifist attitude can still be found today expressed in the restrictive use of military means. This principle was described by the German Federal President Steinmeier in an article during his time as Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs: “Germany will continue to frame

⁵⁴ Ibid., 74.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 77.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 74.

⁵⁷ For example, “agenda,” “guidelines,” or “policy” are the words used instead of strategy.

⁵⁸ Techau, “No Strategy, Please, We’re German,” 75.

its international posture primarily in civilian and diplomatic terms and will resort to military engagement only after weighing every risk and every possible alternative.”⁵⁹

In addition to the effect of guilt and shame, there is another decisive factor that shaped the German strategic culture. The loss of sovereignty associated with the loss of WW II and the division of Germany must also be considered. Until the reunification of Germany, the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany)⁶⁰ had no full right of self-determination, especially not in foreign and security policy. The focus of the limited German foreign policy was concentrated on cooperation and reconciliation with Germany’s western European neighbors and, in a certain way, also with its eastern neighbors in order to maintain the connection to East Germany and not to lose hope of the unification of Germany. The hope to overcome the division of Germany arose from a social pain. A pain hard to imagine for non-Germans, as former Federal Chancellor Helmut Schmidt said: “It is difficult for most Americans to visualize the situation of West Germany. First of all, it is difficult to understand the enormous psychological wounds that the division of the German nation has caused and the wounds are not healing.”⁶¹ The reunification of Germany was not only a wish but also a constitutional intention, which was described in the German Basic Law until reunification in 1990 as follows: “The entire German people are called upon to accomplish, by free self-determination, the unity and freedom of Germany.”⁶²

At the same time, neighboring countries and former war enemies were deeply distrustful and skeptical about the direction Germany would take. Techau described this as follows: “Mistrust of Germany and Germans, after the experiences of two major wars, stayed alive for a

⁵⁹ Frank-Walter Steinmeier, “Germany’s New Global Role,” *Foreign Affairs*, June 13, 2016, accessed October 3, 2017, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2016-06-13/germany-s-new-global-role>.

⁶⁰ In this context, the predecessor of the reunited Germany is considered exclusively West Germany.

⁶¹ Helmut Schmidt, *A Grand Strategy for the West: The Anachronism of National Strategies in an Interdependent World* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 19.

⁶² Federal Republic of Germany, *Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Bonn, Germany: Federal Republic of Germany, May 1949), preamble.

long time. Also, there were serious doubts about whether Germans, this time around, would be successful in their latest experiment with democratic government. So, the allies kept the short leash on Chancellor Adenauer's government."⁶³ The desire and commitment to achieve reunification and eliminate neighbors' skepticism and gain confidence were defining elements or even the defining elements of foreign and security policy. This led to the external but also internal expectation of German foreign and security policy described by Franz-Josef Meiers: "It is rather a recognition that Germany's foreign and security policy was guided by the notion that the world expected nothing more from it than to keep a low profile and to remain peaceful."⁶⁴

Another very important element in the context of the loss of sovereignty Techau called "The Great Transatlantic Bargain of 1949,"⁶⁵ in other words, a kind of trade deal where the US maintained its influence in Germany in return for a guarantee of the safety of Germany from the Soviet Union. In this context, Germany "handed over" its responsibility and its military capabilities to the US and NATO. Security policy and strategy were made by the US or NATO. Therefore, the need and the will of the German government to deal with security strategy or even with security policy were limited. German security policy was mostly reduced to military policy. This in turn gave Germany the chance and the resources to focus on rebuilding the country, investing in social freedom and stability, as well as fostering the economy. In short, "for decades, Germany was a consumer of security, guaranteed by NATO and especially by the United States."⁶⁶

⁶³ Techau, "No Strategy, Please, We're German," 81.

⁶⁴ Franz-Josef Meiers, "A Change of Course? German Foreign and Security Policy after Unification," *German Politics* 11, no. 3 (December 2002): 195, accessed September 9, 2017, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/714001317>.

⁶⁵ Techau, "No Strategy, Please, We're German," 85.

⁶⁶ Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States, *New Power, New Responsibility* (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2013), pt. 38, accessed January 24, 2018, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/new-power-new-responsibility-new-foreign-policy/>.

