



ANALYSIS

BETWEEN OSTPOLITIK AND ZEITENWENDE GERMANY'S DUAL DEPENDENCE ON CHINA AND RUSSIA

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Cover page photo: Chinese President Xi Jinping welcomes German Chancellor Olaf Scholz at the Grand Hall in Beijing on 4 November 2022 (Photo by Kay Nietfeld / Pool / AFP / Scanpix)

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INTRODUCTION

For a long time before February 2022, Germany prioritised commercial ties with Russia and China over the geopolitical risks they carried. These economic ties were fostered in the spirit of Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. Eventually, Germany had hoped, its autocratic economic partners would liberalise and 'change through trade' – *Wandel durch Handel*. In this spirit, former Chancellor Angela Merkel and her predecessor Gerhard Schröder increased Germany's reliance on cheap Russian energy and encouraged the establishment of an intricate web of co-dependence with China. This played an important role in helping Germany become not only the most powerful economy in Europe and the largest contributor to the EU budget but also the largest dependent on Russian energy and trade with China.

Now, winds of change have been blowing in Berlin for almost a year. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz made his *Zeitenwende* (turning point) speech at the Bundestag three days after Russia had launched its all-out invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Signalling the most profound turning point in the German foreign policy of the past 70 years, Scholz's proclamation unveiled plans to inject €100 billion into Germany's underequipped army which, if materialized, would make Germany the third largest military spender in the world.¹ In August 2022, Scholz used the 'partner, competitor, rival' triad to state that Germany would be seeking a "political and economic diversification" away from China and towards other partners in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.²

¹ NATO Military Committee, "[NATO Military Committee visits Germany](#)," NATO, 29 August 2022; The International Institute for Strategic Studies, "[The Military Balance+ database](#)," accessed on 3 November 2022.

² The Federal Government, "[Speech by Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz at the Charles University of Prague on Monday 29 August, 2022](#)," Cabinet of Germany (Bundesregierung), 29 August 2022.

A new China Strategy – a separate element of the new National Security Strategy – is anticipated to come out next year. The document will mark the direction of Sino-German bilateral relations for the years to come. Germany's China policy, in turn, will steer the course of how the whole of the EU and China interact moving deeper into this century. According to Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock from the Green Party, the Strategy is expected to outline a need to "create more distance and reduce economic dependencies" in line with the *Zeitenwende* sentiments.³ Yet Chancellor Scholz has already been criticised for undermining this toughened stance of his own government, clinging onto the hopes of *Ostpolitik*.

Although Germany is still in search of its exact *Zeitenwende* policies, a firm reversal from the business-first mantra of *Ostpolitik* towards a tougher approach as taken place vis-à-vis Russia in 2022. Will the change of direction in German foreign policy apply when it comes to China? Or will Germany remain stuck between the *Ostpolitik* and *Zeitenwende* approaches? This analysis looks deeper into Berlin's dependence on both China and Russia and how the two are intertwined. Looking forward to a more secure and sustainable future, it explores how Germany could diversify should it choose this hurtful yet rewarding path.

1. GERMANY'S ENERGY DEPENDENCE ON RUSSIA

Much to the surprise of many European states, including pre-*Zeitenwende* Germany, Putin's Russia redoubled its aggressive efforts to redraw international borders in February 2022. Despite the visible signs of a Russian military build-up along Ukraine's border in August 2021 hinting at the upcoming invasion, soon-to-be-Chancellor Scholz, in calling for a new European *Ostpolitik*, continued to back the SPD's embrace of the controversial Nord Stream 2 pipeline.⁴ Pushing for tighter energy cooperation with

³ German Bundestag, Human Rights Committee, "[Baerbock: China-Strategie erarbeiten](#) [Baerbock: Develop China strategy]," German Bundestag, 2 June 2022.

⁴ Manuela Kasper-Claridge and Jaafar Abdul Karim, "[Olaf Scholz: 'Hier gilt die Herrschaft des Rechts und nicht das Recht des Stärkeren](#)" [Olaf Scholz: 'The rule of law applies here and not the law of the strongest'], *Deutsche Welle*, 11 August 2021.

