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The United States and Germany's policy towards the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022

Introduction

The full-scale Russian aggression against Ukraine surprised the German political elites and society. Successive German governments invested huge political capital in Russia, striving to maintain the best possible relations with Moscow. In turn, German industry invested a lot of financial capital in Russia, including in the energy sector. The war in Ukraine showed that Germany's betting on Russia, to some extent at the expense of relations with the United States, turned out to be a serious mistake. After the outbreak of the war, it was very difficult for Germans to quickly adapt to the new political reality. Trying to minimize losses and protect their own interests, they exposed themselves to increasingly serious criticism from allies, including the US. Washington's pressure became one of the factors that influenced the redefinition of Germany's policy of helping Ukraine and sanctioning Russia.

The article analyzes and attempts to assess Germany's policy towards Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine from the perspective of the United States, which plays a key role in the West's reaction to the war. It tries to answer the question: Does Germany's policy of supporting Ukraine and sanctioning Russia meet US expectations? It was assumed that after the initial disgrace of Germany in the eyes of the US, it is gradually trying to rebuild the image of one of the key allies in Europe. This is due to increasing arms deliveries to Ukraine and abandoning economic cooperation with Russia. The first section of the article discusses the reasons for Germany's restraint in the US-led pro-Ukrainian coalition. The focus was on four factors: Germany's fear of Russia and diplomatic attempts to maintain cooperation; Germany's energy dependence on

Russia; attempts to make Germany's foreign policy independent of the US; and the burden of history in the form of pacifism and post-Cold War disarmament. The second section of the article is devoted to Germany's military support for Ukraine, and the third section – to Germany's economic, energy and humanitarian activities in the face of war. These issues were analyzed in the perspective of expectations and pressure from the United States. Doing research, scientists and analysts in the field of international and security policy from research institutions in Washington and New York were interviewed. This includes both leading American universities as well as American think-tanks with a global reach. The interviews were individual, non-standardized, unstructured and in-depth. They were conducted in a form reminiscent of an ordinary conversation, in which threads of the interlocutor's specialties were developed.

Reasons for Germany's restraint in the US-led pro-Ukrainian coalition

Focus on diplomacy and fear of Russia

Many Germans are attached to the idea of "Ostpolitik", i.e. the policy of opening up to the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc in the 1970s. They see the way to stability and security in Europe in easing conflicts with the USSR/Russia and in political and economic rapprochement. Since the end of the Cold War, Russia has played a special role in Germany's foreign policy, more important than other post-Soviet states. Already in the 1990s, German diplomats told their Ukrainian counterparts that Russia was their most important partner in Eastern Europe and they would not spoil these relations for the sake of supporting the interests of another post-Soviet state (Locoman 2022). Through formal and informal diplomatic channels, Russia decisively promoted its interests among the German elites and society. One of the consequences is that many Germans permanently perceive Ukraine as Russia's sphere of influence (Schwarz 2023). As noted by Julie George (2022), Germany is very skeptical about the possibility of further NATO enlargement to include countries that Russia considers its sphere of influence, like Ukraine. At NATO's 2008 Bucharest Summit, Germany, contrary to the United States, opposed granting of Membership Action Plans to Ukraine and Georgia. President Putin was aware of this difference in the approach to Ukraine's NATO aspirations, and played it skillfully. Before the summit, he warned the U.S. Undersecretary for Political Affairs William J. Burns, saying: "This would be another mistake in American diplomacy, and I know Germany and France are not ready anyway." (Burns 2019).

After the Russian annexation of Crimea and aggression in eastern Ukraine in 2014, Germany and France led a diplomatic offensive to end the war. As a result, the Minsk Agreements were signed, thanks to persuading Ukraine to make concessions to Russia (Mallick 2022: 13) and Normandy Format – a consultative group of Ukraine, Russia, Germany and France – was established. The government of Angela Merkel perceived Moscow's military actions as an attempt to defend its own interests. For this reason, it made diplomatic efforts to support Russia's involvement in European security, not believing in the possibility of Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine. In relation to Ukraine, Germany focused on supporting political and legal reforms on its way to the European Union, instead of strengthening the state security sector. In the meantime, there were voices in Germany about the need to abandon the sanctions imposed on Russia after 2014 and to rebuild political relations. The most radical attitude on this issue was presented by *Die Linke*, but such demands were also expressed by prominent representatives of the grand coalition, including the *SPD*, such as the then party chairman and vice-chancellor Sigmar Gabriel (Kosman 2019). In Ukraine, Germany's attitude in 2014-2021 is often referred to as "Germany's appeasement of Russia" (Kusa 2023). Edward Luttwak believes that Germans are good at almost everything but strategy. According to him, the German authorities are co-responsible for the war in Ukraine, because for years they did not counteract infiltration and pressure from Russia (Tavberidze 2022).

