

est. 1808
AMJ
AUSTRIAN MILITARY JOURNAL

02 2021

ONLINE



Table of contents

Table of contents	1
Wolfgang Peischel: Editorial	3
Curriculum Vitae/Editor in Chief.....	5
Heino Matzken: "Deus lo vult", was the crusaders' motto 900 years ago	6
1. Moral, media and military preparation for the crusades	7
1.1 Religious justification.....	9
1.2 Economic reasons.....	10
1.3 Preparation via the media	11
1.4 Pooling forces internally against the enemy from the outside.....	12
1.5 Adventurism and ignorance.....	12
2. Large-scale military operations.....	13
2.1 Thoughtful and strategic preparation	13
2.2 Harsh actions against opponents and the civilian population.....	14
3. Findings and follow-up	14
3.1 Inner conflict and changing interest of the West.....	15
3.2 Infidelity in the eyes of the Arabs	16
3.3 Failed goals	16
3.4 Religious instrumentalisation by the IS	18
Curriculum Vitae	19
Christian Herrmann: Loss of Reality: The Illusion of a European Army.....	20
Reasons for the European Army.....	20
Counterarguments.....	21
Imperial vs. allied warfare	22
The latter remains a difficult undertaking for five reasons:	23
1. Mixing apples and oranges.....	23
2. Unwillingness to deploy.....	24
3. Unnecessary duplications.....	25
4. A European army: in principle yes, but not yet.....	26
5. The question of identification radii	30
Open questions.....	31
Curriculum Vitae	32
Bernhard Seyringer: No more "hide and bide": China's Grand Strategy for 2020 and beyond	33
Introduction.....	33
Comprehensive National Power	34
Jiang Zemin: "Responsible power"	35

Hu Jintao: soft power and the return of Confucius	36
Xi Jinping's dream	39
"New type of great power relations" (<i>xinxing daguo guanxi</i>).....	41
The "community of common destiny" (<i>minyun gongtongti</i>)	42
The Belt and Road Initiative: the elephant in the room.....	43
Conclusion	45
Corriculum Vitae	45
Ilya Zarrouk: The German and European Question	46
The German Question between the Old Empire and the German Confederation.....	46
The liberal movement of the 1840s and the birth of German nationalism	48
The Crimean War and the Italian campaign.....	51
The Schleswig-Holstein Question as the trigger for the <i>kleindeutsche Lösung</i>	55
Conclusion	59
Corriculum Vitae :	60

Editorial



Dear readers,

The "Österreichische Militärische Zeitschrift (ÖMZ)" is one of the oldest military science periodicals in Europe, and the "Austrian Military Journal (AMJ)" for the first time offers a translation of the core contents of the print publication for the English-speaking readership.

The primary task of the editorial office is to support the National Defence Academy in Vienna in its role as a pillar of military science research in Austria by means of accompanying publications on current research projects. Thus, the results of the scientific work, which is done by both departmental and external researchers, are made accessible to a highly qualified, international specialist audience.

The editorial team's guiding objective is to provide information on developments, research results, and conclusions relevant to military science – including forecasts wherever possible – and to offer contributions that meet scientific quality criteria as a basis for higher military command and control training but also for civilian leadership practice and as a support for ongoing corporate decisions by senior military commanders.

The maxim of also allowing or consciously seeking controversial, biased views on a topic in order to leave it up to the readers themselves to evaluate the offered lines of argumentation and to enable them, through this "dialectical" approach, to penetrate deeper into the issue on their own is regarded as the guiding principle.

The editorial office is not only involved as a publisher, but it also contributes to the development of an independent military science. In this respect, it has expanded into knowledge generation, research and teaching.

Holding on to German as the leading language for the printed edition will therefore remain necessary in the future, because the language-specific depth of certain contributions, for example, from the fields of theory of strategy, the military command and control philosophy of the specific cultural area or polemology, cannot be rendered into English without deficits. Nevertheless, the format of the Austrian Military Journal is an attempt to open up the core content of the printed edition to international discourse and to give the authors the opportunity to be perceived beyond the German-speaking area.

In particular, we also cordially invite members of the "International Society of Military Sciences (ISMS)" to enter into a critical dialogue with our authors and thereby increase the publication's military science quality and its recognition. The ISMS publication on "Building Military Science for the Benefit of Society", published by Miles-Verlag in 2020, has visibly demonstrated how enriching such international cooperation between military science researchers can be.

In issue 2/2021 you will find the following articles:

Heino Matzken's contribution addresses the in-depth causes for the Crusades. His reflections range from the approaches of the Popes Urban II and Gregory VII via the more than 30 campaigns through to deliberations on how an honestly sought reconciliation between the religions might succeed by setting aside power and economic interests. It is remarkable in which different ways collective historical experiences may become manifest in the specific perception of phenomena such as the Crusades. While many analyses of the Crusades focus on the aspect of peaceful coexistence between the religions in the Holy Land, there are also authors who are, for example, influenced by the historical existence of a duchy on the southeastern border of the empire and recognise the Crusades as an ultimately successful approach to preventing the spread of Islam across Europe.

In his contribution on the illusion of a European army, Christian Herrmann looks at the foundations of functional armed forces that lastingly prevent such a force from being built. He develops a stringent, equally realistic and critical view of such a project's chances of success. Irrespective of the conclusions drawn by the author, it may also be noted that the hope to deliberately assign arbitrary force components to the EU is an illusion. From the EU's point of view, the fundamental requirement for any European military response capability will have to be the ability to resort to organic national contingents that can be deployed operationally independently. At the same time, the states deploying the units still need to be able to maintain enough core autonomy to secure their respective airspace, homeland defence and possible counter-terrorism or assistance tasks even while participating in EU military operations or a CSDP operation.

According to Bernhard Seyringer's analysis, 2021 is a key year for China because it marks the end of the "period of strategic opportunity" and because the "moderately prosperous society" should be realised by then. Accordingly, China's foreign and security policy, which is often underestimated by the West and aims at a "Chinese-style world order", has become increasingly confrontational and offensive. The author sees a glimmer of hope in the fact that China's actual capabilities lag behind its foreign policy ambitions and that Beijing has ventured out of cover too early, contrary to its "hide and bide" maxim. If, on the other hand, one considers that China, not least because of its authoritarian internal structure, will survive a pandemic that poses a substantial threat to the West and will burden it economically for years relatively unscathed and with subdued but nevertheless existing economic growth, one should probably not harbour too many illusions about a European counter-strategy capability.

In the study presented by Ilya Zarrouk, the path from the German Confederation to a modern German nation-state structure is compared with the German reunification under Chancellor Helmut Kohl. According to the author, the fundamental difference is that reunification was not conceived in opposition to European powers, but in the sense of a German nation state embedded in a "House of Europe", and that the inclusion of Russia was judged to be a compelling prerequisite for a sustainable peace order.

Dear readers, we hope that you will gain many new insights into the research findings provided by the Austrian Military Journal and that we will succeed in winning you over as readers who want to make use of the journal with its proven standing, its greater reach made possible by the internet, and the option to enter into a military science discourse that goes beyond the German-speaking area.

BrigGen MMag. Wolfgang Peischel, PhD, Editor in Chief

Curriculum Vitae/Editor in Chief

MMag. Wolfgang Peischel, PhD

Born 1956; Brigadier General; 1982-1985 Military Academy „Theresianische Militäarakademie“; 1991-1994 General Staff Course; 1991-1997 Political science studies; Lecturer officer/National Defence Academy/Wien; since 1999 Head of the independent subdivision „Comprehensive National Defence“ at the Austrian Ministry of Defence; 2003-2008 Head of division in the Austrian Ministry of Defence; 2001 Commanding Officer/Infantry Regiment „Vienna“; since 2008 Editor in Chief of the Austrian Military Journal ÖMZ.

“Deus lo vult”, was the crusaders’ motto 900 years ago

What is the situation today?

Heino Matzken

This Middle Latin call ("God wills it") echoed first through the Alpine town of Clermont in 1095, then through southern France and later throughout Europe. Pope Urban II had proclaimed the Lord's will. "Deus lo vult!" He, Christ's representative on earth, knew what the merciful Christ expected of his followers: the liberation of the holy sites from the hands of the "infidels", that is, the reconquest of Jerusalem from the rule of the Turkish Seljuks. At the Council of Clermont, the Holy Father set in motion an unprecedented propaganda machine, which, by the standards of the time, inspired an army of knights to join the "just" fight against the "bedevilled" Muslims. The pontiff commissioned the most famous orator of the time, the 55-year-old abbot Bernard of Clairvaux, to raise a storm of faith. Even then, his speeches earned him the nickname "doctor mellifluus" ("honey-effusing teacher").¹ After more than 400 years of Muslim rule, Christianity was to reclaim the city of three religions for itself. Urban II's successor Gregory VII (already considered one of the most important popes during his lifetime because of his Gregorian reforms) set in motion a movement that would dominate the next two centuries. More than 30 times, hundreds of thousands of French, English, Germans, Italians and many other Christians followed their dream to the Holy Land. There is a reason why Muslims also call the city "Al Quds", meaning "the Holy". For it was in this city, which at that time had fewer than 100,000 inhabitants and where the Temple of the Jews had once stood, that the Prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven and Jesus Christ met his death on the cross, only to rise again three days later. A tremendous rivalry between the religions and struggle at the domestic and the foreign policy levels ensued and has found many imitators to this day. Various military operations of the West were conducted in the same region in the last two centuries. In retrospect and in comparison, they were certainly not launched to the advantage of the Middle East.

900 years later, similar slogans can be heard, this time not from the Pope, but from Western politicians and societies. At the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century, all eyes once again turned to the Orient. For various economic, political, perhaps even religious reasons, there have been several military ventures in the region in recent decades, which at first glance show many similarities with the campaigns of our ancestors. The consequences in particular seem to be identical: war, devastation and suffering for attackers and defenders in the Middle East, social and governmental chaos with no foreseeable hope for peace. Then as now, supposed "moral authorities" divide the world into believers

¹ Cf. Dr. Anja Fries: "Sturm des Glaubens", GEO Epoche - Das Magazin für Geschichte, no. 59, January 2013.

and infidels – on both sides, by the way. What, however, is really behind the motivations for the military expeditions to the Orient, then as now? Were the efforts made 900 years ago crowned with success, or is the West doing better in the 21st century? This article attempts to shed light on at least some facets of the Crusades in a more detailed comparative analysis. In doing so, it concentrates on the parallels in the three main phases of Christian intervention: the justification and "media" preparation, the execution, and the outcome including follow-up. Equating crusades with contemporary military operations in the region is neither intended nor demonstrable.

In 2003, an "army of crusaders of modern times" set out. American and British soldiers in particular took up the fight against a part of what was then called the "axis of evil". A year earlier, the then US President George W. Bush had coined this political catchword in a State of the Union address. In this speech, he had accused countries like North Korea, Iran or Iraq of supporting terrorists and making efforts to get weapons of mass destruction. The 43rd President of the United States declared only a short time later that he had supposedly "irrefutable" evidence that the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein was in possession of "weapons of mass destruction" (WMD). Teaching him a lesson seemed more than appropriate, necessary and justified. As in 1096, the soldiers went into battle in good faith, with a clear conscience and the conviction that they were fighting for the good cause. The "leader of the Western world", comparable at least in terms of power to the Pontifex Maximus of the 11th century, called on his fellow soldiers and "brothers in faith" to embark on a campaign unparalleled in history for the good of democracy. Even if the religious aspect was far from the forefront in the Occident, the Iraqis and many Arabs in the region perceived the invasion as a direct attack on their Islamic faith. Even a large part of the population in Saudi Arabia, which was crying out for help and felt most threatened by the regional political claims and ambitions of its northern neighbour, spoke out against the stationing of the "infidel" GIs on holy ground, since Mecca and Medina, two of the three holiest places of Islam, are located on the Arabian Peninsula. As we know today, neither the justification for the 2003 invasion nor the result of the latter corresponded to the announcements or the hopes for democratisation and pacification of the region.

1. Moral, media and military preparation for the crusades

It is therefore all the more important to take a closer look at the justification for the campaigns then and now. What is the truth of the line of argument put forward by the Catholic Church at the time? Were the reasons – as in 2003 – merely pretexts? Why did the Holy See and various ruling houses of Central Europe start the international military campaigns of the Middle Ages also called the Crusades? Did God and faith in Him really provide the comprehensible and irrefutable reasons? How strong were and are the power-political, if not even economic, considerations?

For centuries, Jerusalem, the holy city for Jews, Muslims and Christians, enjoyed a wealth-bringing stream of pilgrims who came to the region, usually unmolested by the respective rulers. Even the conquest by the Seljuks in 1071 did little to change the busy and financially interesting movement of believers to the places of worship. Rather, a kind of tolerance developed that was rather unusual at the time and that Moses Mendelssohn, Jewish pioneer of the Enlightenment in the 18th century, did not dare to dream of. Why change the situation in the city which the Arabs called "Al Quds" ("The Holy")? Until then, everyone was earning money from the travellers – inns, restaurants, translators, the transport and security sector, even the local authorities. However, the situation of the Christians changed under the rule of the militarily powerful Turkish people from the north. Riots, reports of atrocities by the Islamic rulers, the devastation of Christian sites, for example the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as early as in 1009, attacks on pilgrims and restriction of access to the holy sites now became more frequent. Even without the internet and mobile phones, this news found its way into Christian Europe, albeit sluggishly and often exaggerated or distorted. The Eastern Roman Empire and its capital Constantinople, which had been losing influence and military power for decades, took advantage of the change of mood. The Byzantine Emperor Alexios I Komnenos saw hope again for his empire, which was increasingly threatened by the Seljuks. The nomadic Turkic people of the Aral Sea were the rising power within the Islamic world. It had conquered Anatolia and Antioch after the battle of Manzikert in 1071 and plunged Christian Orthodox Byzantium into yet another crisis, including a domestic one. Tax revenues continued to decline and the mercenary army was too costly. Alexios I did not have the military means to reconquer the lost territories and therefore sent several requests for help to Catholic Central Europe. Only a European military power, preferably in alliance with the Church, could bring him the necessary backing. The Byzantine envoys therefore exaggerated and dramatised their reports about the apparently "intolerable" circumstances for Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land.² Supposedly spiritual arguments were thus mixed with political considerations early on – then as now.

In 2010, outgoing US President George W. Bush described the false statements about alleged weapons of mass destruction in Iraq as the "biggest mistake" of his time in office. In doing so, he blamed his own and British intelligence services in particular. After the attack of 11 September 2001, the Bush administration focused on Iraq in addition to Afghanistan as the alleged location of Osama bin Laden and training camps for Al Qaida terrorists. Then-Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, "hawk" Paul Wolfowitz and Vice President Dick Cheney encouraged the effort to obtain evidence of weapons of mass destruction. They set up a working group in the Pentagon in early 2002 called the Office of Special Plans (OSP). They and British sources provided unverified information that led President Bush to say in October 2002 that Iraq could give biological and chemical weapons to terrorists at any time. On 5

² Cf. Peter Frankopan: "Kriegspilger: Der erste Kreuzzug", Rowohlt Berlin, 2017, p.139.

February 2003, then Secretary of State Colin Powell described the dangerousness of Dictator Saddam Hussein before the UN Security Council. An exaggerated, manipulated and in parts false presentation of evidence therefore formed the basis for a renewed campaign,³ an operation with devastating consequences, as will be shown. Exaggerations, misinterpretations and even manipulations are thus still part of the usual procedures today.

1.1 Religious justification

Pope Urban II was more than aware of his position as the rock on which Jesus built his Church. Church history has always been not only a question of faith, but also of power politics. Skilfully using his moral authority, the pontiff influenced world political events for centuries. At the latest after the declaration of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire by Emperor Theodosius I in 380 AD, the global rise of the teachings of the carpenter from Bethlehem could no longer be stopped. However, with the growth of the community also came the different spiritual currents and ultimately the division of the ecclesia. The Roman Empire broke up both politically and religiously into a western part with Rome and an eastern part with Constantinople as the respective capitals. Under the pretext of religion, both sides fought for "reunification" for centuries – each under its own aegis, of course. Sending a "Latin" army to the Orient was thus an opportunity that Rome could not pass up, either in terms of power politics or religion.

Although the first section of the First Amendment to the US Constitution of 1789 separates church and state, the influence of religion on politics remains strong to this day. Around the year 2000, 90% of Americans believed in God. To this day, American society is bound together by a construct of ideas, attitudes and beliefs. Despite all the religious differences between Catholics, Protestants and countless Christian sects, US citizens share a common basic understanding of faith, which Gunnar Myrdal described in 1945 as "American creed". It embodies an amalgamation of beliefs, symbols and rituals that binds citizens to their polity and makes its institutions and representatives appear, in the last instance, to be religiously legitimised. Terms like "A Nation under God" are clear signs of this. The American civil religion is therefore more of a consensus of values that ensures the cohesion of society. The Christian currents that grew stronger at the beginning of the 21st century therefore insisted on their basic ideological pillars such as democracy, freedom from oppression, opposition to any kind of tyranny, individualism and a belief in progress.⁴ This general tendency continued through the so-called neo-conservatives into the George W. Bush administration. It was one of the driving forces on the road to the Iraq war.

³ Cf. Hans Leyendecker: "George W. Bushs größter Fehler", *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 17 May 2010.

⁴ Cf. Ellen Ziegler: "A Nation under God - Zivilreligion und Protestantismus in den USA", GRIN, e-books, 2007.

1.2 Economic reasons

Economic reasons also played a role in the Middle Ages. The sharp increase in population, the lack of arable land, the development of the money economy and, above all, the Italian economic expansion in the Mediterranean really called for a move to the East.⁵ It was therefore not surprising that especially the impoverished nobility and the mass of the destitute rural population took on the hardships and dangers of the crusades. For many, the religious aspect was subordinated to the dream of wealth and prestige. On the other side was an opponent who, after the revelation of Mohammed, had gained enormous self-confidence through countless victories and the conquest of the entire southern Mediterranean. Moreover, the Muslim troops saw themselves as "warriors of God". After the conquest of Spain, the Islamic expansionist ambition could only be stopped in central France in 732 by the battles of Tours and Poitiers. The Muslims were also economically and culturally in no way inferior to the West. Their wealth was based on the trade in spices, gold, ivory and slaves. Intellectually, the Arab world benefited from the translation, cultivation and further development of ancient Greek, but also Persian and Indian scientific knowledge.

Even in the 21st century, "well-meant" democratisation intentions and peace-building operations mix with real economic interests. The strategic importance of the Orient as a crossroads between the East-West and North-South axes, the USA's "Nibelung loyalty" to Israel and its dependence on "black gold" have made the Middle East a priority for many Western states, especially on the other side of the Atlantic. Wars, campaigns and operations in Iraq and Libya or against the Islamic State in Syria speak a clear language – not to mention publicly unknown operations of special forces in the region.

