



## What the United States can expect from Germany after the Elections?

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### Summary

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What can the United States expect from Germany after the election? Germany will

- continue to lead the way in building both a sustainable, competitive Eurozone and a stronger, internationally more credible European Union
- continue to lead stay engaged in South Eastern Europe with regard to reinforcing stability and security in the region
- endeavour to enhance its economic interaction with Russia and thus contribute to stability and prosperity with this important neighbor
- increasingly engage in the Middle East. This will be mainly an economic engagement; this will have a positive impact on the security and stability situation in the region
- follow this path in North Africa
- enhance its footprint in Latin America, particularly in Brazil
- boost its overall performance in Asia, the most critical market outside Europe for continued German prosperity. This will also include a cautious course of promoting security and stability in the region

### About ISPSW

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The Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy (ISPSW) is a private institute for research and consultancy. The ISPSW is objective and task oriented and is above party politics.

In an ever more complex international environment of globalized economic processes and worldwide political, ecological, social and cultural change, bringing major opportunities but also risks, decision-makers in enterprises and politics depend more than ever before on the advice of highly qualified experts.

ISPSW offers a range of services, including strategic analyses, security consultancy, executive coaching and intercultural competency. ISPSW publications examine a wide range of topics connected with politics, economy, international relations, and security/defense. ISPSW network experts have worked – in some cases for decades – in executive positions and possess a wide range of experience in their respective specialist areas.



## ANALYSIS

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The German election is just round the corner and people are asking if the German people really want a change. The short answer is no, not really.

We can expect to see many familiar faces in any new government; it is quite likely, that we will also see the familiar figure of Chancellor Merkel firmly in the saddle for a third time. The German people, and many politicians, feel quite comfortable with the political status quo.

Having said that, Germany will both change internally and will continue to influence over her borders. Germany will continue to follow the money and continue to benefit from globalization and the challenges created by globalization. Here Germany will not be content with the status quo and this trend will impact on German policy and public opinion.

Timothy Gordon Ash rightfully observed that Germany today is very much in the driver's seat of Europe. This took some time to come about following Unification in 1990, but come about it did. Following Unification, Germany participated in the Kosovo intervention, joined its allies in Afghanistan and is even engaged in Mali. German air defense assets are protecting Turkey and German ships are patrolling off the coast of East Africa. This would have been unthinkable prior to Unification.

Prosperity (which is all about following the money) is a driving force in Germany as it is a key ingredient of the Social Market Economy. This in turn provides stability, good governance, pensions, social security and job stability. German prosperity is linked to the further development of the European Union – no other European nation has benefitted more from the European Union and the common currency than Germany. Currently out of the focus of both voters and government is the fact that increasingly the stability of the European Union is linked to stability outside the Union, particularly when key markets, lines of communication and strategic resources are involved. Germany will have to come round to the idea that global stability is very much in the interest of Europe's largest and most powerful economy.

East Asia has become the world's most dynamic and dominant region in terms of future global economic development. This region is crucial to Germany's sustained development. It is also slowly dawning on both the German people and the Government that this region is far from stable. East Asia is challenged by border issues, territorial claims and disputes, old animosities and unsolved conflicts. America's new interest in the region can result in new political risks and it will result in increased competition for the markets in the region. All this will have a direct security impact on the European Union and thus also Germany. It is high time that Europe takes a more proactive role in this region – not only on the commercial front but also as a provider of security.

German-Russian relations over the past years have gone from good to bad. This has in part to do with the personal relations between the political leaders; it also has to do with a new found nationalism in Russia which is not in tune with European political mainstream thinking. German-Russian trade relations are crucial to stability in Russia as they are also to German energy policy. It can be argued that in this regard Russia has Germany over a barrel – hardly the best position to be in if one wishes to influence Russian policy at home and



abroad. Add to this the rising tension in North Africa and the Middle East and one can see that the European Union – and Germany – is surrounded by a range of instable and unpredictable countries and regions.

Germany will almost certainly not resort to military means in order to secure its aims and objectives. It lacks that strategic intent and would most certainly not have the popular or political backing for such a move. Germany has realized that 19<sup>th</sup> century Gun Boat diplomacy has been replaced by more subtle and complex means and methods. The real future battles, so the German view, will be geo-economic. Countries no longer protect their borders; today and in the future countries will need to protect their supply chains, business systems, communications, financial networks and know-how. These very developments bring particular A2AD<sup>1</sup> challenges to the fore, and in this regard Germany is getting increasingly better prepared in the relevant domains.

