

DGAP REPORT



Action Plan for Security and Defense Policy

What Germany Must Do for Security, Defense, and Peace



Dr. Claudia Major
Head of the International Security Research Division, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)



Dr. Christian Mölling
Research Director and Head of the Security and Defense Program, German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP)



Dr. Constanze Stelzenmüller
Fritz Stern Chair on Germany and Transatlantic Relations at the Center on the United States and Europe, Brookings Institution

Because Germany is open and globally networked, its security is inextricably linked to that of its European neighbors and the world. This interdependence, as well as the deterioration of the global strategic landscape, should compel the new German government to comprehensively overhaul German security policy. Should it fail to do so, Germany risks losing its sovereignty of action to strategic challengers.

As an open, globally interconnected country, Germany's security is inextricably linked to that of its European neighborhood and the world. Particularly since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, reunified Germany's prosperity, security, and standing have been enhanced by normative orders that developed under the umbrella of the United Nations, especially the European Union and the Western Alliance, supported by the security guarantee provided by the United States. No country in Europe has benefited more than Germany from EU enlargement and the introduction of the euro. The energy partnership with Russia and the trade partnership with China have helped to make Germany the economic powerhouse of Europe. Finally, NATO expansion has placed the former German frontline states at the geographical center of the European allied territory.

In Germany, as the diplomat Thomas Bagger has noted, this development was misinterpreted in two ways: first, as proof of global convergence toward the Western model and, second, as evidence that the German experience of a peaceful resolution to the Cold War could be universalized. As a result of these misunderstandings, many Germans wrongly came to believe that they were living in an acceptable and stable status quo that allowed a shift to comprehensive disarmament. They did not want to see the dark side of economic interdependence, for example in the case of dependence on trade with China. They were even less inclined to believe that partners can become rivals and opponents, as, to cite the most recent example, has been true of Russia since the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. Finally, Germany ignored its partners' criticism of the strategic side effects of German economic policy for far too long, for example in relation to initiatives such as Nord Stream 2. These willful misconceptions afflict German security policy to this day.

A NEW, DANGEROUS ERA

It is now clear that the historic constellation of circumstances that afforded Germany such unique protection in the period following the end of the Cold War is coming to an end. New dangers and threats to Germany's security are growing rapidly, reinforcing the impact of existing threats such as wars, failed and failing states, terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction:

- China's pursuit of global dominance and Russia's territorial revisionism
- The ambivalence of the United States toward its role to date as a global security guarantor
- New weapons technologies (e.g., hypersonic missiles, AI, autonomous systems, space-based systems, biotechnological materials), sometimes in combination with "old" but modernized weapons systems, such as nuclear weapons
- Information operations (propaganda, disinformation) using new media technologies

Wars, crises, and internal conflicts can be found not just at Europe's borders (Israel-Palestine, Syria, Armenia, North Africa), but within Europe itself – in Belarus, Ukraine, the Balkans, and the Eastern Mediterranean. They have an adverse effect on Europe in various ways: via gaps in supply chains or freight and gas transit routes, via migrant and refugee flows, and via attempts to politically exploit diaspora populations. The local parties to these conflicts are often backed by third powers such as China, Russia, Iran, Turkey, or Saudi Arabia. The European neighborhood is increasingly becoming the scene of competition between major and regional powers, and Europe and Germany can hardly hope to avoid being drawn in. This is particularly true when allies, such as Turkey, are involved in these conflicts.

THEATER OF SYSTEMIC COMPETITION

Europe itself has long been a theater for and an object of systemic competition between democracies and autocracies. China, Russia, and Turkey are pursuing different aims, but there is no mistaking the fact that all three countries are increasingly acting as rivals or even opponents of the West. In this context, they exploit differences within NATO or the EU. They drag bilateral conflicts into these organizations and play actors and the public within the member states against each other. They support domestic extremists and stand in the way of solidarity and joint action. Ultimately, this means that the future of the West, the European project, and democracy in Germany is at stake.