Since 1973 at the latest, when the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) quadrupled oil prices within a year, the industrialised nations have been aware of the importance of a regular and stable supply of oil. Economic growth and energy consumption were closely intertwined. With the world economy growing by 3%, the consumption of primary energy sources also increased by 2%. This thirst for oil was quenched in early 2000 by the countries around the Persian Gulf. In addition to one third of all natural gas deposits, about two thirds of the world's oil reserves are located there. The moderate price policy of OPEC, which is dominated by Saudi Arabia, allowed the West's demand to be continuously satisfied. However, the price reacted immediately to extraordinary events such as regime changes, environmental disasters or wars. The industrialised nations thus had a special interest in leverage in the region and stability of rule. Internal conflicts such as Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, revolutions or other disturbances of the balance had to be prevented – if possible, at an early stage. Particularly the NATO-led Operation Unified Protector in the North African country of Libya

⁵ Cf. Cécile Morrison: «Les Croisades», Presses Universitaires de France, 1984, p.7.

reflects the economic interests of the West. Libyan oil wells are close to Europe and production is cheap. Furthermore, it is so-called light oil, which requires relatively little refining. Various companies and consumer countries therefore maintained the best relations with the former dictator Gaddafi. Now countries like Italy, France, but also Russia and China are interested in making concrete agreements with whatever successor regime as quickly as possible.⁶ Besides the redistribution of oil and gas production rights, a lucrative reconstruction of the infrastructure damaged by the fighter jets of the "coalition of the willing" is enticing. Some even regarded the air offensive as a "publicity campaign" for the latest European fighter planes. Thus, British Eurofighters, French Rafale and even Swedish Gripen "earned" their status as "combat proven".

1.3 Preparation via the media

As already indicated, the preparation via the media also shows parallels. At a time when "inexplicable things" such as natural forces and diseases were explained by God's will, people, but also the supposedly educated upper class, were completely at the mercy of the propaganda of the Catholic administrative apparatus. Initiated by a flaming speech at the Council of Clermont, the Vicar of Christ sent his servants into the world to promote the good cause. Then, in three waves between 1096 and 1101, up to 120,000 men, women and even children moved to the Holy Land. The massive procession was made up of French, Flemish and Normans. Therefore, not without good reason the Arabs called the invaders Franks and not Crusaders.

In the 21st century, too, the press prepared the Western population. Alleged evidence of the development of weapons of mass destruction or atrocities by dictators like Saddam Hussein, Gaddafi or Assad prepared the field. Almost 150,000 soldiers of the "Coalition of the willing", led by the USA, moved to Saudi Arabia in 2003 to liberate the Iraqi people from their tyrant. Even in the current crisis in Syria, it is difficult to make an objective distinction between good and evil. Coalition partners change – US President Trump's justification that the Kurds did not support the invasion of Normandy in 1944 probably needs no further comment – and NATO members negotiate with Russia without coordination within the alliance. While Saddam Hussein was financed and militarily equipped by the West in the 1980 war against Iran, the public focused on his cruel way of governing in 2002. The same happened to the dictators Gaddafi and Assad. In order to conclude contracts for the purchase of Airbus aircraft worth more than 3 billion euros and a nuclear reactor plant, President Sarkozy received the Libyan in Paris in 2007. Assad even attended the National Day parade on the Champs-Élysées on 14 July 2008 as guest of honour. Only a few years later, both fell out of favour and the press and the public showed a completely different picture of the two rulers.

⁶ Cf. Rudolph Chimelli: "Frieden, Freiheit und -Erdöl", Süddeutsche Zeitung, 24 August 2020.

1.4 Pooling forces internally against the enemy from the outside

Pope Urban II pursued another goal with his call for the reconquest of the holy sites. Catholic Europe in the 11th century was far from being united. A perpetual struggle for power and influence raged in the various territories of Europe. Conflicts between England and France, between the Staufers and the Guelphs, among Italian cities, but above all the struggle for supremacy in the Holy Roman Empire⁷ weakened the successor states to the empires of Caesar and Augustus. For decades, the German kings had been wrestling with the Holy See for worldly power on the Rhine and Tiber. An enemy from the outside was all too convenient for the Pope to pool forces and divert attention from internal disputes – ideally under his leadership.⁸ So he preached: "Those who carelessly wage a personal war against the faithful should now go to war against the unbelievers."⁹

After the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the communist threat, also the West was far from being as united as it had been during the Cold War. The supposed peace dividend caused defence spending by NATO members to fall steadily. The gap between those who invest the agreed 2% of the gross domestic product (GDP) for the defence of common values and those who enjoy their security in the middle of the community is widening. Moreover, the North Atlantic Alliance fell into a crisis of purpose. The traditional enemy in the East was passé. The historically first declaration of a state of emergency in 2001 due to an attack on the USA from the outside came in very handy from a security policy point of view. Now there was officially a defence situation according to Article 5 of the NATO Treaty. The USA then skilfully used the opportunity to rally its allies behind it in the fight against international terrorism. The call to fight evil fell on fertile ground, especially among the "new" partners. Poland, Romania, Bulgaria or Estonia, for example, took part in the campaign against Saddam Hussein with pride and with legitimate "ulterior motives". Warsaw, Bucharest, Sofia or Tallinn hoped that their loyalty would in the future extend Washington's protective hand over them should the Russian bear awaken again.

1.5 Adventurism and ignorance

For some crusaders, the economic options that opened up or were dreamed of were certainly an important motivation. Others, however, were concerned about their salvation and strove for an honourable afterlife. The thirst for adventure also played a role. Overall, however, it must be said that the people of that time had very little knowledge about the region, the Muslims and their religion. The Koran was not translated into Latin until the 12th century. This ignorance, which is not much less pronounced even in the 21st century, has made the demonisation of the enemy easier even today.

⁷ Cf. Hans Eberhard Mayer: "Geschichte der Kreuzzüge", W. Kohlhammer GmbH, 2005.

⁸ Cf. Thomas Asbridge: "The Crusades: The Authoritative History of the War for the Holy Land", Ecco, 2010.

⁹ Cf. Cay Rademacher: "Mit Kreuz und Schwert", GEO Epoche - Das Magazin für Geschichte, no. 59, January 2013.

Even the legal psychologist Marc Sageman concludes that "it was not Islam that was the problem, but the lack of knowledge of Islam".¹⁰

2. Large-scale military operations

2.1 Thoughtful and strategic preparation

Parallels can also be seen in the conduct of the campaigns. Less than 10% of the participants at that time were nobles and knights. However, as "professional soldiers", they were superior to their Muslim opponents in most battles due to their training, experience and equipment. Technical and organisational advantage also guaranteed success in Iraq in 2003 or in Libya in 2011, and reduced losses on the friendly side. Especially Louis IX's Sixth Crusade in 1248 shows similarities, at least in its preparation. He believed that he could only conquer and dominate the Holy City in the long term if he first defeated the Sultanate in Cairo, which ruled over the region. He therefore directed a large fleet towards Cyprus. As the only monarch to take the cross twice (1248 and 1270), he created his own infrastructure to make his enterprise a success. Thus, he had an entire port city built in the French town of Aigues-Mortes for the embarkation of his troops and ordered the storage of supplies and food on Cyprus. To finance this, he turned in advance to the cities and the clergy. Louis IX secured his backing by extending the armistice with his arch-rival England, which claimed various lands in France for itself.¹¹ The Maronites of Lebanon offered the king a contingent of archers when he landed at the city called Acre. Louis IX then declared the Maronites "part of the French nation".¹² A bond that lasted for centuries and repeatedly led to interventions by France, especially in Lebanon. In 1860, Paris sent warships to the coast of Syria to stop the massacre of the Maronites by the Druzes. President Macron's attempt to take the lead in resolving the current political crisis in Lebanon is based not only on strategic considerations but also on this special relationship between the two countries.

The American-led campaign against Saddam Hussein was also preceded by intensive preparations, up to and including the creation of infrastructure in the form of expansions of air bases in Saudi Arabia. The protection of Christian minorities in the Middle East often also played a role. For example, the cruel fate of the Yazidis in 2014 in the Sinjar region of Iraq was an important factor in shaping the opinion in Germany to actively support Kurdish Peshmerga militias with weapons and training in their fight against the terrorist organisation known as Islamic State.

¹⁰ Cf. Karen Armstrong: "Schrift und Schwert", Zeit Geschichte, no. 2/2016.

¹¹ Cf. Dr. Anja Fries: "Vom langsamen Ende einer Vision". GEO Epoche - Das Magazin für Geschichte, no. 59, Jänner 2013.

¹² Cf. Sandra Mackey: "Lebanon, a house divided", W. W. Norton & Company, 2006, p.40.

2.2 Harsh actions against opponents and the civilian population

The behaviour of the victors towards the Muslim population, especially in the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099, cast a shadow over the "bellum iustum" (just war) defined by Augustine of Hippo.¹³ The bloodbath ensuing among Muslims and Jews after a six-week siege in hot July 1099 cost the lives of several thousand people. There could be no talk of romantic chivalry when the city was taken.¹⁴ Even though in the 21st century the armies of the West placed an emphasis on avoiding civilian casualties, so-called collateral damage could not always be ruled out. According to a US study by researchers at Washington University, Johns Hopkins University and Simon Fraser University, half a million Iraqis died during the Iraq War and the subsequent occupation.¹⁵ Not to mention the long-term effects on the local population after the destruction of infrastructure and thus their livelihoods, as well as the psychological consequences. For example, the men of "outré mer" ("beyond the sea") converted the mosque on the Dome of the Rock into a Christian church and installed the headquarters of the Knights Templar there. The armed brothers of the order on the Temple Mount symbolised the new Christian rulers of the Holy City par excellence.¹⁶ Many Iraqis perceived the appointment of Lewis Paul Bremer III as civil administrator in Iraq (succeeding Jay Garner) by President George W. Bush in May 2003 as disenfranchisement and it turned out to be a poor basis for trustful cooperation.

Ultimately, on 18 May 1291, the city of Acre fell as the last bastion of the Christian kingdom of Jerusalem. Even then, the question arose, who would survive the fall and who was to blame? Since the middle of the 13th century, the Christian bridgehead in the Middle East had lacked an assertive leadership. The discord among the nobles was too strong and the minor Hugo II of Cyprus too weak. Italian influence on the coastal cities and the growing power of the knightly orders directly subordinate to the Pope further weakened the king – "good fodder" for the new world power in the East. Genghis Khan led his Mongols via the Islamic metropolis of Baghdad (1258) to the Holy Land.¹⁷

3. Findings and follow-up

When comparing the historical crusades with those of modern times, however, the parallels in terms of results and consequences are particularly striking. In just under 200 years and in seven crusades, Christian armies and their leaders were able to bring parts of the Middle East under their rule. Yet, the undertaking, which was well-intentioned from the papal point of view, failed all along the line. Unknown diseases, impossibly long supply lines, internal greed for power and booty, a rebellious local population as well as the never-ending attacks of neighbouring Muslim states made life difficult for the

¹³ Cf. Cécile Morrison: « Les Croisades », Presses Universitaires de France, 1984, p.11.

¹⁴ Cf. Steven Runciman: "A History of the Crusades I: The First Crusade and the Foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem", Penguin Classics, 2016.

¹⁵ Cf. "500.000 Tote durch Irak-Krieg", Süddeutsche Zeitung, 16 October 2013.

¹⁶ Cf. Oliver Fischer: "Im Land der Mirakel", GEO Epoche - Das Magazin für Geschichte, no. 59, January 2013.

¹⁷ Cf. Ralf Berhorst: "Die letzte Schlacht der frommen Ritter", GEO Epoche - Das Magazin für Geschichte, no. 59, January 2013.

predecessors of the Maronites.¹⁸ The Crusader states were unable to bring lasting peace and order, let alone religious tolerance, to the region. The initial devoutness to God was increasingly eclipsed under the inner-Christian intrigues. Most crusaders, who in the course of time poured into the country more and more sparsely, came from France. Their influence grew accordingly. In the coastal towns, on the other hand, the Italians held sway and ensured that their trading interests were protected.¹⁹ Conflicts between the various crusader nations were therefore inevitable. In addition, it should not be forgotten that "crusades" took place in various other theatres of war in Europe in the centuries to come.²⁰ On the Arab side, too, one could not speak of unity. Officially, the Caliph of Baghdad claimed leadership of the entire Muslim world. However, in the Mediterranean region alone, after an aggressive expansion of the Muslim sphere of influence, two further dynasties ruled, in addition to the Seljuks already mentioned, in present-day Turkey, Syria and Palestine. The Almoravid family ruled in Spain and western North Africa. In addition, the Fatimid caliph dominated the land on the Nile. The year 1092 is considered a historical coincidence, when the Seljuk sultan died. Only two years later, the Fatimid Empire suffered the same fate. The two main powers in the Holy Land were weakened by succession struggles and instability. An ideal time for the head of Christendom to reconquer the city of Jesus. The temporary impotence of the local rulers was later reflected in the changing coalitions of the various kingdoms and emirates with the "Franks". This "betrayal of the true faith" was no exception. Ultimately, the centuries-long conflict weakened the Muslims to such an extent that they had nothing to oppose the Mongol invasion in the 13th century.

3.1 Inner conflict and changing interest of the West

The main reason for the Muslims' initial defeats was their internal disunity. In the crusaders' target area, i.e. in present-day Syria, Lebanon and Israel, there was a power vacuum, which the crusader states temporarily filled. Throughout the First Crusade, the local Islamic rulers failed to combine their forces against the invaders. A characteristic that has hardly changed to this day and continues to be one of the most important obstacles to a prosperous Middle East. Only in the course of the following operations did the unity of the Christians dwindle on the one hand, whereas the enemy grew stronger on the other hand. The initial euphoria fired by Urban II flattened out and led to fewer and fewer Christians taking up the cross. The geopolitical interest in the Orient receded into the background. It was not until the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century that enthusiasm for the Holy Land grew again. Colonial ambitions, but also journeys such as that of the German Emperor Wilhelm II in 1898 emphasised this. The staged invasion of Jerusalem by the British General Allenby on 9 December 1917 crowned Western ambitions. As a deliberate counterpart to the pompous visit of Wilhelm II, who

¹⁸ Cf. Sandra Mackey: "Lebanon, a house divided", W. W. Norton & Company, 2006, p.24.

¹⁹ Cf. Gerhard Ficker, Heinrich Hermelink: "Das Mittelalter", J. C. B. Mohr, 1929, p.89.

²⁰ Cf. Jonathan Riley-Smith: "The Crusades, A history", Bloomsbury Academic, 2014, p.374ff.

had previously ridden through the Jaffa Gate on a white horse, the Briton entered the Holy City as a pilgrim, liberator and gentleman, and went on foot. Once again, a long period of Islamic rule – 400 years – had ended.²¹ Not for nothing do the English portray General Allenby as the "new Richard the Lionheart", a disgrace that reopened old wounds.

3.2 Infidelity in the eyes of the Arabs

In the eyes of the Arabs, the crusaders were not holy men, but infidels. They came not to seek the Holy Grail and the kingdom of heaven, but to conquer land. In their slipstream followed thousands of pilgrims, soldiers of fortune and profiteers in search of adventure and wealth. Even today, Saladin's descendants regard the fighters in the name of the cross as the forerunners of Western imperialism. They were thus the vanguard of the mandate powers of France and Britain after the First World War and Israel after the Second. Muslims have neither forgotten nor forgiven the crusaders.²²

From 1970 onwards, religion played a growing role again in the Occident as well as, especially, in the USA. The various humiliations of the Arab world by the West – colonialism, partition according to Sykes-Picot, intervention at the Suez Canal in 1956 as well as the founding of Israel – find their climax in the Iraq wars. Al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden, for example, did not declare war on the USA, but on the "Alliance of Crusaders".²³ As early as the 11th century, the Crusaders' successes meant humiliating the local population. In addition to religious motives, greed for profit and power also led to the division of the territory into the four Crusader states and the founding of new, artificial kingdoms as a thorn in the flesh of Arab pride.

3.3 Failed goals

Just as Urban II's men failed to secure Jerusalem for the Christians in the long run, the modern Crusades barely achieved their lofty goals. To this day, the West has failed to establish democracy, freedom or religious tolerance in the region around the Holy City. Worse still, the rift between the Muslim Orient and the Christian Occident seems more insurmountable than ever. This is, of course, also due to the Islam's aggressive military and political expansion after the Crusades. Both in the Mediterranean and in the Balkans, the Ottoman Empire continuously expanded its rule and thus its influence. Serbia, Hungary, Malta, Cyprus and Crete fell to the Ottoman army before the "Turks" stood before Vienna for the second time in 1683. Only then did troops of the Catholic League under the "saviour of Vienna", the Pole John III Sobieski, put an end to the so-called "half-moon campaigns" and forced the Muslims to retreat in the following centuries. Then, in the 21st century, extreme Islamist groups such as the

²¹ Cf. Florian Stark: "Ich will Jerusalem nicht. Ich will Eier für meine Offiziere", Die Welt, 8 December 2017.

²² Cf. Sandra Mackey: "Lebanon, a house divided", W. W. Norton & Company, 2006, p.24.

²³ Cf. Professor Dr. Nikolas Jaspert: "Mythos des Westens, Trauma des Islam", GEO Epoche - Das Magazin für Geschichte, no. 59, January 2013.

Islamic State again translated the medieval slogan "God wills it" into "In sha'Allah" and misused their religion. This misinterpretation of the Koran, as well as terrorist attacks in Europe, also make coexistence between God-fearing Muslims and Christians all over the world increasingly difficult. The circuitous integration of migrants in Germany and Europe is just one example. Constant Western interference reminds the Arabs not only of the Crusades, but also of the imperialism that followed later and the exploitation of land and people that went with it. President George W. Bush, despite his military victory in 2003, could not let himself be celebrated as a saviour and "initiator of global democracy". He had successfully removed a dictator, but he did not succeed in implementing a new form of government based on democratic principles. "Mission accomplished", but he did not become king of the Middle East. It is possible that Gottfried von Bouillon foresaw the fate of the coming Christian liberation operations in the Holy Land. Although the crusaders offered the Lorraine nobleman the title of King of Jerusalem, the hero of the First Crusade refused this honour. Unlike his successor Balduin I, who held the title from 1100, he modestly called himself "prince and defender" ("princeps et defensor"). The son of George Bush Senior, who had already taken his chance in Iraq in 1990, celebrated himself as the "iron fist of democracy". September 11, 2001, but also patriotic supporters as well as the Western press had made George W. Bush Junior the symbolic figure of an epic struggle between Occident and Orient. A glorification that the troubadours bestowed on the Lorraine Gottfried von Bouillon almost 1,000 years ago.²⁴ Nevertheless, this title of honour has brought neither Bush Junior nor his successor anything tangible. Neither, therefore, did most people in the region trust the good intentions announced by ex-US President Barack Obama in his 2009 speech entitled "A New Beginning" at Al-Ahzar University in Cairo. A new phase in relations between the United States and the Islamic world was to be heralded. The discourse brought the Nobel Peace Prize for the American, but no end to the civil wars and thus the suffering for the people in Yemen, Libya or Syria. As was the case back then, today it is also a struggle that, apart from faith, is primarily about power, influence and dominance – on both sides, by the way.