At the beginning of 2022, when the risk of a war in Ukraine increased, numerous Western political circles, including in the United States, accused Germany of passivity. Germany, however, conducted a diplomatic offensive to prevent aggression. In order to establish a common position with the US, Washington was visited by Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock on 5 January and by Chancellor Olaf Scholz on 7 February. President Biden appreciated Germany's diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis, including cooperation with the US in this regard, saying: "Germany and the United States, together with our Allies and partners, are working closely together to pursue diplomatic resolutions of this situation [...] Germany has also been a leader in pushing de-escalation of tensions and encouraging dialogue through the Normandy Format." (*Remarks by President Biden and Chancellor Scholz... 2022*). However, these actions did not bring the desired result.

The policy of the Scholz government regarding the war in Ukraine is largely a derivative of public sentiment towards Russia. A representative survey conducted in August 2022 by the opinion research institute Kantar Public showed that 80 percent of Germans feared a spillover of the war from Ukraine to neigh-

boring NATO countries, 72 percent felt threatened by Russia, and 69 percent feared a Russian nuclear strike. At the same time, 52 percent of Germans wanted the government to continue to act cautiously. Of the 41 percent of Germans who wanted their state's greater involvement in the Ukrainian crisis, 65 percent demanded more active diplomacy, only 14 percent – more military support, and 13 percent – more financial commitment. It is worth mentioning that many more former West Germans than East Germans demanded more toughness toward Russia (47:31) (Schwarz 2023). The main difference between Germany and Ukraine is how they would view an acceptable outcome of the war. Fearing its escalation, Germany is inclined to treat Ukraine as a buffer zone separating Russia and the West, which is unacceptable from Ukraine's perspective (Kusa 2023). The United States is closer to the position of Ukraine than Germany on this issue.

Energy cooperation with Russia

In Germany's political elites, including the largest parties – the *SPD* and the *CDU* – the prevailing belief was that the Soviet Union/Russia were reliable natural gas suppliers, even in periods of tension and political disputes (Reuters 2022). After the Cold War, Germany contributed to deepening Europe's dependence on Russian gas. This was conducive to the implementation by Russia of the Falin-Kwicinski doctrine formulated in 1991, according to which dependence on energy supplies was to be an instrument to weaken the processes of integration of Central and Eastern European countries with Western organizations (Ruszel 2015: 114). In 2006-2012, together with Russia, Germany built two branches of the Nord Stream gas pipeline at the bottom of the Baltic Sea, bypassing the territory of Ukraine. Prior to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, natural gas imports from Russia covered 55 percent of Germany's demand (Reuters 2022). During the war in the Donbas, contrary to the position of the United States, Ukraine and most countries in the region, Germany and Russia decided to build Nord Stream 2 (Choonara 2022: 18). The project implemented in 2017-2021 was the most symbolic manifestation of Germany's attempt to return to "business as usual" in its relations with Russia. It met with the Ukrainian narrative as "German betrayal", which irritated Berlin (Kusa 2023). From the point of view of the USA and Ukraine, NS 2 was seen as a political project aimed at hobbling Ukraine's economy by severely limiting its capacity to transport Russian gas to the EU. However, it was in the interest of Germany, which wanted to become the largest gas trading hub in Europe (Dutsyk, Dyczok 2021: 163). In 2020, President Donald Trump imposed sanctions on NS 2, but in May 2021 President Joe Biden lifted the sanctions at the request

of Chancellor Angela Merkel (Francis 2022). On 21 July 2021, the German Foreign Ministry and the US State Department issued a joint statement regarding the conditions for withdrawing the American objection to NS2. Germany undertook that further aggression by Russia in Ukraine or its use of energy as a weapon would result in actions at the national and European level aimed at imposing sanctions on the Russian energy sector. Berlin also declared financial support for Ukraine's energy transition and efforts to maintain Ukraine's importance as a transit country (*Joint Statement...* 2021). The US concession was not the result of a change in the perception of NS2, but a desire to rebuild transatlantic relations strained during the Trump presidency.