Russia during its all-out invasion of Ukraine, the German government continued to import around 55% of gas and 35% of oil from Russia.⁵ Gas, almost all of it imported, accounted for about a quarter of Germany's primary energy consumption in February 2022. Nearly 50% of the 40.6 million households in Germany use natural gas, the majority of which comes from Russia, for heating.⁶ The early closure of Germany's last operational nuclear power plants further exacerbated Germany's dependence on Russian energy.⁷

The EU's most economically powerful country suddenly found itself in a difficult position. Germany came to realise that its energy trade with Russia was threatening its national prosperity and security. According to IMF estimates, a total Russian gas shutoff could reduce the German GDP by approximately 1.5% in 2022, and by 2.7% in 2023.⁸ More pessimistic forecasts have even suggested a loss of up to 6%, due to firms' "extreme inability" to replace Russian gas.⁹ The GDP drop could be accompanied by an increase in unemployment by up to 750 000 people.¹⁰ "I say this with great regret [...] Germany is dependent on Russian energy imports", remarked Robert Habeck, Germany's Vice Chancellor.¹¹

Germany's high dependence helps explain why it has been so reluctant to sanction Russia. Pledging lighter sanctions on the EU level while pushing back against calls for energy embargo, Germany has also reduced the EU's ability to penalise Russia.¹² Moreover, in the first 100 days of the invasion, Berlin paid Moscow €93 billion in revenue from fossil fuel exports, further eroding the effectiveness of all measures.¹³ The other side of the same coin is Germany's exposure as a target of economic blackmail. Even though Germany has now managed to reduce its reliance on Russia's gas from 55% to 35% of total imports, and there are plans to cut that share to 10% by mid-2024, the German economy is still vulnerable to weaponisation of energy trade.¹⁴ Russia's state-owned energy giant *Gazprom* has repeatedly cut gas supplies to Europe through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline as an influence tactic, using the European energy crisis and high inflation to gain political leverage. The 26 September incident that damaged the underwater Nord Stream pipeline between Russia and Germany is the most severe case

Germany and Europe have realised that if any 'change through trade' has occurred over the past decades, it has been a change in favour of Russia's imperialist ambitions

of energy weaponisation to date. The multiple explosions leaked a colossal amount of methane into the atmosphere, estimated to be equivalent to the emissions of "1.3 million cars driven on a road for a year".¹⁵ The scale of the sabotage, with massive amounts of explosives and multiple detonation sites, suggests a state actor might have been involved.¹⁶ While no formal finding has yet established that Russian

⁵ Rüdiger Bachmann, David Baqaee, Christian Bayer, Moritz Kuhn, Andreas Löschel, Benjamin Moll, Andreas Peichl, Karen Pittel, and Moritz Schularick, "[What if? The economic effects for Germany of a stop of energy imports from Russia](#)," *ECONtribute Policy Brief*, no 028 (7 March 2022).

⁶ The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action, "[So heizen die Deutschen](#) [That's how the Germans heat]," The Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK), accessed 3 November 2022.

⁷ Kalev Stoicescu, "[Germany, Russia, and Energy Politics](#)," *Germany and Baltic Security Series*, no 5 (February 2022).

⁸ Ting Lan, Galan Sher, Jong Zhou, "[The Economic Impacts on Germany of a Potential Russian Gas Shutoff](#)," *IMF Working Paper*, no 2022/144 (19 July 2022).

⁹ Oliver Holtemöller, Prof. Dr. Martin Gornig, Torsten Schmidt, and Timo Wollmershäuser, "[From Pandemic to Energy Crisis: Economy and Politics under Permanent Stress](#)," *Joint Economic Forecast*, no 1/2022 (April 2022).

¹⁰ Gemeinschaftsdiagnose, Projektgruppe, "[Von der Pandemie zur Energiekrise – Wirtschaft und Politik im Dauerstress. Kurzfassung der Gemeinschaftsdiagnose Frühjahr 2022](#) [From the pandemic to the energy crisis—economy and politics under constant stress Summary of the joint forecast spring 2022]," *Schnelldienst* 75, no 5, (München: Leibniz-Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung an der Universität München 2022): 58-63.

¹¹ "[Deutschland ist von russischen Energieimporten abhängig](#) [Germany is dependent on Russian energy imports]," *Stern.de*, March 3 2022.

