

A Contemporary Re-evaluation of German Grand Strategy

An Analysis of the Soft-Power Strategy

By

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Introduction

The primary topic of this research paper is the re-evaluation of German diplomatic grand strategy. This research paper will attempt to reassess the foreign policy strategy employed by the Federal Republic of Germany. The central writing focus will address the question “how has Germany’s soft power playbook been tested in the contemporary political arena?” This research will serve as an extension and potential negative case to previous findings and conclusions on the German “soft-power playbook.”¹ As such, this paper will examine if German foreign policy remains committed to its soft power ideals and principles. Out of necessity, Germany has been backed into a smart power corner – theoretically falling back on hard power resources but doing so in accordance with smart power principles. Of fundamental importance is this paper’s attempt to discern whether the international responses to recent events are an indication of the degradation of soft power diplomacy as a whole or rather a “stress test” of cooperative diplomacy. These ideas will be researched and examined through a case study timeline that predominantly follows the German diplomatic response to agitator states and major international crises on the European continent in the recent decades. Such a timeline primarily consists of major events in the late 20th and early 21st century involving German diplomatic participation: the Kosovo intervention, the 2008 Russian invasion of Georgia, the 2014 seizure of Crimea, and the ongoing Ukrainian conflict. The purpose of these specific cases is to evaluate the effectiveness of the German response, as well as the ability of the German government to act in accordance with its soft power playbook. To accomplish this re-evaluation, this paper is divided into several sections: beginning with a study of German society as well as the historical cultural and political attitudes that could shed light upon Germany’s contemporary trend towards soft power politics; moving into case studies detailing the German diplomatic responses and strategies in the wake of major international events. Ending with an analysis of said diplomatic actions evaluating the effectiveness of the soft power playbook amidst re-emerging hard power ideologies.

First, this paper examines German societal and political attitudes in the late 19th and 20th centuries that help explain Germany’s inclination towards the acceptance of soft power diplomacy. This historical examination then moves into case studies detailing the recent European diplomatic crises in the two previous decades; the case studies will follow a qualitative formulaic approach to evaluating both the effectiveness of the soft-power playbook in traditional hard-power situations and the extent to which soft-power methods were the initially proposed solution. Finally, this paper evaluates the degree to which Germany has adhered to its soft-power principles amidst reemerging hard-power ideologies.

Definitions

In this research the *soft power* ideology and diplomatic strategy refers to the ability of a state to attract or co-opt the policy preferences of other states using diplomatic and economic avenues of discussion and negotiation, rather than the traditional means of militaristic coercion or economic threat².

¹ Swenson, Isaac. 2022 “Germany: Powerful Outlier or the Normalization of Soft Power Diplomacy?” Faculty Mentored Research Paper, *University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire*

² Nye, Joseph S. “Soft Power.” *Foreign Policy*, no. 80, 1990, pp. 153–71, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1148580>.

Cooperative multilateralism is the practice of coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states through ad hoc arrangements or through non-governmental or international organizations³. Due to the nature of this research a particular emphasis is placed upon on a certain form of cooperative multilateralism: *Liberal internationalism*. The essence of this strategy is a focus on the expansion of liberty, free trade, and responsible sovereignty through cooperative means and institutions.⁴

When addressing the complex relationships between states in the international arena, the term *hegemonism* herein refers to the benevolent hegemon variant of the strategy. A focal point in the United States' diplomatic behavior, benevolent hegemonism is commonly characterized by a powerful state providing goods, services, defensive and security guarantees, as well as military aid and sales to states within a projected sphere of influence or control. This is done in support of the state quo alongside preserving relations with friendly counties and deterring unruly, aggressive, or agitator states⁵.

In the political science discipline, a concrete definition for *ethnic conflict* is a hotly contested topic⁶. This research has taken a broad approach, defining any political or social conflict involving one or more groups which are identified by some marker of ethnic identity⁷ as *ethnic conflict*.

Literature Review

Within the realm of political science, the knowledge base on soft-power diplomacy has transformed from simply defining an alternative theory to the conventional idea of hard power tactics, to comparing and evaluating its effectiveness against the other prevailing grand strategies.

The literature takes two directions when discussing the position of Germany within the international system. Scholars in the historical approach claim the past experiences of the German state have shaped the operational model it uses today. It is argued that the Prussian form of governance provided a basis for molding Germany into the powerful economic welfare state it maintains today. Sheri Berman proposes that a country's political structure influences and shapes its economic and political development⁸. In the German context, German federal system, the Bundesrat and Bundestag, as well as

³ Keohane, Robert O. "Multilateralism: An Agenda for Research." *International Journal* 45, no. 4 (1990): 731–64. <https://doi.org/10.2307/40202705>.

⁴ Callahan, Patrick. *Logics of American Foreign Policy: Theories of America's World Role*. Pearson. 2004, pg. 109

⁵ Ikenberry, G. John. "Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of Liberal World Order." *Perspectives on Politics*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2009, pp. 71–87, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40407217>.

⁶ Bowen, John R. "The Myth of Global Ethnic Conflict." In *Globalization and the Challenges of a New Century: A Reader*, edited by Patrick O'Meara, Howard D. Mehlinger, Matthew Krain, and Roxana Ma Newman, 79–90. Indiana University Press, 2000. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2005tk7.11>.

⁷ Gilley, Bruce. "Against the Concept of Ethnic Conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 6 (2004): 1155–66. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993756>.

⁸ Berman, Sheri E. "Modernization in Historical Perspective: The Case of Imperial Germany." *World Politics*, vol. 53, no. 3, [Cambridge University Press, Trustees of Princeton University], 2001, pp. 431–62, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25054156>.

the many other governmental institutions and political bodies⁹ are the product of western influence on the post-World War II German government; these characteristics then helped turn the state into an economic and political powerhouse. It is argued that the mistakes of unilateral transgression in the World Wars, fascism under Hitler, and the mismanaged Weimar Republic nudged Germany towards becoming the modern pacifist state it is today: one that is wary of national pride who binds its foreign policy to larger international objectives and institutions. As Andrew Janos argues, Germany initially chose to compete militarily, rather than economically, with other states due to perceived fewer social and political consequences¹⁰. Following the defeat of Nazism and Germany in World War 2, German reconstructionists then began to rebuild and compete economically instead – and as we now see Germany thriving as a beacon of wealth and economic progress on the European continent.

In the opposite direction, there are scholars who point to the political context of post Marshall-plan Europe as the source of Germany's soft-power ideological tendencies. As the United States gradually withdrew from Europe, there was a need for a unifying European leader with the economic and technological prowess necessary to propel the continent forward. The 1960s saw Germany indulge in an era of fierce modernization, in which political, cultural, and economic change expanded to fill the boundaries of the prosperous German situation¹¹. Germany remains the central engine of unification/integration of Europe and thus aims to cement its position as a figurehead for the contingent of European continent.

An examination of the literature on the subject of ethnic violence is necessary due to the inherent ethnic and cultural nature of the conflict discussed within the case studies of this paper. When the political science discipline first began to investigate ethnic conflict, the accepted hypothesis/theory became these so-called “ancient hatreds.” Developed by journalist Robert Kaplan¹⁸ in a study of Yugoslavia after the Dayton Peace Accords, the ancient hatreds thesis argues that long-standing bitterness and resentment over the course of history inevitably drives ethnic groups into conflict with one-another; historical hatred being primary cause of ethnic and culture divide that often spurred into violence and killing. The ancient hatreds theory is coupled with the ideas of primordialism. This approach asserts that ethnicities or national identities are fixed phenomena that are both natural and ancient. According to primordialists, ethnic identity is embedded in inherited biological attributes/features, a longstanding practice of cultural traditions, or both¹⁹. What constitutes this ethnonational identity is constantly reformulated in an iterative process with socially constructed boundaries limited and shaped by memory and myth²⁰ A pushback on

⁹ O'Neil, Patrick H, et al. “Germany.” *Cases in Comparative Politics*, 7th Edition ed., W.W Norton and Company, New York City, NY, 2021, pp. 270–273.