Long-term Chancellor Merkel was hailed as Europe's foremost stateswoman just a few years ago. Currently, she is widely criticized for tightening cooperation with Russia as an allegedly reliable partner and main supplier of energy resources (Hastings 2022). However, the mistakes concern the entire German political class, including the left-wing circles, which opted most strongly for abandoning nuclear energy in favor of green energy and dependence on Russia for natural gas imports. Although, for example, the Greens criticized NS 2, but they were even more opposed to LNG imports from the US, given that it was extracted by fracturing. As a result of this policy, Europe's largest economic power became a de facto hostage to Moscow. As noted by James H. Lebovic (2022), President Putin hoped for a rift among NATO states, the more so that during Trump's presidency the divisions in the Alliance deepened. An important role in the Russian strategy was to be played by Germany given its gas dependence on Russia.

Anti-Americanism and German foreign policy independence from the United States

During the Cold War, West Germany's foreign policy was in line with that of the United States, which dominated the Western Bloc. On the other hand, East Germany was a member of the Warsaw Pact hostile to NATO. Today, anti-Americanism is deeply rooted in Germany, especially in the eastern federal states. This is, among other things, the effect of anti-American propaganda conducted by the German Democratic Republic for many decades. Historian Sönke Neitzel says that a considerable number of Germans "still consider the U.S. to be the real enemy" (Schwarz 2023). After World War II, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer closely linked West Germany with the transatlantic structures, as he saw it as an opportunity for the country's freedom and development. American security guarantees, both conventional and nuclear, as well as economic assistance and cooperation were crucial in this regard. The United

States strongly supported the reunification of Germany while guaranteeing its full membership in NATO. In the first decade after the Cold War, Germany pursued a foreign policy towards the US that was often described as transatlantic (Cziomer 2005: 134-135). Although relations with the US are still of paramount importance for Germany's security policy, in recent decades we have observed its attempts to become fully independent on the international arena. As James Goldgeier (2022) notes, in the world dominated by the US, Germany did not line up with the US foreign policies, a symbolic example of which was the opposition to the war in Iraq in 2003. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld referred to Germany and other countries opposing the war as "Old Europe", contrasting it with a ready-to-act "New Europe", which consisted mainly of CEE countries. What is particularly important, Germany and the US assessed the role of Russia and China in the international environment differently. With the reduction of the US presence in Europe, first due to the global war on terror and then the "pivot to Asia", Germany tried to consolidate its dominant role in European politics. Recognizing the growing importance of Russia, Berlin did so in political and economic cooperation with Moscow. Germany tried to gain the strongest possible position in the emerging multipolar international environment. Although the transatlantic bond remains an axiom of German foreign policy, the growing aspirations and new status of Germany led to the search for ways to subtly re-tune the formula of relations with the USA (Malinowski 2021: 7). However, as noted by Richard K. Betts (2022), despite the above frictions and controversies, along with Great Britain and France, Germany remained the most important European ally of the United States in NATO.

Russian aggression in Ukraine has led to a certain ferment on the German political scene in the context of relations with the US, which also applies to the ruling coalition. Many members of the *SPD* consider the war in Ukraine a proxy war between Russia and the US. Since they do not consider it "their war", they are in favor of ending the arming of Ukraine and forcing it to conclude an agreement with Russia at the price of far-reaching concessions. The Greens have put aside traditional restraint towards the US and strongly support the arming of Ukraine, as does the traditionally transatlantic-oriented liberal *FDP*. The largest opposition party, the *CDU*, which during the rule of Chancellor Merkel sought to strengthen cooperation with Russia, sometimes even at the expense of relations with the USA, returns to its pro-American roots and advocates military aid for Ukraine. However, there are divisions within the party on this issue (Schwarz 2023). The far-right *AfD* and *Die Linke* are in favor of ending military support for Ukraine and forcing it to make peace with

Russia. The war in Ukraine showed that Germany, due to its military weakness and the presence of American troops on its territory, remains dependent on American security guarantees. For this reason, Washington still has a significant influence on German foreign and security policy in the region. This is evident despite the fact that Chancellor Scholz tries to maintain the appearance of a decision-making independence from the United States.

