

Germany: Leader of the New European Security Architecture

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ABSTRACT

With the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, one of the most debated issues has been how to ensure European security. This article analyzes Germany's role in the European security architecture, which is expected to emerge after the Ukraine war. In addition, the countries from which Germany can receive assistance in fulfilling this leadership role are also discussed. In this context, the contribution of the UK and Sweden to Germany has been emphasized. The selection of these countries was based on their ability to act strategically and their historical memory. The aim of the study is to explore what kind of structure can ensure European security in the face of the Russian threat. The study mainly focuses on the period after the Ukraine-Russia war. However, in order to provide a holistic perspective on the subject, references to the post-World War II period are also made from time to time. The main argument of the article is that Germany will be the leader of the new European security architecture. Document analysis was used to obtain data on the subject. In this framework, the explanatory/descriptive case method, one of the case study types of qualitative research designs, was used. The subject was tried to be handled within the framework of realism in international relations theory. The scope of the research consists of Russia's attempts to disrupt the balance of power in Europe on the one hand and the efforts of states trying to maintain the balance on the other. This situation led to the conclusion that the most appropriate theoretical approach for the study would be the realist theory. As a result of the research, it is concluded that Germany will be the leader of the new European security architecture for many reasons.

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1. STRUCTURED ABSTRACT

In this study, the problem of how to ensure European security, which emerged with the Ukraine war, has been tried to be examined. In this context, it has been tried to answer the questions of how European security will be ensured from now on, the role of Germany and which country can assume the leadership role in the new European security architecture. In the study, the countries that Germany can get help from while fulfilling this leadership role are also discussed. In this context, what kind of role Sweden and England will play is examined. The reasons for the selection of these countries are also discussed within the scope of the study. The realist theory of international relations is used for the analysis of the case. In the case that constitutes the subject of the study, there is an attempt by an aggressive state to disrupt the balances to the detriment of other states. This situation leads to the idea that it would be appropriate to use the Realist theory of international relations on the subject. Russia has made an attempt to disrupt the security balances in Europe by attacking Ukraine. This situation has caused Poland, the Baltic countries and Germany to be uneasy. As a result of this uneasiness, other countries, especially Germany, have increased their military expenditures. The emerging Picture confirms Thucydides' idea of the security dilemma. The Ukrainian war is not the only thing that has caused European nations to be uneasy. In this sense, the rhetoric of the Russian rulers and Putin is remarkable. The rhetoric of the Russian rulers, who do not even accept the sale of Alaska, shows that they aim to establish an imperial Russian empire. In the most modest terms, this empire can be thought to cover the regions that were once within the Soviet sphere of influence. One of the most striking places within the Soviet sphere of influence during the Cold War can be said to be the former East Germany. From this perspective, it can be seen that the Russian rulers and Putin have goals far beyond what Machiavelli intended in *The Prince*. In a sense, the Russians are attempting to bring the nations they once forcibly subjugated back under their captivity. Morgenthau's views can be said to be the most appropriate framework that can be used to explain the goals of the Russians. Morgenthau lists among the foreign policy objectives the conquest of new territories and the creation of regional change. In a sense, the Russians are trying to create a regional change that aims to recapture their former spheres of influence. American strategists such as Kissinger and Brzezinski have put forward important views on how to ensure European security. Among Kissinger's proposed solutions, NATO occupies a prominent place. Brzezinski's approach also emphasizes European security. Brzezinski believes that Europe is too important a region to be left under the control of any other power. Brzezinski also sees Europe as the only structure in the global system that can share the burden of the US. Russia's aggression against Ukraine can be considered as a recent event. In this sense, it is possible to say that there are not many new studies on the subject yet. Document analysis was conducted to obtain information and data on the subject. In this framework, explanatory/descriptive case method, one of the case study types of qualitative research designs, was used. It is a fact known by experts and strategists that the US focus on the Indo-Pacific region will create a gap in European