¹⁰ Janos, Andrew C. “The Rise and Fall of Militarized Societies: Germany and Russia as Great Powers, 1890–1990.” *German Politics & Society*, vol. 14, no. 1 (38), Berghahn Books, 1996, pp. 31–64, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23736406>.

¹¹ Janos, Andrew C. “The Rise and Fall of Militarized Societies: Germany and Russia as Great Powers, 1890–1990.” *German Politics & Society*, vol. 14, no. 1 (38), 1996, pp. 31–64, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23736406>.

¹⁸ Kaplan, Robert D., 1952-. 1994. *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*. New York, Vintage books.

¹⁹ Reuter, T. Kempin. "Ethnic Conflict: Theories of Ethnic Identity." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, May 29, 2023. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/ethnic-conflict>.

²⁰ Majstorovic, Steven. “Ancient Hatreds or Elite Manipulation? Memory and Politics in the Former Yugoslavia.” *World Affairs* 159, no. 4 (1997): 170–82. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20672499>.

this emotional causation is the rationalist explanation. From that standpoint, race and ethnicity are convenient tools to separate peoples into an “us vs them” situation which by itself easily develops into conflict. Scholars such as Ashutosh Varshney describe ethnic and cultural identities as a cover for deep-rooted rationalized calculus that seeks to advance nationalist goals and interests²¹. This is often referred to as the “instrumentalist” approach: defining ethnic groups merely as coalitions formed in a rational attempt to compete for scarce goods in the context of social change brought about by various factors such as globalization, modernization, and urbanization²².

The discipline has since then matured in its development of these ideas: Stuart Kaufman is one to reject the “ancient hatreds” theory as well as the rationalist point of view. He posits that ethnic violence comes from the politics that surround myths and symbols - these things stir up rabid emotions rather than attempting to aid a cause or interest. Populist hostility then invokes these myths and symbols to perpetuate a political sentiment of ethnic domination pursued through ethnic war²³. Kaufman’s viewpoint is a zoomed-in application of the common “four model” approach: Fear, Hatred, Resentment, and Rage. Roger Petersen explains that each model represents a process for motivating individuals to commit violent or punitive actions against ethnic others. The models are often portrayed as a singular emotion acting as a causal device that underlines a theory or set of theories²⁴. Scholars who study ethnic conflict often focus on a singular model for specific literature and/or research projects – however it is not uncommon to study the relationships and causal connections between them.

So, what’s missing? Soft-power as a diplomatic strategy and a theory of cooperative diplomacy is the subject of much research, critique, and analysis. The evaluation of a country’s implementation and use of the methods that strategy offers is less common. Here, literature offers nothing but a void. Formulaic evaluations of soft power doctrine and effectiveness are rarely considered. How does one evaluate Germany as a great power state in this context? Rarely do other states act in such accordance with soft power principles: using cooperative diplomacy as a diplomatic strategy in international relations with organizations and institutions, such as the European Union²⁵. The problem thus rests on the ancient liberal versus realist debate. It is hard to compare outcomes between the two ideological camps; the world outlook and overall lens between the two are too different to provide any comparison. Instead, evaluations should be focused on what a state’s purpose and role are within the international system and how it operates in said role. Therein lies the problem of analysis: Previous research focuses pitting pure theory against its contemporaries, the methodology is a vis a vis boxing match that reduces soft-power diplomacy to an opponent²⁶. That being said, it is not within the scope of this paper to comment on the realist-liberal

²¹ Varshney, Ashutosh. “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Rationality.” *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no. 1 (2003): 85–99. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3687814>.

²² Robert Bates, “Modernization, Ethnic Competition, and the Rationality of Politics in Contemporary Africa,” *State vs. Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*, (Boulder: Westview, 1983), p. 152

²³ Kaufman, Stuart J. *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. Cornell University Press, 2001. p. 15-17

²⁴ Petersen, Roger D. “INTRODUCTION.” Chapter. In *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, 1–14. Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

²⁵ John Gerard Ruggie, ‘Multilateralism: the anatomy of an institution’, in John Gerard Ruggie, ed., *Multilateralism matters: the theory and praxis of an institutional form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 11

²⁶ Tim Dunne and Matt McDonald, ‘The politics of liberal internationalism’, *International Politics* 50: 1, Jan. 2013, pp. 1–17; Beate Jahn, *Liberal internationalism: theory, history, practice* (New York: Palgrave, 2013).

debate. This research will sidestep that ancient conversation by assuming its nuances are known and respected.

Scholars have investigated the different strands of solutions to ethnic conflict. Here, the knowledgebase offers several answers to ethnic violence: Chaim Kaufmann argues that the physical separation of warring groups is an effective deterrent to ethnic violence²⁷. A positive-case example would be Bosnia, with intergroup relations growing more and more peaceful as the degree of separation widens²⁸. However, partition remains controversial, with critics claiming that population transfers, and the partitions that often accompany them, generally do not reduce suffering and death but actually increase them such as the case in four famous twentieth-century partitions: Ireland, India, Palestine, and Cyprus²⁹. Negotiation or mediation is a commonly proposed solution to ethnic conflict: in essence, asking two opposing groups to “talk things out.” Negotiation within the realm of stopping ethnic conflict usually refers to the concept of power sharing. The key idea of any power-sharing structure is that two or more ethno-national groups have to jointly rule the common polity and take decisions in consensus. No single group can decide important matters without the consent of the other. Based on informal or formal rules, all groups have access to political power and other resources³⁰. Whether through previous military intervention or mediation, a “level playing field” is created to discuss compromise and the future of ethnic groups in conflict with one another. Another proposed solution is direct military intervention. Barbara Walter argues that direct, early, military intervention is the only viable strategy to ensure long-lasting peace. She argues that negotiation and partition do not fail because people cannot be made to move, or that bargains cannot be struck. The military interventionist argument rests on the position that all other methods are futile because they ask conflicting ethnic parties to do the unthinkable: cooperate with a sworn enemy and disarm within an unsafe power vacuum³¹. Thus, the military-presence of a third party or organization is necessary for the stability of a geographical region so that progress can be made towards creating government and order. The interventionalist solution also argues that ethnic conflicts themselves – specifically civil wars to create new ethnostates – have an intrinsic logical rationale in violence towards civilians that is subordinate to nothing but physical opposition by armed forces³².

Yet once again, there remain some gaps within literature: none of the proposed solutions explicitly discuss how a great power state practicing soft power diplomacy would augment the possible solutions. How would a state such as Germany assist in effectively achieving these solutions? The fact that Germany

²⁷ Kaufmann, Chaim D. “When All Else Fails: Ethnic Population Transfers and Partitions in the Twentieth Century.” *International Security* 23, no. 2 (1998): 120–56. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539381>.

²⁸ John J. Mearsheimer, “Shrink Bosnia to Save It,” *New York Times*, March 31, 1993

²⁹ Radha Kumar, “The Troubled History of Partition,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 1 (January/February 1997), pp. 22-34.

³⁰ Schneekener, Ulrich. “Making Power-Sharing Work: Lessons from Successes and Failures in Ethnic Conflict Regulation.” *Journal of Peace Research* 39, no. 2 (2002): 203–28. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1555299>.

³¹ Walter, Barbara F. “The Critical Barrier to Civil War Settlement.” *International Organization* 51, no. 3 (1997): 335–64. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2703607>.

³² Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Logic of Violence in Civil War*. of *Cambridge Studies in Comparative Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

remains a soft power state is a key variable; ultimately, it changes the decision-making process and how a response is formulated. Any response would be different than how an institution or any number of traditional hard power states were to act.

Methods

To facilitate its completion, this research opted to use the qualitative tradition of case studies to meet its analytical goals. In particular, these case studies focus on German diplomatic responses to aggression and other crises on the European peninsula to cleanly evaluate the effectiveness of said responses. By evaluating the success and efficiency of the German responses prescribed by the soft-power strategic playbook³³, the diplomatic strategy as a whole can be contextualized in the new wave of international ideologies that are emerging – or re-emerging – in our contemporary era.