Most German scholars rate the second attempt of the French King Louis IX in 1270 as the seventh and last crusade. British historians in particular, on the other hand, count the attack on the Egyptian port of Damietta and the voyage of Emperor Frederick II in 1228 (also King of Sicily) as well as the voyage of the English heir to the throne Edward in 1271 as crusades as well. They thus come to a total of nine expeditions. It is therefore understandable that the Anglo-Saxon press refers to the modern war on terror as the "tenth crusade".²⁵ So even if religious wars live on as a myth to this day and the military

²⁴ Cf. Cay Rademacher: "Mit Kreuz und Schwert", GEO Epoche - Das Magazin für Geschichte, no. 59, January 2013.

²⁵ Cf. Stefanie Peters: "Die Wege der bewaffneten Pilger", GEO Epoche - Das Magazin für Geschichte, no. 59, January 2013.

operations are considered successful, the goals they set themselves can be judged as a failure overall, then and now!

3.4 Religious instrumentalisation by the IS

Many claim that the direction of the crusades has even reversed in recent years. Thus, religious fanatic organisations such as Al Qaeda or the Islamic State are striving to shift their campaign against the "infidels" to Europe or the USA this time. Since then, various attacks in the name of civil-religious values have terrorised the West. The perpetrators of violence are a radical minority that uses the Koran to legitimise itself. Abu Bakr, the leader of the Islamic State, succeeded in counteracting the modern trend of individualising religion, especially in the Occident, but also in the Orient. He once again created a faithful religious community and motivated his followers to collective action for his "cause".²⁶ The parallels to the instrumentalisation of the Bible and a few fanatics by Pope Urban II 900 years ago are recognisable – not to mention the terrible effects on the population!

Since the Enlightenment, the West has viewed religion as a "coherent and binding system of beliefs, institutions and rituals around a supernatural God whose cult is essentially private and insulated from all secular activity. This conception of faith is shared by no other culture",²⁷ and certainly not the Arab one. A real reconciliation between the religions honestly sought by many today as well as then, can therefore only succeed by putting aside all power and economic interests. The religious, but above all political leaders in the Occident and Orient play a decisive role in this. Only their moral authority can bring people together again who live in different cultural environments and whose God merely bears a different name. Only then will the "clash of civilisations"²⁸ prophesied by Samuel P. Huntington be a matter of the past and the prophecy of the historian Francis Fukuyama also come true in the Middle East. In his 1992 work "The End of History and the Last Man", he postulated that the principles of liberalism in the form of democracy and market economy would finally prevail everywhere.²⁹ However, it will be a long time before the democratic system and Western values triumph over Oriental traditions and ways of life, if they ever do. All the more important is the task of reconciliation and peaceful coexistence for the leaders of the world – certainly also in the Lord's sense. Only then can one rightly say "Deus lo vult".

²⁶ Cf. Rolf Schieder: "Keine Religion ist auch keine Lösung", Zeit Geschichte, no. 2/2016.

²⁷ Karen Armstrong: "Schrift und Schwert", Zeit Geschichte, no. 2/2016.

²⁸ Cf. P. Samuel Huntington: "The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of world order", Simon & Schuster, London, 1997.

²⁹ Cf. Francis Fukuyama: "The End of History and the last Man", Free Press, New York, 2006.

Corriculum Vitae

Heino Matzken, MSc, PhD

Born 1968; Lieutenant Colonel; Informatics-Studies, Universität der Bundeswehr in Munich; Master of Science in Professional Computing, Stafford University; Ph.D. in International Relations, International University of Bircham; served in the German-French Brigade, the NATO-Headquarters SHAPE in Belgium, the French Ministry of Defence in Paris, as German Military Attaché in the Kingdom of Belgium and Luxemburg and as Desk Officer in the German Ministry of Defence in Berlin (Near-Middle-East-Subdivision); International Missions: SFOR, KFOR and ISAF; participant at the 46th. Course at the „Centre des Hautes Etudes de l'Armement“ of the „Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale“ (IHEDN) in France; Author of „Ewiger Krieg im Nahen Osten – Konsequenz verkorkster Staatengründung“; currently Military Attaché in Lebanon.



Loss of Reality: The Illusion of a European Army

Christian Herrmann

In March 2015, the President of the EU Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, promoted the creation of a European army as a security-policy measure to deter Russian aggression. French leader Emmanuel Macron³⁰ called for the formation of a common European army in November 2018, with Angela Merkel supporting this project, at least in the long run.³¹ However, increased calls for a European army³² seem unrealistic in the face of intensified political centrifugal forces that make even the continued existence of the EU in its current form seem questionable. Only five of the 28 EU member states meet the self-imposed defence target of 2% of gross domestic product (GDP). However, apart from the lacking or disappearing political preconditions, proponents also seem to negate the military-historical and -sociological regularities. They often tend to confuse the ideal state with the actual state, and thus they prevent common ignorance of security policy from being overcome as they persevere in their moral arrogance. This reduces the project to being nothing more than a defiant symbol of an already questionable European unity. The following article is devoted to such considerations, also referring to the motivational-psychological foundations of functional armed forces, which permanently hamper any realisation of a European army.

At the beginning, arguments for and against a European army will be briefly presented.³³

Reasons for the European Army

- The concept of a European Army results from the logic of European integration towards a political union. A union that has agreed on a common currency cannot leave the military permanently under national control.
- -The idea of a common armed force arises almost automatically if one takes the idea of "pooling and sharing" – i.e. the bundling of existing military capabilities – to its logical conclusion.

³⁰ Whereby the demographic exhaustion of the Russian Federation is often underestimated, as is the lack of economic performance due to a one-sided, commodity-based development model and the related lack of innovation in the Russian economy (the latest T-14 Armata tank had to be towed away publicly at the Red Square parade in 2017). From the author's point of view, Russian hybrid warfare also seems to be predominantly defensive and driven by fear of losses. Hence, the costly maintenance of such states as Transnistria, South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Donbass and the now annexed Crimea. Cf. the work of Toal, Gerard (2016). *Near Abroad*.

³¹ It should also be noted here that the German government, for example, is using the "expanded security concept" approach to include the budgets of other ministries in order to achieve the 2% target without (unpopular) cuts in the social budget, which it had itself agreed to under the Schröder/Fischer administration.

³² Peter Bartels (2019): *Ein Europa, eine Armee*, <https://www.welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article203442328/Wehrbeauftragter-Hans-Peter-Bartels-Die-Europa-Armee-kommt.html>, accessed on 15 May 2020.

³³ Cf. Karl-Heinz Kamp (2015): *Die Europa-Armee: Pro und Kontra*. <https://www.baks.bund.de/de/arbeitspapiere/2015/die-europa-armee-pro-und-kontra>, accessed on 4 Aug 2019.

- It can also be assumed that joint forces would be more efficient than national armies, since redundancies at all levels would be avoided.³⁴
- This would allow European defence spending to be used far more efficiently. After all, EU defence budgets currently total nearly 200 billion euros – but the capabilities of EU forces are only 10% to 15% of those of the US military.
- More efficient use of defence budgets would also benefit defence industrial capabilities.
- An EU strengthened in this way would form a serious "pole" in the future multipolar world, which could also exert military influence.

Depending on its design, a European army would be readily compatible with NATO structures and thus help to strengthen transatlantic ties.

- A NATO-compatible European army would be an important element of transatlantic burden sharing.
- Finally, joint forces would force EU members to harmonise their national decision-making processes in order to increase responsiveness.

Counterarguments

- The USA in particular has warned for many years against risking costly duplication. If a European army were created in parallel to the national armed forces, this would be at the expense of the already underfinanced national armed forces.
- Voices of warning are coming from Eastern Europe that, especially in view of Russia's new aggressiveness, ties with the USA must not be weakened.
- A European army is only conceivable in the distant future. Such long-term concepts, however, would have no effect on the current need for security policy action. It is therefore idle to discuss them.
- Instead of wasting political energy on the distant goal of a European army, one should try to advance concrete military cooperation.

³⁴ Werner Hoyer, Gerd F. Kaldrack (eds.): Europäische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik (ESVP). Der Weg zu integrierten europäischen Streitkräften? (Forum Innere Führung). Nomos, Baden-Baden 2002.

- NATO, to which the vast majority of EU member states belong, is already a functioning example of integrated military capability.

In recent years, NATO has made its structures so flexible that it can militarily act in different configurations. In Afghanistan, it has included countries that are neither NATO members nor geographically part of Europe. It is therefore perfectly possible for only European states or only EU members to conduct military operations within the framework of NATO.

- The current Russian crisis shows that the division of labour between the military actor NATO and the security-policy but non-military actor EU works well. NATO concentrates mainly on the military deterrence of Russia in order to avoid an expansion of the conflict into NATO territory. The EU, on the other hand, is trying to defuse the crisis with its broad range of options for action and to persuade Russia to behave less aggressively.
- Military crisis interventions are unlikely to be carried out by the large organisations NATO or the EU in the future. On the one hand, intervention fatigue has set in among the majority of member states, as Afghanistan or Libya have shown how little can be achieved even with militarily successful action. On the other hand, Russia will hardly give its consent in the UN for a NATO or EU operation. In the future, interventions will at best be made by "coalitions of the willing".

Especially for the British Eurosceptics, the vision of an EU army was a nightmare for years. This very recently became clear in the referendum campaign. However, the reality of European defence cooperation does not match the rhetoric – neither the Eurosceptics' nor the federalists'.³⁵

Eurosceptics warn that, "The European Union has NATO lined up in its sights". It has become a symbol of EU overreach in one of the most sensitive areas of national sovereignty – defence.

Imperial vs. allied warfare

The creation of EU forces with a role in defending Europe's borders would represent a qualitative shift in EU policy towards territorial defence – far beyond the more limited objectives of the current EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). Under CSDP and set out in the European Security Strategy (ESS), which was revised for the first time in 2016, the EU aims to take on humanitarian and rescue tasks, crisis management and peacekeeping. However, CSDP does not include collective

³⁵ Sascha Dietrich: Die rechtlichen Grundlagen der Verteidigungspolitik der Europäischen Union. In: Zeitschrift für ausländisches öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht (ZaöRV), Vol. 66, 2006, pp.663-697.

defence of the EU territory. Nor does any EU government seriously plan to do so, as NATO has already been playing this role very successfully.³⁶

Moreover, member states do not wish to cede their sovereignty of defence policy. Therefore, decisions on defence (and foreign) policy require unanimity in the Council of Ministers. David Cameron pointed this out in his speech of 9 May 2016, when he said that, "Proposals of an EU army are fanciful: national security is a national competence, and we would veto any proposal of an EU army." The UK's departure has put an end to this, but it will nevertheless remain a political player at NATO level.³⁷

Euroenthusiasts are not alone in arguing that European defence efforts must become more credible and faster in the face of multiple security crises on Europe's borders. Donald Trump alone may say that NATO is obsolete and call for Europe to pay for America's role in defence; but in both US political parties, Republicans and Democrats alike, frustration has been growing since 1990, even under Bush Sr. and Clinton, because only five³⁸ out of 28 NATO members meet NATO's goal of spending 2% of GDP on defence.

The Europeans must therefore respond to US pressure, as otherwise they will run the risk of a bleak, if not sad, future of the transatlantic alliance that the then US Secretary of Defence Robert Gates had already foreseen in 2011. However, the justified need for greater defence integration should not be confused with the creation of an EU army.

The latter remains a difficult undertaking for five reasons:

1. Mixing apples and oranges

History has shaped the defence cultures of different EU member states in very different ways. Some countries may therefore find it easier to work together than others.

Proponents of an EU army often refer to existing examples of different countries integrating their armed forces as a blueprint for pan-European forces. In the Nordic Defence Cooperation (NORDEFCO), for example, Swedish and Finnish armed forces have long trained together. Proponents have also paid special attention to Dutch-German cooperation – the two countries now effectively share soldiers, tanks and other capabilities.³⁹

³⁶ M. Dembinski/D. Peters: Eine Armee für die Europäische Union? Europapolitische Konzeptionen und verteidigungspolitische Strukturen, Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung, PRIF-Report1/2018, Frankfurt/M. 2018.

³⁷ J. Warwick: Auf dem Weg zur „Euroarmee“. In: Internationale Politik, H. 1/2007, p.4651.

³⁸ These are the USA, Greece, Great Britain, Estonia and most recently Poland. In the case of Greece in particular, however, it must be noted that the lion's share flows into the maintenance of obsolete material (heavily armour-heavy army organisation) and into personnel expenditure and is therefore rather an inefficient use that does not significantly increase the country's alliance value.

³⁹ Gerd Höfer: Europäische Armee. Vision und Utopie. Merus Verlag, Hamburg 2008.

However, Dutch-German integration has been driven primarily by economics; the Netherlands has abandoned its armour in the face of budgetary pressures and has sought to offset the impact of these cuts by building a partnership that allows the Dutch Armed Forces to train with German tanks. Cooperation at this intimate level was only possible because the two armies had longstanding ties: a joint headquarters that has been active since 1995, similar political pre-deployment processes, shared command philosophies, and the familiarity of both armies with German-made equipment (Fennek scout cars, etc.).

Without these commonalities, true integration becomes much more difficult. This is demonstrated by the Franco-German joint brigade. Although founded in 1989, it was only deployed (and then only partially) in Mali last year as part of a training mission. In Afghanistan, the two countries could not agree on an acceptable risk for the troops involved and blocked the deployment. In the end, German and French contingents were deployed in Afghanistan in parallel. The problem would only be worse in the multinational EU units.⁴⁰

In addition, there are very different armed forces cultures and leadership philosophies in these two European states in particular. While the German armed forces traditionally rely on the concept of mission tactics with a high degree of responsibility for the NCO and troop corps, the French armed forces focus on strong elements of command structure. Since neither nation intends to deviate from its own proven leadership philosophy, it is difficult to imagine how tactical-operational cooperation could be successful here.

2. Unwillingness to deploy

The lack of a common vision for the deployment of EU troops would be a huge problem in a crisis. Member states would be anxious to protect their sovereignty, which means that a single government could block a deployment. This is by no means a theoretical construct.⁴¹

The Europeans have already made this experience with the EU Battle Groups. They were created in 2007 and consist of rotating contingents of troops from member states, theoretically ready for deployment at ten days' notice. In practice, they have never been used in combat, even twelve years after their creation. Different national military strategies and threat assessments prevent EU members from volunteering soldiers for missions. An unattractive system of cost distribution, which increases the financial burden of an operation on the country of deployment, does not help either. The longer

⁴⁰ Wolfgang Wosolsobe: Militärpolitik: Die Europäische Armee - ein fernes Ziel? In: Truppendienst, Episode 297, Issue 3, 2007.

⁴¹ Dominic Vogel, Rene Schulz (2020): Zur Diskussion über eine 28. Armee für die Europäische Union, <https://www.swp-berlin.org/10.18449/2020A19/>, accessed on 15 May 2020.

battle groups remain unused, the more difficult it is to justify the decision to use them and actually send them into action.⁴²

Today, governments are reluctant even to try: In 2013, Britain blocked these forces from supporting French operations in the Central African Republic for fear of the potential impact on Britain's EU membership. Even the staunchest supporters of an EU army cannot envisage a supranational defence agency that could override such decisions made by national parliaments.

3. Unnecessary duplications

Some member states fear that an EU army could compete with NATO structures. Since 22 of 28 EU countries are also NATO members, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has urged Europeans to avoid duplicating NATO – money invested in an EU army would be money lost for the Alliance.

The institutional dispute between the EU and NATO has its roots in a long-standing and largely ideological split. On the one hand, there were the so-called "Gaullists", who advocated a strong and independent "Europe de la défense".⁴³ On the other hand, the "Atlanticists" wanted to protect NATO's role as Europe's security provider and advocated strong American involvement.⁴⁴ They rejected the idea of territorial defence of the EU and feared that this would eliminate America's *raison d'être* to keep its forces in Europe.

NATO's problem these days is not simply that the US is abandoning European defence because the Europeans are doing the job themselves, but rather that the Americans might tire of European "free riders" (as President Obama already called them). Washington has repeatedly signalled that it does not care through which institution European defence is operationally managed; the priority is for Europeans to take their own defence more seriously.⁴⁵ Still, Central and Eastern European states such as Poland and the Baltic states see US capabilities as an important safeguard against an aggressive Russia.⁴⁶ As a result, they have also expressed their strong preference for NATO and rejected the idea of a European army. It is unlikely that they will give up this resistance in the near future, especially since the Russian government's behaviour is highly unlikely to change.

⁴² The author considers a "quiet death" of the EU Battle Groups to be likely, similar to the example of the WEU.

⁴³ Matthias Waechter (2006): *Der Mythos des Gaullismus: Heldenkult, Geschichtspolitik und Ideologie, 1940-1958*, Wallstein-Verlag, Göttingen.

⁴⁴ David Noack: *Kapitalfraktionen in Deutschland II - Atlantiker und Gaullisten (1944-1987)*, <https://theheartlandblog.wordpress.com/2011/10/01/kapitalfraktionen-in-deutschland-ii-atlantiker-und-gaullisten-1944-1987/>, accessed on 15 May 2020.

⁴⁵ Whereby it seems questionable whether a total autonomy of the EU could be in the interest of a US government. The author suspects this and is an optimist here because of his membership of the common democratic family.

⁴⁶ Cf. wishes of the Polish and Romanian governments for permanent stationing of US combat troops in their respective countries. The question arises whether this also refers to tactical nuclear systems, which would mean a further confrontational element vis-à-vis the Russian Federation. Cf. Marco Overhaus (2019): *Eine Frage der Glaubwürdigkeit: Konventionelle und nukleare Sicherheitszusagen der USA in Europa*. SWP-Studie 15.

4. A European army: in principle yes, but not yet

Finally, a European army would conflict with politics in some major EU capitals. While Paris does not explicitly oppose the idea (Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault recently spoke of the need for "strategic autonomy for Europe and Europeans"), it prefers to have the rest of Europe support French operations in Mali and the Sahel. Britain, as mentioned above, considers any debate on an EU army dangerous. Ireland, which zealously upholds its neutrality, rejects the idea of an EU army and has secured a protocol to the Lisbon Treaty explicitly stating that the Treaty does not cater for the creation of such an army.⁴⁷

Also, Germany's alleged commitment to the creation of an EU army is weaker than it appears. Although the project is explicitly anchored in the government's coalition agreement and is supported by almost all political parties, all German politicians emphasise the long-term nature of this goal. It is considered good form for a "good European" in Germany to reaffirm the commitment to a European army. However, according to Christian Moelling, Senior Fellow for Security Policy at the German Marshall Fund in Berlin, who was involved in the Defence Ministry's White Paper consultation process, no one is drawing up concrete implementation plans.⁴⁸

Another example of EU defence cooperation, the "Permanent Structured Cooperation" (PESCO), also shows that member states are not willing to involve the EU in their military cooperation efforts. PESCO was introduced by the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, now ten years ago, to allow a core group of EU members to deepen their cooperation in military issues if certain criteria were met. The mechanism was, however, never used – countries opted instead for military integration in small clusters outside EU structures. The political will for small-scale EU cooperation has never been there, so it will not be strong enough to enable the creation of an EU army.⁴⁹

There will be no European army in the foreseeable future, but the EU can and should do more to strengthen European defence. Taken together, the EU member states are the second largest defender in the world, surpassed only by the USA. However, it is also true that when numbers become the measure of success, soldiers often become impostors. The pure comparison of numbers remains in the quantitative spectrum and ignores important qualitative determinants and European shortcomings (air

⁴⁷ Thomas Hanke (2019): Die europäische Armee wird konkret, <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/verteidigungspolitik-die-europaeische-armee-wird-konkret/24350246.html?ticket=ST-2956513-gpCQix6J7SQGLyFha9v5-ap2>, accessed 15.5.2020.