The effects of the two groups of influencing factors, “Guilt and Shame” and “Loss of Sovereignty,” which played a decisive role in the strategic culture, led to an indirect and restrained approach with regard to German security policy and with regard to strategy development. In concrete terms, the indirect approach means that German interests are formulated and carried out in the context of alliance policy, in the framework of the UN, NATO and EU. Linked to this is the renunciation of and loss of the ability to develop a strategy. Furthermore, German governments try to avoid conflict about security policy. This leads to a less ambitious approach, based on maximum accommodation. The historian Klaus Naumann described the effects of German strategic culture below: "Strategy was developed only at the level of alliances... The result was that there was neither a developed strategic community nor the intention of public policy clarifications. The strategic culture of the old Federal Republic was characterized, paradoxically, by not talking about strategy."⁶⁷

With the reunification and the restoration of complete sovereignty, the German Cold War strategic culture received a public confirmation. Germany's new geopolitical situation and the need to rebuild the eastern part of the country meant that German politics and society moved further away from security issues and security policy. Germany was convinced of the moral superiority of its restrained security culture and used the "peace dividend" for domestic political purposes. Stefani Weiss describes this in her work on the security policy changes in Germany as follows:

Germany's principled pacifism took a new ground. Surrounded by friends, Germans felt that their national security was well served. Furthermore, the country was engaged with managing the process of reunification, which came with a hefty price tag, and demanded the reduction in the number of German armed forces from roughly 600,000 to 370,000.

⁶⁷ Klaus Naumann, “Wie strategiefähig ist die deutsche Sicherheitspolitik?,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 48/2009, November 28, 2009 14, , trans. Heiko Diehl, accessed January 23, 2018, <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/31583/wie-strategiefahig-ist-die-deutsche-sicherheitspolitik?p=all>.

Many believed that money spent on defense would be better spent on the economic development of the eastern part of Germany.⁶⁸

Additionally, a certain sense of moral superiority, which increasingly turned against the United States, emerged in German politics and society. It saw Germany's restraint in security and politics and the restrictive use of military means as progressive. Colin Gray describes this as follows:

“One especially appealing notion is the theory that a revolution is underway in the public acceptability of warfare... EU-Europe anticipates no danger of interstate warfare and judges war to be a policy option irrelevant to their situation... A post-military EU may feel itself morally superior to a somewhat belligerent, self-appointed American sheriff of world order.”⁶⁹

With the wars in the Balkans in the '90s, the associated refugee crisis in Germany, and the terrorist attacks in the United States (9/11) and Europe, the political and social perception changed. For the first time since reunification, German society felt the effects of war and terror. Simultaneously, Germany was developing into an economic superpower and had a leading role in the EU. The neighboring countries and partners' expectations also changed. Skepticism was replaced by the expectation that Germany should share more burdens and assume more leadership responsibility. Robin Christian Howard Niblett, a British specialist in international relations and director of Chatham House, described these expectations in his white paper panel speech in February 2015 as follows:

I think Germany is not just a “mid-size power.” I believe that Germany is now seen as a mid-sized great power... I think the German government needs to confront the expectations concerning its behavior in international relations and the competition that it is going to experience for its support as a country that is seen not just as mid-sized... But if you are seen as a mid-sized great power, then it is your leadership sometimes from the front that people also expect.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Stefani Weiss, *Germany's Security Policy: From Territorial Defense to Defending the Liberal World Order?* (Washington: Bertelsmann Foundation, 2016), 1, accessed January 25, 2018, http://www.bfna.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Germanys_Security_Policy_Weiss.pdf.

⁶⁹ Colin S. Gray, *Another Bloody Century: Future Warfare* (London: Phoenix, 2006), 352.

⁷⁰ Robin Christian Howard Niblett, “Internationale Erwartungen an Deutschland” (speech, Berlin, February 17, 2015), accessed December 17, 2017, http://www.erh-koeln.de/download1/weissbuch_2016/robin_niblett.pdf.

All these internal and external effects led to a change in German security policy in the form of increased responsibility and situational awareness. Evidence for this can be found by taking into consideration the numerous Bundeswehr missions abroad, for example in the Balkans, Mediterranean, Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, and Mali. The obligations and the changed role of Germany, influenced by increased outside pressure, led to changes in the security policy, and to different changes in the strategic culture. Federal President Steinmeier himself has in different government functions witnessed and participated in the transformation. He described the change as follows:

Germany did not seek its new role on the international stage... the EU struggled through a series of crises, Germany held its ground. It fought its way back from economic difficulty, and it is now taking on the responsibilities befitting the biggest economy in Europe... Such actions are forcing Germany to reinterpret the principles that have guided its foreign policy for over half a century. But Germany is a reflective power: even as it adapts, a belief in the importance of restraint, deliberation, and peaceful negotiation will continue to guide its interactions with the rest of the world.⁷¹

This speech can be seen as an example of one direction of new German foreign and security policy: a policy which is aware of the current security situation, acknowledges more responsibility, but wants to act by using the “old” restrained strategic culture. A more active foreign and security policy is supported by other German government representatives, such as Federal Minister for Defense Ursula von der Leyen: “Therefore, to sit and wait is not an option. If we have means, if we have capabilities - we have the obligation and we have the responsibility to engage.”⁷² Similarly, the former Federal President Joachim Gauck demanded that more responsibility must be followed by more action:

Germany has long since demonstrated that it acts in an internationally responsible way. But it could – building on its experience in safeguarding human rights and the rule of law – take more resolute steps to uphold and help shape the order based on the European Union, NATO and the United Nations. At the same time, Germany must also be ready to

⁷¹ Steinmeier, “Germany’s New Global Role.”