That said, the existing security arrangements in Europe (NATO, the EU, and the OSCE) are also being called into question by their own members. The OSCE's legitimacy is being undermined by autocratic governments, such as Russia's. The EU is being weakened by Brexit and by authoritarian and nationalist governments, such as those in Hungary and Poland. NATO, for its part, is affected by the ambivalence of the United States, although a French

president declaring the Alliance politically “brain-dead” is also not helpful. But Germany’s political players must also accept a large share of the responsibility: For decades, they have failed to educate the public about the real challenges of security and defense policy. They have called Germany’s contribution to defense into question and underfunded the Bundeswehr. And despite their stated commitment to the EU and NATO, they are engaging in projects with Russia and China, such as Nord Stream 2, that divide Europe and the Western Alliance.

With these obvious centrifugal forces in the Alliance and in the EU, Germany is the fulcrum at which the European order could be overturned. Anyone in search of proof need look no farther than the disinformation and propaganda campaigns aimed at the country’s September 2021 federal election, and at the accompanying generational and power shifts. Moreover, Germany has witnessed interference by foreign players on a massive scale for years, ranging from the legal purchase of municipal or private infrastructure and innovation systems to illegal cyberattacks. Yet the German government has only treated hybrid threats as an issue in their own right since 2020 – with the Federal Ministry of the Interior taking the lead. This puts Germany among the stragglers in the EU and NATO.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

In recent years, Germany has begun to narrow the gap between wishful thinking and reality in its security policy. The federal government took the lead on EU sanctions against Russia following the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. It has also participated more in collective defense in NATO and in international military missions. Germany’s defense budget has grown significantly, from €32 billion in 2014 to almost €47 billion in 2021. And yet the impression persists that Germany mainly reacts to external pressure – and even then does too little, too late.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the deteriorating strategic situation, the new federal government must find the strength to overhaul German security policy. Should it fail to do so, Germany risks losing its sovereignty of action to strategic challengers. Three things are therefore necessary: Firstly and at the very start of its legislative period, the new federal government needs to initiate a mind shift in security policy with the help of practical measures. Secondly, this should lead to changed processes and new institutions. The third step is for existing policies to be adapted and sharpened; this applies, in particular, to the approach taken to hybrid threats, crisis prevention and stabilization, the nuclear order, and new technologies.

STRATEGIC CULTURE AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

The Afghanistan crisis has only reinforced what has been apparent since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and the catastrophic flooding in western Germany in the summer of 2021: The German state is not capable of sophisticated anticipation, planning, and management of major crises. It is particularly overwhelmed when several crises occur simultaneously. Coordination and decision-making among the relevant ministries and agencies (intelligence services, crisis units) is inadequate. The principle of departmental independence (Ressortprinzip) at the national level, Germany’s federal structures, and the lack of cooperation with private stakeholders impede coherent action by the government and the state as a whole (see also the Action Plan for German Foreign Policy Structures).

1. Make Germany’s Strategic Culture More Vibrant

There are limited options for action that Germany’s political players can even envision, regard as legitimate, and advocate publicly. They lack the vision, political will, and readiness to shoulder responsibility and take the risks that are required to both pursue policies that rise to the level of the challenges the country is facing and shape structures and processes to ensure that the necessary instruments and resources are available. Yet a failure to take problems into account at the planning stage results in a lack of adequate instruments to address them (masks,

communications infrastructure, or rapid reaction forces). This, in turn, means that security cannot be fully ensured or cannot be ensured at all. In an acute crisis, these varied shortcomings limit the room for maneuver by political players to such a degree that they are unable to take adequate action.

This is due to a specific societal-cultural dimension known as a country's "strategic culture" that determines the basic assumptions underlying a country's security policy. It also sets the framework for which issues can be the subject of political debate and decision-making, and which options for action are simply inconceivable. In Germany, this framework of conceivable objectives and means, and thus the country's room for maneuver, is more limited than that of our closest partners. The reason for this can be found in norms and beliefs that are rooted in German history, party politics, and society. Political decision-makers thus encounter considerable resistance if they wish to pursue policy approaches outside of this generally accepted framework. Such approaches are rarely considered in the planning process.