⁴⁸ Christian Mölling (2015): So wird es nichts mit der europäischen Armee. In: DIE ZEIT 06/2015. <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2015-06/ruehe-kommission-europaeische-armee>, accessed on 13 Aug 2019.

⁴⁹ T. A. Graf: Unity in the face of threat? Exploring the empirical relationship between strategic threat perceptions and public support for a common European army in Germany, in: European Security, H. 1/2020, p. 55-73.

refuelling, strategic deployment capabilities, reconnaissance capabilities, etc.). However, these are of crucial importance for sustainable operations, especially outside Europe.

These expenditures therefore do not lead to a proportional increase in military power. Inefficiencies as well as a lack of coordination and interoperability prevent the EU from exploiting obvious economies of scale. Money wasted on duplication and protectionist policies is money that cannot be invested in developing capabilities. Common infrastructure, common procurement and a tightly integrated defence market would help European governments get more for their money.⁵⁰

There have been some positive developments, including the creation of the European Defence Agency (EDA) to coordinate defence planning between member states⁵¹ or the multinational European Air Command (EATC), which controls nearly 150 aircraft from Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

The EATC works for two reasons:⁵² There is an agreed funding model, and although the EATC determines how aircraft should be deployed most efficiently, each country can refuse to participate in a particular operation without blocking others. The EDA is exploring whether this framework could be used as a model for other capabilities in the future.⁵³

The EU can add value to European defence by integrating European defence markets or coordinating multinational procurement projects. Nevertheless, these initiatives do not create the preconditions for an EU army, a project that has few real friends and many enemies. European leaders should not allow debates on the creation of such an army to get in the way of decisions on how best to meet Europe's defence needs. Instead, they should use existing structures to ensure that member states do not waste money on unnecessary duplication or a distracting and unrealistic European dream.

The centralisation measures that make up the "European Union" project are not based on convergence processes as seen in the emergence of many nation states. It is a technocratic elite project.⁵⁴ It lacks any popular romanticism and a foundation on which nation states could be based in their emergence. It is neither sung about by bards nor longed for as a milestone of future "greatness" by rapturous masses. As an "economic bloc" or "peace project", its proponents rather appeal to rational

⁵⁰ It should also be noted here that the complexity of modern weapons systems generally slows down development cycles more and more; this also affects the USA.

⁵¹ Clara Marina O'Donnell: "The trials and tribulations of European defence co-operation", CER Policy Brief, July 2013.

⁵² The success of EATC can only be confirmed here by the author based on his own experience in 2016.

⁵³ Gisela Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet (ed.): The Future of the European Foreign, Security and Defence Policy after Enlargement (Würzburger Universitätsschriften zu Geschichte und Politik, 9). Nomos, Baden-Baden 2006.

⁵⁴ The creation of the EU is an ideal example of the functionalist approach in the sense of "form follows function" by David Mitrany.

considerations of wealth preservation⁵⁵ or to the fear of a repetition of the European catastrophes of the 20th century.⁵⁶ In doing so, they confirm the realisation that people can often be the mental prisoners of their life experience, taking their cues from past approaches to solving the present. Just as the Congress of Vienna was conceived to overcome the Napoleonic Wars, the League of Nations the First World War, the United Nations (UN) the Second World War, such constructs usually prove ineffective in dealing with newly emerging crises. The EU, too, derives a considerable part of its legitimacy from the moral claim to be a guarantor of peace. Since 1945, Europe has not been peaceful because the EU exists, but the EU exists because Europe is peaceful due to its demographic exhaustion.⁵⁷

It is, in fact, in contrast to most of the unification efforts from which the European nation states emerged, a "top-down" project that is only dubiously legitimised and, after the abandonment of the functionalist approach (ECSC, Euratom, etc.), largely enforced, especially in recent years. Its proponents reflect the same mix of liberal, pacifist and left-wing forces that dreamed of overcoming the nation state even before the outbreak of the First World War. They, too, argued with the evolutionary humanist approach of the assumption, based on a universal image of man, that people can be educated to be peaceful because peace is an "idea of reason". Economic redistribution mechanisms, including the idea of destroying capitalism on the one hand, or establishing borderless free trade on the other, created dissimilar allies who justified their anti-national goals with "economic determinism". Popular education and re-education were often seen as appropriate measures, sometimes leading by force to pacifism. The socialist variant proved to be the bloodiest form of the struggle for peace and not only left millions dead, but also did not even come close to achieving its goal.⁵⁸ Its envisaged armed forces would thus find neither "fatherland" nor "people" in their motivational vocabulary, but would want to fight for "Europe" and its "citizens". But if the Clausewitzian assumption that the national interest continues to enjoy primacy in the actions of states⁵⁹, and that war is thus also the continuation of politics by other means, should also be true in the future, the question arises as to the political consensus required in this regard. If the alliance cases of Kosovo (1999) and Afghanistan (2001) serve as indicators, they tend to show that the widely

⁵⁵ Which has been and is being gambled away by the negative demographic development and the misguided (mass) migration policy by taking in largely unqualified, culturally difficult-to-integrate large groups of young men from the Near and Middle East and Africa.

⁵⁶ From the author's point of view, a repetition is out of the question due to the democratic character of all EU member states (with the possible exception of Hungary at present) and the general demographic exhaustion.

⁵⁷ In addition, of course, there is also the democratic constitution of all EU states (in the case of Hungary currently anocracy, but not autocracy). The democratic character could change further in favour of authoritarian regimes through the intended admission of various Balkan states (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Northern Macedonia).

⁵⁸ It is significant that the Soviet government quickly threw communist rhetoric overboard after the German invasion and invoked the nationalism of the "Soviet fatherland".

⁵⁹ Andreas Dietz: *Das Primat der Politik in kaiserlicher Armee, Reichswehr, Wehrmacht und Bundeswehr: Rechtliche Sicherungen der Entscheidungsgewalt über Krieg und Frieden zwischen Politik und Militär*. Mohr Siebeck, Tübingen 2011.

divergent positions of the respective European states can hardly be reconciled. A similar situation can be seen in foreign policy towards Russia, Ukraine or the USA.⁶⁰

An EU army would also be a parallel structure to NATO, which immediately raises the question of financing.⁶¹ After all, defence budgets would now have to be divided between the two institutions.⁶² A further weakening of NATO, which includes 22 EU states and whose mandate explicitly stipulates the defence of Europe's territorial integrity, could make the US reconsider its role as its ultimate guarantor. Eastern European allies have already indicated that they value real US capabilities over fictitious European ones.⁶³

The cultural distance also largely determines the ability to cooperate and therefore also the ability to integrate in the future. The functioning, mainly maritime (joint use of the dock landing ship of the "Rotterdam" class, joint training of the marines of both countries) cooperation of Dutch and German armed forces, which is often cited by advocates of a European army, contrasts with the sobering results of the Franco-German Brigade: The latter was not deployed in Afghanistan because the two countries could not agree on a joint risk analysis.⁶⁴

However, countless empires of the past succeeded in doing so by emphasising their own strength, and the openly visible success was confirmed in the eyes of their inhabitants or citizens. Thus, ancient empires such as Egypt, Persia or Rome were able to unite foreign peoples under their greatness and raise successful armies. Yet their unifying "ideas" were often of rather marginal importance among their subjects, who instead stood in complex relationships of power and dependence. In times of ascendancy, these forces of attraction were sufficient, but in times of crisis, they were prone to conflicts of loyalty and ethnic centrifugal forces. Despite centuries of assimilation, 5th century Romans discovered their real or perceived Germanic roots⁶⁵ and contributed significantly to the fall of Western Rome.⁶⁶

⁶⁰ Robert Vogler (2020): Gesamteuropäische Armee? Eine Nebelpetarde aus Paris, <https://www.nzz.ch/meinung/eine-eu-armee-die-nebelpetarde-aus-paris-ld.1533552>, accessed 15.5.2020.

⁶¹ Council of Europe (2019), Defence: Is a "European army" coming? <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/de/headlines/security/20190612STO54310/verteidigung-kommt-eine-europaische-armee>, accessed on 15 May 2020.

⁶² Matthias Naß (2019): Europas strategische Autonomie ist eine Illusion, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2019-11/nato-emmanuel-macron-europa-verteidigungspolitik>, accessed on 15 May 2020.

⁶³ Due to the broad equipment of also Western European armed forces with US material (cf. Netherlands, Spain, Greece, etc.) and thus created long-term political dependencies, this positioning is not only for the Eastern European states.

⁶⁴ Sophia Besch, An EU Army: Four Reasons It Will Not Happen, 12 May 2016, <https://www.cer.eu/insights/eu-army-four-reasons-it-will-not-happen>.

⁶⁵ Whereby material interests were often in the foreground here anyway, so that one must rather speak of a mercenary relationship; many Germanic peoples never had any real loyalty to the Roman Empire. They were always more interested in their own clan or tribe. A similar development threatens in the case of a European army. The betrayal of Arminius stands as a portent on the wall.

⁶⁶ Not so the Eastern Roman Empire, which did not engage in such a "mercenary project", developed a very strong identity, especially one with religious connotations, and had considerable military clout.

More modern empires such as the colonial powers of France and Britain also had the peoples under their rule fight for them. But even they had to realise during the decolonisation era that former comrades could easily become enemies. Apt examples here are the French Indochina War, which ended in ignominious defeat in 1954, and the end of French colonial rule in Algeria in 1962.

5. The question of identification radii

According to the British scholar Emerson, nationalism has an extraordinary, and above all lasting, capacity for mobilisation. It "commands the loyalty of men"⁶⁷, overcomes tribalism, but it also outlasts empires. Since the Battle of Valmy (1792) at the latest, princes and kings have known of its power. This power of nationalism is still indispensable for the leadership of modern armed forces. It is hard for soldiers to imagine being wounded or falling for a technocratic entity like the EU. Tim Collins, former colonel and combatant commander during the Iraq campaign, offers a British perspective when he says, "There's no reason why a European army should do the extraordinary things that regiments do. They will be the cause of the first great defeat for the British Army. You will see guys running away – there's no reason to stay, there's no Black Watch or Royal Irish or whatever. It's just a European army."⁶⁸ There is a danger of a levelling of the armed forces, which, however, would be presented as a "symbiotic gain", while the better armed forces would have to accept a loss of level. For a levelling "upwards" is unrealistic, which is why warnings of a "dragging down effect" were issued as early as 2005, and a report by the Centre for Policy Studies pointed out that, "Apart from the French Foreign Legion, marine infantry, and airborne, plus the Dutch Marines, European armies are armed youth movements."⁶⁹

Successful missions, such as the French guerrilla war against Islamists in Mali, are conducted nationally; EU missions, by virtue of their often deliberately vague mandate alone, harbour the seeds of failure. The EU is incapable of winning in terms of defence policy and material. However, the idea of victory and the will to win are indispensable, even in today's asymmetric conflicts. Until now, this has required a national idea; however, the EU does not want to and cannot provide this motivation, which is due to its structure and its original idea. For the creation of a European army, one could put it the other way round, the national idea works too well. This is not improved by dogmatic adherence to the European

⁶⁷ From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples. By Rupert Emerson. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 1960).

⁶⁸ Richard North: The Wrong Side of the Hill The Secret Realignment of UK Defence Policy with the EU, Centre for Policy Studies, London, October 2005, p.1.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

army, when at the same time it is shown that national solutions are pragmatic and successful, and can be implemented more quickly and cost-effectively.⁷⁰

If nothing else, it is a psychological mistake to believe that good planning will inevitably lead to "cooperating" according to plan. On the contrary, emotional closeness to the concept or plan, and this is often found among leading policy-makers, leads to confirmation bias. This is true at the tactical, at the operational and at the (military) strategic levels.

It remains illusory to think that a coherent organisational culture in the form of a European army could displace the culture of origin. This is already evident in the dichotomy of command and mission tactics in France and Germany, respectively. This can lead to bloody casualties in action.

Thus, at the end of this rather sceptical essay, some questions remain open, which are:

Open questions⁷¹

- Does the European Army refer only to the EU or to Europe as a whole? If it is Europe as a whole, does one rather mean Western Europe, i.e. those countries that are also in NATO, such as Norway? Or does one choose a broad definition of Europe and include, for example, Georgia?
- Should the European Army consist of national armed forces that are assigned to a common command, similar to NATO – is this primarily a matter of renouncing sovereignty?⁷² Does one mean a small armed force that is set up and financed by one of the EU institutions – for example, the Commission – and is subordinate to it?
- Should the European Army be the only existing armed force in the EU, or should there continue to be national armed forces for national tasks in addition to a common army?
- Who decides on the deployment of the European Army? – Is it the European Council, the Commission or the European Parliament? What role should the national parliaments have?⁷³

⁷⁰ Mahdi Nazemroaya (2015): Die NATO soll stillgelegt werden: Ist die EU-Armee gedacht, den Einfluss der USA in Europa zu verringern <https://www.mondialisation.ca/die-nato-soll-stillgelegt-werden-ist-die-eu-armee-gedacht-den-einfluss-der-usa-in-europa-verringern/5436936>, accessed on 15 May 2020.

⁷¹ Cf. Karl-Heinz Kamp (2015): The European Army: Pros and Cons. <https://www.baks.bund.de/de/arbeitspapiere/2015/die-europa-armee-pro-und-kontra>, accessed on 4 Aug 2019.

⁷² Martin Ganslmeier (2019): Warum Trump skeptisch ist, <https://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/europaeische-armee-trump-101.html>, accessed on 15 May 2020.

⁷³ Donata Riedel (2018): Der Weg zur EU-Armee ist steinig – kommt stattdessen die "Armee der Willigen"? <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/verteidigungsunion-der-weg-zur-eu-armee-ist-steinig-kommt-stattdessen-die-armee-der-willigen/23790020.html>, accessed on 15 May 2020.

- What task should a European army fulfil? Would it be an instrument for military intervention in crises in Europe's neighbourhood, or should it also serve the purpose of national and alliance defence?⁷⁴
- How should the joint force be financed? Should the member states bear the main burden, or should the EU have its own budget for such purposes?⁷⁵
- Depending on the degree of military integration and the ambitions of the European Army, the question arises as to what should happen to the British and French nuclear forces.

Curriculum Vitae

Dr. Christian Herrmann

Born 1983; Reserve Officer in the Reconnaissance Unit of the Army, 2003-2004, military service; 2004-2008 Political Science Studies at the Universities of Erlangen/Budapest/Tel Aviv; 2014 PhD, University of Gießen; 2014 BMVg Seminar; 2009 Scientific Assistant at the Deutschen Bundestag (German Federal Parliament), Berlin; 2010-2014 Desk officer Zivil-und Katastrophenschutz (civil defence), Bonn; 2015-2017 Teacher at the University of Bonn; since 2018 Assistant Professor for Security Policy at the Hochschule Bund-Fachbereich Bundespolizei (High school of the German Police Forces), Lübeck.

⁷⁴ Harald Kujat (2018): "Europäische Armee" oder Nato - Was will die Bundesregierung denn nun? <https://www.welt.de/debatte/kommentare/article184052492/Europaeische-Armee-oder-Nato-Was-will-die-Bundesregierung-denn-nun.html>, accessed on 15 May 2020.

⁷⁵ Erich Vad (2019): Warum die EU-Armee eine Illusion ist, <https://www.behörden-spiegel.de/2019/07/05/warum-die-eu-armee-eine-illusion-ist/>, accessed on 15 May 2020.

No more “hide and bide”: China’s Grand Strategy for 2020 and beyond

Bernhard Seyringer

2021 is a pivotal year for China. The so-called “period of strategic opportunity” is coming to an end, and its successor – the vision of a “moderately prosperous society” – is swinging into view right on schedule. China’s foreign policy machine is gearing up for its anticipated confrontation with the West. Under Xi Jinping, the political discourse in Beijing has taken a decidedly hostile turn. As far as the President is concerned, it is time to draw an end to Deng Xiaoping’s era of cautious diplomacy.

Introduction

Since the late 1980s, China has viewed the development of the global hierarchy as an “inevitable” and “irreversible” evolution towards a “multipolar world” (*duoji shijie*).⁷⁶⁾ One of the most influential driving forces of this evolution was the brainchild of Chen Qimao, an advisor to Jiang Zemin. He divided the transformation period into three stages: the first covering the period from 1989 to 1991, and the second being termed “one superpower and four powers” (*yi chao si qiang*)⁷⁷⁾. The third stage would come at the turn of the millennium, with a major transformation that would see the USA become a lesser power compared to its past status. Meanwhile, rising powers elsewhere in the world would drive the global hierarchy’s transformation into a “multipolar” structure.⁷⁸⁾

This global shift opened up a “period of strategic opportunity” (*zhanlue jiyuqi*) for China, which was formally announced by Jiang Zemin during the 16th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)⁷⁹⁾. He also declared that exploiting this opportunity would become the main focus and objective of all government activity, for both domestic and foreign policy.⁸⁰⁾ The Chinese government gave itself a period of two decades in which to implement internal reforms, strengthen its economic position, and shape international discourse so that it would be well-disposed to China’s ascent on the global stage.⁸¹⁾ According to the planned scenario, it was imperative to achieve this ascent by the end of this two-

⁷⁶⁾ This term is attributed to Huan Xiang, Security Advisor to Deng Xiaoping, Huan, X. (1986) “Zhanwang” 1986 nian guoji xingshi’ (Prospects for the 1986 international situation), *Liaowang* (Outlook), (Jänner), p. 8 f.

⁷⁷⁾ Note: the superpower in this scenario is the USA, with the four major powers being China, Japan, Russia and the EU.

⁷⁸⁾ Q. Chen (1993): *New Approaches in China’s Foreign Policy – the Post Cold War Era*; *Asian Survey* 32/3, p. 237 ff.

⁷⁹⁾ Z. Jiang (2002): “Build a Well-off Society in an All-Round Way and Create a New Situation in Building Socialism with Chinese Characteristics”, report to the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, 8 November.

⁸⁰⁾ G. Shen (2007): “Zhongguo Xin Waijiao de Linian yu Shijian” (The Concept and Practice of China’s New Diplomacy), *Shijie Zhishi* (World Affairs), no. 13, p. 43.