Case studies have proven to be extremely useful in the discipline of political science. They provide densely packed sources of information that excel in establishing causal claims through the use of causal-process observations (CPOs). CPOs are pieces of data – qualitative observations and/or quantitative statistics – that provide insight into the mechanism, context, or process of causal analysis³⁴. In this paper, these practices culminate into case studies following the diverse selection procedure, which is defined by selecting cases that illustrate the full range of variance in causal claims and variables around a topic³⁵. Due to inherent complexity and sheer number of interfering variables present when comparing entirely different political scenarios this approach was the most plausible technique.

Case studies also provide a uniquely useful byproduct of scholarly research papers as there tend to be many possibilities for follow-up or in-depth research into the topic or the cases themselves – this paper itself is a follow up to a previously established theory which also employed a similar case study technique. A hypothesis or theory discussed in one paper can easily be expanded upon by varying case selection along the same topic, or delving into the specific cases themselves. However, since this paper is using qualitative case study methods I feel compelled to address some of the shortcomings that are regularly voiced in the political science community: Case studies in general are of limited scope which creates causal gaps amongst other problems. Fortunately, due to the nature of political science research as a whole, these gaps and problems are dutifully filled by others looking to expand the knowledge of the discipline – I'll leave it up to them to fill in my blanks.

Additionally, qualitative methodologists are consistently harried with calls to make their procedure “more rigorous.” Indeed, there is much debate and conflict within the discipline that qualitative explanations pale in comparison to the statistical models of quantitative researchers³⁶. I believe this paper

³³ I invite the reader to view the previous project on this topic for a more detailed description and initial analysis of this playbook: Swenson, Isaac. 2022 “Germany: Powerful Outlier or the Normalization of Soft Power Diplomacy?” Faculty Mentored Research Paper, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire

³⁴ Crasnow, Sharon. “The Role of Case Study Research in Political Science: Evidence for Causal Claims.” *Philosophy of Science*, vol. 79, no. 5, 2012, pp. 655–66. *JSTOR*, <https://doi.org/10.1086/667869>. Accessed 9 Jun. 2022.

³⁵ Seawright, Jason, and John Gerring. “Case Selection Techniques in Case Study Research: A Menu of Qualitative and Quantitative Options.” *Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 61, no. 2, June 2008, pp. 294–308, doi:10.1177/1065912907313077.

³⁶ James Mahoney and Gary Goertz, “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research,” *Political Analysis*, Vol. 14, No.1 (2006), pp. 227-249

offers meaningful re-evaluation of the German diplomatic model and decision-making ideology through its formulaic approach within the case studies themselves.

The German Scenario

A reoccurring theme both amongst the German public and government is the notion of memory politics³⁷. This idea centers around “atoning for the past,” writing the wrongs of history. Either through guilt, shame, anger, frustration, or resentment the historical experiences of a cultural society color its attitudes and ideological doctrine in both negotiating and interacting with other states. In the context of Germany, this contributed contradictorily to the rise of Hitler’s Nazi regime, and aided in shifting German public opinion towards soft power strategies³⁸. In the post-war period and throughout the Cold War, the German government maintained that its country still had honor, but that honor had to be found in places other than military achievement. This resulted in a surge of soft power sentiment both amongst the populace and in the decision-making structure of the German diplomatic corps. Germany began to turn to cooperation and diplomacy to meet the ever growing needs of the burgeoning new republic.

After the Fall of the Berlin Wall, the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany was signed on October 3, 1990³⁹. The document mended the separated German states and reunified the country. The reunification solution was a test of cooperative diplomacy: Germany saw its goals realized and the government – although going through a time of relative upheaval – saw cooperative diplomacy as a valid tactic and thus continued to make it a core pillar of their developing diplomatic grand strategy. German society remained steadfast in its commitment towards non-militaristic and cooperative diplomacy. The newly reformed Federal Republic of Germany immediately set to work building relationships with the countries breaking out of the crumbling Iron Curtain, as well as with the USSR itself. On November 14, 1990 a Cooperation Treaty was signed with the Polish government confirming the Oder-Neisse line agreement from the Warsaw Treaty. A further cooperation agreement was agreed upon on June 17, 1991. In dealing with the USSR, Germany conducted 4 treaty negotiations: one covering the future and objective of German-Soviet bilateral relations, another that drew up economic relations and deals, and two treaties on Soviet withdrawal from former East Germany – one to demand the removal of troops, and another that pledged the German government’s support in aiding the Soviet military’s removal from the premises⁴⁰.

The Federal Republic of Germany had a predisposition towards soft power diplomatic tactics due to historical circumstances in the post-World War Two era. This predisposition has enabled Germany to build up vast reserves of soft power that allow it to follow a soft power-focused diplomatic

³⁷ Fukuoka, Kazuya. Review of Memory, Politics, and International Relations, by Eric Langenbacher and Yossi Shain. *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 12, no. 1 (2011): 142–48. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43133874>.

³⁸ Fulbrook, Mary. *The Divided Nation: A history of Germany 1918-1990*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

³⁹ “Final Settlement With Respect to Germany.” *Arms Control Today*, vol. 20, no. 8, 1990, pp. 33–34, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23624305>. Accessed 13 May 2022.

⁴⁰ Smyser, W. R. “U. S. S. R.-Germany: A Link Restored.” *Foreign Policy*, no. 84, 1991, pp. 131–133, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1148786>. Accessed 13 May 2022.

“playbook⁴¹.” This “playbook” is an application of soft-power sources to leverage international goals and objectives. The core principles follow a multilateralist approach, with emphasis on finding diplomatic and multilateral resolutions to international crises and global problems. Often, this materializes as strengthening the European Union (EU) and furthering integration, improving the organization and efficiency of NATO, and participating in the United Nations and its affiliated bodies; all the while utilizing transatlantic and global institutional frameworks. At a base level, the German state focuses on mutually beneficial bilateral relations and obligations. At an international level, Germany devotes a considerable amount of attention and political capital to the further development and use of international institutions and other mechanisms. Being the largest net contributor to the entity for decades⁴², Germany takes a leadership and defining role in the deepening of EU membership and the further integration of Europe. It remains a member on the G4 and G7 economic councils, as well as both a beneficiary and collaborator in the International Monetary Fund (IMF), a member of the World Bank Group, and World Trade Organization (WTO). Germany is also a proponent of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). These institutions are the framework and implementation method that Germany uses to advance its interests and pursue its foreign policy objectives.

Developments throughout history – notably defeat in World War Two, German reunification, the end of the Cold War, the origination of global terrorism, and Russian aggression – have forced the Germans through several evolutions of foreign policy.

As a result of the Nazi regime’s destruction in World War Two, Germany suffered a total loss of economic productivity and a crippling of state infrastructure. The German military was significantly reduced in accordance with peace terms – as a promise to not return to aggression. The battered republic was in no place to make threats – economic or military – it was hard power bankrupt. Forced to move away from its traditional sources of hard power⁴³, Germany opted to go in a different direction. Fueled by a desire to rebuild world trust, the use of cooperative diplomacy and the creation of mutually beneficial relationships reformulated the German foreign policy outlook. The new republic had something to prove: Germany was worthy of the world’s trust. The Marshall Plan rejuvenated the (West) German⁴⁴ economy and propelled it into democratic growth, providing some of the incentive to cooperate with the world and lending Germany the economic resources to effectively negotiate on the international stage. Germany now had the tools necessary to efficiently operate within a soft power framework.

⁴¹ Swenson, Isaac. 2022 “Germany: Powerful Outlier or the Normalization of Soft Power Diplomacy?” Faculty Mentored Research Paper, *University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire*

⁴² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/316691/eu-budget-contributions-by-country>, a graph showing both Germany’s 2020 contribution (in Euros) as well as its contributions over a longer time period.

⁴³ Janos, Andrew C. “The Rise and Fall of Militarized Societies: Germany and Russia as Great Powers, 1890–1990.” *German Politics & Society*, vol. 14, no. 1 (38), 1996, pp. 31–64, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23736406>. Accessed 4 May 2022.