It is therefore legitimate and necessary for the new federal government to set itself the goal of strengthening Germany's national strategic capability, i.e., the ability to define appropriate security policy objectives and provide the means to implement them. That said, the necessary changes to Germany's strategic culture will be difficult to achieve. It will require political stakeholders not only to accept the need for these changes, but also to muster the will to communicate the desired changes to the public and to actively involve the public in this process.

In a federal system like Germany's, power is distributed across multiple levels. Changes to the perception of security problems, objectives, means, and solutions are only possible if the government, parliament, the security policy community, and civil society have the opportunity to participate in this change. Otherwise they will block it.

The key to lasting changes to government action is to have institutions and processes that make whole-of-government action the rule. Problems must be recognized as such across the whole of government, solutions must be agreed upon jointly, and instruments must be used in a coordinated manner. The fact that the government and bureaucracy have to explain their actions regularly at the various levels of the state, and explain them to the public, means that they can also help to expand the framework of conceivable objectives and means.

2. Create a Federal Security Council Capable of Action

The most important institutional reform is redesigning the Federal Security Council (Bundessicherheitsrat or BSR), which to date has almost exclusively taken decisions on military equipment exports. It should be turned into a central instrument of coordination for the federal government. This is necessary to enable interministerial coordination and decision-making on all security issues. Depending on the topic, the German states (Länder) should also be involved, as they are becoming more relevant in terms of security in the non-military field. States and municipalities make decisions about who receives access to critical infrastructure such as data networks, water and energy supplies, or ports.

The new BSR should consist of a cabinet committee as a body for discussion and decision-making, and a secretariat to support it. The cabinet committee would provide a forum for ministers to hold regular discussions on strategic issues and take binding decisions. As a permanent support structure, the secretariat would be tasked with taking up items from the federal government's agenda and submitting them to the committee. However, it should also be able to place issues before the committee on its own initiative. Half of the members of the secretariat should be officials seconded from the ministries involved in the BSR, while the other half should be practitioners and experts from academia and the private sector. The secretariat should be jointly led by senior officials and scientific experts so that it can draw on both perspectives.

The first step in creating a new BSR is appointing a coordinator with the rank of a state secretary and establishing a task force to develop it and carry out its work on an interim basis. Important thematic support can be provided by the security policy commission (see the next recommendation). Based on the commission's proposals, the BSR should present a national and federal security strategy after roughly two years.

3. Establish a Security Policy Commission

As one of its first actions, the BSR should set up **an independent security policy commission**. It should be composed of parliamentarians, experts, and ministry officials. Within one year, it should produce a report that sets out the risks and opportunities to be considered by a national security policy, and provides recommendations for substantive policies, structures, and instruments. In this way, the commission would offer vital substantive input for the national security strategy and the BSR's other work.

The commission should subsequently assess the progress made on implementing the security strategy each year. Its reports could help to **build a community of experts, policy-makers, and practitioners in ministries and private organizations**. This will help the government improve its articulation of national security policy and encourage public debate, which, in turn, is the prerequisite for the evolution of Germany's strategic culture.

4. Democratize Security Policy

New solutions and the evolution of security policy become possible if the government, political parties, and parliament are forced to move beyond rote arguments and practiced reflexes, and instead have to explain and justify their positions. The public should be involved in the development of policy options and visions for the future. A security policy capable of rising to the current challenges can only emerge if civil society understands, accepts, and – ideally – supports it. This is particularly true of preventive measures. The following options should be considered:

Civil society should be consulted, especially in the development of visions for the future and the formulation of policy options. Its findings and proposals should be fed into the work of the security policy commission and the national security strategy. To this end, **the government and parliament could declare a security and peace policy year or semester**. Its implementation could be supported by the Federal Agency for Civic Education (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung), the state agencies for civic education, political foundations, ministries, schools, universities, media outlets, and other institutions by means of interactive and participatory events. These should be held throughout the country and go beyond the expert community to include the general public.