⁸¹⁾ cf. G. Wu, H. Lansdowne (2008): *China turns to Multilateralism: Foreign Policy and Regional Security*. p. 224.

decade period, since after this point the West would begin to realise its impacts and start to launch drastic countermeasures as a form of containment.⁸²⁾

The strategy for this period was to deploy a “great power diplomacy” (*daguo waijiao*) in order to undermine the formation of any anti-Chinese coalitions⁸³⁾ and, based on Deng Xiaoping’s philosophy of acting with diplomatic reservation – embodied by the tenet “*tao guang yang hui*” (hide capabilities and bide your time),⁸⁴⁾ – to allay any concerns that the West may have about the consequences of Chinese ascendancy (the “China threat” theory – “*zhongguo weixielun*”).⁸⁵⁾

Comprehensive National Power

In order to prepare for competing with the other major powers, in 1984 Deng Xiaoping commissioned Colonel Huang Shuofeng from the Academy of Military Sciences (AMS) to conduct a study on future security policy after the turn of the millennium.⁸⁶⁾ In order to assess the international security situation, a concept was drawn up to analyse the “Comprehensive National Power, CNP” (*zonghe guoli*) of other major powers in comparison with China’s own position. The CNP indicator system consists of four central index systems and takes both “hard power” and “soft power” components into consideration. It is based on qualitative and quantitative indices for forecasts over a ten to twenty-year period.⁸⁷⁾ The reasoning behind the CNP can be traced back to the texts on Chinese military strategy produced during the nation’s “Warring States” period. In the writings on Sun Tzu, one of the key tenets is that achieving strategic goals through war depends on successfully calculating the might of enemy forces. Expressing the strategies, strengths and the intentions of opposing forces in mathematical equations and making cost/benefit calculations are precursors to modern warfare.⁸⁸⁾

For Wu Chunqiu, these considerations are “the epitome of CNP” and, more than just being wisdom gleaned from traditional military warfare, they are also “instructions for political or diplomatic

⁸²⁾ J. Liu (1994): *Ershi yi shiji ershi sanshi niandai Zhongguo jueqi ji waijiao zhanlue xueze*. (Diplomatic strategic alternatives for a rising China in 2020 to 2030); *Zhanlue yu guanli* (Strategy and Management) 4/3, p. 119, cited in M. Pillsbury (2005): *China Debates the Future Security Environment*. p. xlv.

⁸³⁾ S. Chu (2003): *Quan mianjianshi xiaokang shiqi de zhongguo wai jiao zanlue* (China’s Foreign Policy Strategy during the Period of Building a Relatively Wealthy Society), *Shijie jingji yu zhengzhi*, p. 8.

⁸⁴⁾ Note: a 24-character narrative based on six four-character idioms: “calmly observe” (*leng jing guan cha*), “secure your position” (*wen zhu zhen jiao*), “calmly deal with affairs” (*chen zhuo ying fu*), “hide capabilities, bide your time” (*tao guang yang hui*), “do something to make a difference” (*you suo zuo wei*), “never take the lead” (*jue bu dang tou*).

⁸⁵⁾ Y. Deng (2014): *China: The Post-Responsible Power*. *The Washington Quarterly*, 37/4, p. 120.

⁸⁶⁾ S. Huang (1992): *Zonghe guoli lun* (On comprehensive national power).

⁸⁷⁾ S. Wang et al. (1996): *Shijie zhuyao guojia zonghe guoli bijiao yanjiu* (Comparative Study of the Comprehensive National Power of the Most Important Countries in the World).

⁸⁸⁾ H. Goldhamer (1978): *The Adviser*; Elsevier, New York, p. 130 ff.

offensives, to destabilise enemy forces".⁸⁹⁾ Another concept that has always been a source of consternation for Chinese strategists was formulated by General Li Jijun (AMW), who believed the main threat to the survival of a nation was not primarily war, but rather "strategic disorientation". This capability was attributed to the USA in its handling of the Soviet Union, which has caused – and continues to cause – a deep-seated mistrust of all diplomatic initiatives by the USA.⁹⁰⁾

Jiang Zemin: "Responsible power"

By 1992, China was focusing almost exclusively on domestic policy and economic development. Its foreign policy initiatives were concentrated on efforts to extinguish the diplomatic fires ignited by the Tiananmen Square Massacre of 1989. The regime rediscovered its self-confidence in 1992 and the years that followed. This was felt in domestic policy, since belief was growing that China was not condemned to the same fate as the Soviet Union. In foreign policy matters, too, the wind was changing, since overcoming diplomatic isolation was a matter of vital importance.

The decision of the Clinton administration to allow Taiwan's then-President Lee Teng-hui to travel to the USA in May 1995 led to one of the largest crises between the USA and China during Jiang Zemin's presidency. In the autumn of 1995, China commenced military manoeuvres with the intention of influencing the Taiwanese election planned for March 1996. The swift military intervention by the US administration undoubtedly came as a surprise to the Chinese government.⁹¹⁾

Relations with the USA began to improve markedly from 1997 onwards. During a state visit by Jiang Zemin, talk of a "constructive strategic partnership" could already be heard between the two powers.⁹²⁾ For the Chinese government under Jiang, the relationship with the USA was of primary importance, earning the moniker "key of all keys" (*zhongzhong zhi zhong*)⁹³⁾. In the same year, the narrative of a "responsible power" (*fuzeren de daguo*)⁹⁴⁾ began to take root in the media. From this point onwards, it became an essential part of China's image to the outside world and a first step towards international integration.⁹⁵⁾ This narrative reflected the USA's policy of "deep engagement"

⁸⁹⁾ C. Wu (1995): *Guangyi da zhanlue* (Grand Strategy), p. 98.

⁹⁰⁾ J. Li (1997): *Zhanlue wenhua* (Strategic culture), *Zhongguo junshi hexue* (China Military Science), 38/1, p. 12.

⁹¹⁾ R. Ross (2000): The 1995–96 Taiwan Strait Confrontation: Coercion, Credibility and the Use of Force; *International Security*, 25/2, p. 91.

⁹²⁾ Z. Chen (2012): US Diplomacy and Diplomats: A Chinese view. In: Paul Sharp, Geoffrey Wiseman: *American Diplomacy*. p. 52.

⁹³⁾ D. Shambaugh (2011): Copying with a Conflicted China. *The Washington Quarterly*, 34/1, p. 14 f.: Note: "Key of all keys" is a term that originates from within the CCP, cf. Medeiros, 2009, p. 34.

⁹⁴⁾ J. Nye (1997): "China's Re-emergence and the Future of the Asia-Pacific"; *Survival* 39/4, p. 76.

⁹⁵⁾ N. Li (2008): Summary of the "China International Responsibility Concept"; seminar, Dangdai Yatai, 20 November, p. 150–155 cited in: Yong, 2014, p. 118.

with the Chinese government and had a strongly multilateral outlook.⁹⁶⁾ However, neither the USA nor China itself ever clarified precisely what this meant.⁹⁷⁾

Within the Chinese government, however, discussion regarding China's integration into international structures was always ambivalent. Some believed it was time to step up China's involvement in international affairs. Meanwhile, the neorealists and the Marxist/Leninist-inspired nativists were of the opinion that the US-led integration of China into the structures of global governance was in fact a trap set by the West in order to tie up political resources in international conflict resolution and put the brakes on the nation's ascent.⁹⁸⁾ From this perspective, "global governance" was considered a continuation of Western "containment policy".

Hu Jintao: soft power and the return of Confucius

By the time Hu Jintao took office as the General Secretary at the 16th National Congress of the CCP in November 2002, China had changed its face considerably. Its entry into the WTO in 2001 after 15 years of negotiations brought about dynamic economic development that surpassed all expectations. However, Sino-American relations deteriorated considerably during the 2000 US presidential election campaign. George W. Bush was an outspoken critic of the Clinton administration's China policy (which positioned China as a "strategic partner"). In his view, China was not a partner but a competitor. This change of course was closely monitored by China.⁹⁹⁾ One year after George W. Bush's inauguration to the US presidency, Yang Jiechi – a friend of George H. W. Bush during his time as US ambassador in Beijing – was appointed Foreign Minister.¹⁰⁰⁾

In 1999, the USA led the NATO intervention in Kosovo. Its considerable show of power during this operation caused China to adopt a more reticent stance. It was clearly taking longer than expected for the international hierarchy to shift towards "multipolarity", while the USA's star showed no signs of the "inevitable" dimming that had been discussed for more than a decade. In fact, quite the opposite was true: America's power and influence was much more robust than expected, and the USA had not loosened its grip on its absolute and relative position of power as anticipated, but had in fact tightened

⁹⁶⁾ J. Nye (1995): The Case for Deep Engagement. *Foreign Affairs*, 74/4 p. 93; A.I. Johnston (2008): *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980–2000*; p. 148.

⁹⁷⁾ Deng, 2014, p. 121.

⁹⁸⁾ M. Swaine (2016): Chinese Views on Global Governance Since 2008–2009: Not Much New; *China Leadership Monitor*, February.

⁹⁹⁾ cf. D. Shambaugh (1990): *Beautiful Imperialist: China Perceives America, 1972–1990*.

¹⁰⁰⁾ A. Satoshi (2014): China's Diplomatic Philosophy and View of the International Order in the 21st Century; *Journal of Contemporary East Asian Studies*, 3/2, p. 15.

it even more firmly.¹⁰¹⁾ “Superpower is more super, and the many great powers are less great”.¹⁰²⁾ This assessment prompted China to adopt a more defensive foreign policy strategy. At the same time, however, it drastically increased its defence spending, intensified the negotiations surrounding its entry into the WTO, and continued to pursue expansive economic growth.¹⁰³⁾ However, in the grand scheme of things, neither the Gulf War of 1991, nor the 1995/96 Taiwan Strait Crisis, nor the US-led NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999 fundamentally called into question the “period of peaceful development” or the trend towards “multipolarity” theorised by Chinese analysts.¹⁰⁴⁾

The events of 11 September 2001 once again led to a reconsideration of the strategic alignment within Chinese foreign policy. The belief in Beijing was that the USA would shift its external priorities from China back towards the Middle East, and would therefore be primarily focused on conflict prevention.¹⁰⁵⁾ China saw an opportunity to improve relations with the USA and live up to its role as a “responsible power”. In the UN Security Council in 2001, it agreed with the USA and thus granted the mandate for the intervention in Afghanistan.¹⁰⁶⁾ It did so in spite of a prevailing opinion in Chinese (and Russian) security circles that the invasion of Afghanistan in the autumn of 2001 by the US-led coalition was less about the “war on terror” and more about increasing American dominance in Central and Southern Asia.¹⁰⁷⁾ In this way, China shed the mantle of “strategic competitor” to become a potential partner in the fight against terrorism.¹⁰⁸⁾

Although, in this period, Sino-American relations enjoyed a level of stability not seen since the end of the Cold War, Beijing began to take a more offensive stance on foreign policy in the early 2000s.¹⁰⁹⁾ This can be attributed to two factors. Firstly, the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 gave China the opportunity to crystallise its opposition to “unilateralism driven by hegemonic ambitions” of the

¹⁰¹⁾ Y. Deng (2002): Hegemon on the Offensive: Chinese Perspectives on U.S. Global Strategy; *Political Science Quarterly*, 116/3, p. 346.

¹⁰²⁾ J. Wang (1998): Building a Constructive Relationship. In: Morton Abramowitz, Funabashi Yoichi, Wang Jisi, China-Japan-US.: Managing the Trilateral Relationship; Japan Center for Int. Exchange, p. 22.

¹⁰³⁾ K. He (2009): Dynamic Balancing: China’s balancing strategies towards the United States, 1949–2005, *Journal of Contemporary China*, 18/58, p. 132.

¹⁰⁴⁾ D. Shambaugh, (2005): Return to the Middle Kingdom? China and Asia in the Early Twenty-First Century. In: D. Shambaugh, (ed.): *Power Shift. China and Asia’s New Dynamics*; p. 28.

¹⁰⁵⁾ T. Christensen (2006): Windows and War: Trend Analysis and Beijing’s use of Force. In: Alastair Iain Johnston. *New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy*; p. 76.

¹⁰⁶⁾ He, 2009, p. 133.

¹⁰⁷⁾ A. Kuchins (2018): What is Eurasia to us (the U.S.) *Journal of Eurasian Studies*, no. 9, p. 128.

¹⁰⁸⁾ X. Wu (2004): The promise and limitations of a Sino-US partnership; *The Washington Quarterly*, no. 4, p. 121; Yong Deng (2014), p. 122.

¹⁰⁹⁾ W. Lam, (2007): *Chinese Politics in the Hu Jintao Era: New Leaders*, p. 160.

USA¹¹⁰) and, at long last, to see some indication that the predicted shift in global power towards multipolarity was beginning to take shape. The fact that traditional allies of the USA, such as France and Germany, publicly declared their opposition to US involvement in Iraq signalled to the Chinese government that the US-dominated formation of alliances was beginning to break up, in another parallel with China's "Warring States" period (475–246 BCE). Secondly, the dramatic hit to the reputation of the USA left the Chinese government in no doubt of the significance of "discourse power" (*huayuquan*).¹¹¹) Furthermore, the change of tone in Western literature did not go unnoticed in Beijing. Thanks to its charm offensive, in the early 2000s China was increasingly perceived as a cooperative player in the international arena.¹¹²)

Zheng Bijian, former Director of the CCP Academy and Chairman of the China Reform Forum, learned during his visit to the USA in 2002 just how negative an impact the "China threat" theory was having on his country's image in the eyes of American foreign policy experts. At the Boao Forum for Asia (China's version of the World Economic Forum) held in November 2003, Zheng presented the foreign policy concept of the "peaceful rise" (*heping jueqi*)¹¹³), which was renamed to "peaceful development" (*heping fazhan*) in April 2004.¹¹⁴) This was the first strategic narrative developed in China that aimed to dispel the growing global unease surrounding China's rise to economic and military power, which it did by emphasising the "peaceful" aspect.¹¹⁵)

In 2005, Hu introduced the concept of a "harmonious world" (*hexie shijie*).¹¹⁶) This called for an effective form of "multilateralism", based on a reformed UN, collective security guarantees and the cooperative mechanisms required for this. Within this concept, Hu emphasised the importance of different civilisations coexisting peacefully, as well as ongoing coordination between all states, as opposed to "unilateralism with hegemonic ambition".¹¹⁷) In this way, the "harmonious world" spells

¹¹⁰) M. Clarke (2019): Beijing's Pivot West: The Convergence of "Innenpolitik" and "Aussenpolitik" on China's "Belt and Road"? Journal of Contemporary China, p. 6.

¹¹¹) B. Zhang, (2010): Chinese Foreign Policy in Transition: Trends and Implications. In: Journal of Current Chinese Affairs, 39/2, p. 58.

¹¹²) D. Lynch, (2009): Chinese Thinking on the future of International Relations: realism as the *ti*, rationalism as the *yong*? The China Quarterly, 197, p. 90.

¹¹³) B. Zheng (2005): A new path for China's peaceful rise and the future of Asia; Speech to the Boao Forum for Asia, 3 November, in: China's Peaceful Rise: The Speeches of Zheng Bijian; Brookings Institution, p. 13–17; B Zheng (2005): China's "peaceful rise" to great-power status; Foreign Affairs, 84/5 p. 18–24.

¹¹⁴) R. Suettinger (2004): The Rise and Descent of "Peaceful Rise"; Hoover Institution, China Leadership Monitor, no. 12, p. 7 f.

¹¹⁵) Lynch 2009, p. 88.

¹¹⁶) J. Hu (2005): Build Towards a Harmonious World of Lasting Peace and Common Prosperity; speech given at the UN General Assembly, 15 September 2005, <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/ceun/eng/zt/shnh60/t212915.htm>.

¹¹⁷) S. Zhao (2010): Chinese Foreign Policy under Hu Jintao: The Struggle between Low-profile Policy and Diplomatic Activism; The Hague Journal of Diplomacy, 5/4, p. 363.

the end not just for the idea that “major powers are of primary importance” (*daguo shi shouyao*), but also more generally for the tradition of a foreign policy built on the ideology of “struggle” (*douzheng*).¹¹⁸⁾ At the 17th National Congress in 2007, Hu broke with tradition by eschewing calls for a new international order, instead stressing that China would “work to make the international order fairer and more equitable.”¹¹⁹⁾

The strategic narrative of the “harmonious world” has two new ideas at its core:

1. Firmer anchoring of Confucian values:¹²⁰⁾ In the background, Chinese analysts were working on a new interpretation of the Confucian hierarchical system – one which places a cultural value system above the concept of liberty, ethics above legislation, and rule by the elite above democracy and human rights.¹²¹⁾ At its heart was a rejection of the universal validity of “Western” values.
2. New language rules. The official language regime was changed from “multipolarity” to “multilateralism” (*duobianzhuyi*).¹²²⁾ “Multipolarity” was not just a model born of contemporary analysis – it was also a commitment to active “counterbalancing” of the “US hegemony”, which was met with a less than enthusiastic response in Washington.¹²³⁾

Xi Jinping’s dream

On 15 November 2012, directly after the conclusion of the 18th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party and the announcement of the new party leaders, freshly minted General Secretary Xi Jinping wasted no time in setting out a new political direction. He spoke repeatedly of the “Chinese dream” (*zhongguo meng*) and a “revival” of the Chinese nation (*fuxing zhonghua*) while rejecting Deng’s philosophy of diplomatic reservation¹²⁴⁾, thereby sending a clear signal.

¹¹⁸⁾ Shambaugh, 2011, p. 14 f.

¹¹⁹⁾ E. Medeiros (2009): China’s International Behavior. Activism, Opportunism and Diversification; RAND p. 49 f.

¹²⁰⁾ N. Rolland (2017): China’s “Belt and Road Initiative”: Underwhelming or Game-Changer? The Washington Quarterly, 40/1, p. 131.

¹²¹⁾ W. Callahan (2012): China’s Strategic Future; Asian Survey, 52/4, p. 631.

¹²²⁾ R. Gupta (2012). China’s National Interests: Exploring the Domestic Discourse; Strategic Analysis, 36:5, p. 808.

¹²³⁾ Z. Chen (2009): *Zhongguo liyiguan de lishi bianqian yu xianshi jingou* (Changes in Perspective of China’s Interests and Real Circumstances); Paper presented at the Symposium Proceedings, Annual Meeting of the China International Communist Movement History, Beijing, p. 315 ff. cited in: Gupta, 2012, p. 808.

¹²⁴⁾ W. Lam (2015): Chinese Politics in the Era of Xi Jinping. p. 191.