security. The findings of the study show that German leaders are also aware of the security gap that will emerge in Europe. German leaders emphasize that the security of the European continent should be ensured by Europeans. German state leaders are willing to play a leadership role in European security. The most concrete manifestation of this approach is the deployment of German troops in Lithuania. An other finding of the study is that Germany needs time to build a combat capable army. Although German leaders are aware of the importance of the issue, it should be noted that there is a division in the German public opinion on the issue. Time is also needed to resolve this issue. An other finding of the study is that some leaders, such as Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico, have a pro-Russian stance. The inadequacy of the population, economic and military power of other European countries makes it imperative for Germany to play a leadership role. In addition, it is seen that Russian leaders have been making threatening statements against Germany since the 1950s. The last link of these statements is the threatening words of the Russian defense minister Sergei Shoigu against Germany. In a sense, these statements also point to Germany's position in terms of European security. Poland, which is among Russia's potential targets, is a country devoid of geographical barriers. For this reason, it can be thought that a possible Russian military operation would quickly reach the German borders. This can be thought to have forced German leaders to take the initiative on European security. Germany is in a way the country on the border line of Russian expansionism during the Cold War. In other words, it is the point where Russian advances in Europe stopped. The study is expected to contribute to the literature on how to ensure European security. The study is also expected to contribute to the understanding of Germany's role in European security. In particular, it is hoped that the study will help practitioners to look at the issue from a broader perspective. It would be appropriate for practitioners and researchers to examine the obstacles to Germany's leadership role. In this context, research on how to eliminate these obstacles will also make an important contribution to the subject. German military units were deployed outside the country for the first time after World War II in Lithuania. It should be noted that Lithuanian state administrators were very pleased with the deployment of these troops in Lithuania. The effects of the deployment of German troops in other Baltic countries on European security can also be examined by researchers. In addition to the Baltic states, there are other countries where the German military presence could be deployed as a research topic. Poland could be one of the potential targets of Russia in the coming period. In this sense, it is also important to investigate what kind of support other European countries could provide to Poland. What kind of strategy Poland could follow in order to cope with a possible Russian attack can also be seen among the issues that can be researched.

2. INTRODUCTION

The war in Ukraine has had many global and regional repercussions. The war not only triggered academic debates on the issue, but also led other states to take concrete steps towards regional security. The most tangible developments that the war has led to in terms of

regional security are Sweden and Finland's move towards NATO membership and the increase in Germany's military expenditures.

At the same time, the war in Ukraine has also led to an increase in the debate on how the new European security architecture will be shaped and which country will play the leading role in this structuring. It should be noted that discussions on European security, at least at the strategic level, are not new. The work of American strategists and experts is particularly noteworthy. Former US Secretary of State Henry Alfred Kissinger's *Diplomacy* is one of the fundamental works on European security (Kissinger, 1994). It should be noted that Kissinger especially emphasizes the European balance of power. Kissinger is one of the representatives of the realist theory of international relations. The difference that distinguishes Kissinger from other representatives of this theory is that he did not stop only with theoretical analysis but also had the chance to apply his ideas in practice. An other important work in terms of understanding European security and Euro-American relations is Zbigniew Brzezinski's *The Grand Chessboard* (Brzezinski, 2020). An other study that can be examined on the subject is Francis Fukuyama's *The Origins of Political Order* (Fukuyama, 2016). In this work, Francis Fukuyama analyzes the relationship between geography and the survival and security of states and the results of military activities. It is possible to make a similar analysis regarding the geographical structure of the countries between Germany and Russia.

It would be useful for academics and practitioners to investigate the contributions that other states can make to the new European security architecture to be led by Germany. In this context, it is important to investigate what kind of contributions countries such as the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Turkey can make to this new structure. It would also be appropriate to investigate the possible obstacles that may be encountered in the formation of the new security architecture and how they can be overcome. In this context, a number of research topics can be proposed within the framework of different international relations theories. Perhaps the most prominent of these topics is to examine the implications of parties such as the Alternative für Deutschland (AFD) in Germany for the new security architecture. When we look at what these effects might be, several topics can be mentioned. The first of these is the possible rise of AFD and the effects it will have on Germany's foreign and security policies if it comes to power (Eser and Çiçek, 2020). The second one is related to the reflections of the AFD's anti-immigrant policies on the security field. As is well known, there are a significant number of immigrants in Germany from many countries such as Poland, Italy, Ukraine and Turkey. How the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the AFD's possible rule, which

may border on fascism, may affect security cooperation with these countries is a matter of research. The third is how the United States will react to the AFD's policy of isolationism, which has a racist discourse (Çiçek, 2021). The study is expected to be useful for academics, diplomats, security experts and strategists working on European Security.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

It should be noted that there are not many answers to the question of which International Relations theory can analyze the developments following Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Realist theory is considered to be the most appropriate theoretical framework for analyzing the issue. It should be noted that there are not many examples in the field of international relations where theory and reality on the ground overlap so perfectly.