The burden of history, pacifism and disarmament

Nazi Germany was responsible for unleashing World War II and its crimes, including the Holocaust. After the attack of the Third Reich on Soviet Russia, Ukraine found itself under German occupation. The occupation authorities interned politicians who tried to recreate Ukrainian statehood in concentration camps and persecuted people promoting Ukrainian culture and education. Ukrainian food and raw materials were requisitioned and consumed by the German army. About 2.2 million people were taken from Ukraine to Germany as slave laborers (Britannica). About 7 million Ukrainians died during the war, including 1-1.5 million of Jewish origin, of whom tens of thousands were shot and dumped in mass graves in the infamous Babi Yar ravine in Kiev. On the other hand, a minority of Ukrainians, including the followers of Stepan Bandera, tried to ally themselves with the Nazis (Choonara 2022, 18).

As a consequence of World War II, post-Nazi aversion to war persists in Germany. In the post-war period, the pacifist movement developed on a large scale. Pacifism is most deeply rooted in the parties and voters of the *SPD*, *Die Grünen* and *Die Linke*. Germany also adopted a number of restrictions on the use of its armed forces, including in peacekeeping missions. As a rule, it also does not send arms to areas of armed conflict, which was used as an argument for not supplying arms to Ukraine in the first months of the war. In recent years, however, there is no consistency in this matter, as Germany sent weapons to many Arab states fighting in the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen (Miedziński 2022). Earlier, Germans armed the Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga fighting Islamic State (Reuters 2022).

President Vladimir Putin denies Ukraine the right to statehood, just as Chancellor Adolf Hitler wanted to destroy the statehood of Czechoslovakia, Poland and other European countries. In doing so, the Russian army is destroying civilian infrastructure and murdering Ukrainians. Given its historical experience, Germany should assume a special responsibility for counteracting the crimes of totalitarianism. Germany's policy towards Russia in the 21st century resembled the appeasement policy of the European powers towards

Germany in the 1930s. Germany's military weakness and its tendency to make deals at all costs encouraged Putin to adopt an increasingly assertive policy towards Russia's neighbours. As Max Hasting (2022) writes: "The Russian leader contemptuously defies the guiding spirit of such nations as Germany, industrial giant of Europe, which has long renounced Bismarckian principles: It has identified itself as a so-called 'civilian power,' forswearing credible armed forces." In the context of the tragic events of World War II, the Kremlin's propaganda of calling the Ukrainian government fascist and attacking President Zelenskiy for his Jewish roots should be particularly controversial among Germans.

During the Cold War, West Germany had the largest army in Europe, which resulted from its role as a NATO flank state. Only in recent decades has a huge gap emerged between German economic power and their inadequate defense capability. The demobilization of Germany that began in the 1990s went too far. As Cynthia Roberts (2022) rightly points out, today Russia also does not have an army as powerful as the Soviet Union, so there is no need for a German army to be as large as during the Cold War. However, Germany should have a military potential equivalent to its economic strength. In the 21st century, the main discrepancy in relations with the US was Germany's avoidance of financing defense spending at least at the level of the NATO-required 2 percent of GDP (Malinowski 2022: 21). The US hoped that European states, including Germany, would take responsibility for the security of the continent so that it could focus on other regions of the world, especially the Indo-Pacific. In recent years, demands have also appeared in Germany, including those of the *SPD* chairman, Rolf Mützenich, to withdraw from the NATO nuclear sharing program. In order for Germany to be an important pillar of Europe's security, it is necessary to significantly increase military spending and reorganize the army, including filling gaps in military equipment and ammunition. In practice, however, Berlin shuns military leadership in the European and transatlantic context. America's security umbrella created a comfortable situation for Germany to avoid a leadership role in the defense area, which became a kind of mindset in Berlin (Dempsey 2022).

The United States towards German military support of war-torn Ukraine

After the outbreak of war on 24 February 2022, the leaders of the United States and Germany – President Biden and Chancellor Scholz – unequivocally condemned Russia's brutal and unprovoked attack on Ukraine, announcing