Xi's vision for the "Chinese dream" was to unfold over the course of a "two centenary" project (*liang'ge yi bainian*):¹²⁵⁾ The goal for the first centenary is to establish a "moderately prosperous society" (*xiaokang shehui*)¹²⁶⁾ by 2021, with this hundred-year period being counted from the founding of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in 1921. The second hundred-year period comes to an end in 2049, with this being based on the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. The idea of the "Chinese dream" can be traced back to Liu Mingfu.¹²⁷⁾

The link between Xi's "Chinese dream", whose primary goal was to anchor the legitimacy of the party and the government system in domestic policy¹²⁸⁾, and the dominant narrative within foreign policy of a "community of common destiny"¹²⁹⁾ is the concept of "moral realism". This is a combination of neorealism and Confucianism that is intended to demonstrate that Beijing is following its own path, one rooted in its history and in its political and strategic culture. It pits Western liberalism in direct opposition to "Chinese values", with the intent of anchoring "an international order shaped by Chinese values" in the traditional philosophy,¹³⁰⁾ the historical reference point for this being Imperial China. At the core of this philosophy is a rejection of the universal validity of Western norms¹³¹⁾ and China's role as a normative power that is capable of shaping the international order with its own values and norms.¹³²⁾ Under Xi, there was a major growth in the significance of global "discourse power" (*huayuquan*). Lending further weight to this concept, Xi introduced the notion of "cultural confidence" in 2014. This was a new addition to the existing "three matters of confidence" (*sange zixin*), a doctrine first introduced in 2012 and espousing confidence in the path (*daolu zixin*), the theory (*lilun zixin*) and the system (*zhidu zixin*) of Chinese socialism.

¹²⁵⁾ Xi (2014), p. 325.

¹²⁶⁾ Note: in specific terms, this means a doubling of GDP per capita between 2000 and 2020. Note: this is a goal that had already been declared by Jiang Zemin; cf. W. Callahan (2013): China dreams: 20 visions of China's future. p. 1.

¹²⁷⁾ M. Liu (2010): Zhongguo meng: Zhongguode mubiao, daoku ji zixinli (The China dream: China's objective, path and self-confidence), Beijing; cited in: Ferdinand, P. (2016). Westward ho – the China Dream and "one belt one road": Chinese foreign policy under Xi Jinping. International Affairs 92(4), p. 944.

¹²⁸⁾ Sorensen CTN (2015) The significance of Xi Jinping's "Chinese Dream" for Chinese Foreign Policy: from "Tao Guang Yang Hui" to "Fen Fa You Wie". Journal China International Relations.

¹²⁹⁾ X. Yan (2014): From Keeping a Low Profile to Striving for Achievement. The Chinese Journal of International Politics, p. 170.

¹³⁰⁾ X. Yan (2018): Chinese Values vs. Liberalism: What ideology will shape the International Normative Order? Chinese Journal of International Politics, 11/1, p. 14 f.

¹³¹⁾ F. Zhang (2011): The Rise of Chinese Exceptionalism in International Relations, European Journal of International Relations 19/2, p. 313; cf. T. Zhao (2006): Rethinking Empire from a Chinese Concept "All-under-Heaven" (Tianxia), Social Identities 12 p. 29–41 and T. Zhao (2005): Tianxia tixi: Shijie zhidu zhaxue daolun (The Tianxia System: An Introduction to the Philosophy of a World Institution).

¹³²⁾ Yan, 2014, p. 182.

“New type of great power relations” (*xinxing daguo guanxi*)

The “new type of great power relations” must be understood as a transitional narrative between the fourth leadership generation under Hu Jintao and the fifth under Xi Jinping, its purpose being to emphasise continuity in the regime. Its content is largely congruent with the (unofficial!) proposal made by the foreign policy establishment of the USA to introduce a “group of two” format, which was published in summer 2008 in *Foreign Affairs*¹³³⁾ and in spring 2009 in the *Financial Times*.¹³⁴⁾ During the state visit by US President Obama in 2009, the “G2” idea was unceremoniously rejected by then-Premier Wen Jiabao. Just over two years later, the concept resurfaced under the moniker “new type of great power relations”, which was publicly proposed by Xi – at that time still the Vice President – during his state visit to the USA.¹³⁵⁾ This time, however, it was to be a “G2 with Chinese characteristics”.

The wording adopted for this concept, the “new type of great power relations”, can be traced back to Professor Li Yihu of Beijing University. Back in 1999, he wrote that, in his view, strategic partnerships would replace the traditional politics of alliances in this multipolar world, giving rise to a “new type of great power relations in the 21st century”.¹³⁶⁾ This wording is based, in part, on the term “great power relations”, which has existed in China since the 1990s – albeit for the purpose of describing Sino-Russian relations. It was used for the first time in April 1997 by General Secretary Jiang Zemin during a speech to the Russian State Duma. Jiang deployed this term to suggest that China and Russia, as “great powers” with a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, had an important role to play in ensuring peace and global stability.¹³⁷⁾

The wording “new type” is used not just to make a distinction between this concept and American-Soviet relations during the Cold War, but also to signal a turning away from the “unavoidable” confrontation – in the neorealist worldview – between the USA as the status quo power and China as the emerging power.¹³⁸⁾ This scenario has been described and discussed as the “Thucydides Trap”.¹³⁹⁾

¹³³⁾ F. Bergsten (2008): A Partnership of Equals. *Foreign Affairs*, Edition: July/August.

¹³⁴⁾ Z. Brzezinski (2019): The Group of Two that could Change the World, *Financial Times*, 13 January; Qi H. (2015) China debates the “New Type of Great Power Relations”, *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 8/4, p. 350.

¹³⁵⁾ J. Xi: “Speech at the National Committee on U.S.-China Relations and U.S.-China Business Council Luncheon”, Washington, D.C., 15 February, 2012, <http://www.chinausfocus.com>.

¹³⁶⁾ J. Zeng (2016): Constructing a “New type of great power relations”: the state of debate in China (1998–2014). *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*. 18/2, p. 429.

¹³⁷⁾ P. Yeophantong (2013): Governing the World: China’s Evolving Conceptions of Responsibility. *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 6/4, p. 331.

¹³⁸⁾ Yan 2014, p. 171; cf. Zeng, 2016, p. 430.

¹³⁹⁾ G. Allison (2015): The Thucydides Trap: Are the U.S. and China headed for war? *The Atlantic*, 24 September.

The “community of common destiny” (*minyun gongtongti*)

Since the first “Belt and Road” forum in May 2017, the narrative of a “community of common destiny”, first coined by Xi in April 2013,¹⁴⁰⁾ has been pursued with fervour by the Chinese government.¹⁴¹⁾ This narrative, too, dates back to the Hu era and has been a part of official terminology since 2007, when it was originally used to describe relations between Taiwan and the PRC. This is the most likely background to the change in the official English translation from “community of common destiny” to “community of shared future for mankind”, which Xi first used in autumn 2015.¹⁴²⁾

The new foreign policy guidelines on “peripheral diplomacy” (*zhoubina waijiao*) were enshrined in the CCP Work Forum on 24 and 25 October 2013, which addressed all high-ranking representatives of the state and the party. At the action level, clear emphasis was placed on the “coordination” of foreign policy goals. Instead of the de-facto federalism that prevailed in the past, a strictly hierarchical top-down principle (*dingcen sheji*) was now prescribed for coordinating the various sub-areas of foreign policy. The focus on development, implementation and achieving strategic goals within specific time frames was a stark contrast to the framework of fundamental principles adhered to during the Hu era. Xi saw this as a response to the central weakness of the Hu era: Weak leadership had allowed infighting and factional struggles to take hold, hindering the efficient execution of political directives.¹⁴³⁾

A key topic was the “priority direction” (*youxian fangxiang*) of China’s relations with its neighbours.¹⁴⁴⁾ According to this principle, the neighbouring Asian countries would be integrated into a Sinocentric regional order by way of the “community of common destiny” as a shared cultural framework along the “belt and road”. In all his speeches on foreign policy, Xi invokes the principles of “friendship” (*qin*), “sincerity” (*cheng*), “mutual benefit” (*hu*) and “inclusion” (*rong*),¹⁴⁵⁾ all one-word phrases in Chinese and modernised re-imaginings of Confucian principles. In this way, he signalled the growing influence

¹⁴⁰⁾ J. Xi (2013): Working Together toward a Better Future for Asia and the World, Keynote: Boao Forum for Asia, 7 April, http://www.china.org.cn/business/Boao_Forum_2013/2013-04/10/content_28501562.htm.

¹⁴¹⁾ D. Zhang (2018): The Concept of “Community of Common Destiny” in China’s Diplomacy: Meaning, Motives, and Implications, *Asia and the Pacific, Policy Studies* 5/2, p. 196.

¹⁴²⁾ J. Xi (2015): Working Together to Forge a New Partnership of Win-win Cooperation and Create a Community of Shared Future for Mankind. Speech to the UN General Assembly, 28 September, http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjdt_665385/zyjh_665391/t1305051.shtml.

¹⁴³⁾ W. Callahan (2016): China 2035: From the China Dream to the World Dream, *Global Affairs*, 2/3, p. 229.

¹⁴⁴⁾ Yan, 2014, p. 167 f.

¹⁴⁵⁾ J. Xi (2014): On the governance of China. Beijing. Foreign Languages Press, p. 326.

of the neorealist school of thought in international relations and a departure from the prioritisation of “great power relations” that prevailed under Jiang and Hu.¹⁴⁶⁾

Different kinds of “communities of common destiny” exist: bilateral (e.g. with Pakistan), those involving regions and continents (primarily ASEAN and African nations), and “the whole of mankind”. Even though this formulation is the one currently used most frequently, there is no official definition. Its primary objective is to signal discontent with the “US-dominated international order” and set a path towards a “better order”. For Yan Xuetong, the “community of common destiny” extends as far as military cooperation.¹⁴⁷⁾

Since Xi’s rise to power, China’s previous self-portrayal as a developing country – predicated on the notion that “the West is strong, while China is weak” – has ceased to be used. The new four-character idiom for expressing China’s “grand strategy” is “*fen fa you wei*” (striving for achievement), which replaces Deng’s “*tao guang yang hui*” (hide capabilities and bide your time).¹⁴⁸⁾

The Belt and Road Initiative: the elephant in the room

The pronouncement of a “New Silk Road” initiative by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in July 2011 undoubtedly spurred Beijing into action.¹⁴⁹⁾ The Chinese government was faced with the dilemma of being unable to force the USA out of Asia, while also sensing that this open declaration of competition could not be ignored. In autumn 2013, the Chinese government decided to launch its own initiative, a somewhat vague concept of a “New Silk Road” based on the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Maritime Silk Road. This strategy was given the title “One Belt, One Road” in 2014 and renamed the “Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI) in 2016.¹⁵⁰⁾ There was considerable internal uncertainty surrounding the concept. Up until 2015, it had not appeared in any reports by the State Council, nor did it feature in the thirteenth five-year plan that set out the economic priorities and strategies for 2016–2020.¹⁵¹⁾ The idea had been put forward by Wang Jisi, one of Hu’s trusted advisors, in October 2012. Wang’s “Marching

¹⁴⁶⁾ N. Rolland (2017b): China’s Eurasian Century? Political and Strategic Implications of the Belt-and-Road-Initiative. Washington D.C. p. 133.

¹⁴⁷⁾ Yan, 2014. p. 169.

¹⁴⁸⁾ A. Berkofsky (2016): “The Chinese Dream” and Chinese foreign and security policies – Rosy rhetoric versus harsh realities. Asia-Pacific Review, 23/2, p. 122 f.

¹⁴⁹⁾ Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton Speaks on India and the United States: “A Vision for the 21st Century”, Chennai, India, 20 July, http://chennai.usconsulate.gov/secclintonspeechacl_110721.html.

¹⁵⁰⁾ K. Brown, p. 104.

¹⁵¹⁾ S. Kennedy, C. Johnson (2016): Perfecting China, Inc.: The 13th Five-Year Plan. CSIS.

Westwards" (Xi jin)¹⁵²⁾ initiative called for an intensification of economic and trade relations with all West Asian territories along three trade routes (a southern, central and northern corridor), as well as a maritime trade route through the Indian Ocean. He proposed the introduction of a cooperation and development fund, deeming the "march westwards" a historical imperative for the new great power relations. In retrospect, this reads as a quasi-prophetic outline of the later Belt and Road Initiative, with Wang's theories also borrowing from existing ideas: the "necessary and fateful march west" had already been proposed a decade earlier by Liu Yazhou, the son-in-law of former President Li Xiannian, in the foreword to Liu Mingfu's "China Dream".¹⁵³⁾ Liu Yazhou counts among the circle of officials who advise Xi Jinping.¹⁵⁴⁾

The BRI is presented as the key to China's rise to normative power, with historical references extending as far back as the Tang Dynasty – often described as China's "golden age" – which set the rules of "global governance". This initiative is inextricably bound up with the idea of "Chinese exceptionalism" and the claim of imperial sovereignty embodied by *tianxia datong*, the "harmony under heaven".¹⁵⁵⁾ It is framed as a peaceful alternative to "American hegemony" and as the counter-model to "Western imperialism", in which "harmony without uniformity" (*he er butong*) is possible, and by extension a form of international order that is superior to "globalisation". This Confucian principle aims to make clear that nations can maintain "harmonious relations" without having to abandon their own political attitudes, with the aim of preventing criticism of and interference in "internal matters". As a grand strategy, the BRI underscores the dream of a Silk Road that transforms the "Chinese dream" into the "dream of all mankind".¹⁵⁶⁾

China has also shown an awareness of "discourse power" in its practice of continually revising and tweaking its guiding phrases. A few months after publication, a standardisation of the English translation was published. According to the new rules, the term "initiative" should no longer be used in the plural, while terms such as "strategy", "project", "programme" and "agenda" were to be avoided. However, the Chinese-language articles in the *neibu* (professional journals for an exclusive group of readers) continued to use *zhanlue* (strategy) instead of *changyi* (initiative).

¹⁵²⁾ J. Wang, (2012): Xi jin: zhong guo di yuan zhan lue de zai ping heng ("Marching Westwards": The Rebalancing of China's Geostrategy), Global Times, 17 October.

¹⁵³⁾ M. Liu (2001): Zhongguo meng: Zhongguode mubio, daoku ji zixinli (The China dream: China's objective, path and self-confidence).

¹⁵⁴⁾ W. Lam (2015): The General's Growing Clout in Diplomacy. Jamestown Foundation, China Brief, 3 April.

¹⁵⁵⁾ F. Godement (2019): China's Promotion of new global values. In: A. Tellis (ed.): Strategic Asia 2019. China Expanding strategic ambitions. p. 346

¹⁵⁶⁾ W. Callahan (2012b): Sino-Speak: Chinese Exceptionalism and the Politics of History, Journal of Asian Studies 71/1, p. 42.

Conclusion

Since Xi Jinping first outlined the idea for the Belt and Road Initiative in autumn 2013, many western observers have asserted that China is on a global offensive. However, in reality, the BRI is hardly a ground-breaking innovation. Since the mid-1990s, there have probably been more than a dozen “Silk Road” initiatives – proposed by international organisations, Japan and South Korea, the EU and the USA. Some of the underlying political initiatives are based on ideas dating back more than a decade, while the leading strategic narratives, in particular the “community of common destiny”, are a simple rehashing of familiar concepts. Even among the BRI partner states themselves, there is a dearth of allies who would be prepared to take China’s side in anti-American coalitions, even in the medium term. To neighbouring countries in the region, cultural integration into a Sinocentric order that implicitly harks back to the “Middle Kingdom” offers not so much a promise of a prosperous future as it does a tragic reminder of a historical era in which China saw its neighbours as vassal states.

No more hide and bide. No more lying low: At the sunset of its “period of strategic opportunity”, China adopted a much more confrontational stance in its foreign and security policy, proclaiming a “world order shaped by Chinese values” for the future. But the ideas, concepts, and perhaps even capabilities, within Chinese foreign policy remain well below the level of this ambition. Even if the time of appeasement and charm offensives appears to be over, there is still a suspicion that, owing to domestic instability and a misjudgement of future prospects, Beijing has simply shown its hand too early.

Curriculum Vitae

Mag. Bernhard Seyringer

Technology analyst; since 2020 University of Vienna Head of the Department of „Desinformation Analysis“; 2013 MRV Research, Vienna (Founder and Director) – New Technologies & International Liaison, Smart Manufacturing, KI, Blockchain; 2010-2013 Seyringer Communication: Public Affairs; 2012-2015 Lector: Lobbying and Public Affairs, University of Kufstein (FH Kufstein); 2006-2010 Observer for the Commission for Radio and Television Policy in SEE (South Eastern Europe); Member of the Austrian Society for Foreign Policy, STRATEG- Society for Strategic Studies, ULI Austria.



The German and European Question

A comparative study of the politics of Bismarck and Kohl on the 90th birthday of Dr Helmut Kohl and the 30th anniversary of German reunification

Ilya Zarrouk

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, now the German Minister of Defence, wrote in a guest article for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 18 June 2018: "Looking at Helmut Kohl's coffin, the whole world could see what kind of Europe he had given his life to: a Europe of togetherness; a Europe of unity; a Europe in which the interests of our German fatherland are realised; a Europe in which there is no German 'Sonderweg'."¹⁵⁷⁾ This statement is the guiding principle behind the comparative analysis of the 'German Question' in the 19th and 20th centuries by German historians – a question that applied, in turn, to Europe too. Where are the continuities and the discontinuities in the German and European Question? This essay aims to answer this question, on the 90th anniversary of Dr Helmut Kohl's birth.

The German Question between the Old Empire and the German Confederation in the Concert of Europe

With the founding of the German Empire in 1871, the new nation state was faced with the problem of having adopted a quasi-hegemonic position in Europe. Within the European centre of gravity, there was an equilibrium to be struck between a Europe-ruled state and the balance of power.¹⁵⁸⁾ The existence of a federation of 41 small and medium-sized German states fell on the side of limitation of power, even though a power vacuum prevailed in Europe at this time.¹⁵⁹⁾ Austria was the guarantor power for the German Confederation. This was a favourable situation, since it did not contradict the interests of the small and medium-sized German states.¹⁶⁰⁾ Prussia, meanwhile, found itself in a two-pronged situation. Following the Wars of Liberation, it had gained the provinces of Westphalia and Rhine, which was to help secure the border against France. However, the Prussian territory was not sufficiently homogeneous in structure. As a result, Prussia's position was somewhat weakened, but still too strong for the small and medium-sized German states.¹⁶¹⁾ Restoration of the 'Old Empire' was not pursued in the interests of creating a major power. Rather, the intent was to underpin peace by way of a passive confederation, thereby avoiding the chaos of war, or at least confining it to a local

¹⁵⁷ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Monday 18 June 2018, no. 138, p. 6. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer is the Leader of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and has served as the Minister of Defence since 17 July 2019.

¹⁵⁸ Konrad Canis: *Bismarcks Außenpolitik 1870–1890*, 2nd Edition, 2008 Paderborn, p. 3 ff.

¹⁵⁹ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ See: Pieter M. Judson: *Habsburg, Geschichte eines Imperiums 1740–1918*, Munich 2017.

