

Enemies of Rationality, Mirrors of Intent? The Role of Images in International Relations,

Part II

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Following up on part I of the present article on the role of images in international relations,¹ we will in this essay turn our attention to a recent case study regarding the influence of images on IR. Decision-making in international politics is a process often affected by images actors hold of themselves and one another. The 2011 Libyan Civil War represents a significant example of what happens when a major decision influences the image a country holds of another country. Though disagreement from Russia and China regarding the issue of the Libyan no-fly zone would not have been surprising, the abstention of Germany, one of the EU Big Three and temporary UNSC member, was very much unexpected. However, Germany has long been recognised as a reluctant collaborator in military operations, in accordance with its 'never again' philosophy adopted after World War II. Why, then, was its abstention in the UNSC1973 vote touted as the moment that killed the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy?

The intention of this article is to outline the effect of the German UNSC1973 abstention on the images of Germany in French media in order to determine their impact on the French and British images of Germany. Media are a key factor in disseminating information and influencing individual and collective public opinions – hence they are a key component in the process of socialisation, which imprints the national identity on an individual and thus integrates them into a particular group. Images in media representation are themselves the result of the perception-creation process; thus they are subject to selective perception in their information-gathering phase and undergo

further distortion through perception by the world.² Media images exist in symbiosis with the human network of opinion leaders. They may increase the social status of the latter, whereas the human network rejects messages, passes them on or lets them die, endows them with credibility and social support or destroys them by ridicule and scepticism.³

As Germany's abstention is considered highly significant to the credibility of a united European security and defence policy, the image being studied is one of Germany as a security and defence actor within the CSDP, thus from reunification onwards.

The sample of articles studied spans from 17/03/2011, the day of UNSC1973, to 16/01/2013, the last day a significant article regarding the subject was published at the time of writing. The articles were selected on the basis of containing mention of 'Libya/Libye', 'Germany/L'Allemagne' and 'no-fly zone/zone d'exclusion aérienne'.

The article attempts to encompass a wide range of political opinions in its sample sources, which are limited to nationally circulated newspapers and, in one instance, their mentions of images in a French radio station. Articles which do not mention UNSC1973 or do not express an opinion regarding it were ignored. Perceptual change will be measured through the use of positive/negative keywords to describe Germany or the abstention.

The CSDP and pre-UNSC1973 Franco-German relationship

¹ Alexandra Gallovičová, 'Enemies of Rationality, Mirrors of Intent? The Role of Images in International Relations, Part I', *Strife*, Vol. 3 (May 2014), pp. 21-27.

² M. Kunczik, *Images of Nations and International Public Relations* (Mahwah, NJ, 1997), p. 20.

³ H.C. Kelman, *International behaviour. A Socio-Psychological Analysis* (New York, 1965), p. 152.

Cooperation under the CSDP has always been based more on an expectation of unity rather than trust among the Big Three (France, Germany and the UK). The relationships between the countries were shaped in part due to their stance towards NATO and European integration. The Franco-German tandem represented a major counterweight to the 'special relationship' between the US and the UK. France and Germany were the 'hard core' acting as the main decision-making and operational centre of EU security and defence due to a strong commonality of security interests, high operational and military credibility.⁴

According to Stanley Hoffmann,⁵ the duo created an 'équilibre du déséquilibre', with French political strength compensating for German economic power. Its key bargains have defined the structure of opportunities and constraints for other EU states. In terms of security and defence, this seemed like a match made in heaven. They were the 'hard core' acting as the main decision-making and operational centre of EU security and defence due to a strong commonality of security interests, high operational and military credibility.⁶ What France wanted out of the CSDP project was very clear from the outset – an autonomous policy outside of the NATO framework, but united under a European banner.