¹² Hans von der Burchard and Merlin Sugue, "[Germany's Scholz rejects calls to ban Russian oil and gas](#)," *Politico*, 7 March 2022.

¹³ Lauri Myllyvirta, Hubert Thieriot, Andrei Ilas, Oleksii Mykhailenko, "[Financing Putin's war: Fossil fuel imports from Russia in the first 100 days of the invasion](#)," Centre For Research On Energy And Clean Air (CREA), 13 June 2022.

¹⁴ Lan et al, "The Economic Impacts on Germany."

¹⁵ GHGSat, "[Sustainable Development Technology Canada \(SDTC\) Announces \\$20 Million Investment in GHGSat to Advance the World's Only High-Resolution, Satellite-Based Greenhouse Gas Detection System](#)," GHGSat, 3 November 2021; Karen McVeigh and Philip Oltermann, "[Nord Stream gas leaks may be biggest ever, with warning of large climate risks](#)," *The Guardian*, 28 September, 2022.

¹⁶ Sergey Vakulenko, "[Shock and Awe. Who attacked the Nordstream Pipelines?](#)" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 30 September 2022.

authorities were responsible for the attacks, it is an example of the serious repercussions of close trade ties with political adversaries in times of crisis.¹⁷ Due to decades of not sufficiently diversifying energy sources, routes, and suppliers in the spirit of *Wandel durch Handel*, Germany and Europe have realised that if any ‘change through trade’ has occurred over the past decades, it has been a change in favour of Russia’s imperialist ambitions.

2. PARALLEL DEPENDENCY – CHINA

Against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine and the energy crisis in Europe, a sense of urgency to address another major dependence has emerged. Germany’s dependence on its trade relations with China dwarfs its energy dependence on Russia, according to Max Zenglein from the Mercator Institute for China Studies.¹⁸ Similar to Berlin’s policy on Russia, *Wandel durch Handel* has been the underlying motto of Sino-German relations for decades. The Germany-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CPS) was established in 1972, at the peak of the *Ostpolitik* crafted by Chancellor Willy Brandt and his adviser Egon Bahr.¹⁹ For the past six years, China has been Germany’s largest trading partner, accounting for 8% of country’s total exports.²⁰ Germany is much more dependent on China than China is on Germany in terms of both exports and imports.²¹ Roughly 2.4% of Germany’s total employment (i.e., the jobs of 1.1 million German people) directly depends on China’s demand.²² Top German companies, such as *Volkswagen* and *BMW*, rely on the Chinese

market, responsible for the largest shares of their business.²³

Though the EU as a whole is proportionally less reliant on trade with China than Germany is individually, dependence on China is an EU-wide phenomenon.²⁴ This is in part a legacy of Merkel’s government, which enthusiastically promoted economic engagement with China on the EU level.²⁵ Now, if trade with China were seriously hindered, critical supply lines would break down and GDP growth would collapse, leading to spike in inflation and unemployment.²⁶

Rare earth minerals that the EU uses to produce consumer electronics, national defence equipment, electric vehicles, solar panels, and more are almost exclusively produced in China.²⁷ Europe also depends on China in the chemical, electronics, and pharmaceutical sectors. To illustrate with a niche yet important example: almost all Vitamin B supplements (97%) and certain types of antibiotics are imported from China, for which Europe would struggle to find a substitute for at the moment.²⁸ Perhaps even more concerning than the status quo is Germany’s – and the EU’s –

Even more concerning than the status quo is Germany’s – and the EU’s – current trade trajectory with China, which is moving at a “tremendous pace” towards more dependence

current trade trajectory with China, which is moving at a “tremendous pace” towards more dependence.²⁹ At the same time, China has managed to lessen its dependence on both – measured relative to total value added of the

¹⁷ Vakulenko, “Shock and Awe.”

¹⁸ Max J. Zenglein, “China: Hope for the best but prepare for the worse,” *Politico*, 8 September 2022.

¹⁹ Albero Cunha, “Paving the New Silk Road: The Evolution of the Sino-German strategic partnership,” *Observatorio Politico Working Paper* 67 (2017).

²⁰ “How heavily does Germany rely on Russian energy?,” *The Economist*, 4 March 2022.