a strong response to the aggressor and multifaceted support for the victim of aggression (*Remarks by President Biden on Russia's...* 2022; *Federal Government condemns...* 2022). However, while from the beginning of the war the USA sent significant amounts of arms to Ukraine, Germany held back. The government of Chancellor Scholz variously justified the very limited military support for Ukraine in the first months of the war. Among the key arguments was the fear of the conflict escalating, including its transformation into an open war between Russia and NATO, and the possibility of Russia using nuclear weapons. It also pointed to the limited stocks of military equipment and ammunition in the German army and referred to the tradition of Germany not sending lethal weapons to war-torn regions. Both the US and Ukrainian authorities saw these arguments as excuses. The war in Ukraine once again showed the lack of German leadership, especially in the military area (Dempsey 2022). Only the crimes committed by the Russian army, the destabilizing impact of the conflict on European security and pressure from NATO allies, mainly the US, gradually influenced the evolution of Germany's position on this issue (Bryjka 2022: 1). Pierre Morcos (2022) estimates that initially Germany was very restrained in terms of military support for Ukraine, unlike, for example, the USA, Great Britain or Poland. However, this position is evolving and Germany is increasingly meeting the expectations of Ukraine and the US in this regard. In mid-September 2022, the US Ambassador in Berlin, Amy Gutmann, praised Germany for supplying weapons to Ukraine, but also called for stronger military support. During the meeting in Washington with Chancellor Scholz on 3 March 2023, President Biden appreciated this and other changes in Germany's foreign and security policy: "You've stepped up to provide critical military support [...] And you've driven historic changes at home and, you know, increasing defense spending and diversifying away from Russian energy sources." (*Remarks by President Biden and Chancellor Scholz...* 2023). On the other hand, time plays a key role, and yet Germany still uses the tactic of dosing heavy military equipment (Malinowski 2022: 28).

According to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy, in the period between 24 January to 20 November 2022, the total value of individual licenses issued by the Federal Government for the export of military goods to Ukraine amounted to about 2.34 billion EUR (Hofmann 2022). Germans have allocated a very diverse armament and military equipment, including the Patriot air defense system, the Marder infantry fighting vehicles, the IRIS-T SLM air defense systems, various types of howitzers, various types of vehicles, drones, anti-aircraft systems, anti-tank weapons, anti-mine systems, diversified ammunition, small arms, individual equipment of soldiers and many others (The Federal

Government 2023). For comparison, in this period the USA declared 18.51 billion EUR, the United Kingdom 1.9 billion EUR, Poland 1.82 billion EUR, Canada 0.99 billion EUR and France 0.47 billion EUR (Hofmann 2022). However, this is a declared amount, and by 5 December Germany had actually delivered military aid worth 1.93 billion EUR (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 2022: 5). In addition, while Germany's military aid is quite good in terms of amounts, it is in a distant position in terms of its share in GDP.

After the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Germany has gradually reversed its historic policy of not sending weapons to conflict zones (Choonara 2022: 2). In April 2022, Chancellor Scholz announced the delivery to Ukraine of heavy weaponry, which broke the existing taboo in Germany and caused discontent among some politicians of the *SPD*. The German government also successively gave consent for the supply of more and more advanced equipment of German production by other countries, including consent for Estonia to send German Howitzers (Kotoulas, Pusztai 2022: 16). The pressure from the US to increase military aid by Germany was growing every month. In late July 2022, U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin expressed hope that artillery and missile systems from Germany would soon be on the battlefield in Ukraine (*Opening Remarks by Secretary of Defense...* 2022). Equally important was forcing Germans to decide to send Patriot missile systems to Ukraine at the end of 2022 and Leopard 2A tanks at the beginning of 2023. The international discussion in this regard was opened by Poland, but it was the United States that played a key role in persuading Germany to send this technically advanced equipment. Germany only agreed to send them when the US declared sending its own Patriot system and M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine, respectively (Roque 2023). These decisions were also influenced by internal factors, including scuffles within the ruling coalition and pressure from the opposition *CDU* and *CSU*. However, it was not without voices of opposition. A peculiar comment was made by the *ARD* correspondent in Washington, Gudrun Engel, after the visit of President Volodymyr Zelensky to the USA on the 300th day of Russian aggression. She called the visit, where the Ukrainian president asked for more military support, "an act of desperation." She assessed that the visit had "probably only a symbolic meaning and did not bring the world closer to the end of the war even by a meter", and depreciated President Biden's decision to hand over the Patriot system to Ukraine (PAP 2022). Even though it was one of many different voices on the matter, this kind of narrative has not appeared in the mainstream media in Poland or the Baltic States. In order to create the image of a leading country in the supply of tanks to Ukraine, the German government also decided to send

the older type of tanks, the Leopard 1, a significant number of which ended up in storage during the reduction of the German armored forces (Tavberidze 2022). Announcing this decision, the fact that large quantities of older tanks were delivered by other countries at the beginning of the war, including about 250 T 72 and PT 91 tanks by Poland, was omitted.