The end of the Cold War and German reunification ended the limits on German sovereignty, partly shifting the image of Germany as a 'dependant ally of the perceiver's state' towards the 'ally' image. Despite the emphasis on the commonality of the Franco-German destiny from 1984 onwards, formerly mutual interests began to diverge.⁷ The 1992 French offer to Europeanise its nuclear forces made Germany feel pressured by French

designs to make the CFSP more flexible and compete with NATO on political territory.⁸ France was ready to allow the CSDP to become part of the EU defence structure. Full German convergence with France or the UK had not been achieved, and with President Mitterand gone, President Chirac's attempts at reasserting the French leadership position were met with concern from the German side. German suspicions were further raised by Chirac's outline for a wholesale reform of the French military in order to be more effective in multilateral out-of area missions. However, a major breakthrough came in 1996 in Nurnberg, where the new Common Franco-German Security and Defence Concept took military cooperation between the two countries to new levels.⁹ Despite steady progress, the existing gaps in the cooperation began to widen. For example, firm pressure was exerted by France to get Germany to agree to take part in the EU ARTEMIS mission in the DR Congo when the gap about thinking regarding pre-emption in issues of international defence and security between the two countries became too wide.¹⁰

The transformation of Germany from a reluctant 'ally' to a near-'neutral' state is related to the French perceptual change regarding the German national self-image post-unification. France assumed that Germany would quickly resume nationhood through pursuing its own objectives, which was ironically a notion viewed with apprehension by the Germans themselves. The layer of distrust and fear served to heighten the differences in goals between the two countries. In the end, it was the difference between *la grande nation* and a nation that had had greatness thrust upon it by its status in wider Europe.¹¹ Up until the UNSC1973 vote, France still maintained its leadership position in the duo.

Libya and the perceived 'death' of the CSDP

⁴ A. Bloch-Lainé, 'Franco-German Cooperation in Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence: A Case Study', in D. Webber, (ed.), *The Franco-German Relationship in the European Union* (London & New York, 1999), p. 149.

⁵ Quoted in P. McCarthy, *France-Germany in the Twenty-First Century* (London, 2001), p. 37.

⁶ Bloch-Lainé, 'Franco-German Cooperation', p. 149.

⁷ D.P. Calleo and E.R. Staal (eds.), *Europe's Franco-German Engine*, Vol. 6 (Washington, D.C., 1998), p. 55.

⁸ J. Schild, 'Durchbruch in der deutsch-französischen Sicherheitskooperation', *Aktuelle Frankreichanalysen*, Vol. 6, Nos 1-12 (1997), p. 5.

⁹ McCarthy, *France-Germany*, p. 115.

¹⁰ Calleo and Staal, *Europe's Franco-German Engine*, pp. 85-134.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

The Libyan intervention was portrayed as the big moment of the CSDP to contribute to the resolution of a major international crisis. The policy had previously been deemed an ineffective, not widely known project without proven relevance. Britain and France campaigned vigorously to demonstrate that the EU was prepared to act militarily in Libya under conditions approved by a European Council summit on 11 March 2011. The final declaration of the EU was a compromise that did not mention a no-fly zone, contrary to the wishes of Paris and London. Moreover, the German hesitance towards intervention became obvious, whereupon French representative François Baroin had to voice his regrets. Moreover, German hesitance towards intervention became obvious. The centre-right *L'Express* was quick to express their regret at this continuing lack of German support in its article a day after the UNSC1973 vote, pointing out a lack of enthusiasm for Germany from even prominent MEP Daniel Cohn-Bendit, leader of the European Greens.¹² The French media gained great enthusiasm for echoing the outrage of former Chancellor Joschka Fischer at the German abstention.

After this unsuccessful attempt to organise the European effort on the EU level, French President Nicolas Sarkozy became the figurehead of the pro-intervention camp in the UNSC. In effect, he put the finished decision in front of German policy makers and took a stance of 'with or without you,' which served to alienate German policy-makers who viewed it as a 'very spontaneous decision by a very impulsive president'.¹³ This time, Germany chose 'without us', which was labelled a bitter blow to the French by British newspapers.¹⁴ German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle proclaimed in Beijing that 'the Libyan situation

cannot be resolved through military means'.¹⁵

The assurance that Germany 'understood' the need for intervention, yet offered no support angered the France.¹⁶ This understanding was also dubious, particularly as Germany not only refused to participate but actively withdrew its forces from the area, thereby denying the mission even support from the side-lines. It was an active move on the German part, but a move away from participation in a major crisis. In private, Christian Democratic Union (CDU) Defence Minister Thomas de Maizière justified the withdrawal by claiming the naval blockade was ineffective as weapons and foreign mercenaries were arriving overland.¹⁷

The French, British and even the **formerly wavering Americans did not conceal their dejection.** The German refusal to allow their NATO AWACS aircrews to fulfil their mission¹⁸ had *Le Monde* condemning Germany for being back 'twenty years ago, when it had the same problems securing German support during the First Gulf War and in Bosnia.' The hope for greater solidarity was directed towards the German Socialist or 'even' the Green party, as the newspaper places the blame for having the majority of European states refuse to participate in UNSC-legitimised military operations squarely on Germany's shoulders.¹⁹ In effect, the *Le Monde* article is blaming Germany for damaging the entire NATO setup. Moreover, UNSC1973 has revealed the deep divisions regarding the future of the CSDP, on the level of the debt crisis in terms of severity.