According to realism theory, the main purpose of states is to ensure their survival, that is, to continue their existence. Realist theory emphasizes the concepts of power and the balance of power. According to realists, the international environment is anarchic. At the same time, the international environment is an arena where states struggle for power. In such an environment, some states may attempt to disrupt this balance. In these cases, other states unite against the destabilizing state and try to restore the balance. Within the scope of this study, it is seen that Russia is the destabilizing state. Russia is trying to gain military, political and economic gains to the detriment of other states. In this study, it will be examined why Germany is an important state to restore this balance and how this balance can be achieved with a security architecture that will be shaped around Germany. According to realist theory, it is the capacities of states that determine the outcome of conflicts. In this framework, the elements of Germany's capacity that distinguish it from other European countries will be discussed. We can say that the security dilemma philosophy of the realist theory was in full operation during the Second World War in the case of German armament and the arming of its neighbors in response to it. In the security dilemma, the arming of a state causes fear in its neighbors and leads them to arm themselves (Mynott, 2013). Today, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and its military build up in this region can be considered as a cause of fear for Germany and other countries. We can say that Russia's aggressive behavior has mobilized Germany to increase its military expenditures.

One of the important Works that form the philosophical foundations of the Realist theory of International Relations is Niccolò di Bernardo dei Machiavelli's *The Prince* (Machiavelli, 1532). In this work, Machiavelli advises the ruler to achieve Italian unity. When we look at the discourses of Putin and Russian rulers, it is seen that they have goals far beyond the

establishment of Russian unity. In explaining Russia's aggressive initiatives, it is necessary to look at the views of other pioneers of realist theory.

With these aggressive initiatives, Russia is in a sense acting in a way that confirms Morgenthau's thesis that states are structures that aim to gain interests. Hans Morgenthau sees the cause of conflicts as the attempts of states to maximize their interests. Morgenthau also lists controlling territories and creating regional change among the goals of foreign policy (Morgenthau and Thompson, 1985). Russia's initiatives towards Ukraine fit precisely in to these definitions. From this perspective, we can say that Russia aims to create regional changes and take new regions under its control. Ukraine can be considered as the victim of Russia's first step towards increasing its regional control.

Morgenthau sees the balance of power as the way to prevent conflicts. An opposing bloc will play an important role in preventing Russia from taking a more aggressive stance. In this sense, Brzezinski believes that Europe is the only power that can help the US in terms of maintaining the balance in the global system (Brzezinski, 2020).

4. FINDINGS

This section of the paper will present the reasons why Germany should be the leading country in the new European security architecture. Germany's attempt to ensure European security on its own will bring with it serious challenges. In this context, in the second part of the chapter, it is tried to reveal which countries can support Germany in fulfilling its leadership role.

4.1. Reasons For German Leadership

Great states make long-term strategic plans. Those interested in international relations have heard this saying many times. It is often seen as a cliché. In the case of Germany, however, it is true. Already in the 1990s, the Americans laid the foundations of the New European security architecture. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the unification of the two Germanies should not be seen as an ordinary event. A weak fragmented Germany could not cope with the Russian threat in particular. Already in the 90s, the Americans saw China as a rising power and realized that in the future they would have to concentrate their power in the Asia-Pacific region. Who was going to ensure the security of Europe while the Americans were struggling with China, which was challenging their global hegemony? The American answer to this crucial question of European security was Germany. Historical events, especially the unification of the two Germanies, show that the Americans' solutions were shaped around Germany.