⁴⁴ Knapp, Manfred, et al. “Reconstruction and West-Integration: The Impact of the Marshall Plan on Germany.” *Zeitschrift Für Die Gesamte Staatswissenschaft / Journal of Institutional and Theoretical Economics*, vol. 137, no. 3, 1981, pp. 415–33, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40750368>. Accessed 4 May 2022.

Immediately in the post-war period, the newly formed Federal Republic of West Germany adopted the policy of Westbindung⁴⁵. Masterminded by Germany's first post-war Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, Westbindung translates to "Western fixation" or "Western bond." It primarily concentrated on binding Germany to Europe and its western allies, all the while implanting Germany as a steadfast contributor to the advancement of the European continent (at least the western half). Chief amongst the German objectives of the time was the integration of the West German state into the newly formed NATO⁴⁶ alliance. Ascension into this alliance would allow for further cooperation with western partners – namely the United States (which was the lender of the Marshall Plan) and the United Kingdom. NATO satisfied the itch for security guarantees, while the European Coal and Steel Commission started the slow-burn towards Europe economic solidarity and solidity. Being a burgeoning democracy with a free-trade economy that flourished into the largest exporter and third-richest country in the world, Germany stood to benefit from the shared interest of free trade and a secure world. Westbindung was the beginning of Germany's leadership role of European integration and its commitment to multilateralism.

Konrad Adenauer successfully expanded the West German economy, bringing the country into a newfound prominent role in the European diplomatic arena. However, in doing so many nuances of the complex German situation were neglected. The Hallstein Doctrine is this neglect made manifest. The doctrine called for a complete and utter refusal to formally recognize the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Furthermore, Germany declared it would not maintain or establish formal diplomatic relations with any state that recognized East Germany⁴⁷. The Hallstein Doctrine was replaced with Ostpolitik, "look east," with the ascension of Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt to Chancellor in 1964. Ostpolitik advocated for increased dialogue with the Soviet-bloc states in eastern Europe. Several treaties were negotiated once relations began to open between eastern and western Europe; one such being the Treaty of Warsaw. This document oversaw the official obligation between West Germany and Poland to commit to nonviolence and the establishment of the Oder-Neisse line and the formal German-Polish border⁴⁸. This eased Polish grievances and allayed fears towards future German aggression; all the while starting Germany down the path to bilateral relations and a revulsion towards aggressive tactics and overabounding ambition. Ostpolitik also produced the Basic Treaty, which "aimed to establish good neighborly relations between both German states" and established "legal recognition to the German Democratic Republic⁴⁹." With these foundations, the German diplomatic corps was poised to employ a

⁴⁵ Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. "Growth and Progress 1961-1969." *Bpb.de*, Bundeszentrale Für Politische Bildung, 9 Dec. 2021, <https://www.bpb.de/die-bpb/ueber-uns/federal-agency-for-civic-education/148079/growth-and-progress-1961-1969/>.

⁴⁶ Nato. "German Reunification." *NATO*, 21 July 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/declassified_136311.htm#:~:text=NATO%20welcomed%20West%20Germany%20as, later%20on%2022%20May%201955.

⁴⁷ Merkl, Peter H. "The German Janus: From Westpolitik to Ostpolitik." *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 89, no. 4, 1974, pp. 803–24, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2148896>.

⁴⁸ Gelberg, Ludwik. "The Warsaw Treaty of 1970 and the Western Boundary of Poland." *The American Journal of International Law*, vol. 76, no. 1, 1982, pp. 119–29, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2200977>.

⁴⁹ Information Office of the Federal Government. "The Basic Treaty (December 21, 1972)." *GHDI*, GDHI, 2007, https://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/print_document.cfm?document_id=172.

soft power strategy to further establish a peaceful mode of international relations – however internal political change would provide to be an ardent roadblock to cooperative diplomacy.

German foreign policy strategy in Latin America towards the latter half of the 20th century is a marked contrast to the soft power diplomatic tact it employs now. In the 1970s, the Brandt government openly denounced the right-wing oppressive dictatorship in Latin America, going so far as to headline the formal denounce the Chilian military junta on the floor of the United Nations in 1973⁵⁰, all the while granting asylum to political refugees and dissidents who opposed the state-sponsored terrorism.

Direct and targeted denouncement as well as direct intervention in a foreign country's domestic political affairs are absent from soft power tactics. While granting asylum can be argued upon humanitarian grounds, the overall response represented a clear divergence from the soft-power diplomatic playbook championed by contemporary German diplomats. In a further upset to the playbook, Helmut Schmidt's government turned the policy on its head. Reversing the definition of belligerents from right-wing extremists to left-wing radicals, the Schmidt government openly praised the actions of the National Reorganization Process⁵¹. The NRP staged a successful coup that overthrew the democratically elected government in Argentina in 1976. To further the contrast, the Germans sold billions of marks in weapons to the regressionist-regime, who employed "dirty war" tactics; characterized by large scale oppression of the populace, weaponized torture and rape, and the use of death squads to crack down on all political dissidence or opposition⁵². Chancellor Schmidt accepted these tactics as a way to fight so-called "leftist subversion."⁵³ These decisions greatly displeased the German public and, once the events were disclosed, the voters soon ousted Schmidt in the 1980 election.

Germany has renovated its reputation both amongst the states in the international system as well as with international organizations present in the system. Through its use of a soft-power playbook, it has cultivated positive relations with a large portion of the globe. Using non-conventional strategies and non-militaristic methods, Germany has punched above its weight in the diplomatic arena. The utilization of non-conventional tactics paints a positive picture of a state on the international stage – further promoting their influence, which can be leveraged during soft-power negotiations. The use of soft-power tactics inherently strengthens a state's position and ability to engage in similar diplomatic strategy⁵⁴. Due to the efficacy and success of the German soft-power diplomatic playbook, alternatives to traditional militaristic methods of international relations are growing in their attractiveness. This

⁵⁰ Steenland, Kyle. "The Coup in Chile." *Latin American Perspectives*, vol. 1, no. 2, 1974, pp. 23–25, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2633976>.

⁵¹ Aguila, Gabriela. "Dictatorship, Society, and Genocide in Argentina: Repression in Rosario, 1976–1983 1." *Journal of Genocide Research.*, vol. 8, no. 2, Carfax International Publishers, 2006, pp. 169–80, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520600703040>.

⁵² Esparza, Marcia, et al. "'Industrial Repression' and Operation Condor in Latin America." *State Violence and Genocide in Latin America: The Cold War Years*, Routledge, London, 2011.

⁵³ BOTTA, F. (2018). The Foreign Policy of State Terrorism: West Germany, the Military Juntas in Chile and Argentina and the Latin American Refugee Crisis of the 1970s. *Contemporary European History*, 27(4), 627-650.

⁵⁴ Swenson, Isaac. 2022 "Germany: Powerful Outlier or the Normalization of Soft Power Diplomacy?" Faculty Mentored Research Paper, *University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire*

advantageous position has Germany poised to cement its role as *de facto* leader of the European Union. Germany's soft power diplomacy has the capacity to further integrate the EU: the German foreign policy outlook is becoming increasingly popular; the Common Foreign and Security Policy could adopt the soft power playbook as its official *modus operandi* and go to strategy of the diplomatic corps (including the High Representative on Foreign Affairs and the Security Policy).

This paper is organized primarily through case-study analysis. Specifically, looking at the major German diplomatic events/transactions in recent years. Regarding Germany's soft-power disposition, an examination of Germany's history (as well as world history) will be performed. The buildup of Germany's military and the stress on cooperative diplomacy due to the conflict in Ukraine. Such situations undermine the soft power approach and thus are useful in evaluating both the strength of the German playbook and the antithesis to soft power tactics.