After the outbreak of war in Ukraine, Chancellor Scholz announced the “turning point” (*Zeitenwende*) in German foreign policy. According to Krzysztof Malinowski (2022: 18-19), it was not the result of a strategic plan or in-depth strategic reflection, but of awareness of the risks associated with war. Continuing a passive defense policy and maintaining energy cooperation with Russia could weaken Germany's position towards the US and the cohesion of NATO. Chancellor Scholz announced to improve the country's defensive military capacities: “The goal is a powerful, cutting-edge, progressive *Bundeswehr* that can be relied upon to protect us”. He pledged to spend an additional 100 billion EUR for the army and to increase the defense spending to 2 percent of GDP by 2024. He also announced multi-faceted support for the brutally attacked Ukraine and actions to strengthen NATO's eastern flank. (*Policy statement...* 2022). Chancellor Scholz repeated these promises at the NATO summit in Madrid on 29-30 June 2022 (Graham 2022). Ambassador Gutmann described Germany's decision to bolster the armed forces as “bold and historic”, announcing the strengthening of American-German defense and security cooperation, and confirming unwavering support for Ukraine (*Ambassador Amy Gutmann...* 2022). As Steven Pifer (2022) states, Berlin's decision was in line with the US expectations that Germany would take on greater responsibility for the security of NATO's eastern flank, and perhaps also other regions of the world. Unfortunately, bureaucratic obstacles in the administration and the *Bundeswehr* are already visible in the implementation of this ambitious goal. Stephen Biddle (2022) believes that because of the war in Ukraine, Germany has become radically more forceful in just a few months than it had been in decades. This can be seen in the rapid evolution in the approach to the increase in defense spending and military aid for Ukraine. However, he believes that such an attitude will not last long and the readiness to support Ukraine militarily will diminish. Germany will also return to traditional anti-military policies to some extent, but it will not be a return to what it was before February 2022, because now Berlin is more aware of the existing threats. Biddle believes that Germany will not implement the radical defense spending increase that it announced, and in practice Berlin will decide to implement less ambitious goals. Still, the prognosis for German defense spending is higher than it was before the war.

In the context of the war in Ukraine, American military installations on German territory play an important role. The US base in Ramstein in southwest Germany is involved in supporting and coordinating military assistance to Ukraine (Wright 2022). It is also the operational center for NATO operations to patrol the airspace of the Baltic states (Big-Alabo, MacAlex-Achinulo 2022: 30). However, Germany is cautious about using the base to support Ukraine. In early March 2022, when the Polish government proposed to transfer 28 MiG-29 fighter jets to Ukraine via the US base in Ramstein, Chancellor Scholz said that there was no option for Germany to host jets for Ukraine (Mackinnon, Detsch 2022). However, this issue may return in the future. In turn, the US Army base in Grafenwoehr in Germany is a home for the Joint Multinational Training Group-Ukraine. The Americans carry out training for Ukrainian soldiers there, mainly in the field of using the armament and military equipment provided to them (Liebermann, Lillis, Bertrand, et. al. 2022). In the long term, it is possible that the United States will transfer part of the military infrastructure from Germany to NATO's eastern flank, which largely depends on Germany's credibility as an ally, including its assistance to Ukraine.

Economic, energy and humanitarian area

After the meeting with President Biden in Washington on 7 February 2022, Chancellor Scholz said: "If there was a military aggression against Ukraine, this will entail severe consequences that we agreed upon together, severe sanctions that we have worked on together. So, there will be a high price for Russia." (*Remarks by President Biden and Chancellor Scholz...* 2022). After the war broke out the United States has played a leading role in the West's imposition of sanctions on Russia, and Germany has traditionally been among the European countries most reluctant to tighten the sanctions (Haesebrouck, Taghon, Van Coppenolle 2022: 37). Nevertheless, given the size and importance of the German economy in the European and global economic system and its trade relations with Russia, Germany's role is extremely important. Pierre Morcos (2022) believes that Germany has played a quite critical role in terms of sanctioning Russia, mainly within the G7 and the EU. Along with the progressing Russian crimes, Berlin agreed to increasingly far-reaching economic sanctions. Initially, they concerned individuals in President Putin's immediate ward, including his ministers and the oligarchs who supported his regime. Over time, sanctions were significantly expanded, including cutting off Russian banks and enterprises from international financial markets, banning exports to Russia,

mainly of modern technologies, and banning imports of raw materials, including energy resources (Federal Foreign Office 2023). The purpose of the sanctions for both the US and Germany is to force Russia to withdraw its army from Ukraine. Washington does not officially argue that the sanctions are also intended to initiate regime change in Russia, which Berlin is all the more wary of (Hoffman 2022). Currently, however, the German government also realizes that a return to “business as usual” with President Putin’s regime is impossible. Confirmation of this is that at the beginning of 2023 Germany called for the establishment of a special international tribunal to prosecute Russian leaders for war crimes committed in Ukraine.