It can be said that the approach to the security structure that the Americans expect to be shaped around Germany has been understood and adopted by German leaders. German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius stated that America's military presence in Europe would be reduced and that America would focus on the Indo-Pacific region. Reuters shared these statements with its subscribers on December 16, 2023. In his statements, Boris Pistorius emphasized that Europeans should do more to ensure the security of their continent. One thing that stands out in Pistorius' statements is that he emphasizes that time is needed for this. Boris Pistorius believes that a period of five to eight years is needed to become militarily, industrially and socially ready (Marsh, 2023). Boris Pistorius was not the only one to draw attention to the decline of the American military presence in Europe and its consequences. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis has also made statements on the subject.

Gabrielius Landsbergis expressed his thoughts on the subject in an interview on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Landsbergis stated that if the US withdraws its forces from Europe at a time of Russian aggression, it would be a "Nightmare" especially for the Baltic states. Landsbergis' thoughts are influenced by the anxiety about the possible outcome of the 2024 US elections. The possibility of Trump's return can be seen as the main reason for this uneasiness (Dendrinou and Drozdiak, 2024).

Germany's leadership is also necessitated by the small populations and military strength of other European countries. It is debatable whether the military presence of many European countries can be characterized as an army. It is possible to characterize the military presence of European countries as symbolic armies. It would be delusional to think that these armies would be able to offer serious resistance to a full-scale Russian attack. This situation is already forcing Germany to take steps in this regard.

The most concrete step in this regard is the agreement signed between German Defense Minister Boris Pistorius and Lithuanian Defense Minister Arvydas Anusauskas. This agreement includes the deployment of thousands of German troops in Lithuania. It can also be said that this agreement was a historical turning point. With this agreement, German troops will be permanently stationed in a foreign country for the first time since the Second World War (Sytas, 2023). Prior to this agreement, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz met with the leaders of the Baltic states in Tallinn on May 26, 2023. This visit focused on defense and security cooperation. It should be noted that the main agenda of the visit was the war in Ukraine (Armstrong, 2023).

It can be assumed that the foundations of the agreement signed between the defense ministers were laid during Olaf Scholz's Baltic visit. This agreement is also noteworthy in that it shows that agreements between states do not emerge out of nowhere. Agreements between nations mature after a series of contacts.

One of the reasons that necessitates Germany's leadership is the fact that Russia, which is the main source of threat to European security, addresses Germany. When we look at the rhetoric of the Russian rulers, we see that they threaten Germany and the UK in particular. In a sense, with their threats, Russian leaders declare that their interlocutors in Europe are Germany and the UK.

The words of Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, commenting on Merkel-era German Defense Minister Kramp-Karrenbauer's call for NATO to deter Russia, are very striking. "The German defense minister must know well how this in the past ended for Germany and Europe," Sergei Shoigu said (Xinhua, 2021). Another striking point in Sergei Shoigu's statements is that he used the terms Germany and Europe separately. The fact that Sergei Shoigu used these expressions separately can be read as an indicator of the importance that Russian state leaders attribute to Germany.

It should be noted that Russian discomfort with German power and its development is not new. In the past, Germany has been subjected to threats from Russian statesmen on many occasions.

Between 1958 and 1963 we see Khrushchev's ultimatums on Berlin. The basis of these ultimatums was the discomfort with the rapidly developing Federal Germany. In a sense, the development of the Federal Republic of Germany was a bad example for the Soviets (Kinsinger, 1994).

We can state that another issue that forces Germany to act and take precautions in the security context is the discourse of Russian leaders. We see that Russian leaders, especially Putin, make discourses that refer to the pre-Soviet era. In a sense, we can say that Russian leaders have a perspective towards the reconstruction and development of the Russian empire in history. In this sense, a decree signed by V. Putin draws attention. This decree, which came at the time when Russia invaded Ukraine, does not specifically mention Alaska. However, it is stated by military experts that Putin used this decree to declare that Russia's sale of the Last Frontier State to the United States in 1867 was illegal (Nazzaro, 2024). It would not be difficult to guess what a mentality that cannot accept the sale of Alaska thinks about the

former East Germany. At the very least, it can be assumed that these perspectives and initiatives were carefully monitored by the German general staff and statesmen.