Case Studies

The Kosovo Intervention

Tensions began boiling over in the Kosovo region in 1989 when Ibrahim Rugova, a leader of the ethnic Albanians in Serbian-controlled Kosovo, began a campaign of nonviolent protest against the Serbian government headed by Slobodan Milošević accusing the regime of violating the autonomy and cultural sovereignty of the region. As ethnic violence began to loom ever closer, a militant group broke off from Rugova's movement and formed the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) in 1996; believing the group's demands could not be attained by peaceful means alone. The KLA began a terror campaign targeting Serbian police installations and pro-Serb politicians with the frequency of attacks increasing over the next two years. By 1998 the uptick in KLA attacks attracted the full attention of the Serbian and Yugoslav armed forces. These groups attempted to reassert control over the region, with refugees fleeing the atrocities committed by police, paramilitary groups (ethnic militias), as well as the formal armed forces of Serbia⁵⁵.

As the region became more and more volatile, the initial international response employed soft power diplomacy. The Contact Group—an informal coalition of the United States, Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, and Russia—demanded a cease-fire, the withdrawal of Yugoslav and Serbian forces from Kosovo, the return of refugees, and unlimited access for international monitors⁵⁶. In March 1998, at the London meeting of the Contact Group, the EU and U.S. called for a withdrawal of the Serbian special units from Kosovo. That same month the Contact Group met again in Bonn and demanded autonomy for Kosovo. Rugova was confirmed as president in new elections. The use of a non-governmental authority to achieve regional cooperation and the protection of human rights emphasized the United Nation's commitment to deescalating the region – immediate militaristic input or a show of force would have inflamed tensions, leading to even

⁵⁵ The Independent International Commission on Kosovo, 'The Origins of the Kosovo Crisis', *The Kosovo Report: Conflict, International Response, Lessons Learned* (Oxford, 2000; online edn, Oxford Academic, 1 Nov. 2003)

⁵⁶ Moe, Marit. "The Contact Group on Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo : The Institution and Its Mediation Role." Thesis, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2003.

more widespread violence. The UN Security Council passed Resolution 1160⁵⁷, in which Serbia was charged with excessive abuse of power. An arms embargo alongside a sanctions package was imposed on both the Serbian and Yugoslavian government in an attempt to curb the use of excessive force. These sanctions mark the first deviation from a soft power doctrine. The arms embargo is a prime example of coercive economic diplomacy: a reduction in arms sales did limit Serbia's (and Yugoslavia's) ability to wage the ethnic war of expulsion on the Kosovar Albanians, but fears over the state's ability to defend itself from other aggressors with a diminished arsenal fanned the flames of nationalist factions within Serbian politics⁵⁸. UNSC 1160 called on Yugoslavia to pursue a diplomatic solution and demanded all Kosovar Albanians condemn terrorist actions. Additionally, the resolution concluded the only way to stop escalation and further conflict was to give the Kosovar ethnic communities access to a genuine political process on the goals of autonomy and self-determination. The prevailing thought behind this conclusion was that by folding a democratic Kosovo into the liberal international order, the existing global political framework would then be able to protect the infant state's citizens. In the face of unfolding human rights atrocities and a growing refugee crisis, the United Nations Security Council then adopted Resolution 1199⁵⁹ which directly called on both parties (Kosovar Albanian and Serbian) to observe a cease-fire. After the Gornje Obrinje⁶⁰ massacre, UNSC 1203⁶¹ was adopted; this time the UN called on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (at this point only comprised of Serbia and Montenegro) to comply with the requirements of the previous resolutions and co-operate with a joint NATO-Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) verification mission to ensure compliance with the outlined goals. The examination of the initial responses and actions of the international community at large show a strong emphasis on diplomacy and a reliance on soft power means.

Under increasing international pressure, Milošević agreed to meet most of the Kosovar Albanian's demands and comply with UNSC 1203. Milosevic granted the OSCE the right to monitor the implementation of UNSC 1199 with up to two thousand observers on the ground and agreed to an air watch by unarmed NATO spotter planes. In addition, he agreed to undertake the hosting of a regional summit to conclude a political framework agreement on far-reaching self-administration for Kosovo. The stationing of OSCE observers did initially lead to a significant détente in the fall of 1998⁶². Refugees were able to return, and life began to return to normal. As a member of the

⁵⁷ "Resolution 1160 (1998) /." United Nations, March 31, 1998. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/252117?ln=en&v=pdf>.

⁵⁸ Yanik, Lerna K. "Guns and Human Rights: Major Powers, Global Arms Transfers, and Human Rights Violations." *Human Rights Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2006): 357–88. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20072741>.

⁵⁹ "Resolution 1199 (1998) /." United Nations, September 23, 1998. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/260416?ln=en&v=pdf>.

⁶⁰ Ron, James. "Kosovo's Changing Institutional Fate." In *Frontiers and Ghettos: State Violence in Serbia and Israel*, 1st ed., 87–112. University of California Press, 2003. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1pp587.12>.

⁶¹ "Resolution 1203 (1998) /." United Nations, October 24, 1998. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/262334?ln=en&v=pdf>.

⁶² "Permanent Council Decision No. 296/Corrected Reissue." OSCE, June 8, 1999. <https://www.osce.org/pc/28926>.

Contact Group, German participation was already high. The German government approved the participation of two hundred German observers in the OSCE mission to send 2,000 observers to watch over the cease-fire and repatriation of the refugees and to help prepare for elections⁶³. Also, in October 1998 NATO authorized “Operation Eagle Eye,” an aerial surveillance campaign in which 350 Bundeswehr soldiers were to participate⁶⁴. But the cease-fire remained fragile and again and again there were incidents: the KLA regrouped and rearmed during the cease-fire and renewed its attacks under the guise that the Serbian government failed to adhere to the cease-fire obligations. The Yugoslav and Serbian forces responded with a ruthless counteroffensive and engaged in a program of ethnic cleansing.

As a last-ditch diplomatic effort, the Contact Group – alongside Russia, who ended its non-cooperative stance with attendance to this summit – brought the Kosovar Albanians and the Milošević government together to create an agreement on Kosovo’s sovereignty: the Rambouillet Agreement. The document, in essence, created a starting point for a democratic Kosovar government. It included Articles and enumerated powers prescribing a republican style of governance as well as distinctions between certain sectors of government. A large portion of the document was dedicated to language on Kosovo’s ability to defend its independence and sovereignty on a regional level⁶⁵. The result of the summit was to assert the immediate need for a ceasefire as a matter of urgency with the backing of the international community at large. Nothing short of a united international front would force Milošević to comply. The talks concluded on March 18th, 1999 without a signature from Milošević. Full-scale conflict resumed shortly thereafter and the NATO mission (KFOR) was officially launched on March 24th. The United Nations commended the efforts of various organizations and states⁶⁶ for exhausting all diplomatic avenues before NATO’s military intervention.

German participation in the Kosovo intervention was a marked shift from the diplomatic stance it had adopted in the post-war period. Until this point, Germany had taken a non-interventionist stance for over four decades. The traditional soft-power avenues had been employed: aid and FDI packages alongside the use of intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental actors to achieve diplomatic objectives. Germany had held fast to the conviction that Bundeswehr soldiers would not be deployed in active combat except in the invocation of NATO Article 5; in the Kosovo crisis this was abandoned. As mentioned previously, German troops were involved in security duties on the OSCE Kosovo verification mission and the accompanying NATO

⁶³ Friedrich, Wolfgang-Uwe, Wolfgang Ischinger, and Rudolf Scharping. “The Legacy of Kosovo: German Politics and Policies in The ...” Edited by Wolfgang-Uwe Friedrich. aicgs.org, 2000. https://aicgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/legacy_of_kosovo.pdf.

⁶⁴ “Government of Canada.” Canada.ca, National Defense, December 11, 2018. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/military-history/history-heritage/past-operations/europe/kayak.html?adlt=strict&toWww=1&redig=524EF0579E9D4A26A11B7EE1A1E22CB6>.