¹⁵ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 1 April 2011, 'Libye: «la situation ne peut être résolue par des moyens militaires»', <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/les-revolutions-arabes/20110401.OBS0607/libye-la-situation-ne-peut-etre-resolue-par-des-moyens-militaires.html>.

¹⁶ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18 March, 2011, 'La position de chaque pays sur d'éventuelles frappes en Libye', <http://www.challenges.fr/monde/20110318.CHA4104/1-a-position-de-chaque-pays-sur-d-eventuelles-frappes-en-libye.html>.

¹⁷ *Le Monde*, 26 March 2011, 'La question libyenne divise la classe politique allemande', by F. Lemaître, <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=40bc3113d7a2295712f10bcf63440e4b0e1da6344670b73a>.

¹⁸ A third of the NATO arsenal according to *Le Figaro*, 'Libye: contribution indirecte de Berlin?', 18/3/2011

¹⁹ *Le Monde*, 31 August 2011, 'Une nouvelle répartition UE/Etats-Unis'.

¹² *L'Express*, 18 March, 2011, 'Le recours à la force en Libye a divisé l'ONU... et l'Europe', http://www.lexpress.fr/actualite/monde/le-recours-a-la-force-en-libye-a-divise-l-onu-et-l-europe_973722.html

¹³ *Deutsche Welle*, September 12, 2011, 'Germany's Libya policy reveals a nation in transition', by E. Bower, <http://www.dw.de/germanys-libya-policy-reveals-a-nation-in-transition/a-15367751>.

¹⁴ *Le Figaro*, 24 February 2011, 'Libye: Berlin reproche...'

The newspaper goes on to say that it is the inability of Paris and London to ‘train Germany and other countries in their own image’ that illustrates the difficulty of forming a true CSDP.²⁰

The German abstention marked a significant divergence from its previous patterns of ‘compliance with reservations’, such as its participation in the UN peacekeeping operation ARTEMIS in the DR Congo. Within the span of one decision, Germany was re-categorised from reluctant to obstructive ally in the French media’s perception. In fact, it can be said that France began actively vilifying the German decision, as most easily summarised in the quote by French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé in *Le Monde*: ‘The common security and defence policy of Europe? It is dead.’²¹ The clear implication here was that Germany was the cause for the failure of the CSDP – for refusing to participate in Libya. Furthermore, Juppé told *Europe-1* that Europe ‘had procrastinated on the decision to stop Gaddafi from winning and thus let slip by a chance’.²² This once more suggests short-sightedness on the part of those opposing intervention. Germany was the only one out of the European countries to do so. According to *Le Monde*, the Libyan crisis was on a smaller scale compared to interventions in the Balkans, the Gulf or Afghanistan, but ‘will have severe strategic consequences for NATO and the EU’.²³

Westerwelle made it clear that military participation would only be a last resort for Germany and that he continually ‘respects

France’.²⁴ Ironically, the abstention and subsequent withdrawal allowed Sarkozy to lead the military effort much more prominently and glean international recognition for himself and France. The role of French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy in Sarkozy’s decision-making is not to be underestimated.²⁵ Lévy had urged the president to intervene and afterwards became an ardent critic of the Germans. ‘We have lost a lot of time because of the Germans. This is a disaster, for the Libyans, but also the Germans, who will pay dearly for their abstention. What happened will leave traces in Europe. And Germany will have great difficulty in satisfying its legitimate ambition to have a permanent UNSC seat’.²⁶

French newspapers also stress the divisiveness in Germany over the abstention and the general unpopularity of Westerwelle and even Merkel because of this decision. Their harshest critic is Lévy once more, claiming that Merkel had thrown all the foundations of German post-war foreign policy overboard and calling for Westerwelle’s resignation while remarking that he does not seem to be ashamed of his decision.²⁷ It is difficult to determine whether Lévy speaks for himself, or for Sarkozy, as *Le Monde* admits. It stresses the division of German parties, including the ruling coalition, with the lone exception of Die Linke, who is ‘delighted to see the country turn its back on its Western allies’.²⁸ *Le Nouvel Observateur* stated that 62% of Germans believe that a military intervention was justified; however, 65% remained behind the decision of the Merkel government not to participate.²⁹ The surveys of *Le Monde* suggest that about 80% of Germans

²⁰ *Le Monde*, 20 March 2011, ‘L’Union européenne en order disperse’.