²¹ Jürgen Matthes, “Gegenseitige Abhängigkeit im Handel zwischen China, der EU und Deutschland: Eine empirische Faktensammlung [Interdependence in trade between China, the EU and Germany: A collection of empirical facts],” *Wirtschaftliche Untersuchungen, Berichte und Sachverhalte* 35/2022 (13 June 2022).

²² Matthes, “Gegenseitige Abhängigkeit im Handel zwischen China.”

²³ “Germany is recalibrating its close economic ties with China,” *The Economist*, 16 June 2022.

²⁴ Matthes, “Gegenseitige Abhängigkeit im Handel zwischen China.”

²⁵ Erik Brattberg, “Merkel’s Mixed legacy on China,” *Carnegie Endowment of International Peace*, 30 September 2021.

²⁶ Zenglein, “China: Hope for the best.”

²⁷ Silvia Bobba, Samuel Carrara, S., Jaco Huisman, Frabrice Mathieux, and Claudiu Pavel, *Critical Raw materials for Strategic Technologies and Sectors in the EU. A Foresight Study*, European Commission (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2020), 3 September 2020.

²⁸ Max J. Zenglein, “Mapping and recalibrating Europe’s dependence on China,” *Mercator Institute for China Studies*, 18 November 2020.

²⁹ Matthes, “Gegenseitige Abhängigkeit im Handel zwischen China.”

whole economy – by reducing its own trade openness for the past 15 years.³⁰

Now, a change might be underway. Germany and the EU as a whole have become increasingly alarmed over China's actions in the Taiwan Strait, human rights abuses in the Xinjiang region, and the risk of economic blackmail.

3. THE PROBLEM OF GERMANY'S DEPENDENCE ON CHINA

On 6 September 2022, German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock noted the importance of “anchoring what we have learnt from our dependency on Russia” in the China Strategy.³¹ When asked about the risk of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan following warnings from Western security services, Baerbock said, “I am very concerned”. Referring to Russia, she reiterated that “we must not make the same mistake again” with China.³² Chancellor Scholz had similar thoughts when asked about his stance on China's growing belligerence against Taiwan in September 2022. He said that “it is important to ban violence from international relations,” including when it comes to China.³³ However, Norbert Röttgen, a prominent CDU politician, pointed out the emptiness of these words, noting that if China were to invade Taiwan, Germany would “not really” be able to back sanctions against Beijing.³⁴

Tensions in the Taiwan Strait are not the only problem. The UN Human Rights Office published a report in August 2022 raising concerns over human rights violations and potential crimes against humanity committed against the Muslim Uyghur minority in China's

Xinjiang region.³⁵ The report provided plausible evidence that the Uyghur minority was being subjected to sex crimes, family separations, and detentions, outlining yet another area where Germany, with its current dependencies, would struggle to back strong sanctions against China. This would be a problem not only for the value-based unity of the EU but also for Germany's own commitment to its values.

Finally, Germany's reliance on China could limit its freedom of political expression, as China has repeatedly shown a willingness to use trade ties as economic blackmail against individual states in the EU and the European Economic Area (EEA). Among other things, it banned dairy exports from Estonia in 2011 following the Dalai Lama's visit there,³⁶ cut off Norway's salmon exports after the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo in 2013,³⁷ and limited Lithuanian exports of beef, dairy, and alcohol following Lithuania's decision to allow Taiwan to open a de-facto embassy in Vilnius.³⁸ This highlights the threat of economic blackmail associated with trade dependence. Germany's new China Strategy will declare a change in direction from the current path and outline how decisively trade dependencies on China will be reduced in the years to come. However, it is likely that these processes will not be quick and painless.

4. BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Germany, a superpower within Europe, has repeatedly declared its commitment to “defending the rules-based order globally.”³⁹ These commitments have started to expose

³⁰ Matthes, “Gegenseitige Abhängigkeit im Handel zwischen China.”

³¹ Federal Foreign Office, “[Speech by Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock at the Business Forum of the 20th Conference of the Head of German Missions](#),” Federal Foreign Office, 6 September 2022.

³² Federal Foreign Office, “[Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock in an interview with the FAZ ‘Our weapons are helping save lives’](#),” Federal Foreign Office, 22 September 2022.