⁶⁵ Marc Weller, The Rambouillet Conference on Kosovo, *International Affairs*, Volume 75, Issue 2, April 1999, Pages 211–251, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2346.00069>

⁶⁶ Including OSCA, in which Germany is an active member, as well as formally acknowledging the German diplomatic corps for their efforts in aiding the arrangement of the Balkan regional summit and the Rambouillet summit.

mission Operation Eagle Eye. In the full-scale NATO intervention KFOR German armed forces were among the peacekeepers sent to halt the ethnic genocide. Only five years earlier, Germany had been debating whether it could allow its troops to be engaged in such a conflict. The German government under Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher were initial and strong proponents of spreading sovereignty in the Balkan region. To them, the breakup of Yugoslavia marked the possibility of creating new democratic states, adding to the stability of the region⁶⁷. It is worth noting that at each subsequent layer of international involvement, Germany consistently called for specific metered responses and the delay of military intervention until strictly necessary or in the defense of non-combatant peacekeeping personnel. Even during KFOR, the German government strongly advocated for realistic short-term involvement to achieve regional security goals; a German general was put in command of KFOR to help implement a stabilization plan that had been developed by Germany's Foreign Minister and approved by the United Nations and the G8⁶⁸.

The domestic response to Germany's involvement in the Kosovo intervention helped define the evolution of German diplomacy into the contemporary soft power playbook. There was initial hesitation on direct military intervention with reunification being fresh in the public eye. Security experts such as Karl Kaiser and Uwe Nerlich urged a realistic assessment of German hard power reserves and military readiness of the newly reformed Bundeswehr. The political left remained strongly convinced by non-interventionist, near pacifist, doctrine. The majority of public opinion outright rejected foreign deployment of Bundeswehr troops. This did not mean the German government remained idle during the crises. In 1996, prior to the full onset of conflict in the region, the number of refugees in Germany from Bosnia-Herzegovina reached an all time high of over 300,000⁶⁹. The German government inserted itself in non-militaristic ways: it aided the Contact Group in organizing the various diplomatic summits. It maintained pressure on the Serbian government to abide by the terms of the ceasefire by augmenting the number of refugees the German government would allow to seek asylum, either relieving the regional refugee crisis, or intensifying Serbia's refugee responsibilities. An essential turning point of German policy was the Federal Constitutional Court's ruling of July 12, 1994⁷⁰ on the use of the Bundeswehr on foreign soil. The court had been asked by a bipartisan group of Bundestag members to rule on whether the Basic Law permitted Bundeswehr units to participate in the various UN and KFOR actions. The Bundestag wanted to limit these activities by a constitutional amendment specifying that the Bundeswehr could be used "only for peacekeeping measures without military action" and for humanitarian or environmental aid. Each of these actions would also require separate authorizations by the Bundestag. In 1995 the Bundestag's Commission on Foreign and Security

⁶⁷ Owen, John M. "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace." *International Security* 19, no. 2 (1994): 87–125. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2539197>.

⁶⁸ Friedrich, Wolfgang-Uwe, Wolfgang Ischinger, and Rudolf Scharping. "The Legacy of Kosovo: German Politics and Policies in The ...". Edited by Wolfgang-Uwe Friedrich. aicgs.org, 2000. https://aicgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/legacy_of_kosovo.pdf.

⁶⁹ Die Fischer-Chronik, Deutschland '49-'99. Frankfurt am Main 1999, p. 1017

⁷⁰ See *Neue Juristische Wochenschrift*, 1994, Issue 34, pp. 2207ff

Policy's report on foreign policy, stated: "It is necessary to have the power and to be prepared to use military means in order to hinder the use of force" in international relations. The soft power playbook sometimes prescribes a hybrid, smart power, use of diplomatic resources to achieve foreign policy objectives. The clear, defined premise of military involvement is what sets Germany military involvement apart from states that practice traditionally militaristic diplomatic grand strategy.

In the face of divided public opinion, the Germany Ministry of Defense had to strive for as much operational transparency as possible to be credible in the foreign deployment of Bundeswehr soldiers during KFOR. The Ministry of Defense held daily press conferences to share their agenda during the NATO operations, both to their domestic audience, but also as a way to persuade their regional and continental allies that this intervention was not another signal towards the buildup of German military aggression. The German government actively sought out the consent of its citizens during the course of military deployment. In the months leading up to the NATO deployment, and over the course of the full KFOR mission, German public support never dropped below 50% in favor of active participation of the Bundeswehr in the missions⁷¹.

German foreign policy as a whole underwent an evolutionary pivot during the Kosovo Intervention. Germany became increasingly intertwined with the Western political order; the German diplomatic core earned itself some recognition on the world stage with its handling of the diplomatic summits and its leadership during the NATO KFOR mission. Involvement of the Bundeswehr in a full-scale military operation of foreign soil was unprecedented – the first time since reunification. However, this was not an abandonment of the soft power playbook nor a dramatic shift towards militaristic tactics; rather it was the first instance of transformation of the soft power playbook to incorporate German hard power reserves in smart power strategy. Germany did not rely on military means as a primary tactic, rather it exhausted many diplomatic options before even – somewhat reluctantly – considering the use of force. Desperation over avoiding genocide tipped the scales in favor of a deliberate military intervention as a last resort.

Russo-Georgian War

Georgia is a culturally diverse country with numerous different religious, linguistic, and ethnic groups inhabiting the same geographical region. Many of these groups have coexisted peacefully for centuries with hundreds of years passing without real conflict⁷². This juxtaposition has created a shared history that alternated between liberation and conquest by marauding empires and leading powers over the eras; the most recent of these being incorporation into the USSR. Georgia's transition from Soviet rule to independent republic was difficult with the transition period being

⁷¹ Friedrich, Wolfgang-Uwe, Wolfgang Ischinger, and Rudolf Scharping. "The Legacy of Kosovo: German Politics and Policies in The ...". Edited by Wolfgang-Uwe Friedrich. aicgs.org, 2000. https://aicgs.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/legacy_of_kosovo.pdf.

⁷² Goltz, Thomas. "The Paradox of Living in Paradise: Georgia's Descent into Chaos." Essay. In *The Guns of August 2008*, 1–18. Routledge, 2009.

marked by high levels of political instability and unrest alongside ethnic violence. Many of these upheavals were the result of Georgian diplomatic decisions, but Russian and other former-Soviet interference by way of minority group relations exacerbated many problems⁷³.

The Republic of Georgia declared independence in April 1991 following a referendum during the dissolution of the Soviet Union⁷⁴. However, fighting between Russian-backed separatist groups and the Georgian government in South Ossetia made full autonomy incomplete. A pro-Western change of power in 2003 and the emergence of Vladimir Putin's regime contributed to deteriorating relations; in April 2008 a full diplomatic crisis emerged when NATO publicly promised to consider Georgian membership in the alliance. The violence escalated in August as Russian-backed South Ossetian forces began shelling Georgian villages. In response, Georgian armed forces launched a counteroffensive that reached deep into the oblast, even capturing the main separatist stronghold. Russia, declaring a "peacekeeping operation," then launched a full-scale land, air, and sea invasion of Georgia extending the warfare outside of the contested regions⁷⁵.

Russian aggression prompted responses from many entities, chief among them the United States, the United Nations, and the member states of the European Union. The United States was a staunch Georgian ally even before the attacks. The US Armed Forces had stationed 130 military advisors alongside numerous civilian advisors and contractors in Georgia to assist the Georgian government, military, and economy. When full-scale hostilities opened, the US government openly condemned them and President Bush criticized the Russian government for its "disproportionate involvement." In part of its initial response, the United States threatened Russia with deteriorated standing with Western systems if the conflict continued. Specific consequences were never explicitly drawn up, but expulsion from the G8 was considered to be among them⁷⁶. This use of initial threats and coercive diplomatic tactics is to be expected of a traditional military hegemon such as the United States. That being said, it is of note that the US did not threaten the use of military force or other hard power assets in response to the Russian invasion. It is argued this was primarily due to the fact the United States was summarily engaged in two separate wars in the Middle East; its resources were stretched too thin to open another conflict in the South Caucasus region. Some within the discipline argue that this was exactly the position Russia anticipated and hoped for: inaction would send the message that American security guarantees were unreliable when the US was engaged in other regions. The Georgian conflict could be used as a warning by Russia to other

⁷³ Slider, Darrell. "Democratization in Georgia." Chapter. In *Conflict, Cleavage, and Change in Central Asia and the Caucasus*, edited by Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, 156–98. Democratization and Authoritarianism in Post-Communist Societies. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

⁷⁴ Beat Müller, beat (at-sign) sudd (dot) ch. "Georgien, 31. März 1991 : Unabhängigkeit." Database and Search Engine for Direct Democracy, March 31, 1991. <https://www.sudd.ch/event.php?lang=en&id=ge011991>.