An **annual national security week** could be held in the Bundestag.

The federal government should present an annual report on the implementation of the national security strategy, preferably during the security week, introduced by a speech on security policy delivered by the chancellor.

The Bundestag's current committee structure does not reflect the interdependence of domestic affairs, foreign affairs, defense policy, economic policy, and development cooperation, but this is essential for a strategic German security policy. The Bundestag should therefore set up **a committee on security policy**. This new committee would monitor and support the work of the Federal Security Council and be responsible for parliamentary scrutiny of its work. This approach ensures that a greater capacity to act for the executive does not come at the cost of democratic legitimacy and parliamentary oversight. The committee should include parliamentarians from all relevant committees.

This would enable a comprehensive security policy approach and would help place defense policy issues within their proper foreign policy context. This would give security and defense issues greater weight and reach.

POLICY REFORM

1. Integrate the Strengths of NATO and the EU

Global and regional security institutions, such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), are achieving less and less as they are blocked by conflicts among their member states. Germany should do all it can to prevent a further erosion of these institutions. However, at present, it is primarily the EU and NATO that offer real capacity to act and shape developments.

In Europe, 21 countries are currently members of both NATO and the EU, and yet they are not making the most of the joint potential of these two institutions. The relationship between the EU and NATO is characterized by mistrust and indifference, at times even a sense of rivalry. In Germany, political stakeholders are often biased in their commitment to either one of these institutions. They ascribe meanings to it that fit their own world views instead of using both organizations for a comprehensive security policy.

In fact, these ideological or categorical framings are an obstacle to greater security. Europe can only successfully address the rapidly growing challenges if it makes use of the competences of both organizations together. This requires a willingness to overcome ideological positions. NATO is the strongest military alliance in the world if the allies are politically united. But the more Europe’s security depends not only on traditional military capabilities, but also on the protection of critical infrastructure, resilience, prevention, management of complex conflicts, and the use of new technologies, the more the EU’s capabilities for action in non-military fields come to the fore. The EU has unique instruments in the fields of civilian crisis management and climate change, as well as in technology, via regulation, standardization, and its ability to set development incentives.

The federal government should press strongly for a qualitative leap forward with regard to the integration of the EU and NATO. The political window of opportunity for major change will close in the summer of 2022, when both the EU and NATO finish work on new strategic documents. Germany should press for as coherent an analysis as possible of the current state and future of European security. To this end, it should persuade the 21 countries that are members of both the EU and NATO to use the results reached by that point in the EU’s discussions as a common basis for NATO’s process, which is just beginning. The United Kingdom is also likely to support the goal of ensuring coherence.

- Building on their joint analysis, the staffs of the EU and NATO should work together to define what **level of capabilities must be achieved in Europe** in order to cover the entire conflict spectrum (with the exception of nuclear deterrence). The EU, NATO, and the member states will make individual contributions to this level of ambition.
- There should be a visible political, military, and technological focal point for the Europeans’ military contributions to the level of ambition (and thus the European pillar in NATO), in the form of a **European Joint Force** (EJF). The EJF should provide 50 percent of the conventional capabilities required for collective defense in Europe and military crisis management. This would automatically also strengthen the EU’s capacity to act, as national armed forces are available to both the EU and NATO.

