

‘Time for GERMANY to lead Europe!’ Merkel urged to boost German military as USA ‘is weak’

GERMANY should abandon its military reluctance and lead Europe, Angela Merkel has been told by a leading historian.

In an article for Der Spiegel that would have been unthinkable a few short years ago - with Germany’s reluctance to be a military power stems from its defeat in two world wars and the lingering legacy of the Nazi Holocaust - Polish-American historian Anne Applebaum said it was time for the nation to act.

Miss Applebaum said: “Germany enjoys high regard around the world. But with American power weakening and authoritarian powers rising, the country needs to abandon its military reluctance and finally lead in Europe.”

She added: “Germany’s claim to be an integrated member of the Western alliance has never been stronger. Some even speak of Germany as the West’s new leader.

“As Donald Trump’s America turns inward, possibly abandoning its free trade agenda and its longstanding commitment to democracy, Germany seems like a possible replacement.”

She cites a poll from 2013 showing Germany as the most admired nation in the world and Mrs Merkel as one of the most trusted public figures in Europe.

She said: “Germany’s public commitment to environmentalism, multilateralism and human rights give Germany moral standing; Germany’s industrial strength and export clout have given Germany economic power as well.

“But in a world where American power is weakening and authoritarian powers are rising, how long can this last?

Trump may be an aberration, but he does reflect a very real American exhaustion, and real American doubt about the worth of the trans-Atlantic alliance.

Germans should have a plan to deal with threats in America’s absence. Right now,

you don't.

“At the very least Germany, by itself, lacks the military power and therefore the foreign policy clout to keep Europe safe from future Russian aggression; to help bring peace — and thus an end to the refugee crisis — to the Middle East; to do anything about the reconstruction of Libya except talk about it.

“Germans once confronted the problem of unification, and they spent time and resources on solving it. But when it comes to problems in the wider region, Germany has been absent.”

Miss Applebaum said President Trump has been rightly criticised for his verbal attacks on NATO and German politicians have also helped undermine the West's defences.

She said: “In 2013, Russian jets simulated an attack on Stockholm; in 2016, Russia transferred nuclear-capable missiles to Kaliningrad, in range of Germany. Yet when NATO announced a series of military exercises in Europe in that same year — designed to deter Russian intervention — Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier denounced them as ‘warmongering’.

“Today's authoritarian powers, whether in Islamic State or the Kremlin, are more sophisticated than the Soviet state that once occupied the eastern half of Germany and that built the Berlin Wall.

“They seek to recruit supporters or impact politics through social media. Wealthy foreigners, Russians as well as others, seek to shape German policy and opinion through money and corruption.

“If Germany does not want a powerful army, it should still, as a matter of urgency, work with the institutions it has built, most notably the European Union, and especially with France and even Britain (this might be a way to give Britain a future European role) to create a multinational European force that can be deployed in defence of Europe's borders, and in Europe's name, at any time.

It could be part of NATO, and should work with NATO. But the era of total dependence on the U.S. military is over.

“As in 1989, if you want to keep what you have achieved, Germany will have to change.”

Source: <http://www.express.co.uk/news/world/845263/angela-merkle-germany-military-power-lead-in-europe>

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