⁷⁵ Monaghan, Andrew C. "The Russo-Georgian Conflict." NATO Defense College, 2008. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10323>.

⁷⁶ "NATO Joins US in Condemning Russia's Response in South Ossetia." The Guardian, August 11, 2008. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/aug/11/georgia.russia7>.

vulnerable Eastern European states that choose to align themselves with the United States (against Russian interests)⁷⁷.

The United Nations Security Council met in late April to discuss this Russian aggression and to formulate a response. Although the UNSC issued no public declaration, the United States, Great Britain, France, and Germany all voiced formal concerns of the encroachment on Georgian sovereignty⁷⁸. The European Union stepped into the role as head mediator under the leadership of President Nicolas Sarkozy (also President of the EU Council at the time). The EU negotiated a six-point peace plan that heavily favored Russian interests⁷⁹. The Georgian government was pressured to sign the plan by the foreign diplomats of France, Germany, and the United States. Russia did not adhere to the peace plan by delaying the removal of troops⁸⁰ and creating new buffer zones inside Georgian territory. While the EU member states united in condemnation of Russia's actions, they were divided in how to respond. The recent additions, particularly the former Soviet-bloc states in Eastern Europe argued for a swift and strong response to continued Russian belligerence, viewing it as a major threat to European security at-large⁸¹. The western member states who had developed positive economic relations with Russia – Italy and Germany – were more hesitant to take a strong stance. Instead, they sought a nuanced approach and were decidedly circumspect about criticizing the Russian invasion. The lack of a unified position was exacerbated by the EU's dependence on Russian energy supplies: approximately one-third of European oil and 40% of natural gas is imported from Russia⁸².

Despite the disunity on a policy towards the Russo-Georgian War, the EU was united in providing support – at least monetarily – to Georgia. The EU developed an effective crisis-aid package: €120 million in postcrisis assistance in addition to the €42 million of regular funding. The objective of the assistance was to provide humanitarian aid, support internally displaced persons,

⁷⁷ Friedman, George. "The Russo-Georgian War and the Balance of Power." Rane Worldview, August 12, 2008. <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russo-georgian-war-and-balance-power>.

⁷⁸ Kurtbag, Ömer. "EU'S RESPONSE TO THE GEORGIA CRISIS: AN ACTIVE PEACE BROKER OR A CONFUSED AND DIVIDED ACTOR?" OAKA, n.d. <https://www.ajindex.com/dosyalar/makale/acarindex-1423910567.pdf>. 62-63

⁷⁹ "Background: Six-Point Peace Plan for the Georgia-Russia Conflict - Georgia." ReliefWeb, August 15, 2008. <https://reliefweb.int/report/georgia/background-six-point-peace-plan-georgia-russia-conflict>.

⁸⁰ Point 5 of the peace plan explicitly required the withdrawal of Russian armed forces to lines prior to the start of hostilities.

⁸¹ Russell, Alison Lawlor. "The Georgia-Russia War." In *Cyber Blockades*, 96–127. Georgetown University Press, 2014. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt9qdsfj.10>.

⁸² Kurtbag, Ömer. "EU'S RESPONSE TO THE GEORGIA CRISIS: AN ACTIVE PEACE BROKER OR A CONFUSED AND DIVIDED ACTOR?" OAKA, n.d. <https://www.ajindex.com/dosyalar/makale/acarindex-1423910567.pdf> pg. 64

stabilize the security situation, repair infrastructure, and support the economic recovery of Georgia⁸³. Individual EU member countries also provided €8.4 million in support⁸⁴.

The NATO alliance briefly stuck its head into the conflict as well. To assist with recover efforts after the war and to allay Georgian security fears, NATO established the NATO-Georgia Commission. Its purpose was to act as a consultative framework to oversee the implementation of support and recovery measures and assist with the development of an annual national program attributed to the continued Georgian security concerns. The program remains active today, with NATO continuing to reaffirm the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Georgia within its internationally recognized borders⁸⁵.

The individual German response to the Russo-Georgian war was relatively mute. In stark contrast to the Kosovo Intervention, the German government essentially sidelined themselves during the crisis. Germany did help to initiate the OSCE mission to oversee the implementation of the six-point peace plan⁸⁶. However during the April NATO summit, Germany – along with France – strongly argued against extending a Membership Action Plan (MAP) to Georgia⁸⁷. Citing high tensions over the separatist regions and the increase of Russian involvement, Germany and France were vehemently against admitting Georgia. In the eyes of Germany, a solution to the crisis was found and no further escalation was necessary. This was a deliberate choice, as the German government feared an increase in tensions and disagreements with Russia due to the states being intertwined and the EU's reliance on Russian oil and gas. The German foreign policy decision making structure naively hoped the Georgian invasion to be an isolated incident.

The Russo-Georgian war offers a unique insight into German foreign decision making. The condemnation of actions and formal declarations of concern can hardly be called an “active strategy.” To relent, Germany did employ soft power tactics with its cooperation in the EU Council peace plan negotiations and its involvement in the OSCE mission. Here the German diplomatic corps did stay committed to the soft power playbook. However, it is worth noting that this case highlights a concussive failure of German diplomatic action – not specifically a failure of the soft power playbook but an abysmal display of German foreign policy. Germany prioritized positive relations with Russia over the security concerns of the Eastern European and South Caucasus regions. Such a stance diminishes the future effectiveness of any future German diplomatic action. In many ways the weak German stance is a mirror of what Russia hoped to achieve from the

⁸³ “European Commission’s Crisis Response Assistance to Georgia in 2008 Reaches €120 Million - Georgia.” ReliefWeb, January 20, 2009. <https://reliefweb.int/report/georgia/european-commissions-crisis-response-assistance-georgia-2008-reaches-%E2%82%AC120-million>.

⁸⁴ See the UN website on formal relations with Georgia: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/georgia/>

⁸⁵ Regions which Russia formally recognizes as independent republics; in reality they are little more than Russian mini-puppet states.

⁸⁶ “Permanent Council Decision No. 831.” OSCE, December 31, 2008. <https://www.osce.org/pc/30157>.

⁸⁷ NATO. “Membership Action Plan (MAP).” NATO, March 18, 2014. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_37356.htm.

inaction of the United States: a display of diplomatic negligence that undermines the confidence of other regional actors in a great power state. If Germany chooses its own domestic interests and global stability over the harsh security concerns of a minor power, what credibility does it lend to any diplomatic promises it makes?

Ukrainian Conflicts

The Russo-Georgian war provided a learning experience for parties on both sides of the conflict. Russia correctly predicted the inaction by the United States and took full advantage of the negligent and reluctant attitude of the European Peninsula. After the Euromaidan protests spurred public outcry that ousted the Ukrainian President Yanukovich, a pro-Russian referendum supposedly affirmed the wish of the population of the Crimean Peninsula to become a Russian province⁸⁸. The Treaty on Accession of the Republic of Crimea to Russia was signed in March of 2014. Yet this time, Germany and the other EU member states did not succumb to inaction; rather the EU rallied and developed a unified response consistent with the Common Foreign and Security Policy doctrine. The EU parliament formally condemned Russia for its actions, with Germany opening tribunals into investigations of international law and the formal process of annexation. Germany headlined a resolution in the General Assembly of the United Nations declaring the annexation of Crimea invalid⁸⁹. Unfortunately, due to Russia's uncooperative attitude with organizations like the International Criminal Court (ICC) and international law, the world's hand remained tied as Russia subsumed the Crimean Peninsula.