- The **NATO planning process and the EU cooperation instruments** CARD (Coordinated Annual Review on Defence), PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation), and EDF (European Defence Fund) should contribute to the implementation of this joint aim. The foundations have already been laid for this. The federal government should attach particular importance to the technological-industrial field. American and European companies are competing in this area, and Europe is insisting on the greatest possible degree of autonomy. From a military perspective, the effectiveness of the Western armed forces depends on technological superiority and interoperability. Targeted efforts should therefore be made to include NATO allies in EU projects and vice versa.
- Necessary and reliable partners can also be found outside the EU and NATO, however, which is primarily relevant to **security engagement in regions such as Asia**. This is an area where the federal government should forge additional partnerships, for example with Australia. This can take place both within informal formats and coalitions of the willing and through cooperation with existing regional formats.
- There should also be institutional changes at the national level. At the Federal Foreign Office, the separate units for the EU and NATO should be replaced by a **department for Euro-Atlantic security**. The same approach should be taken in the departments for policy, planning, and equipment at the Federal Ministry of Defense. The aim is to bring security policy objectives to the fore rather than institutional logics.
- The planned reform of the Bundeswehr should be embedded in the development of the EJF. Germany can promote the implementation of the EJF by **reviving the Framework Nations Concept** (FNC) and expanding it to include armaments and procurement. For example, Germany should offer partnerships not only with regard to military structures, but also in terms of the defense industrial base. This would discourage a further renationalization of the defense sector in Europe and would reduce industrial dependence on the rest of the world. In this way, Germany would help to preserve a high-performance defense technology and industrial base at the European level.

2. Improve Planning Certainty and the Use of Funds

The debate in Germany about adequate security and defense funding is reduced to wrangling about whether NATO's two percent target makes sense. Germany has repeatedly pledged to meet this target, but remains far from doing so. Germany has also promised to continuously increase its defense spending in the EU framework.

This blinkered focus on spending increases – and mainly on military spending – is no longer appropriate, however, given the expanded threat spectrum. Nonetheless, the federal government must not allow the suspicion to arise that the only reason it is emphasizing the need for greater spending efficiency and the inclusion of non-military aspects of security is because it still wants to avoid opening the purse strings and would prefer to continue to freeload off the United States and other NATO countries.

An internal organizational aspect is also relevant here: Even if Germany continuously raises its defense spending, these budget increases are made on a short-term basis and are often only guaranteed for the following year. The Bundeswehr cannot invest this funding meaningfully in long-term projects if it does not know whether the necessary funding will be available for the entire duration of the project. In other words, the issue of adequate funding has at least two dimensions: whether Germany's NATO and EU pledges are reliable – whether Berlin is keeping its word; and whether the Bundeswehr has a reliable basis for planning. The current funding arrangements undermine both.

- The new federal government must move very quickly to ensure that it can bring together its various aspirations (meaningful funding and a broader security focus), as **NATO intends to present its new strategic concept** as early as 2022. The issues on the agenda are the threat spectrum, burden-sharing, and, in particular, the range of security risks and instruments in the fields of climate, health, and technology.
- To ensure it is credible in the eyes of its allies, Germany should adhere to **NATO's two percent target** and make clear that it will meet the requirements by 2024. If Germany succeeds in doing so, its enhanced credibility will also increase its influence in NATO. The new federal government can use this influence to seek support for an **adjustment of spending metrics and areas of spending**. In this context,

Berlin should expand the focus of the contributions to include climate, cybersecurity, and innovation. A portion of spending (0.5 percent of GDP) should be reserved for joint projects with EU and NATO countries, as well as with other partners (such as Australia). This would also help to consolidate industries and military equipment in Europe.

- In addition, the Bundestag can provide planning security by passing a **Bundeswehr Planning Act** and thus boost the efficiency of public spending. A Planning Act should stipulate funding over a longer period (five to ten years) for long-term projects judged to be necessary by consensus. The projects in question would be determined by the Bundestag.
- However, as the Bundeswehr also still lacks many small purchases that never make it onto priority lists, but whose absence is felt in a crisis, the Bundestag should also launch and fund a full **equipment initiative** for four years. It would be counted toward NATO's two percent target and would rapidly improve the Bundeswehr's operational capability.