³³ “[Bundeskanzler Scholz: Deutsche Waffen haben Erfolge der Ukraine ermöglicht](#), [Chancellor Scholz: German weapons enabled Ukraine to achieve success],” Deutschland Radio, 24 September 2022.

³⁴ “[‘Sicherheitsgesetz’ in Hongkong. Röttgen lehnt Sanktionen gegen China ab](#), [Security Law” in Hong Kong Röttgen rejects sanctions against China],” *Spiegel Politik*, 16 July 2020.

³⁵ The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner, “[OHCHR Assessment of human rights concerns in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, People's Republic of China](#),” The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner, 31 August 2022.

³⁶ Frank Jüris and Dmitri Teperik, “[Chinese Influence in Estonia](#),” CEPA, 9 August 2022.

³⁷ Ivar Kolstad, “[Too Big to Fault? Effects of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize on Norwegian Exports to China and Foreign Policy](#),” *Chr. Michelsen Institute Working Paper* 2016:03 (2016).

³⁸ “[China Halts Lithuania Beef, Dairy and Beer Imports amid Taiwan Row](#),” *BBC*, 11 February 2022.

³⁹ Federal Foreign Office, “[Statement by a Federal Foreign Office Spokesperson on today's video conference between Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock and her Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi](#),” Federal Foreign Office, 24 May 2022.

difficult dilemmas. Germany can only choose one of the following: to continue indirectly funding Russia's war in Ukraine through energy imports or defend the rules-based order by decisively sanctioning Russian energy. The latter option could compromise proper winter heating in 20 million German homes. Dependence on China entails similar risks. Trade with a nation that has not ruled out the use of force in Taiwan, violates human rights, and threatens economic blackmail? Or put 1.1 million German jobs in peril? ⁴⁰

Germany can only choose one: to continue indirectly funding Russia's war through energy imports or defend the rules-based order. Dependence on China poses a similar dilemma

It is important to note that these two dilemmas do not exist in isolation but cause a dual concern simultaneously. Russia's genocidal campaign in Ukraine is taking place at the same time as China is demonstrating its might over Taiwan, and as human rights abuses in Xinjiang are becoming increasingly visible to the world. In an even worse scenario, an invasion of Taiwan would force Germany to confront this dilemma now, during the Ukraine war, and amid the steepest recession and inflation Europe has had in a decade.

Germany is caught between a rock and a hard place following decades of close trade with autocratic nations in the spirit of *Ostpolitik*. On the one hand, protecting the rules-based order by decoupling, and backing strong sanctions, would come at a price to Germany's own people. On the other hand, deferring and hesitating would leave Germany unprepared in short- and medium-term should an urgent need to take a hard-line stance in defence of the rules-based international order and democratic values arise.

5. A CAUTIOUS DIVERSIFICATION TOWARDS OTHER PARTNERS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

So far, Germany appears to have opted for a cautious middle ground. On 13 September of this year, Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck mentioned that China would continue to be a welcome trading partner, but that new measures would be imposed.⁴¹

As an example, he cited closer scrutiny of Chinese investments in Europe's infrastructure, reducing investment or export guarantees, and curtailing trade fairs to China.⁴² Germany has

also started to increase diplomatic exchanges with Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore to foster stronger alternative regional partnerships in the Indo-Pacific.⁴³

Most members of the current traffic-light government – a coalition between the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), the Free Democratic Party (FDP), and Alliance 90/The Greens – seem to believe a new approach towards China is necessary. However, considerable opposition to tougher measures against Germany's top trading partner, still exists. Germany's political and business establishments have argued that the country should strengthen its ties with China, not sever them. To counter Russia, they suggest, doubling down on investments to China is a good option, given the economic losses suffered due to the war in Ukraine.⁴⁴

Most Germans still seem to treat Russia and China as two separate problems – not a joint challenge to the international rules-based order.⁴⁵ Chancellor Olaf Scholz's 4 November visit to Beijing is a prime example

⁴⁰ The State Council of the People's Republic of China, "[China releases white paper on Taiwan question, reunification in new era](#)," The State Council of the People's Republic of China, 10 August 2022.