¹⁶¹ *Deutscher Nationalstaat und europäisches Gleichgewicht im Zeitalter Bismarcks*, Munich 1984. Jürgen Angelow: *Von Wien nach Königgrätz, Sicherheitspolitik des Deutschen Bundes im europäischen Gleichgewicht 1815–1866*, Munich 1996.

scale.¹⁶²⁾ While political repression was serving to ensure domestic security in the German Confederation, there was still a need to establish forms of constitutionalism.¹⁶³⁾ The national movement in Germany grew out of the ashes of the Napoleonic Wars, with France looking like more of a threat than a partner since the Wars of Liberation. This differs fundamentally from the political approach taken in the late 20th century and the Kohl era. By 1807/08, the path to be taken was already quite clear. This is reflected in Johann G. Fichte's "Addresses to the German Nation", which sets forth an idealistic portrayal of national unity.¹⁶⁴⁾ This idealism struck a chord with the educated middle-classes in particular, but ultimately it resonated with large sections of the German population too – a situation that has many parallels with that of the German people in 1989–90.¹⁶⁵⁾ This national patriotism emanated out from the modernised State of Prussia, spreading across large areas of Germany. The constitutional elements of the fight for liberation were the uniting of state and people, but also the fight for civil liberties. This can also be said of the period around the fall of the Iron Curtain, and of the desire for freedom and unity in 1989–90.¹⁶⁶⁾ However, the joining of state and people was followed neither by national unity nor by a liberal structure. The Carlsbad Decrees of 1819 were the result of the bourgeoisie being unsatisfied with the restricted freedoms and unfulfilled national promises, in the same way that the people of the former GDR did not want to be placated with the promises of the Krenz regime.¹⁶⁷⁾ New fuel for European and German nationalist movements was again provided by France in 1830.¹⁶⁸⁾ In Germany, the cogs of revolution were turning: not so much in the powerful states of Austria or Prussia, but chiefly in the small and medium-sized states. This revolutionary sentiment was not concerned solely with nationhood itself, but was in fact also about the socio-economic inequalities in the German Confederation, which would as well appear later in the final phases of the former GDR.¹⁶⁹⁾ The political stagnation needed breaking. Karl Theodor Welcker also voiced this sentiment in the Baden diet, arguing that a national parliament was crucial for German unity.¹⁷⁰⁾ This was pursued under the banner of freedom and unity, and posed the 'national question' as a German domestic affair. The liberal tendency to frame national unification fundamentally as a matter of unity and freedom was shattered by the formation of a faction, which, at the Hambach Festival in 1832, declared the nation state a republican model that should be seen not as a system of reciprocity but instead as part of a European idea.¹⁷¹⁾ It was precisely this concept that Helmut Kohl drew upon in 1989–90 together with François Mitterrand.

¹⁶² Peter Burg: *Der Wiener Kongress, Der Deutsche Bund im europäischen Staatensystem*, Munich 1984.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁴ See also: Klaus Vieweg: *Hegel, Der Philosoph der Freiheit*, in particular: *Denken der Freiheit – Fichte*, p. 215, Munich 2019.

¹⁶⁵ See also: Heinrich-August Winkler: *Geschichte des Westens, Vom Kalten Krieg zum Mauerfall*, Munich 1st Edition, 2016.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.* Peter Burg, *Der Wiener Kongress. Der Deutsche Bund im europäischen Staatensystem*, Munich 1984.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ Angelow: *Von Wien nach Königgrätz*, loc. cit.

¹⁶⁹ Winkler: *Geschichte des Westens*, loc. cit.

¹⁷⁰ Konrad Canis: *Bismarcks Außenpolitik 1870–1890*, 2nd Edition, 2008 Paderborn.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.*

"All those who bear responsibility in and for Europe must respect this will of the people and population. We are all called upon to construct a new architecture for the European house, a permanent and just peace order for our continent..."¹⁷²⁾ (From Helmut Kohl's unification speech)

In doing so, he notably walked the path not of conservative but of liberal left thought.

The liberal movement of the 1840s and the birth of German nationalism

The Rhine crisis of 1840, triggered by France's defeat on its Oriental policy, led to murmurings of a French retaliation against Prussia, Austria and the entire German Confederation. On top of this, calls for war became increasingly louder on the German side too. These were stoked in particular by the young General Staff officer Helmuth von Moltke the Younger.¹⁷³⁾ Social divisions became blurred by this patriotic upswell. The dizzying heights of patriotism were scaled once again in 1989–90, but this time there were no calls to achieve unity through war. Instead, as mentioned earlier, Helmut Kohl joined the national unification of the two German states with the European component.¹⁷⁴⁾ In 1840, the sentiment in Germany was that the liberal calls for liberty and Parliamentarism should be put aside because the external threat was so immense and unshakeable. As a result, preference was given to power, and it was decided that Prussia – as the westernmost of the German states and wielder of economic power through the *Zollverein* (customs union) founded in the 1830s – would seek to contain the French threat.¹⁷⁵⁾ However, Prussia was too weak at this point to fully embody the politics of power; it did not rank highly in the European balance of power, even though its partners Austria and Russia had grown weaker.¹⁷⁶⁾ But change was just around the corner, with industrialisation bolstering the Prussian state and modernising the economy, society, and Prussia itself. This was followed by reforms which had been initiated during the Wars of Liberation.¹⁷⁷⁾ However, the Prussian state, and especially the aristocracy, attempted to smother the emerging shoots of liberal ideals, which did result in a certain degree of stagnation. Nonetheless, change could ultimately not be held back forever. The *Zollverein* of 1834 was a milestone on the path towards national unity.¹⁷⁸⁾ Similarly, the economic unification of the two German states in 1989–90 was, together with the European unification, a part of Germany's story of national unity.¹⁷⁹⁾ Prussia knew just how to wield the power it had gained from the customs arrangement, using it to provide economic backing for technological innovations such as railway construction.¹⁸⁰⁾ As a result, the 1850s were a time of dynamic economic growth, although

¹⁷²⁾ *ibid.*, p. 776.

¹⁷³⁾ Angelow: Von Wien nach Königgrätz, loc. cit.; Hans-Christof Kraus: Die politische Neuordnung Deutschlands nach der Wende von 1866, in: Der preußisch-österreichische Krieg 1866, ed. Winfried Heinemann/Lothar Höbelt, Paderborn 2018.

¹⁷⁴⁾ Winkler: Geschichte des Westens, loc. cit.

¹⁷⁵⁾ Angelow: Von Wien nach Königgrätz, loc. cit.

¹⁷⁶⁾ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁷⁾ *ibid.*

¹⁷⁸⁾ Heinrich von Treitschke: Der Deutsche Zollverein und seine Geschichte, 2009.

¹⁷⁹⁾ Winkler: Geschichte des Westens, loc. cit.

¹⁸⁰⁾ cf. Heinrich v. Treitschke.

Prussia was not yet ready to exploit this for the purpose of economic nationalisation.¹⁸¹⁾ However, the Prussian executive did deftly divert some of its economic capabilities into its political rivalry with Austria. The House of Habsburg wanted to join the customs union in order to exert influence on this economic alliance. However, competing interests in Austria made it difficult to reach a positive decision.¹⁸²⁾ This gave rise to the House of Hohenzollern's claim to leadership, which it was granted from the 1840s onwards by the southern, small and medium-sized states of the German Confederation. In the longer term, this resulted in Austria losing the economic and political ability to lead the Confederation.¹⁸³⁾

Bismarck also remarked with foresight that

"Only those who have been in the business can judge this; how did it not occur to us in 1852 and 1864 that it was precisely the customs interests that were the highest of the vital political interests – I do not want to underestimate the capacity to establish an economic community for the whole of Germany..."¹⁸⁴⁾

Shortly before the revolutions of 1848–49, the moderate Baden liberals from the Hessian town of Heppenheim proposed that the *Zollverein* should be used, with the inclusion of Austria, to achieve political unity in Germany.¹⁸⁵⁾ This could be achieved by establishing a national customs parliament, among other measures.¹⁸⁶⁾ The revolutions of 1848–49 gave these powers hope that, in addition to nationalisation, it would also be possible to achieve constitutionalisation.¹⁸⁷⁾ Only a minority within the radical left wanted nationalisation in the form of parliamentary democracy. However, there was a consensus on the fact that a *großdeutsche Lösung*, a solution for all of Germany, had to be found, with the concept of a national state of power coming to the fore – especially with regard to the issue of Schleswig and the Polish city of Poznań. Here, the forces of the *Paulskirche* were relying heavily on the military strength of Prussia.¹⁸⁸⁾ At the Frankfurt National Assembly, there was agreement across the board that Austria should take on a prominent role in Germany. However, there was also some support for the proposal put forward by Parliamentarians to dissolve the Habsburg Monarchy and make the territories of this multi-national empire independent. This happened 70 years later, at the end of the First World War.¹⁸⁹⁾ However, the enduring concept was one of a non-Austrian federal state with some

¹⁸¹⁾ *ibid.*

¹⁸²⁾ *ibid.*

¹⁸³⁾ cf. Pieter M. Judson.

¹⁸⁴⁾ *ibid.*, p. 294/295.

¹⁸⁵⁾ cf. Heinrich v. Treitschke.

¹⁸⁶⁾ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁷⁾ Martin Botzenhart: Die Verfassungsfrage in der Revolution von 1848/49, in: Die Deutschen und die Revolution, ed. Michael Salewski, Göttingen 1984.

¹⁸⁸⁾ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁹⁾ *ibid.*

elements of independence.¹⁹⁰⁾ The problem with this concept of nationalisation was that it would have reduced the Final Act of the Congress of Vienna of 1815 to absurdity, namely the quintessence of the European balance of power.¹⁹¹⁾ Austria was to become a quasi-hegemonic power in Central Europe and, according to Parliamentary President Heinrich von Gagern, it would even establish itself as a global power that would also rule in the Danube region.¹⁹²⁾ For this reason, the *großdeutsche Lösung* also looked towards Russia, which was viewed by Heinrich von Gagern as the 'despotic East'.¹⁹³⁾ This is the polar opposite to Helmut Kohl's policy of détente in the late 20th century. In unifying Germany, Kohl sought not to pit the nation against Europe and Russia, but rather to work with Europe, even to the extent of establishing a European Union and seeking the involvement of the former USSR.¹⁹⁴⁾ However, at that time Austria saw the state sovereignty of its monarchist principle as being under threat, which led it to initiate counter-revolutionary measures. Ultimately, this forced the conclusion that the nationalisation process would have to shed its grand aspirations and take a much smaller form, the *kleindeutsche Lösung*, even if thoughts of a union with Austria continued to hold.¹⁹⁵⁾ The reform-conservative Prussia under Frederick William IV responded to these aspirations of nationalisation and reform on two fronts: firstly with military action, and secondly, with constitutional reforms, which also saw the idea of a *kleindeutsche Lösung* being adopted as the basis for a Prussian-German nation.¹⁹⁶⁾ The liberals did not envisage a hegemonic Prussia in Germany, but rather a Prussian state which was to merge into a parliamentary Germany. Meanwhile, the Prussian monarchy saw its own instruments of power as the basis for constituting a German nation state.¹⁹⁷⁾ As a result, only the *kleindeutsche Lösung* remained under the leadership of the Hohenzollern Monarchy – a process of nationalisation that suited the power structures of the time, since it emanated from one of the major German powers.¹⁹⁸⁾ By the end of the 1848–49 revolutions, both the *großdeutsche* and the *kleindeutsche Lösung* had failed. On the one hand, this was because Austria insisted on its position in the restored German Confederation. On the other, it was the result of the major powers seeing a risk to the European balance of power in both approaches to nationalisation – something that also became clear in the war with Denmark in 1848.¹⁹⁹⁾ It was precisely for this reason that Russia and the UK cautioned Frederick William IV of Prussia against accepting the imperial crown from the hands of the National Assembly. They were pinning their hopes on Austria's balancing power, with the UK gradually aligning more closely with Prussia as events unfolded.²⁰⁰⁾ One of the strongest opponents to both the

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁹¹ *ibid.* See also: Peter Burg, Munich 1984.

¹⁹² *cf.* Konrad Canis, Munich 2008.

¹⁹³ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ *cf.* Winkler: *Geschichte des Westens*, loc. cit.

¹⁹⁵ *cf.* Martin Botzenhart, Göttingen 1984.

¹⁹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ *cf.* Peter Burg, Munich 1984.

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *cf.* Michael Stürmer, Munich 1984.

großdeutsche and the *kleindeutsche Lösung* was Russia. The Russian Empire therefore cooperated closely with the Habsburg Monarchy, with both aristocratic houses exerting considerable pressure on Berlin. Tsarist Russia threatened war, while also making it clear that it would support Austria should conflict arise.²⁰¹⁾ Meanwhile, Russia also assisted Austria by making interventions in Hungary – another indicator of its willingness to use military force. For his part, Frederick William IV made it clear to the German envoy von Rochow that Prussia would be the superior force in a military confrontation. Even though hope of a *kleindeutsche Lösung* had vanished for now, the revolutions of 1848–49 brought a new dynamism to the considerations of the nation state, more under Prussian than Austrian rule.²⁰²⁾ Something similar happened in 1989–90: Revolution quickened the pace of German and European unification almost simultaneously, with the Kohl administration building upon this even further.²⁰³⁾ In his unification speech to the Members of the German Bundestag, Kohl said that “...with their peaceful stand for freedom, for human rights and self-determination, the Germans in the GDR have given an example of their courage and their love of freedom for all the world to see...”²⁰⁴⁾

The fact that the Viennese Order faltered shortly after the Olomouc diction and the quelling of revolutionary activities can be seen in the unresolved ‘problem of the Orient’ – which remains to this day.²⁰⁵⁾

The Crimean War and the Italian campaign as the starting point for the turnaround in the German Question and the shift in the European balance of power

The Crimean War of 1853–56 caused the interests of the individual states to swing back into view. The UK was interested in the integrity of the Ottoman Empire for trade reasons, which were precisely France’s motivations, too.²⁰⁶⁾ After the revolutionary stirrings, Austria wanted to cast off its isolated foreign policy position within its sphere of power, driving Russia to vacate the Danubian Principalities before moving into them itself.²⁰⁷⁾ After its weakening in 1850, Prussia remained a passive actor. Russia’s defeat in the Crimean War bolstered not only the Western powers but also the powers of Central Europe, which was not to Austria’s benefit. The French were concerned with the question of Italian unification, while the UK had the issue of Ireland to deal with, along with larger geopolitical concerns in Asia. For the Habsburgs, isolation was a very real prospect.²⁰⁸⁾ After the Crimean War, the rivalry among the major powers turned its focus towards Asia, where the UK and Russia were trying to

²⁰¹ *ibid.*

²⁰² *ibid.*

²⁰³ cf. Winkler: *Geschichte des Westens*, loc. cit.

²⁰⁴ Helmut Kohl: Ein Zehn-Punkte-Programm, Rede vor dem Deutschen Bundestag zur deutschen Einheit, 28 November 1989, p. 771, in: *Politische Reden 1945–1990*, ed. Marie-Luise Recker, Frankfurt am Main 1999.

²⁰⁵ cf. Konrad Canis, 2nd Edition, Munich 2008.

²⁰⁶ *ibid.*

²⁰⁷ *ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *ibid.*

defend their interests while still keeping a close eye on European politics.²⁰⁹⁾ The situation created by the Crimean War gave rise to a new geopolitical environment for Prussia. The two great Eastern powers – Austria and Russia – were weakened by the conflict. As a result, there was now a very real prospect that no external intervention in the resolution of the German Question, in particular a *kleindeutsche Lösung*, would come under Prussia's leadership. At this time, Russia was excluded from the Concert of Europe, while the UK had adopted a wait-and-see approach with regard to Europe. Otto von Bismarck was acutely aware of this, which is why he held back from forcing the Prussian-German solution.²¹⁰⁾ First, he wanted to ally Prussia more closely with Napoleonic France. In the reunification of 1989–90, Helmut Kohl was occupied with precisely the same dynamics – albeit with a different foreign policy alignment.²¹¹⁾ For Bismarck and for Kohl, political realities formed the basis of foreign policy actions. Bismarck turned to the fundamental tenets of Hegel, who supported the thesis of power politics.²¹²⁾ This thesis puts forth the universal principle that a nation should make use of the need for power, and should enforce this power.²¹³⁾ An example of this can be seen in the concept of the primacy of foreign policy, which became the guiding principles for Bismarck's politics – and to a certain extent, Kohl's foreign and European policies too, albeit in different directions. In "Grundsätze der Realpolitik" [Principles of *Realpolitik*] by Ludwig A. Rochau, the foundations are laid for Bismarck's domestic and foreign policies alike. At their heart is the idea that, wherever there appears to be an absence of power, it is scarcely possible to bring together liberty and unity.²¹⁴⁾ This principle was part of Helmut Kohl's arsenal too. He knew just how to use the weakness of the former USSR and the former SED regime, aided as he was by the backing of the Bush administration.²¹⁵⁾ Both Rochau and Bismarck saw in Prussia's strength the sole opportunity to unite Germany, and to do so as a dualistic counterpoint to Austria.²¹⁶⁾ This is where Bismarck's foreign policy diverges from that of Kohl, since the latter's vision of unification ultimately included Europe. Meanwhile, Bismarck was prepared – should it be necessary – to pursue the nationalisation process against the individual interests of the various regional powers of Europe. Bismarck believed that ousting the Danube Monarchy was the key not just to German unification, but also, crucially, to German security, thereby providing protection against revolutionary rumblings.²¹⁷⁾ It was Prussia's economic strength and the robust growth of its economy, which was considerably greater than that of the French in the 1850s, and to a certain extent greater even than the British, that handed Prussia its dominant position in the German Confederation during this

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*

²¹⁰ cf. Michael Stürmer, Munich 1984.

²¹¹ cf. Winkler: *Geschichte des Westens*, loc. cit.

²¹² See: Klaus Vieweg: Hegel, *Der Philosoph der Freiheit*, Munich 2019.

²¹³ *ibid.* See also: Moltke. *Leben und Werk*, Sammlung Dietrich, 5th Edition, selected by Max Horst.

²¹⁴ cf. Konrad Canis, 2nd Edition, Munich 2008.

²¹⁵ cf. Winkler: *Geschichte des Westens*, loc. cit.

²¹⁶ cf. Konrad Canis, 2nd Edition, Munich 2008.