⁷² Ursula von der Leyen, “Speech on the Occasion of the 50th Munich Security Conference” (speech, Munich, January 31, 2014), Munich Security Conference, accessed December 20, 2017, https://www.securityconference.de/fileadmin/MSC_/2014/Reden/2014-01-31-Speech-MinDef_von_der_Leyen-MuSeCo.pdf.

do more to guarantee the security that others have provided it with for decades... Germany will never support any purely military solution, but will approach issues with political judiciousness and explore all possible diplomatic options. However, when the last resort – sending in the Bundeswehr – comes to be discussed, Germany should not say “no” on principle. Nor should it say “yes” unthinkingly.⁷³

What the three statements clarify is that the political elites have become aware of Germany’s increased responsibility, but there are disagreements about the implementation. It is also undisputed that historically based elements of the strategic culture are still intact, in the case of Steinmeier, in a more distinctive, and in the case of Gauck and von der Leyen in a weakened, form. A change of the German strategic culture, albeit slower than the change in the environment, and thus also of the security policy, is recognizable.

What does the changed strategic culture mean in concrete terms for German strategic capability and with a view to the White Paper 2016? On the one hand, the increased sense of responsibility is evident in the clear naming of German interests and the definition of the framework conditions of German security policy. On the other hand, it can also be seen that the German government aims to increase its engagement with, and the discussion about, the topic of “security policy.” Evidence for this can be found in the participation of an interested public in the creation of the White Paper 2016. Evidence for Germany’s increased responsibility can be found in the White Paper 2016, which says that Germany is willing to take a leadership role in, for example, the Ukraine peace initiatives, or as lead nation for NATO mobile and rapidly deployable forces, or in the NATO framework nation concept.⁷⁴

In contrast, the historic, restrained strategic culture remains visible in the German indirect approach to security policy and the implementation of interests only in the context of and in the

⁷³ Joachim Gauck, “Germany’s Role in the World: Reflections on Responsibility, Norms and Alliances,” (speech, Munich, January 31, 2014), Munich Security Conference, accessed December 30, 2017, http://www.bundespraesident.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/DE/Reden/2014/01/140131-Muenchner-Sicherheitskonferenz-Englisch.pdf;jsessionid=319D6C1612D9F9FDF2ED429F336D1B8D.2_cid371?__blob=publicationFile.

⁷⁴ German Federal Ministry of Defense, *The White Paper 2016*, 81, 68–69.

involvement in international organizations (UN, EU, NATO). The restrictive use of military means is evidence of the historic pacifist tendencies. The lack of a whole-of-government action plan and the alignment of the various security instruments to achieve national interests is derived from the German self-restriction and the desire to achieve compromise.

In summary, the White Paper 2016 bears witness to a slowly changing strategic culture and a greater sense of responsibility. The old drivers (restraint and pacifism as well as a diminished will for long-term planning/strategy capability) remain intact, albeit to a lesser extent.

Conclusion

The central question of this work was “Is the German White Paper 2016 a security policy document comparable with a US National Security Strategy (NSS) and, if not, why not?” Even the use of the term "white paper" is a symbol of Germany's “difficult” handling of its security policy. This term gives a first indication that it could be a government paper, but not more, because the term “white paper” is not exclusively used for state documents but also in other areas of public life. The reader only becomes aware of the white paper dealing with security policy when he notices the second part of the title, “On German Security and the Future of the Bundeswehr.” On the other hand, the titles of the other documents discussed in this paper, the US National Security Strategy from 2015 and 2017, clearly indicate that the intention is for these documents to be strategies for ensuring national security.

However, with regard to the definitions and criteria for strategy and grand strategy, the investigated NSS are not strategies and therefore not grand strategies. Both US documents from 2015 and 2017 can be described as written policy statements on security policy. They define national interests, do not limit security policy only to military means, stress security risks, and describe the principles of security policy. The White Paper 2016 is almost identical to them in structure and content. Especially the Obama NSS can be seen as a role model for the development of the White Paper 2016.