3. Help Shape the Nuclear Order, Deterrence, and Arms Control

The significance of nuclear weapons is rising worldwide, and the nuclear order is becoming more complex. New players have emerged. At the same time, nuclear and conventional capabilities are becoming increasingly intertwined with new technologies. This development entails a great deal of uncertainty, particularly when novel conventional capabilities are combined with modernized nuclear weapons.

The situation is exacerbated by the progressive weakening of arms control. The termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty on land-based intermediate-range missiles, the uncertainty about the long-term future of the treaty on strategic nuclear weapons (New START), and the erosion of the Non-Proliferation Treaty are increasing the risk of miscalculations. The problem is aggravated by China's rapid nuclear armament; so far, Beijing has shown little willingness to engage in arms control. Disarmament proposals such as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons are less likely to succeed than ever. While well-intentioned, they have no chance of being implemented because, from the perspective of nuclear states, they offer no convincing alternative for safeguarding their security interests. They provide neither

verification mechanisms nor guarantees of a permanent elimination of nuclear weapons.

Germany does not have nuclear weapons of its own. It is dependent on NATO and the contributions of the United States, France, and the United Kingdom for nuclear deterrence. As a result, Germany cannot directly set the conditions for nuclear deterrence or for arms control and disarmament. European and transatlantic unity in NATO is the key precondition for both a secure deterrent and disarmament.

NATO is now confronted by two interlinked nuclear zones: the Euro-Atlantic area, which is threatened by Russia's steadily growing nuclear arsenal, and the Asian region, where China is pursuing geopolitical dominance. Strategic stability can only be defined on a three-way basis by the United States, China, and Russia, with Europe having a very limited say. Russia's nuclear arsenal, particularly its intermediate-range missiles, is primarily a European problem, while China's is primarily a US problem.

- In its talks with its NATO allies during the new legislative period, Germany should promote a **disarmament initiative for intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe** at sea, on land, and in the air. This class of weapons should be the focus because their surprise potential puts pressure on Europe, and they could be used to blackmail European countries even in peacetime. If Russia disarms the nuclear-capable intermediate-range missiles that were developed and introduced in breach of the INF Treaty, the NATO states could offer not to station any conventional guided weapons in Europe that could hit Russian missile facilities and command posts.
- However, the federal government will only have a chance of being heard if it can credibly establish that it gives absolute priority to common and equal security for all NATO states. Unilateral initiatives are out of the question. Germany must actively contribute to collective security and adhere to the NATO principle of nuclear deterrence. As long as this is organized via **nuclear sharing**, Germany should play its part reliably. This includes, on the one hand, explaining the challenges of the nuclear order in Germany, creating transparency about the costs and benefits of nuclear deterrence for Germany, and playing a forward-looking role in considering potential changes, for example as a result of new US nuclear doctrines. On the other hand, however, it also means the stationing of US nuclear bombs on German soil, and the provision of conventional combat

aircraft that are certified to transport these nuclear weapons. For political and technical reasons, the **new generation of these combat aircraft should be purchased or leased from the United States**. They would then be of military value even in the event of a change to the nuclear deterrent, for example as a result of a changed US doctrine.

- France and the United Kingdom, the two European nuclear powers, also play an important role in the nuclear order and for deterrence in Europe. **Germany should accept France's invitation to join a strategic dialogue on the role of nuclear deterrence in Europe** and France's contribution to this. That said, Germany should seek to ensure that the dialogue's processes and substance are not defined by France alone, but rather jointly by the European countries. Compatibility with NATO must continue to be ensured. Other shared issues – where the United Kingdom should also be involved – could include the question of what contribution Europe can make to reducing the risk of conventional or nuclear conflicts in the Indo-Pacific region.