Furthermore, in 2022 hoping to repeat its success in Georgia and Crimea, Russia performed a similar façade in Eastern Ukraine. The Russian Federation recognized the separatist groups in the Donbas Oblast as autonomous entities: Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and the Luhansk People's Republic (LPR)⁹⁰. It then launched a mission to protect the sovereignty of the newfound republics, which in actuality was a full-scale invasion in the form of a three-pronged offensive launched from Belarus, annexed Crimea, and the Russian border regions.

The German government initially responded to the shooting war in Ukraine by organizing sanctions packages and orchestrating a denouncement of Russia in both the EU and UN. This was criticized as being insufficient, many saw words and tariffs paling in comparison to the bullets and tanks other countries were sending. Public opinion turned in favor of sending concrete, tangible, military aid to the beleaguered Ukrainians⁹¹. Foregoing a decades long policy (not seen since the Schmidt government's actions in Chile), the German government sent weapons to an active warzone. This arms supply should not be seen as a dramatic departure from soft power tactics, however. Germany has been a main coordinator – along with France, Poland, and the United Kingdom – in rallying Europe against Russian

⁸⁸ Korostelina, Karina V. "Conflict of National Narratives of Ukraine: Euromaidan and Beyond." *Die Friedens-Warte* 89, no. 1/2 (2014): 269–90. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24868496>.

⁸⁹ United Nations Resolution 68/262: Territorial Integrity of Ukraine.

<https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n13/455/17/pdf/n1345517.pdf?token=87URFd9ITHdohrbO7r&fe=true>

⁹⁰ ASEYEV, STANISLAV, and Lidia Wolanskyj. "YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE DPR AND THE LPR: WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?" In *In Isolation: Dispatches from Occupied Donbas*, 39–45. Harvard University Press, 2022.

<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv2d8qwt5.11>.

⁹¹ This includes over 7.1 billion euros in ammunitions and other supplies, armored vehicles including MARDER infantry vehicles and Leopard 2 tanks. PATRIOT missile defense systems as well as training programs for Ukrainian pilots are also in this package: <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-en/news/military-support-ukraine-2054992>

aggression. Germany has offered preferential trade deals and other economic benefits to skirt its dependence on Russian goods and services. The Nord Stream pipelines have come under attack⁹², further incentivizing decreased German dependence on Russian energy resources. Additionally, German reporters cover the ground war in Ukraine extensively. These reports are used in forums such as the European Parliament, European Commission, and the United Nations to spur further action against Russian warmongering.

Germany has fueled the rallying cry in response to Russian aggression, not fully using militaristic measures in its response. Like anything and everything, balance is important. It is unfair to lock German foreign policy behind the bars of pure soft power diplomacy. Once again, the Ukrainian conflicts are another wave of smart power integration. Sometimes pressures need to be applied. The difference with Germany is that pressure is a last resort, the option to exercise when the other ideas have been exhausted.

The modern era (2001-present) created new challenges for the German diplomatic strategy. Russia's annexation of Crimea, its threats towards Ukraine, and the sponsorship of rebel groups in eastern Ukraine (which have bordered on the outbreak of civil war) by the Russian government⁹³ have all shaken the diplomatic corps at its base. Inconsequently, Germany has stuck to its instinct and immediately focused on multilateral response: it took a leadership role in establishing EU sanctions against Russia and pursuing alternatives for Russian goods that the German populace consumes. Chief amongst these is gas – via the Nord Stream Pipeline (and the in-development Nord Stream II) – as such Germany proceeded with caution and opposed the strict measures the United States was employing towards the Russian gas and oil services.

Conclusions

This reevaluation of German foreign policy concludes that cooperative diplomacy and the German soft power playbook are not in decline. There has been no indication of the degradation of soft power diplomacy over the course of the “stress test” caused by the increase in aggression on the European peninsula. In each of the examined cases, Germany did employ the soft power playbook in its navigation of international crises. Out of necessity, Germany has been backed into a smart power corner – falling back on hard power resources but doing so in accordance with smart power principles. Out of necessity, Germany has been backed into a smart power corner – falling back on hard power resources but doing so in accordance with smart power principles.

Even from a soft power perspective it is absurd to think that Germany would never respond to direct, immediate threats through hard power means. Germany is not responsible for the uptick in aggression, but security concerns nonetheless require it to respond. The soft power playbook does not

⁹² Al Jazeera. “Sweden Closes Probe into Nord Stream Pipeline Blast.” Al Jazeera, February 7, 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/2/7/sweden-ends-nord-stream-probe-citing-lack-of-jurisdiction#:~:text=More%20than%2016%20months%20after,described%20as%20a%20terror%20attack>.

⁹³ International Crisis Group. ““We Are Ready to Rise Up – Just Give the Order.”” *Rebels without a Cause: Russia's Proxies in Eastern Ukraine*, International Crisis Group, 2019, p. Page 2-Page 7, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep31330.5>.

describe a hard power strategy as the initial response but rather as a contingency plan. This paper has never asserted that Germany – a great power state using soft power means – has a total aversion to hard power mechanisms.

Below is a tabulated summary of the case study analysis. Of critical importance is the use of soft power in all conflicts examined within this research. This speaks to the overall health of the soft power playbook; Germany maintains its emphasis on soft power cooperative diplomacy even in the face of violent international conflict.

Case	Hard Power Use	Soft Power Use	Evaluation
Kosovo	✓	✓	Positive
Georgia	X	✓	Negative
Ukraine - Crimea	X	✓	Interruption
Ukraine - Invasion	✓	✓	

In the Kosovo conflict, the extensive use of soft power measures was coupled with a final desperate integration of hard power resources to avoid genocide. The Kosovo intervention culminated in the first iteration of the smart power evolution of the German soft power playbook. Ethnic conflict and the power disparity gap between Serbia and Kosovo lead the situation down an inevitable path to violence, the playbook is employed until the very last minute. These outcomes can only be classified as successful through the lens of the German diplomatic corps; the objectives were met and Germany proved to the world it was a competent leader both in diplomatic negotiations and management of a physical peacekeeping operation. Germany was not to blame for the international accords and policies breaking down to Serbian aggression and KLA militant campaigns.

The Russo-Georgian war highlights a complete failure of German foreign policy. To relent, soft power avenues were followed, and Germany participated – albeit meekly – in the post-crisis response. However, the inactivity and negligent attitudes of the international community at large do not shed a positive light on how Germany handled the situation.

The Ukraine situation offers a unique perspective. The annexation of Crimea and the ongoing invasion of Ukraine are nothing the international community has seen before. Ethnic conflict, genocide, and small-scale wars are – unfortunately – all too common in the current system. At no point in this globalized framework has the international community witnessed a state trying to conquer another. This is a situation that no-one has a developed response for anymore. Human civilization does not seek to conquer anymore, those ideas were left hundreds of years ago alongside petty kingdoms and feudal

aristocracies. The Ukrainian conflict has interrupted all previous notions of cemented diplomatic strategy. Countries need time to adapt and respond; It is necessary for any great power to adapt to each individual diplomatic situation; a great power state must have the capacity to respond effectively to dynamic situations Germany is no different.

This interruption is not a deviation from the soft power playbook, but rather a gap in the pages that has not been filled in yet. The soft power avenues were followed, diplomatic measures exhausted yet the European continent has been backed into a corner by Russian aggression. The crisis demands a temporary course correction.

It remains to be seen if this interruption in the expansion of soft power doctrine will create a trend amongst the international community. States could continue to sign-on to the soft power playbook, citing the recent success of the policies, even in the face of antithetical problems. Conversely, the uptick in aggression could force other states to revert to conventional wisdom once again; choosing to re-align with militaristic isolation accompanied by the global rise in nationalist sentiment. There is hope for the soft power cause: Germany has increasingly stepped in to the role of European leader, perhaps the next wave of EU integration will push the state into a formal leadership role. An analysis on the ability of the European Union to evolve into the first supranational authority – with Germany in the pilot’s seat – would be an important “next step” to researching the soft power doctrine.