Since Unification Germany has quietly reshaped its armed forces, police, intelligence services and customs agency. German Special Forces and its small but highly effective fleet of modern submarines fit perfectly in the A2AD environment. Germany is one of the leading maritime nations and with its share in Airbus is very much on a par with the United States in the aviation sector. In space Germany might be small when compared to the United States or Russia, but it compensates this with quality. In the Cyber domain Germany is amongst the seven leading nations. Rather than deploying troops, Germany has had excellent results with its networked security concept, a mix of coercion agencies and forces, development aid and industrial/technological support.

This concept has been put to the test since the beginning of the 90s and has impacted on the European Union – examples for this are EUROPOL<sup>2</sup>, EUROJUST<sup>3</sup>, FRONTEX<sup>4</sup> – and even on NATO<sup>5</sup> in the form of the PRT<sup>6</sup> concept. Germany has “exported” its police forces and their know-how both to European Union members and overseas. Germany has reorganized its intelligence apparatus in order to improve situational awareness via the collection and exchange of data by using common processes, procedures and techniques.

What can the United States expect from Germany after the election?

1. Germany will continue to lead the way in building both a sustainable, competitive Eurozone and a stronger, internationally more credible European Union
2. Germany will stay engaged in South Eastern Europe with regard to reinforcing stability and security in the region
3. Germany will endeavor to enhance its economic interaction with Russia and thus contribute to stability and prosperity with this important neighbor
4. Germany will increasingly engage in the Middle East. This will be mainly an economic engagement; this will have a positive impact on the security and stability situation in the region
5. Germany will follow this path in North Africa
6. Germany will enhance its footprint in Latin America, particularly in Brazil

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<sup>1</sup> Anti-Access Aera-Denial

<sup>2</sup> European Police Office

<sup>3</sup> The European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit

<sup>4</sup> Frontières extérieures

<sup>5</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization

<sup>6</sup> Provincial Reconstruction Team



7. Germany will boost its overall performance in Asia, the most critical market outside Europe for continued German prosperity. This will also include a cautious course of promoting security and stability in the region

Is this of interest to the United States?

Yes, as it is in the interest to the United States if global stability, security and prosperity are strengthened. Germany's historical problem has in the past been a lack of strategic intent and thus an overly cautious approach to security matters. This is due to well-known and understandable historical reasons as well as sovereignty issues prior to German Unification. Global pressures as well as time have contributed to a significant shift in this area resulting in a less insular and more proactive economic, foreign and security policy. This shift, much in the interest of the United States, could be reinforced, encouraged and accelerated – in particular from the United States. We jointly should strive to

- Share the security burden in the Global Commons, i.e. Sea, Air, Outer Space, Cyber Space thereby building on a comprehensive understanding of all instruments instead of focusing predominantly on defense budgets;
- Share the management of challenges and tasks with global actors such as Brazil, China, the Gulf States, India, Russia, South Korea and Turkey;
- Continue to develop an appropriate and valid approach towards a fair and sustainable transatlantic partnership, which is of benefit to all parties.

What we need is a little help from our friends.

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#### **Remarks:**

Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author.

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### About the Author of this Issue

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Ralph D. Thiele is Chairman of the Political-Military Society (pmg), Berlin, Germany and CEO at StatByrd Consulting. In 40 years of politico-military service, Colonel (ret.) Thiele has gained broad political, technological, academic and military expertise. He has been directly involved in numerous national and NATO strategic issues while serving as executive officer to the Bundeswehr Vice Chief of Defence Staff, Military Assistant to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, in the Planning and Policy Staff of the German Minister of Defence, as Chief of Staff of the NATO Defense College, as Commander of the Bundeswehr Transformation Centre and as Director of Faculty at the German General Staff and Command College in Hamburg.

He has published numerous books and articles and is lecturing widely in Europe, Asia (Beijing, Seoul, Tokyo, and Ulaanbaatar) in the U.S. and Brazil on current comprehensive security affairs, cyber security, border security, maritime domain security, protection of critical infrastructure and defence and also historical issues.

Ralph D. Thiele is a member of the German Atlantic Association and member of the Defence Science Board to the Austrian Minister of Defence.



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