The German army's chief-of-staff Carsten Breuer stated that the German armed forces need a five-year period to prepare for a potential war (Martyniuk, 2024). Breuer's statements can be expressed more clearly. Breuer emphasizes that a five-year period is needed to build an army that will stop Russia. Breuer also draws attention to the German public's reservations about Germany's military leadership. It will undoubtedly take time to overcome these reservations in the German public.

Geography plays an important role in the results of military activities and the survival of states (Fukuyama, 2016). It is also possible to explain why Germany is uneasy about the military activity that started at a point far away from its territory in geographical terms. Poland, which is among Russia's potential targets, is a country that lacks geographical protection opportunities. This situation was clearly seen during World War II. Therefore, in a possible Russian operation, there is no significant geographical barrier between the Russian army and the German borders that would have a slowing effect. This situation can be thought to force Germany to take the initiative.

4.2. Disrupted Balance and Germany's Possible Partners In Creating A New Balance

With its aggression against Ukraine, Russia has in a sense attempted to disrupt the balance of power in Europe in its own favor. It would be appropriate for Germany to cooperate with other states to re-establish this disrupted balance of power and ensure European security. Eventhough Germany is a great economic power, it will be difficult for Germany to fight the Russian threat alone. In playing this new leadership role, Germany would benefit from the support of potential partners. It is important to determine the extent to which countries will support Germany's potential leadership of a new European security architecture. Countries and their leaders may make promises they cannot keep in the heat of the moment. However, it is not possible to see most of these countries on the ground when actual support is expected from them. This is more clearly seen in the outbreak of the Ukraine war and the period that followed.

The difference between the declarations made by other countries for assistance at the outbreak of the Ukrainian war and the actual support that followed was expressed by the Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu himself. At the Russian Defense Ministry report on the progress of the special military operation, Sergei Shoigu stated that 54 countries made

declarations in support of the Kiev regime, while 15 states actually provided weapons and military equipment (Yalın, 2023). Slovakian Prime Minister Robert Fico suggested that Ukraine should cede a certain part of its territory to Russia in order to end the war in Ukraine (Pollet, 2024). Analyzing Fico's rhetoric, it can be argued that he does not understand European security and the medium-term consequences of what is happening for European nations.

These realities of de facto support further increase the importance of reliable partners with whom Germany can act. Germany's cooperation with reliable partners will make it easier for Germany to fulfill its role in ensuring European security. The cooperative approach to European security can be characterized as a doctrine. If one word propose an appropriate name for this security doctrine, it would be "zusammen" Doctrine seems reasonable. In this context, two countries that Germany can act together come to the fore. Strategic potential and historical memory were decisive in the selection of these countries. The UK was chosen because of its experience in developing strategic projections and acting strategically. Sweden, on the other hand, seem sto be a suitable partner for Germany due to its historical memory. Sweden is a state that has fought and defeated Russia many times in history. Therefore, it would not be a big claim to argue that in the subconscious and memory of Swedish society, Russia is a defeatable state. It can also be stated that Sweden is one of the few European countries to have experienced great power status in its history.

Europe has produced mighty empires throughout the ages. When one tries to make a list of them, Sweden is undoubtedly the first country that comes to mind. It can be said that Sweden reached the status of a great power in the 13th and 17th centuries. During this period, the Baltic Sea became a Swedish lake. In this way, Sweden controlled the fate of many nations in the region (Mills, 2023).

It is conceivable that the German military has an institutional memory of dealing with Russia going back to the days of World War II. However, Germany does not have a deep knowledge of how to stop Russia diplomatically and strategically. To a certain extent, this is due to the fact that Germany has never ruled an empire on a global scale, which can be seen more clearly in Germany's reactions at the beginning of the war in Ukraine.

Germany could benefit from Britain's strategic and diplomatic wisdom in its approach to curbing Russia. There are two examples of Britain's strategic wisdom. The first one is the approach of former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson after the start of the war in Ukraine. The second is the statements of the British Defense Secretary Grant Shapps to The Sunday

Times. Boris Johnson came on the scene as a strong supporter of Ukraine immediately after the start of the war.

Johnson's support was not limited to the UK's means. He also encouraged the allies to provide more aid to Ukraine. Since the early days of the war, the UK has provided humanitarian and military defense assistance to Ukraine. Boris Johnson made his fourth visit to Ukraine after leaving office. During this surprise visit, Johnson continued his rhetoric on the need to help Ukraine (Forrest, 2023).