²¹⁷ Otto von Bismarck, *Aus seinen Schriften, Briefen und Reden*, ed. Hanno Helbling, Zurich 1998.

period.²¹⁸⁾ However, in 1859, the German states did not support the Italian unification efforts, which were assisted by the French. In fact, these events had quite the opposite effect, resurrecting the anti-French sentiment that had prevailed during the Napoleonic era and the Rhine crisis. The German states now saw Austria as their saviour from the French threat, and implored Prussia to assist the imperial monarchy in its struggle.²¹⁹⁾ However, Prussia was only prepared to support Austria in Northern Italy if it gave up some of its power to Prussia in return.²²⁰⁾ As a result, Prussia fell out of favour with the small and medium-sized states and with southern Germany, in much the same way as Austria saw its reputation suffer when it agreed a rapid peace agreement with France so as not to be put under pressure by the Prussian demands.²²¹⁾ The end of the war in 1859 marked a turning point for the German Question. Although national euphoria persisted, the end of the war and the political reality channelled it primarily into cultural participation.²²²⁾ Rather than a *kleindeutsche Lösung*, it was the *großdeutsche* solution that dominated the political landscape. During the budget and constitutional conflict of the early 1860s, the Prussian monarchy was in danger of collapsing and being replaced by a parliamentary system. This time, however, the catalyst was not revolution: rather, the liberal powers were refusing to approve the army budget of the Crown.²²³⁾ In this situation, Bismarck tried to strike a balance between royal power on one side and parliamentary rule on the other, granting the Prussian liberals concessions on the issue of German nation building.²²⁴⁾ In one of his first speeches, he also said that it was not through speeches and majority decisions that the great questions of the day would be decided, since that was the great mistake of 1848 and 1849.²²⁵⁾ They would be decided, he said, by “iron and blood”.²²⁶⁾ In his view, this fitted the *Realpolitik* of the era. The discontinuity in Kohl’s foreign policy of the late 1980s is particularly evident here. Chancellor Helmut Kohl, along with then-President Richard von Weizsäcker; the Minister President of Baden-Württemberg, Erwin Teufel; his counterpart in Saxony, Kurt Biedenkopf; and the Minister President of Bavaria, Franz Josef Strauß, all had painful memories of war. From these experiences they drew the correct conclusion that “iron and blood” was not the key to establishing unity between the two German states, but rather that it was within the unity of Europe that German unity would be reborn.

Later on in that unification speech, Kohl announced: “...Opportunities are unfolding to overcome the divisions of Europe and also of our fatherland. The Germans, who are now coming together again in

²¹⁸ cf. Konrad Canis, 2nd Edition, Munich 2008.

²¹⁹ *ibid.*

²²⁰ *ibid.*

²²¹ *ibid.*

²²² *ibid.*

²²³ See also: Andreas Biefang: Der Reichstag als Symbol der politischen Nation. Parlament und Öffentlichkeit 1867–1890, in: Regierung, Parlament und Öffentlichkeit im Zeitalter Bismarcks. Politikstile im Wandel, ed. Lothar Gall, Munich 2003.

²²⁴ *ibid.*

²²⁵ Otto von Bismarck, Aus seinen Schriften, Briefen und Reden, ed. Hanno Helbling, Zurich 1998.

²²⁶ *ibid.*

the spirit of Freedom, will never be a threat. Rather – I am certain of this – they will be an asset to Europe, which is growing ever closer together.”²²⁷⁾

Meanwhile, in February 1866, shortly before the Austro-Prussian War, Bismarck explained that Prussia could have placed itself at the forefront of the national movement in 1848 if it had used military might to do so.²²⁸⁾ Bismarck wanted to resolve the internal conflicts of Prussia through the ties that welded the nation together in the 1840s. For Bismarck, power politics were not just for times of war – they were also a bastion of flexible foreign policy. Bismarck did not specify precisely how Prussia was to expand its power in Germany. However, he called for a union of the new and, above all, the innovative with the time-honoured and the traditional. In this way, he was largely in favour of a German parliamentary system, once the question of power had been resolved.²²⁹⁾ On the domestic front, however, the Liberals were not prepared to yield. This caused the Prussian President to shift his focus towards foreign policy, in spite of his endeavours since 1862 to appeal to the economic middle-classes. Here, just like Kohl in the late 1980s, he sought balance – in particular with the House of Habsburg. He was even prepared to agree to support Austria if it would shift the focus of its security policies to the south or southeast, leaving Prussia to assert its claim to power in northern Germany.²³⁰⁾ Austria responded to this proposal with a demand for federal reform.²³¹⁾ It wanted the Bundestag of that time to be appointed a six-person governing board for the federal states, and a collection of delegates from the individual parliaments of each state.²³²⁾ This was by no means the most modern proposal put forward in the debate on national unification, but it was for precisely that reason that the 41 states of the German Confederation agreed to it.²³³⁾ They also went along with the Austrian proposal because they still clung to the sentiments of the *großdeutsche Lösung* of the 1840s, as well as because the Prussian conflict with the liberals was damaging the reputation of Bismarck’s government.²³⁴⁾ Although Bismarck did subsequently succeed in killing off the momentum of the Habsburg proposal, he was now even more doomed to success. Kohl proceeded in a similar manner with the UK in 1989–90. Margaret Thatcher was first and foremost a politician, and she was concerned that Germany would once again become too powerful. As a result, she was not only extremely critical of German reunification, but strongly opposed to it.²³⁵⁾ However, Helmut Kohl succeeded in winning over the USA, as well as France and the former USSR.²³⁶⁾ As a result, the British policy of 1989–90 amounted to nothing.

²²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 772.

²²⁸ *ibid.*

²²⁹ cf. Andreas Biefang, Munich 2003.

²³⁰ cf. Konrad Canis, Munich 2008.

²³¹ *ibid.*

²³² *ibid.*

²³³ *ibid.*

²³⁴ *ibid.*

²³⁵ cf. Winkler: *Geschichte des Westens*, loc. cit.

²³⁶ *ibid.*

The Schleswig-Holstein Question as the trigger for the *kleindeutsche Lösung*

"The relative weakness of the Confederation in comparison to the overall power inherent in the German nation lies in the difficulty of shaping the central federal power and providing it with attributes that enable it to be powerful and effective, but at the same time to protect the justified independence of the individual states and acknowledge the importance of the individual members of the Confederation based on their proper and independent power relations. [...] This weakness necessarily grows to the extent that the Confederation is set the task not just of guaranteeing the security of its members and the federal territory in accordance with its original purpose, but also of fulfilling the purposes of a unified state in both external and internal politics."²³⁷⁾

This quote is just as relevant in 1863. With Denmark attempting once again to reintegrate Schleswig into its kingdom, new life was breathed into the national movement. All the territories of Germany were united in their desire to oppose the Danish intervention. Ultimately, Denmark was forced to surrender the region. However, Bismarck used this situation to further intensify Prussian dominance in Germany.²³⁸⁾ He exploited the national appetite for a *großdeutsche Lösung*, even persuading Austria to join the war of 1864 so that it would later get involved in another war as a result of the Schleswig-Holstein Question.²³⁹⁾ The global situation during the Second Schleswig War was fundamentally different to that of 1848–49. Denmark was in a much weaker position, particularly as the King of Denmark had violated the London Protocol of 1852.²⁴⁰⁾ And with Austria siding with Prussia and the entire German Confederation in the war, Prussia was unable to continue growing its sphere of influence. For this reason, there was less international dissent than in 1848. Something similar can be said of the situation in the 1990s. While the workers' uprising in the former GDR in 1953 was brutally crushed by Soviet tanks, the NVA (National Peoples' Army), the Volkspolizei (Peoples' Police) and even the Stasi, in 1989 the Soviet forces and those of the former SED regime remained largely passive.²⁴¹⁾ The Kohl administration used this passive stance of the former USSR to its advantage in 1989–90, just like Bismarck in 1864. During the Polish uprising of 1863, Bismarck sided with the tsarists, while the Western powers supported the Polish liberation forces. Prussia's behaviour prevented the Western powers from intervening, allowing Bismarck to gain an ally for his Germany policy. While this ally may have been weak, the Russian Empire was also weakened following the Crimean War of 1853.²⁴²⁾ The growing rift between the UK and France in 1864 did the rest.²⁴³⁾ The UK was willing to allow Prussia to build up its might in order to limit the power of France under Napoleon III, while France shied away

²³⁷ Otto von Bismarck, *Aus seinen Schriften, Briefen und Reden*, ed. Hanno Helbling, p. 231, Zurich 1998.

²³⁸ cf. Konrad Canis, Munich 2008.

²³⁹ *ibid.*

²⁴⁰ *ibid.*

²⁴¹ cf. Winkler: *Geschichte des Westens*, loc. cit.

²⁴² cf. Konrad Canis, Munich 2008. See also: Jürgen Angelow, *Von Wien nach Königgrätz. Die Sicherheitspolitik des Deutschen Bundes im europäischen Gleichgewicht 1815–1866*, p. 230 ff., Munich 1996.

²⁴³ *ibid.*

from intervening because Napoleon III was a supporter of the ideology of nationality. In his view, the Schleswig-Holstein Question was a purely German concern.²⁴⁴⁾ On 30 October 1864, Denmark surrendered the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein to Austria and Prussia.²⁴⁵⁾ Although both monarchies had acted in the national interest, the national movement was crippled. Prussia was the driving force in this conflict, while Austria appeared by all accounts to be the more passive party. This is how the liberals gradually ended the opposition to Bismarck's foreign policy. Austria was no longer seen as the determining power in the German Confederation, not least because it had left its confederates, the German princes, to fend for themselves in their efforts to establish an independent federal state of Schleswig-Holstein.²⁴⁶⁾ In his war with Denmark, Bismarck was therefore also pursuing the goal of maintaining the status quo through Schleswig-Holstein, so that he would be in a stronger position when coming to make a decision with the House of Habsburg.²⁴⁷⁾ Whether or not Prussia's offer to the Alpine state of support for the retaking of Lombardy was meant in earnest is a matter of debate. The fact remained, however, that from 1864 onwards, Prussia pushed Austria ever further away from European and German politics – another fundamental difference from Kohl's politics of the 1990s. Kohl was careful not to unsettle his European neighbours, let alone alienate them. His goal was always to involve them in his foreign policies, in particular the smaller European countries. This was a constant mantra for Kohl and for his diplomacy.²⁴⁸⁾ Meanwhile, Bismarck was intent on creating a positive environment so as to force the decision with Austria, be it by political means or through military intervention.²⁴⁹⁾ In as early as February 1866, the Prussian President made a military decision aimed at creating a Prussian-dominated northern Germany, striving for this in concert with the German national movement.²⁵⁰⁾ In Austria, too, a party emerged that saw war as the solution to the German Question.²⁵¹⁾ Bismarck, however, took a more flexible approach. First of all, he had agreed a short-term alliance with Italy, which was also seeking unification.²⁵²⁾ Secondly, he had made a proposal for federal reform that was aimed at electing a German parliament on the basis of universal suffrage, which pitted him against the liberal forces in Germany.²⁵³⁾

This can also be seen in the following quote:

²⁴⁴ *ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*

²⁴⁶ See also: Hans-Christof Kraus: Die politische Neuordnung Deutschlands nach der Wende von 1866, in: Der preußisch-österreichische Krieg 1866, Munich 2018.

²⁴⁷ cf. Konrad Canis, Munich 2008. See also: Angelow: Von Wien nach Königgrätz, loc. cit., p. 230 ff.

²⁴⁸ See: Helmut Kohl: Aus Sorge um Europa. Ein Appell, Munich 2014.

²⁴⁹ cf. Konrad Canis, Munich 2008. See also: Angelow: Von Wien nach Königgrätz, loc. cit., p. 230 ff.

²⁵⁰ *ibid.* See also: Frank Möller: Preußens Entscheidung zum Krieg 1866, in: Der preußisch-österreichische Krieg 1866, ed. Winfried Heinemann/Lothar Höbelt, Munich 2018.

²⁵¹ *ibid.*

²⁵² *ibid.*

²⁵³ *ibid.*

"It could not have been our intention to create a theoretical ideal of a federal constitution in which, on the one hand, the unity of Germany would be guaranteed forever, and on the other hand, the free rein of every particularist movement would be ensured."²⁵⁴⁾

At this time, Austria found itself in a period of political stagnation. It insisted on upholding the status quo, while the small and medium-sized German states were coming under pressure.²⁵⁵⁾ The exact same behaviour was displayed by Honecker and then Egon Krenz in 1989–90. Both knew that the SED's time was running out and the clock was ticking. Now was the time of the Kohl government. A narrow window of time opened up following the opening of the internal German border in autumn 1989, which Kohl made deft use of – politically, diplomatically, and finally also economically – while the SED regime of the GDR was still clinging rigidly to the status quo of its 40-year period of rule.²⁵⁶⁾

The Habsburg Monarchy acted similarly in the mid-1860s – if only in terms of approach; this is by no means to equate their behaviour with that of the SED regime. Even if war with Prussia and the Kingdom of Italy was not completely inevitable, the majority believed that a military decision would be made. In June 1866, military conflict broke out between Prussia/Italy and Austria and a large part of the German Confederation.²⁵⁷⁾ However, this conflict lasted only three weeks and ended with Austria's defeat, much to the surprise of most European powers and the entire German political spectrum.²⁵⁸⁾ The superiority of the Prussian military machine, built on the army reform brought in under Scharnhorst and von Roon, had been demonstrated for all to see on the battlefield. This success emboldened Bismarck to do exactly as he pleased. Liberals from the small German states changed sides in their droves, especially in northern Germany. Before the war, the Western powers and Russia had hoped for a Prussian victory. Now that this had happened, and at great speed too, it fell primarily to Napoleon III – who had signed a treaty with the defeated Austrian side – to seek to bring the victor under some level of control.²⁵⁹⁾ However, France also forced Austria to surrender Venetia to Italy, meaning that Austria was no longer granted any concessions in the German Question.²⁶⁰⁾ A tentative peace agreement was achieved between the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Empire. This resulted not only in the abolition of the German Confederation, but also the end of Austria's dominant position in Germany.²⁶¹⁾ Apart from Venetia, Austria did not have to cede any other territories. Prussia, however, had expanded its territory all the way to the Main line, giving it rule over a contiguous area of northern Germany. The southern German states, the Grand Duchy of Baden, the Kingdom of

²⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 280/81.

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*

²⁵⁶ cf. Winkler: *Geschichte des Westens*, loc. cit.

²⁵⁷ Frank Möller: *Preußens Entscheidung zum Krieg 1866*, loc. cit.

²⁵⁸ *ibid.*

²⁵⁹ cf. Konrad Canis, Munich 2008. See also: Angelow: *Von Wien nach Königgrätz*, loc. cit., p. 230 ff.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.*

²⁶¹ *ibid.*

Württemberg and the Kingdom of Bavaria remained independent for the time being and were protected from any losses of territory.²⁶²⁾ Even though the peace agreement with Austria was built on unsteady foundations, it cannot be denied that it had a monumental impact on the European system of power. Looking back to 1815, one might even say that a complete transformation had occurred.²⁶³⁾ Prussia now stood at the same level as the other major powers of Europe. Central Europe was no longer caught in a political vacuum that endangered the European balance of power. Austria, having suffered a further defeat since 1859, was only a second-tier power and now wielded barely any influence in Central Europe.²⁶⁴⁾ Here again, it is clear that Prussia was now seeking to build a positive European environment that would bring about a resolution to the German Question. The events of 1989–90 also brought about lasting changes throughout the European continent – and indeed the world.²⁶⁵⁾ Shortly after these events, the Warsaw Pact was dissolved, and the way towards the EU paved. The Cold War was also brought to an end, and with it, at last, the dark and terrible era of the world war.²⁶⁶⁾ A new age was heralded in: one of a liberal and global market, and of multilateralism. Looking back at the post-war era following the crossroads of 1945, this was also a total change and one that ultimately resolved the German Question. With military alliances being struck with the southern German monarchies, the birth of the German Empire in 1871 was simply a matter of time. The customs union was used in an attempt to speed up the process of complete unification, while Russia and the UK, despite having some reservations, were prepared to accept a unified Germany under the aegis of Prussia, especially since this would help to curb France's power.²⁶⁷⁾ After 1867, the relationship with Napoleonic France was fraught and uncertain. Napoleon III wanted compensation for the territory gained by Prussia in the Austro-Prussian war, demanding Luxembourg as the basis for such a concession.²⁶⁸⁾ However, the Luxembourg Crisis did not go the way France had hoped; instead, it whipped up calls for revenge for the Battle of Königgrätz.²⁶⁹⁾ Ultimately, the regime under Napoleon III was not strong enough to oppose these calls for war from 1867–70, resulting in the war that followed German unification in 1870–71. Although Bismarck did not force this situation, he nonetheless benefited from the war hysteria of the 1870s.²⁷⁰⁾

²⁶² Hans-Christof Kraus: Die politische Neuordnung Deutschlands nach der Wende von 1866, in: Der preußisch-österreichische Krieg 1866, Munich 2018.

²⁶³ cf. Konrad Canis, Munich 2008. See also: Angelow: Von Wien nach Königgrätz, loc. cit., p. 230 ff.

²⁶⁴ *ibid.*

²⁶⁵ cf. Winkler: Geschichte des Westens, loc. cit.

²⁶⁶ *ibid.*

²⁶⁷ Konrad Canis, Munich 2008. See also: Angelow: Von Wien nach Königgrätz, loc. cit., p. 230 ff.

²⁶⁸ David Wetzel: Duell der Giganten, Bismarck, Napoleon III. und die Ursachen des Deutsch-Französischen Krieges 1870–1871, Paderborn 2005.

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *ibid.*

Conclusion

The guiding principles of the German Question in both the 19th and the 20th century have been made clear. They are consistent in some aspects, while in others discontinuity prevails. It is impossible to say for certain what opportunities the German Confederation might have had. However, it is clear that it was this system that paved the way for a modern German nation. Nonetheless, the merits of the German Confederation should not be overstated. Although it made use of the opportunities arising from the balance of power present in Europe at that time, we must not forget that it failed to resolve the German Question of the 19th century. It is therefore unlikely that a different structure for Germany would have satisfied its pluralistic society, especially when one considers the development of modern capitalist nation states in Europe. If national unity had not been achieved between 1848 and 1870–71, the collateral damage of such an explosive mixture could have been immense. For the emancipated, educated German society, the political order of 1815 must have felt like a burden, of which they sought to rid themselves. Meanwhile, German reunification was brought about through Helmut Kohl's fundamental thoughts on European unification, in which Europe was to serve as the house for a reunited German nation. Kohl did not seek to reunite Germany by pitting it against the European powers, nor indeed against the international spectrum – instead, he trod the path of cooperation and solidarity. This created the conditions necessary for a stable and successful order of peace. It is therefore no surprise that Helmut Kohl wrote in one of his books that “We Germans have always strongly supported this process, including me personally. We knew back then that we were at the very beginning of a long road, and that there would still be many challenges to overcome. [...] The rapprochement between Russia and the European Union, as well as Russia and NATO, has therefore always been a matter of concern to me, above and beyond our security interests, because for me, despite all the differences that exist, Russia also belongs to Europe, both historically and culturally.”²⁷¹ It is within these words and sentiments that we see, with complete clarity, the ultimate difference between Bismarck's and Kohl's political endeavours in pursuit of a resolution to the German, and thus also the European, Question.

²⁷¹ Helmut Kohl: *Aus Sorge um Europa*, Ein Appell, p. 206, Munich 2014.

Corriculum Vitae :

MMag. Ilya Zarrouk

Born 1981; 2002-2007 History and Political Science Studies, University Mannheim and Heidelberg, Master Degree; 2008/09 Scientific Assistant „Bundeswehrakademie“ (Academy of the German Armed Forces); 2016 Master Degree at the „Deutsche Universität für Verwaltungswissenschaften“ in Speier; Member of the Clausewitz Society.