The most serious controversy aroused the issue of German-Russian gas cooperation. After Russia recognized the republics of Luhansk and Donetsk, Germany suspended certification of Nord Stream 2. In March 2022, Germany objected, however, to suddenly suspend the import of energy resources from Russia. This met with international criticism of Germany, including from the US. Cynthia Roberts (2022) does not agree with the legitimacy of such strong criticism of Germany in the context of its reluctance to withdraw from the purchase of energy resources from Russia. As she notes, switching to new directions of energy supplies is a very difficult transition which doesn’t happen overnight. Moscow itself forced Berlin to change its approach, as in the following months the Kremlin weaponized its control over gas supplies to Germany. In early July, Gazprom halted gas deliveries via Nord Stream 1, arguing for technical reasons. It preyed on the German public’s fears about a cold and expensive winter. Moscow’s energy blackmail was aimed at making German industry and individual consumers pressure the government to make concessions to Russia (Dempsey 2022). Among other things, Putin wanted to force the West to certify the NS 2. Germany, however, sent the turbine from NS 1 to Canada, where it was serviced for Siemens. After a few days of delay, at the request of the German government, the certified turbine was sent back. Although this was a breach in Western sanctions, it deprived Russia of one of its arguments for gas blackmailing Europe (Francis 2022).

Over time, Germany began to gradually abandon the purchase of Russian gas, which is possible thanks to concluding contracts with other suppliers, including Qatar and the US (Geletukha, Zheliezna, Drahnev 2022, et. al.: 5). For this reason, Chancellor Scholz announced to rapidly build two LNG terminals in Brunsbüttel and Wilhelmshaven (*Policy statement...* 2022). S. Pifer (2022) believes that Germany absolutely needs to build two or three LNG terminals. German Uniper, the largest individual customer of Gazprom, published a 40 billion EUR loss for the first three quarters of 2022, after which the Ger-

man government decided to nationalize it. The Management Board of Uniper has decided to completely stop buying gas from Russia until 2024. At the same time, Germany was moving away from buying oil from Russia (Tran, Dallara 2022). Preparing to function without energy resources from Russia, Germany modified its energy policy, temporarily suspending the implementation of an ambitious transition program to the green economy. Berlin was forced to do this to prevent possible power shortages and reduce the consumption of gas, which was needed for heating in winter. For these reasons, Germany temporarily maintained two of the remaining three nuclear reactors on standby for emergencies until mid-April. Germany also temporarily returned to coal-fired power plants and even highly-polluting oil-fired power plants (Reuters 2022). Despite the difficult circumstances, these actions partly undermined Germany's credibility as one of the global leaders in clean technologies.

Germany also suffers significant losses due to sanctions on exports to Russia. It was a drastic change, because just from February to March 2022, German exports to Russia halved (Pradetto 2022: 1). As Michael Doyle (2022) notes, due to its economic and technological strength, Germany has the ability to influence the Russian economy. In the context of the war in Ukraine, it was especially important to cut off Russia from German modern technologies that could be used by the Russian military industry. Attempts to evade sanctions by German companies are prosecuted by the relevant authorities. The collapse of economic cooperation with Russia should make German companies rethink their current strategies towards other problematic markets. This applies, among others, to China, over which the specter of American retaliation and even sanctions hangs. Looking at this from a broader perspective, the German government have to rethink its export-oriented economic model (Saxer 2022).