When Johnson's statements during this visit, which took place in January 2023, are analyzed, it can be said that two points stand out. The first of these is his view that Ukraine should be given whatever it needs. The second is that the only way to end this war is for Ukraine to win the war. Boris Johnson's many visits to Ukraine should not be seen as an ordinary event. Johnson's visits can be read as an indication of the British state's sensitivity to the impact of what is happening in the region on European security.

British Defense Secretary Grant Shapps' statements to The Sunday Times can also be seen as another indicator of the British state's sensitivity towards European security. Grant Shapps made statements to The Sunday Times on December 24, 2023 regarding the war in Ukraine (Wheeler, 2023).

When Grant Shapps' statements are analyzed, it is seen that he emphasized that this war should not be won by Russia. Shapps believed that a Russian victory would have enormous consequences for Britain, Europe and the world. Shapps' statements show that he did not see the Ukrainian war as a regional event but as an event concerning European and world security.

It can be argued why Germany did not react to the Ukraine war as the UK did. Germany's failure to react like the UK, especially at the beginning of the Ukraine war, cannot be explained solely from a strategic point of view. It should be noted that there were other factors that influenced Germany's approach. The first factor is that German society is divided on how to respond to the war in Ukraine. The second is Germany's energy dependence on Russia.

Many studies can be cited to illustrate the divisions in German society. According to a poll conducted by the Körber Foundation, 71 percent of respondents in Germany oppose the country assuming military leadership in Europe (Martyniuk, 2024).

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that German leaders are aware of the security vacuum that will emerge in Europe as the US focuses on the Indo-Pacific region. German leaders need time for the military build up necessary to ensure German and European security. On the other hand, some leaders, especially in the Baltic states, have serious fears about European security and a possible war. When we look at the history of Europe, we see that there have been many wars and few of the agreements made after these wars have been as successful as the Vienna Congress.

The order established by the 1815 Congress of Vienna is also known as the Metternich order. Kissinger considers this arrangement to have been very successful. After the Congress of Vienna, there was no war between the great powers for forty years until the Crimean War. After the Crimean War, there was no war between the great powers for sixty years. From Kissinger's point of view, Bismarck, who came to power in 1862, built such a solid Germany that it survived two world wars. Kissinger believes that the Germans had a psychological distrust of their neighbors. He attributes this to the fact that for 200 years the Germans were the victims, not the initiators, of European wars and that all the major battles of the eighteenth century took place on German soil. These feelings of insecurity led them to believe that they had to prepare to fight their neighbors on several fronts at the same time. The large stock piles that the Germans made on their borders worried their neighbors and led to their rapid armament (Kissinger, 1994).

Today, we can say that the process that started with Russia's attack on Ukraine has created a situation similar to Thucydides' security dilemma for Germany. Today, unlike during World War II, Germany is concerned about its own security and the security of Europe. It is safe to say that Kissinger has made very accurate assessments of European security in the past, but it seems reasonable to attribute his contradictory statements on the causes of Russian aggression during the Ukraine war to his health and age. It can be assumed that Kissinger has not been able to fully read the recent developments along the line from Finland to Georgia.

The actions of the Russian rulers and Putin in Georgia, Ukraine and Chechnya, as well as his rhetoric that does not even accept the sale of Alaska, draws attention. In this sense, we must say that we are facing a situation that exceeds the goals Machiavelli intended in *The Prince*. Machiavelli's main problem was to ensure Italian unity (Machiavelli, 1532). Looking at the rhetoric of Putin and Russian rulers, it can be said that they aim to enslave free nations. In a sense, Russians display a point of view that cannot accept the freedom of the nations they

have enslaved in the past. In this sense, eastern Germany, which was under Russian captivity in the past and is now part of a free state, draws attention. It can be said that this Russian perspective is one of the factors that forced Germany to take the initiative on European security.