4. Place Crisis Prevention and Stabilization on a Better Footing

Since the end of the Cold War, crisis prevention and stabilization have become key elements of German peace and security policy. Yet, following missions in the Western Balkans that were successful overall (see also the Action Plan for the Western Balkans), the failure of the Western reconstruction mission in Afghanistan calls into question many of the basic assumptions of this policy. The United States has said that the era of "state building" is over. Germany's new federal government does not have to follow its lead on that, but it too will need to reassess objectives and instruments. Four elements are key:

- **A thorough analysis of the operations in Afghanistan, Mali, and other major civilian or military engagements:** The aim should be to determine in what circumstances, and with what means, crisis prevention and stabilization can be successful. The German public, too, will only accept new missions if a convincing case can be made that there are valid grounds to believe they have a chance of success. The security policy commission can play a key role in analysis and communication.

- Achieving a deeper understanding of interactions:** Even today, many advocates of crisis prevention and stabilization overestimate the effectiveness of missions and underestimate the risks. In addition, some stakeholders believe that the firm emphasis of crisis prevention and stabilization on peace promotion is incompatible with the use of military means to protect people and missions. Yet development requires security. A better understanding of the potential and limits of crisis prevention can be achieved by means of a participatory learning process, for example a policy lab on the future of crisis prevention and stabilization for representatives of the political community, institutions, and civil society.
- Strategic planning:** Stakeholders at both the national and international level are failing to ask what their future engagement in crisis prevention and stabilization could look like and what they will need in this context – they let events take them by surprise and then use the instruments that are available on an ad hoc basis. The new federal government should engage in long-term planning – with a time horizon of, say, 2040 – about the conflicts for which Germany should be prepared, what objectives it wants to achieve, and what means are necessary to achieve them. The first step is to establish a working group composed of strategic planners from the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry of Defense, where strategic foresight projects already exist. They can be joined by other ministries and civil stakeholders. This kind of integrated planning and coordination of instruments would also serve as a model for the EU, NATO, and the United Nations. Proposals to this effect should be fed into the work on the EU's Strategic Compass (by the end of 2021), the EU's Civilian Compact (by 2023), and NATO's strategic concept (by 2022).
- A European stabilization corps:** Today, thousands of civilian and military experts, ranging from engineers to police instructors, would already be needed to achieve structural change in complex conflicts from the Sahel to Syria. The new federal government should therefore launch the process of building up a European stabilization corps and contribute fifty percent of the required capabilities itself. In what would essentially be a civilian version of the Framework Nations Concept, Germany would not only contribute to crisis stabilization, but also to leading and shaping these operations. To this end, Germany should make a pool of 5,000 specialists available who, together or in part, can provide the core, the leadership structure, and the logistics team of major

civilian or integrated operations. This would enable many smaller countries to join and make a meaningful contribution

5. Reorganize Export Controls on Military Equipment and Technology

Both within the EU and internationally, Germany plays a key role when it comes to defense industry products – as a manufacturer, cooperation partner, and exporter. With regard to traditional military equipment exports, however, Germany is regarded as unreliable. Despite clear (and restrictive) rules, there is a lack of transparency about decisions on exports and bans, and the grounds on which these decisions are taken. Germany is thus jeopardizing its own industrial-technological base, which is dependent on exports, and its ability to cooperate with partners.

In addition, traditional military weapons, from a technological perspective, now play only a minor role. Specific (usually digital) technologies are becoming much more important in complex weapons systems. These “emerging and disruptive technologies” (EDT) pose a much bigger problem for security policy, as they significantly increase the capabilities of weapons systems. In addition, military applications now represent only a small area within the wide field of security applications. The existing export control and technology regimes have long since lost the ability to cover and regulate new technological developments.

New technologies are also leading to conflicts between economic and security interests: Artificial intelligence and quantum computers will be an important source of prosperity for the countries that control these technologies in the next five to 20 years. At the same time, these technologies are believed to have a high damage potential if they are used in conflicts – whether in the military context, against infrastructure, or to engage in targeted societal interference. Attempts to align approaches to controls in Europe are hampered by the fact that countries have very different positions on what the right balance is between economic and security interests.

