

Hanns W. Maull:
***Germany's Uncertain Power: Foreign Policy
of the Berlin Republic***

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In the last few years there has been much talk about Germany's "emancipation" within the state system and the "normalisation" of its defence and security policy. In the aftermath of German reunification hysteria surfaced, that Germany might once again become a problem, and fears were spelled out that the country would aim to dominate Europe, resulting in a German Europe rather than a European Germany. None of these fears have been substantiated, however, particularly during the tenure of chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, political commentators have observed an increasingly self-assured position of Germany within international affairs, many seeing a departure from Germany's "civilian power" status. The fundamental principles of this status have been a pronounced preference for an institutionalised cooperation in multilateral fora ("reflexive multilateralism"), and a deep scepticism about the appropriateness and usefulness of military force ("culture of restraint"). Since the Second World War Germany adopted and internalised a self-reflective critical stance of never allowing itself to pursue a *German Sonderweg* with narrowly defined self-interests. Since then German foreign policy has been firmly embedded within the transatlantic and European institutional architecture with the goal of preventing any such path. Continuity has been the *Leitmotif* of German foreign policy for over 60 years.

"*Germany's uncertain power. Foreign policy of the Berlin republic*" is a recent publication, which has been edited by Hanns W. Maull, professor of Foreign Policy and International Relations at the University of Trier, Germany. He has published extensively on German foreign policy, comparative foreign policy analysis, and issues of East Asian and international security. The book is structured in five parts, each one containing a series of political case studies, which document the evolution and standing of German Foreign Policy in key foreign policy areas since the mid-1990's. Emphasis is placed on the period of the red-green government from 1998 to 2005. The chapters are written by a wide range of German and international authors, all who are renowned experts in the field of German foreign policy. The basic question that the book sets out to ask is whether German policy has changed, i.e. if it has left its orientation of a civilian power, and if so, to what extent has it departed from these parameters. This is the basic framework of analysis each author applies in the respective foreign policy field he investigates. The authors come to the conclusion that noteworthy changes have taken place, however, they still see these changes below the threshold of fundamental change. The tenor is that Germany has been too slow in adapting its civilian power position to a fundamentally

changing global environment, and thus is beginning to lose influence due to this lack of foreign policy purpose.

The introduction, written by Hanns W. Maull, starts with the premise “that German Foreign Policy has undergone subtle but important mutations, some of which seem to go against the grain of the country’s traditional foreign policy orientation as a civilian power (p. 5). Part I of the book sets out to describe the political culture and polity of the country and how they reflect the country’s historical experience and legitimise German foreign policy. It describes the domestic and European sources of German Foreign Policy, which have a strong normative character. The contribution by August Pradetto mentions the judicial governing of foreign policy, which has undergone a series of revisions since 1994, after Germany first took on more robust peacekeeping and enforcing missions under the UN and NATO. In order for Germany to contribute to increasing international commitments of NATO or the UN, the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) has tended to enhance the executive’s decision-making power, giving legitimacy to out-of-area missions. The FCC stated that the deployment of the Bundeswehr in peacekeeping operations was permissible within the framework of systems of collective security, as long as such systems were strictly bound to the preservation of peace.

Part II takes a look at Germany’s security and defence policy, the sector of German Foreign Policy, which has seen the most visible changes with the geographic extension of German security [Struck doctrine], the participation of German armed forces in various NATO out-of-area-missions, and reform efforts to transform the Bundeswehr from a training to a deployment army. Marco Overhaus in his contribution argues that Germany’s civilian power status has come under pressure from several sides: domestically, the author speaks of the hijacking of foreign and security policy in an election campaign and asks whether this subordination to national interests is a trend or if it was just a one-off incident. He also puts forward the generational change of German leaders, who are more pragmatic and less inhibited to dissociate themselves with traditional allies such as the US. Externally, the departure of what Ikenberry calls “liberal hegemony”, has caused a great deal of change to the once so stable transatlantic relationship. Overhaus puts forward the significance of Germany giving up its long-held equidistance towards Paris and Washington, in favour of the former, and its traditional role as a champion of the smaller EU member states. By outlining a more noticeable German position in international affairs, Germany weakened its influence in multilateral structures. The one-sided stance on Iraq has considerably hurt the country’s influence in the CFSP and especially the axis Berlin-Paris-Moscow scared the smaller eastern European member states. Overhaus concludes that since the mid 90’s Germany has lost its enthusiasm for multilateral institutions.

The chapter by Harald Mueller deals with Germany and the proliferation of WMD. He detects that throughout the nineties Germany’s policy in this area was consistent with the criteria of a civilian power. Although he sees a collision of multilateralism and pacifism during the 2002 election campaign which tipped the balance towards pacifism but was soon after

restored. He sees continuity not revolution at work when he views Germany's non-proliferation policy. Martin Wagener looks at the "normalisation" of the security policy dimension. He notes that during the Kohl-era Germany "never assumed responsibility for any supreme command or any multinational contingent" (p. 87). Under Schroeder Germany has contributed much more intensively to international military operations than in the Kohl-era, making Germany one of the biggest troop providers for international operations. Towards the end he assesses that the future of the armed forces deployment will be influenced by the fiscal restraints and the global role that Germany wants to play in multilateral operations. Wagener accentuates that Germany still lacks a coherent national security strategy, and that German national interest is defined in a more general manner and often consists of a nebulous concept of responsibility, or out of the aim to please international partners or domestic political factions (p. 90).