²¹ *The Guardian*, 24 March 2011, ‘France Plays Hawk, Germany Demurs. Libya has exposed Europe’s Fault Lines’, by T.G. Ash, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/mar/24/france-hawk-germany-demurs-libya-europe>.

²² *The Guardian*, 15 March 2011, ‘Europe fiddles as Libya burns’, by S. Tisdall, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/mar/15/europe-libya-intervention-eu-us>.

²³ *Le Monde*, 31 August 2011, ‘Après la Libye, il faut repenser l’OTAN’, by F. Heisbourg, <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=705047e505b04dbcefb918fb0937cb07691f0ce5447745d>.

²⁴ *Le Monde*, 30 August 2011, ‘Le ministre des affaires...’.

²⁵ *The Economist*, 20 May 2011, ‘The welcome return of French diplomacy’, http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2011/03/frances_role_libya.

²⁶ *Le Monde*, 30 March 2011, ‘La diplomatie allemande revue et corrigée par BHL’, by F. Lemaître, <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=40c7762c5ac7c699a144abbd72826ce8d1c5b5d9758efb95>.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Le Monde*, 3 April 2011, ‘Le malaise allemande’.

²⁹ *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 20 March 2011, ‘Ces pays réfractaires à l’intervention en Libye’, <http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/les-revolutions-arabes/20110320.OBS9964/ces-pays-refractaires-a-l-intervention-en-libye.html>.

are opposed to intervention.³⁰ In comparison, the centre-right daily *Le Figaro* claims 56% of Germans supported Merkel, 36% of the 1,000 respondents were against the decision.³¹ The leftist press thus focused more on the cultural difference between the French and German opinion, whereas the right-wing press argued/stated that the government had only the slightest majority of supporters for its decision. Ultimately, *Le Monde* voiced the strongest condemnation – ‘the Germans seem as clueless as their leaders’.³² The tone calmed down after Juppé’s visit to Germany on 14/04/2011, with the decision to launch a ‘political process’ at a meeting of the ‘contact group’ created to help resolve the Libyan crisis, which according to *Le Monde* provided a means of reconciling points of view.³³ Including Germany in the group was a gesture on the part of the French, which was returned by Westerwelle stating that Germany had no objections regarding an eventual European military operation to ‘secure humanitarian corridors’ with UN authorisation. On the whole, however, the answer remained: no.

In its assessment of the case six months after UNSC1973, *Le Figaro* openly calls the diplomatic politics of Germany a failure.³⁴ In contrast, the newspaper quotes the very decisive statement of Alain Juppé: ‘The EU cannot only be an NGO. It must have proper

capacity for intervention, outside of NATO’.³⁵ The divergence between long-term ideas about the role of the EU in security and defence policy is thus leaning heavily in favour of France. Germany is portrayed – not entirely inaccurately – as a state that puts more weight on economic than military power. This is supported by the Merkel government’s intention to use economic sanctions against Libya rather than military force. According to *Le Monde*, this leads to France and the UK being naturally pushed towards having sharper elbows in matters of defence and security;³⁶ *Le Figaro* praises the cooperation with London as ‘perfect’.³⁷ The cooperation with Berlin differed on the means, not the ends, according to Alain Juppé. As *Le Monde* states, the Franco-German engine had restricted itself to economic issues, leaving military issues to the second, Franco-British partnership.³⁸

The image of Germany in France has suffered considerably, despite Parisian arguments that it is not in Europe’s interest to isolate Berlin or make it pay.³⁹ The French UN representation claims this incident will not make them renounce support for the German desire to become a permanent UNSC member. However, the Quai d’Orsay snidely remarks that ‘if we consider that the membership of the Security Council should serve effectiveness, Germany is not the best candidate’.⁴⁰ If France measures effective policy by not ‘dithering about’⁴¹ and engaging a crisis that has the potential to evolve into a full-scale military conflict as soon as possible, Germany is indeed not the ideal example. German gestures such as signing a letter of commitment to European defence policy in 2010 along with Poland and

³⁰ *Le Monde*, 19 March 2011, ‘Berlin, hostile à une intervention, s’abstient à l’ONU’, by F. Lemaître, <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=e634287d144d240b9be75a5e65a1be94960617c4bf8a0994>.