At the same time, the question of how countries can secure access to and control of these technologies is becoming highly significant in political and strategic terms. The new technologies are a major field of geo-strategic contention, particularly among the United States, the EU, and China. Germany's partners in the EU and NATO are pressing for rules that make it easier

to export jointly developed military systems. That said, European countries are also competing against each other. The United States, for its part, is pushing for a much more cautious approach to knowledge and technology in relation to potential opponents, especially China. Finally, Germany, like other countries, is seeking to cooperate with countries in other regions, such as the Indo-Pacific. Technology cooperation in the field of security and defense is an attractive option in this context, as Europe has interesting products to offer.

- Together with its EU, NATO, and G7 partners, Germany should not only **secure access to technologies** (for example by investing in innovation), but also **ensure it is in a position to deny access to rivals** (for example by moving production back to Germany, introducing investment controls, or acting to protect supply chains; see also the Action Plan for the Economy and Foreign Policy). This results in the following tasks, which should be handled by the new Federal Security Council and discussed in the national security strategy:
 - Defining which key technologies Germany wants to retain at the national level and at the European level
 - Identifying and coordinating how access to technologies and innovation can be secured in Germany and at the European level
 - Defining how access to strategic technologies can be controlled (access denial) in Germany, at the EU level, and in the G7 framework
- In the future, Germany must **justify its policy on military equipment exports in terms of security** policy and make it more reliable and comprehensible for both the German public and international partners: When is supplying weapons and technology justified, and how does it benefit Germany in terms of security policy? To what extent does the federal government regard military equipment exports as a security policy instrument to support Germany's interests and political influence?
- The new federal government should **embed its export policy in a strategy for specific countries and regions and pursue a systematic opportunity-and-risk approach**. A strategy for specific countries and regions that makes distinctions based on the security situation and security interests would allow military equipment exports to be framed in German foreign and security policy explicitly as a means

of exerting political influence. This would be the basis for related assessments and public justifications. The strategy would need to weigh risks and opportunities: What responsibility and options for action would Germany have if military equipment were to fall into the wrong hands, for example in the event of a coup, and how likely are such events? A traffic light system that ranks countries on the basis of the existing export criteria could be helpful. No specific justification would be required to export to countries on the green list; in the case of countries on the red list, every export would require a specific justification; decisions would have to be taken on a case-by-case basis for countries on the yellow list. The categorization of countries on these lists should be reviewed regularly.

- The new federal government can also promote reliability by passing an export law that creates a **standardized statutory basis for the export of war weapons, military equipment, and new categories (i.e., EDT)**. The law should also include control mechanisms (e.g., end-use monitoring) and sanction options, such as decommissioning military equipment. However, when drafting a new export law, the federal government must also consider the potential financial repercussions for the arms industry of a more restrictive policy and the possibility of compensation for the loss of economies of scale.
- Finally, Germany should launch and help to shape **an international initiative for EDT export controls**. This should aim to create an export regime for critical technologies.

6. Strengthen Resilience in Germany, Europe, and the Alliance

Other players have long gone beyond the narrow confines of the military sphere to exert pressure on Germany; this is shown by the rise in cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, manipulation of social media, and disinformation campaigns in connection with the pandemic. To protect Germany in such hybrid, multilayered conflicts, civil society and the military – private and public stakeholders – must work together more closely from the local level all the way up to the EU and NATO. In particular, cooperation between the national and international level (EU, NATO) and coordination between the EU and NATO should be further enhanced.

- The new federal government should hold regular exercises and simulation games at all levels. Such ex-

ercises help participants understand processes and requirements, identify gray areas, and be prepared for crises. More cross-sectoral exercises should be held nationally and Europe-wide. Within Germany, there should be more drills to test the interaction between the various levels (local, state, federal) and actors (civilian, military, governmental, private).

- The institutions deemed by the federal government to be critical to maintaining the functioning of the state should also be subjected to stress and functionality testing. This will allow security precautions at the federal, state, and local level to be reviewed and improved.