⁴¹ Christian Kraemer, "[Germany drawing up new China Policy, vowing no more naivety](#)," *Reuters*, 13 September 2022.

⁴² Kraemer, "Germany drawing up new China Policy."

⁴³ Rafał Ulatowski, "Germany in the Indo-Pacific region: strengthening the liberal order and regional security," *International Affairs* 98, no 2 (March 2022): 383-402, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iaac008>.

⁴⁴ Roderick Kefferpütz, "[Shifting Politics: The Future of Germany's China Policy](#)," *Institut Montaigne*, 7 April 2022.

⁴⁵ Kefferpütz, "Shifting Politics."

of that fallacy.⁴⁶ Rolf Mützenich, a member of the Bundestag from the Chancellor's Social Democratic Party (SPD), argues that although *Wander durch Handel* has failed in the case of Russia, it is still possible that China will liberalise through trade.⁴⁷ Despite the optimism shared by Mützenich and Chancellor Scholz, China has shown no signs of democratisation over the past six years, in which it has been Germany's largest trading partner.

Most Germans still seem to treat Russia and China as two separate problems – not a joint challenge to the international rules-based order

CONCLUSION

While *Ostpolitik* served Germany well during the Cold War, it is unsuitable for the current era. Back in the day, the *Neue Ostpolitik* (New Eastern Policy), which originated from the start of the Brandt-Bahr era in 1969, promoted rapprochement in Europe with the Warsaw Pact nations. The ensuing acceleration of exchanges between East and West arguably played a key role in the peaceful collapse of the Soviet Union.⁴⁸ But contrary to expectations, trade has not resulted in liberalisation in the autocratic nations of the post-Cold War era. Evidently, the Russian Federation has become more aggressive and authoritarian. The same could be said about China's lack of democratisation.

In the spirit of *Ostpolitik*, Germany and the EU have allowed for the development of asymmetric dependencies. Much of the current coalition in Germany now feels an increasing sense of urgency to revisit the country's approach towards China aiming for a tougher EU-China policy. Nevertheless, in November 2022, Chancellor Scholz still lauded Sino-German partnership and praised China as "an important partner."⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Hans von der Burchard, "Germany's Scholz flies out Under fire to meet Xi," *Politico*, 3 November 2022.

⁴⁷ "Putins Krieg, Chinas Macht: Eine neue Weltordnung entsteht – so könnte sie aussehen, [Putin's war, China's power: A new world order is emerging - this is what it could look like]," *Tagesspiel*, 26 March 2022.

⁴⁸ Jussi M. Hanhimäki, "Ironies and Turning Points: Détente in Perspective," in *Reviewing the Cold War*, ed. Odd Arne Westad (London: Routledge, 2000), 324.

⁴⁹ Olaf Scholz, "Darum Geht es bei meiner Reise nach China [That is what my trip to China is about]," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 November 2022.

While a robust approach cannot be excluded from the upcoming China Strategy, it cannot be relied upon either. Germany appears to be stuck between the new *Zeitenwende* reality of 2022 and the old *Ostpolitik* which have served it well for the past seven decades. Currently, business ties are still fostered with China, while the unhurried diversification towards other regional partners in Asia is proceeding quietly in the background. The problem, nevertheless, persists: Germany might not have the time for such a slow diversification. Its current China-dependent economy is neither prepared nor resilient should a crisis occur with China in the short term.

Europe has only begun to perceive China as a rival and is finally demonstrating unprecedented, united front in the face of authoritarian challenges. Germany's new China Strategy may potentially reassure its fellow EU member states that Berlin – increasingly wary and sceptical of China – will be moving along with the broader European currents of unity – not against, as it previously did in the spirit of *Ostpolitik*. As Willy Brandt said, "Every era requires its own answers."⁵⁰ *Ostpolitik* no longer seems fitting for this one.

Germany might not have the time for such a slow diversification

⁵⁰ Willy Brandt, Uwe Mai, Bernd Rother, Wolfgang Schmidt, Berliner Ausgabe.: *Gemeinsame Sicherheit: Internationale Beziehungen und deutsche Frage 1982-1992* [Berlin Edition.: Common Security: International Relations and the German Question 1982-1992], (Berlin: J.H.W. Dietz, 2000).

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