³¹ *Le Figaro*, 16 March 2011, ‘Libye: Merkel soutenue dans son pays’.

³² *Le Monde*, 23 March 2011, ‘Le refus de Berlin de soutenir l’intervention est critiqué en Allemagne’, by F. Lemaître, <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=e634287d144d240b9be75a5e65a1be94960617c4bf8a0994>.

³³ *Le Monde*, 16 April 2011, ‘La relation franco-allemande à l’épreuve de la crise libyenne’, <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=40bc3113d7a2295712f10bcf63440e4b0e1da6344670b73a>.

³⁴ *Le Figaro*, 23 August 2011, ‘Angela Merkel critiquée pour sa diplomatie timide’, D. Philippot, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2011/08/23/01003-20110823ARTFIG00641-angela-merkel-critiquee-pour-sa-diplomatie-timide.php>

³⁵ *Le Figaro*, 21 March 2011, ‘Franche explication entre la France et l’Allemagne’, by J.-J. Mevel, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2011/03/21/01003-20110321ARTFIG00807-franche-explication-entre-la-france-et-l-allemande.php>.

³⁶ *Le Monde*, 12 February 2011, ‘La coopération militaire franco-britannique progresse à petits pas’, E. Pflimlin, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2011/12/02/la-cooperation-militaire-franco-britannique-progresse-a-petits-pas_1611088_3214.html

³⁷ *Le Figaro*, ‘Franche explication...’.

³⁸ *Le Monde*, 3 April 2011, ‘Le malaise allemande’.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ *Le Monde*, ‘La question libyenne...’.

France seem empty in conjunction with the abstention.⁴² In the view of *Le Monde*, Libya represents a *coup de grâce* to the CSDP. 'We are faced with the reality of today's Germans, who have returned to an organic egoism: preoccupied – like France! – with their national interests. And there is no more Joschka Fisher to counterbalance them,' concludes socialist former Minister of Foreign Affairs Hubert Védrine.⁴³

Breaking the bonds

In order to analyse the change of the German image, as seen in the French press during the sample timeframe, we will now split the image of Germany into Kelman's three components of an image, as outlined in our previous theoretical study – cognitive/inherent characteristics (strength-weakness axis placement), affective/approval characteristics (friendship-hostility, threat-enemy), and the action component (a set of responses to the object that the person deems appropriate in light of its perceived attributes).⁴⁴ We can clearly see that France views Germany as increasingly on the weak side of the strong-weak spectrum due to its refusal to participate in military intervention. This cognitive component of the new image of Germany does not necessarily mean that France believes the Bundeswehr, if fully utilized in combat operations, would be a weak actor. Rather, the German mentality of 'never again' is perceived as weak in comparison to the supposedly universal 'responsibility to protect.'

Its prevalence over R2P in German foreign policy has led to the creation of the French perception that Germany is embracing an 'un-European', 'Sonderweg-ish' attitude that has no place in a 'Europe of Defence.' This has naturally led to the affective component being influenced, as the French liking for German foreign policy and perceived negative attitude towards the CSDP dropped sharply. As a result/subsequently, it is logical that the action component of the image has turned into an amalgam of disappointment, outrage, and disdain. Furthermore, the open vilification of

the German response to the crisis can be read as an attempt to gain legitimacy for the Franco-British pro-interventionist policy, which was not shared by other EU-27 countries, doubtless partly due to the German abstention.

This response to the newly-created perception of Germany served a double-purpose; championing further development for European intervention in military crises in its immediate neighbourhood and distancing France from the passive German reaction in order to gain international support. Ultimately, both sides have emerged from the crisis with new and unflattering perceptions of the other, which may lead to the hardening of images of one another. As shown here, the French image of Germany has undergone a more sudden shift than that after the 1980s and German reunification (from dependent of the perceiver's state to ally). The transformation of Germany from ally to neutral state in French eyes will serve to further tarnish CSDP unity, not to mention international credibility. However, the transformation allowed France to identify itself as the active, pro-CSDP EU member state, in comparison to the passive, meandering Germany.