Morgenthau's observations on the goals of states in foreign policy are very valid for Russia (Morgenthau and Thompson, 1985). Russia's attack on Ukraine can be seen as a step towards creating regional change and taking control of new regions. A much debated issue is what are the borders of the region that Russia aims to control. We can say that the Russian rulers, who do not even accept the sale of Alaska, are targeting an area covering eastern Germany, which was previously within their own sphere of influence. In more general terms, Eastern Europe, especially the Baltic states, can be considered as a priority target for Russia.

How to stop Russian aggressive initiatives is also an important issue of debate. In his sense, the balance of power concept proposed by Morgenthau as a solution to prevent conflicts can be examined (Morgenthau and Thompson, 1985). It can be stated that Russia's initiatives aim to disrupt not only regional but also global balances. We can say that the cooperation of European countries with Germany will play an important role in Russia's attempts to disrupt the balance of power.

One of the issues of debate is whether Europe can ensure its own security. This is a question that many experts have tried to answer, notably Kissinger. In his analysis of the problem, Kissinger emphasizes the importance of NATO. In his view, NATO is the most important link between America and Europe. America should not be afraid of the prominence of the European Union within NATO. It is unthinkable for Europe to take military action on its own without American political and logistical support. NATO is the best organization to counter military threats regardless of their origin. In addition, the European Union is a vital institution for the stability of Central and Eastern Europe (Kissinger, 1994). US support for European security is occasionally voiced by American leaders. Joe Biden's statement "US will defend every inch of NATO territory including Finland" can be considered in this context (Lehto and Holland, 2023).

Brezinski also put forward views on European security and Europe's role in balancing the global system (Brezinski, 2020). Brezinski believes that Europe is the only organization that can share the role and burden of the US in the global system. When it comes to Europe, Germany's capacity factors, especially its economic power, bring it to the forefront. Economic power plays an important role in building and maintaining military power.

John Mearsheimer associates the power of a state in international politics with its military power. In a sense, the power of states in international politics stems from their military power. Looking at the elements of military power, it is seen that Mearsheimer considers land forces as the dominant power today (Mearsheimer, 2014). It can be said that the population of countries will play an important role in the creation of an effective land power. From this point of view, we can state that Germany is a more advantageous country among the European countries with a population approaching 84 million. However, it should be noted that the Germans need time to build a fightable army.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Germany's leadership in the new European security architecture is inevitable for a number of reasons, including the concentration of the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, the absence of another actor in the current structure of the European continent to fulfill Germany's role, and the magnitude of the Russian threat to the European continent.

Today we are facing a very different Europe from the days of World War II. During World War II, Germany was a state feared by its neighbors and Europe in general. Today it is a country of great sympathy and interest, especially in the Baltic states and Poland. The Russian threat paved the way for European nations to see Germany as a savior. Especially countries like Lithuania gladly opened their lands to the settlement of German soldiers. The deployment of German troops in Lithuania can be seen as an important example of German military staff intelligence. It would be the right approach for other Baltic countries to exhibit similar behavior with Lithuania. In this way, the Germans would have the opportunity to establish a frontline of defense. The establishment of a frontline of defense would buy invaluable time for the rearunits in the event of a possible Russian attack. In addition to the Baltic states, military deployments can also be carried out in other countries within the framework of the approach that can be described as the "strategy of establishing a frontline of defense". Critically important countries are Finland, Poland and Romania. The deployment of German troops in these countries within the framework of military cooperation could be considered beneficial. Russia's attempt to extend its aggressive initiatives beyond the territory of Ukraine would be the biggest mistake in its history. It is conceivable that the German army will have one of the greatest logistical support in history on the route to the frontline in the possible counter-attack of the German army. There will be a hand that offers bread to every hungry German soldier and a hand that offers water to every thirsty German soldier.

It would be appropriate for practitioners and researchers to examine the obstacles to Germany's leadership role. Again, in this context, researching how to eliminate these obstacles will also make an important contribution to the issue. It can be thought that Poland will be among the potential targets of Russia in the coming period. In this sense, it is also important to investigate what kind of support other European countries can provide to Poland. What kind of strategy Poland can follow to cope with a possible Russian aggression can also be seen among the issues that can be investigated.

If a single sentence were to be said about Russian aggression and all that has happened, it could perhaps be something like "Leaders who cannot give their societies prosperity and peace fill this void with blood and tears".

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