Part III deals with Germany's two core bilateral relations with France and the United States, both of which are an integral part of the EU and NATO respectively. The first contribution by Harnisch and Schieder highlight that "Germany's European Policy has changed considerably, both in terms of process and substance" (p. 96). The authors speak of a "contingent German Europeanism" as the country's new strategy, combining pro-integrationist positions (for example in European foreign and defence policy), with a clearer "delineation of competencies between the European Union, Germany at the federal level, and the Laender" (p. 97). Due to Germany's stagnating economy the country is less able and willing to be the paymaster of Europe, which has led to Germany not being able to fulfil its EU obligations, as the non-compliance with the Stability and Growth Pact demonstrates. In chapter 7, Hans Stark deals with the Franco-German relationship during the tenure of the red-green government. The chapter nicely illustrates how the relationship between Schroeder and Chirac stands for the Franco-German relationship as a whole: that close, confidential and fruitful Franco-German relations are not self-evident, and that the relationship between France and Germany experience all possible ups and downs. The first years actually seeing one of the biggest crises within the Franco-German relations, with French and German disagreement over EU reform, and in 2002/2003 seeing an unprecedented Franco-German harmony in the run-up to the Iraq war.

In chapter 8 and 9, by Stephn Szabo and Peter Rudolf respectively, each author takes a view on the transatlantic relationship from his side of the Atlantic. Chapter 9 is interesting in that, towards the end, it opens up a discussion about the motives of Schroeder's opposition towards the Iraq war. Contrary to Hanns W. Maull (and major opinion), Rudolf does not see a "clear turning away" ["eindeutige Abkehr"] from the role conception of a civilian power. Quite convincingly, he argues that Germany's behaviour was not a dramatic change in German Foreign Policy away from multilateralism and international organisations, but instead he states that "never before had a German government faced the question of whether to actively take part in a war deemed wrong and not in Germany's vital interests just for the sake

of demonstrating its multilateral orientation... One has to keep in mind that it was all too clear that the question was not to enforce UN resolutions by force, but to overthrow a regime and to occupy a country” (p. 145). So rather than seeing a fundamental shift in Schroeder’s stance, Rudolf sees the major shift in the US foreign policy towards unilateralism, which was incompatible with the principles of a civilian power like Germany.

Chapters in Part IV includes Germany’s standing in the international financial order, German trade policy, environmental policy, and German energy and security policy. Germany has been one of the greatest proponents of universal environmental regimes, taking on a leadership role in global environmental policy. The green party certainly underpinned and strengthened this position. The chapter on energy security demonstrates how this issue is gaining priority in foreign policy, moving from a low to a high foreign policy issue. In this regard Germany faces the same challenges as other European countries. The author takes on a critical view as he highlights the failure of German and European energy policies to integrate energy, environmental, and security objectives. Part V focuses, amongst others, on the German-Israeli relationship and the red-green government’s policy towards Pacific-Asia. The latter chapter signals the increasing *Oekonomisierung* (economic emphasis) of German foreign policy towards Asia, especially with regards to China, where the author Jörn Carsten Gottwald detects a Germany that is behaving like a trading, rather than a civilian, power. In the case of China economic interests seem to have relegated human-rights and democratic deficits to a subordinated role. The chapter on Germany and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict underscores that German foreign policies towards the Middle-East only partially meet the requirements of a civilian power, due to the absence of well-established institutions and the power-oriented US policy in the region. The chapter also puts forward the power of norms in foreign policy, as Germany, shaped by the Holocaust, feels strongly committed to ensuring the survival of the Jewish state.

All in all the book delivers a comprehensive picture of the evolution of German foreign policy since the mid-1990’s. It is very readable, and offers the reader different perspectives on where German foreign policy could head, with the wide range of authors ensuring that the views are not too one-sided. What is clearly missing is a chapter on Germany’s *Ostpolitik*. A chapter on this dimension of German Foreign Policy is something one would expect of such a book, as the foreign policy towards its eastern neighbours has always been an important and integral part of Germany. Maybe the reason is, that under Schroeder, relations with the central and eastern European neighbours were widely neglected, instead Schroeder decided to forge a buddy-relationship with Putin. The book also doesn’t shed much light on Schroeder’s bid for a German seat on the UN security council, where Germany without its traditional allies forged alliances with other like-minded nations like Japan, displaying a clear national interest on a bilateral basis. In my view the book also could have committed more detail to Germany’s participation in the Kosovo crisis, and the ensuing fierce debate this operation sparked in the German polity and public, as that event marked

a clear turning point in Germany's foreign policy as it was the first time since the Second World War that Germany actively took part in combat operations.

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