Analysis of the shock factor

UNSC1973 has led to a significant change in foreign perceptions of Germany, particularly due to past misperceptions. It is still too early to determine whether this issue was highly situation-bound or whether it is a symptom of a disagreement that will continue to produce friction even if the initial dispute is settled. However, it can be argued that the decision to press Germany into accepting the no-fly zone was based on an inaccurate perception of how Germany would react. France succumbed to epistemological (overlooking the German historical experience in favour of viewing the current situation as one where support cannot be denied – heuristics misuse) and subconscious (overlooking significant but unobservable actors that may be inherent in past events) errors when creating their perception of how Germany would react to the UNSC1973. They underestimated not only the strength of the domestic-policy dimension of German decision-making, but also the normative and commitment dimension of

⁴² *Le Monde*, 'Le malaise allemand'.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ Kelman, *International Behaviour*, pp. 72-73.

German politics (never again war). This failure created relevance and evaluation gaps in their judgment, which led to the image of Germany France had held previously changing to accommodate the new information based on the German abstention from the vote.

On the other hand, the escalating crisis in Libya might have simply resulted in information overload among the other states, which is a natural occurrence when the volume of accumulated information grows rapidly in such an unanticipated crisis. The information-gathering phase of the perception creation was already heavily biased and the evaluation phase was rushed and seemed straightforward. In order for information to be effectively processed, it must be integrated both horizontally (fused into a coherent and comprehensive picture) and vertically (fusing all the decision-relevant information into the decision process). The multiplicity of actors involved in decision-making leads to a large number of stimuli flowing into the information processing systems of the participating actors, creating difficulties in allocating attention and absorbing and systematically decoding information. This reinforces the idea of relevance and evaluation gaps in the French and British judgement.

Interestingly, in the case of the UNSC1973 abstention, it is not only the partner countries, but Germany itself that might need to adapt, given the discrepancy between the governing coalition's ambition to hold onto its power, public opinion and that of the German diplomacy. Germany has realised the need for an adjustment if it wants to be taken seriously as a partner in international politics, as evidenced by its readiness to support the international community in Mali. This suggests that the adjustment process has already been triggered by the Libya case. The specific adjustments to be implemented have not been chosen, but with the recent emergence of ISIS and the need for an international response to the crisis, they might be implemented in the coming five years. However, we can clearly see that the national and international response to UNSC1973 was the starting point of the change. It is highly doubtful that the reaction will be one of non-adaptation, but whether the

end result will be maladaptation or positive adaptation still remains to be seen. However, it is certain that Germany – and, for that matter, any actor in the international system – cannot attempt to escape from the existing environment into one where the required characteristics and behaviour patterns are compatible with its ostensive preferences.

Conclusion

The Franco-German 'hard core' of European security and defence have been hardest hit after UNSC1973. Neither the beliefs nor the values of the two states seem to coincide anymore when it comes to the CSDP; certainly not when it comes to troop deployment in international crises. The trio of attributes - a strong commonality of security interests, high operational, and military credibility – that made them the decision-making and operational centre of the CSDP - is mostly gone. Germany does not support the French idea of a 'Europe of Defence', an attitude which led to an increasingly reluctant partnership at first and ultimately the 'death' of the CSDP. It was particularly the failure to let the CSDP shine during the intervention in Libya that led the French to view Germany with increasing dismay and scorn after UNSC1973. This attitude was wide-spread across the full spectrum of French news media. The credibility of a future European security and defence policy was not tarnished, but the credibility of Germany being part of it sank more in a few months than it had in the previous decade. In contrast, the popularity of the Franco-British partnership grew considerably.

The shock and resulting perception adjustment was visible, as the image of Germany rapidly transformed from dependent ally to neutral state. Judged through the heuristic lens of the new images, German motivation, capability, and decision-making no longer matches those of the UK and France. In terms of security and defence, it has become 'the degenerate', a country in which the perceiver sees no opportunity for cooperation or mutual benefits, which will be damaging to future Franco-German relations. Overall, the image of Germany among the studied countries

worsened after Libya, as have the chances for the CSDP superseding NATO as the primary tool for European security and defence. The German abstention from UNSC1973 has thus had a profound impact on inter-European security and defence relations, the CSDP, NATO, the German potential to ascend to permanent membership of the UNSC, and, not least of all, the image of Germany in international relations.