Germany is also involved in humanitarian and economic support for Ukraine. In a special report, the Chancellor's Office announced that from 24 February to 21 December 2022, the German government allocated 12.51 billion EUR in bilateral assistance for Ukraine. The aid considers all areas, including military and humanitarian aid (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung 2022: 1). However, these data are in contradiction with other data. The Kiel Institute for the World Economy reports that, in the period from 24 January to 20 November 2022, Germany's total commitment to Ukraine (both bilateral and share of EU commitments), for all purposes, amounted to 12.6 billion EUR (IFW Kiel 2022). From 24 February 2022 to 15 January 2023, the German government promised Ukraine bilateral support in the amount of 6.15 billion EUR (Rank 3 in the world), which corresponded to only 0.17% of GDP (Rank 14 in the world). For comparison, during this period the US bilateral

aid pledge amounted to 73.18 billion EUR (Rank 1) and 0,37% of GDP (Rank 5), UK to 8.31 billion EUR (Rank 2) and 0.32% of GDP (Rank 8), Poland's to 3.56 billion EUR (Rank 5) and 0.63% of GDP (Rank 4), and Estonian to 0.31 billion EUR (Rank 21) and 1.07% of GDP (Rank 1) (IFW Kiel 2023). The data presented by the German government as bilateral aid actually refer to overall aid, as they include international programs. In addition, some of the initiatives included in the government report do not have starting dates, so it is difficult to determine which ones have actually been ongoing since the outbreak of the war. Besides, some funds also include support for other countries in the region. This way of presenting the data is to picture of Germany as a clear leader of regional help to Ukraine in every area (Frymark 2023).

The German position is extremely important in the context of Ukraine's prospects for joining the European Union. On 28 February 2022, four days after the Russian invasion, President Zelensky submitted Ukraine's formal application to join the EU. However, there was no consensus among the leaders of the member states on whether Ukraine should be given an accelerated path to the membership (Locoman 2022). As P. Morcos (2022) notes, however, as a result of the war in Ukraine, Germany changed its approach to the country's membership in the EU, agreeing to its official candidate status, which it obtained in June 2022. Berlin realizes that this is a very significant symbolic and political signal. The decision was in line with the position of the US, which supports the idea of including Ukraine in European integration structures. Unlike NATO, the EU enlargement focuses on economic, legal and social rather than military issues, therefore allowing Ukraine to join the organization would be easier for Germany to accept (Youngs 2022b). Due to Germany's position in the EU and the European economy, it should be assumed that after the war, Germany will also become an important participant in the reconstruction of Ukraine.

Conclusions

Ukraine places much of the blame on Germany for full-scale Russian aggression in 2022. This is due to the pressure exerted by the government of Angela Merkel on Ukraine to accept the Minsk protocols, calls for the lifting of sanctions imposed on Russia, and the construction of Nord Stream 2. The United States had a different perspective on relations with Russia than Germany, but did not want to interfere excessively in European politics. Due to German ambivalent attitude, both before and in the first months of the war,

Germany's image was seriously damaged. This concerned, among others, the role of Germany as one of the most important US allies in Europe, as well as a potential EU leader on its way to strategic autonomy. On the other hand, the evolution of Germany's attitude towards Russia and Ukraine, forced by the US and other allies, made it possible to maintain the unity of the West in the face of the war. This came at a great economic cost to Germany and resulted from a major re-evaluation of German foreign and security policy. This evolution has been appreciated in the United States, although Berlin is only partially succumbing to Washington's pressure to increase aid. Chancellor Scholz's government is delaying decisions and actions regarding military support for Ukraine, even though time plays a key role in the context of the final outcome of the war. The protracted war, in turn, increases the risk of politicians in Germany advocating limiting aid to Ukraine and forcing it to make concessions to Russia.

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Keywords: war in Ukraine, German-American relations, arms supplies, energy security, economic sanctions, humanitarian aid

ABSTRACT

The aim of the article is to analyze and evaluate Germany's policy toward the 2022 war in Ukraine from the standpoint of the United States, anti-Russian coalition leader.

The main research problem is the question: Does Germany's policy of supporting Ukraine and sanctioning Russia meet US expectations? The main hypothesis is that after Germany's disgrace in the first

months of the war, its reputation as a reliable ally of the United States in Europe was gradually restored as a result of its successively increasing support for Ukraine and breaking off cooperation with Russia. Germany saw significant revaluations in consequence of the war in Ukraine, especially in the military and energy sectors. Regardless of the outcome of the war, a return to „business as usual” in terms of economic and energy cooperation with Russia is very unlikely. In turn, the military improvements that have been announced, including a major boost in the combat potential of the Bundeswehr, will probably only partially be carried out. Germany will continue to be one of US key allies in Europe during the coming years, but it is likely that Washington will tighten cooperation with the countries of NATO’s eastern flank, to some extent at Germany’s expense.

Interviews with American scientists and analysts specializing in international politics were conducted as part of the research.