Nevertheless, there are significant differences in the White Paper compared to the US documents. In contrast to the NSS 2015 and 2017, the 2016 White Paper is less precise in describing the way to achieve its goals and national interests. The German White Paper is satisfied with showing the basic conditions and principal goals of German security policy. From the White Paper's content, it would be difficult to derive specific strategies, responsibilities, and budgetary demands, except for the Bundeswehr, and that is not the intention. The White Paper is far from a strategy with this less ambitious approach. Conversely, the US NSS becomes more concrete and presents different ways to achieve the national interests and goals. Moreover, Trump's NSS achieves a higher level of detail by defining prioritized actions.

In principle, no budgetary implications can be directly deduced from the US NSS. Nonetheless, the definition of priorities and the description of lines of operation should indirectly guide the budgetary demands. This indirect budgetary reference is, last but not least, a reason for the legal obligations (Goldwater-Nichols Act) of the US government in connection with the preparation of an NSS. In contrast, the White Paper is to be considered completely separate from the budget. Furthermore, the German government is not subject to any legal requirement. The government is free to decide when and how to craft the White Paper.

Another significant difference between the German and the US documents can be found in the responsibilities for creating these papers. The US president is by law responsible to publish the NSS. Therefore, the document is closely linked to the president and should reflect his policy. For this purpose, a small task force connected to the national security adviser is usually set up. This approach is designed to create a NSS, which does not seek consensus but wants to guide government work and to inform the intended audience.

In contrast to the US NSS, the MoD is responsible for the initiation and conception of the White Paper. The White Paper was formerly used as a military policy document. The current White Paper 2016 goes beyond this approach and describes itself as the basic security policy document of the Federal Government. However, the lead remains with the MoD. The German

approach differs significantly from that of the US, as the interested public was involved at an early stage, the relevant ministries took part in the subsequent development period, and the final cabinet decision was necessary for its issue. In a nutshell, one can describe this approach as assessing public sentiment and determining how concrete security policy can be while still being tolerated by the society and to avoid a controversial debate. Furthermore, how much effort Germany has to show in order not to disappoint the international partners. The result is a white paper that focuses more on informing the national and international interested public, and that tries to prevent a controversial discourse, than demonstrating reliability to the international partners. In conclusion, a serious commitment to implement the content of the white paper is lacking due to the lack of depth and the date of publication at the end of the legislative period.

The question now is why German security policy remains so reserved despite Germany's commitment to take more responsibility. Why does the White Paper give no clearer indications of how Germany wants to achieve its national interests? Today's strategic culture continues to be shaped by two lost world wars, the division of Germany, and the loss of full sovereignty. Nonetheless, German strategic culture is undergoing a process of change. The changed global political perception of Germany after reunification, as a mid-sized great power, and the noticeable effects of the security situation, with the main effort on terrorism and migration, increase the pressure to act on the political level and thus contribute significantly to the transformation of the strategic culture. This process, however, is usually slower than the changes in environmental conditions. For German security policy and specifically for the White Paper 2016, this means a balancing act between taking more responsibility and its traditional restraint. On the one hand, more responsibility is shown by the will to designate German interests and list security threats to Germany. On the other hand, the trend towards pacifism remains intact in the White Paper 2016 due to the strict restraint of military means and the lack of willingness to develop strategies. German security policy continues to use an indirect approach through international institutions

(UN, NATO and EU). In addition to the historical tendency to rely on international institutions, the German security architecture is still based on the belief in US security guarantees.

Finally, the analysis and comparison with the US documents has shown that, at first glance, the White Paper 2016 seems to be very close to a US NSS due to its outline and listed topics. On second glance, however, it deviates due to the lack of willingness to present future guidance on security policy because of German strategic culture.

If Germany determines that it would be desirable to further develop the German White Paper as a national security strategy, then this monograph offers the following suggestions:

- Change the title “White Paper” into a title clarifying the intention of the document such as “Future Concept on German Foreign and Security Policy.”
- Hand over drafting authority to the Chancellery, in a whole-of-government team representing all relevant departments.
- Develop an agreement of the governing parties on establishing planning guidance for the security policy including budgetary matters and responsibilities.
- Elements for further development of the white paper:
 - o Develop medium-term and long-term lines of action to achieve German interests and security policy goals,
 - o Assign tasks to all instruments of national power,
 - o Define prioritized security actions.
- Establish regular release dates,
 - o at the beginning of a legislative period
 - o at least once in a legislative period or in the event of significant changes in the security environment.

Whether German security policy needs a changed white paper or to develop a kind of German national security strategy and the advantages and disadvantages such a development could bring were not part of this work and need additional consideration. However, Germany will

find its own security policy path, taking account of historical factors and Germany's growing position as a major economic power and European “engine.” The extent to which the United States is still willing to assume security guarantees for Germany and Europe and to compensate for gaps in German and European security architecture will also be decisive. The effects of Chinese and Russian actions as well as the perceptible effects of global crises will continue to influence German strategic culture.

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