A political economy intervention in the debate on the "turn of the times" and diagnosis of the time in concrete confrontation with the FGI[i]

(Preliminary remark:

This paper is based on a 50-page study that is historical and theoretical. But this text focuses on an overview, the time period from 2015 and a few conclusions. The overall study will be published in German. Those interested in the study and the issue can contact the author: judith.dellheim.fellow@rosalux.org)

Introduction

The debates on the "turn of time" (*Zeitenwende*) and diagnosis of the times (*Zeitdiagnose*) additionally challenge the actors of left or socialist politics to critically reflect on and qualify the analysis of their political conditions and possibilities for action. Rosa Luxemburg provides a decisive orientation for this: "The first condition of a successful struggle policy is an understanding of the movements of the opponent. But what gives us the key to understanding bourgeois politics down to its smallest ramifications, down to the intricacies of daily politics, an understanding that protects us equally from surprises and illusions? Nothing other than the realisation that all forms of social consciousness, thus also bourgeois politics, must be explained in their inner discord from class and group interests, from the contradictions of material life and in the last instance 'from the existing conflict between social productive forces and relations of production'." (Luxemburg 1903: 372-373). This means political-economic analysis and once again directs attention to the leading associations of entrepreneurs in German economy and to their relationship to the government resp. the actors in the state. However, close to the announcement of the "turn of the times" and in the context declared with it, the government took concrete budgetary, financial, energy, industrial, economic and social policy measures. So, a second debate was revived: about the continuation or the end of neoliberal government policy, "of neoliberalism". Its (intermediate) results determine the abandonment, maintenance and continuation of the own existing political positions, demands and strategies. For the "neoliberal turn" in the old Federal Republic and for the neoliberal development in today's Germany, the leading associations of entrepreneurs, the relations between them and the government or "the state" were and are of high importance.

These umbrella organisations of entrepreneurs are: The Federal Association of German Industries r.a.[1] FGI (*Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V. BDI)*, the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (*Bundesverband der Deutschen Arbeitgeber BDA*), the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (*Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag DIHT*)and the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (*Zentralverband des Deutschen Handwerks ZDH*). Although they share the motto "March separately, strike together", they each have a very different profile and organisational principle. Their representatives have met annually since 1965 at the International Crafts Fair in Munich for

[1] r.a.: registerd association

top-level talks and operate a joint website[2] . They also meet annually with the Federal Chancellor and demonstrate common ground on fundamental political issues, since spring 2022 also and in particular on "Ukraine aid"[3] . The associations have formed working groups to coordinate their positions and activities on federal policy issues. They have concrete contacts and cooperation partners in the responsible federal ministries. But the ministries also initiate their own policy coordination, to which they invite the associations. In addition, the associations participate in advisory boards and commissions of the federal ministries or government (Raithel 1984: a. o. 333-338). The associations participate in EU-wide, international bilateral and multilateral associations and committees on economic policy, which further underlines the importance of consultations with the ministries.

The fact that this text focuses on the FGI has at least three interrelated reasons: If Luxembourg's orientation is followed, the FGI in particular must be dealt with comprehensively as the umbrella organisation of German industrialists and industry-related service providers, which according to its statutes serves "the general interest of the industrial economy"[4] (1). Its share in the formation and development of neoliberal policies and their social consequences is serious (2). For the strengthening and modernisation of the Federal Army (*Bundeswehr*), for the strengthening of the military in foreign and security policy, services of the defence and security industry DSI and its partners are needed. The decisive actors of the DSI and its associated industrial sectors are members of the FGI (3). The political economy approach to the analysis of the conditions of struggle called for by Luxemburg requires to proceed historically. The history of the FGI must be given high attention in order to be able to recognise political economic connections.

The FGI currently has 35 member associations, including a working group of six associations (individual companies cannot be members), which share membership. It therefore speaks for a total of 40 industry associations (see Appendix 1) and more than 100,000 companies employing approximately 8 million workers. The FGI industry associations include the Federal Association of the German Security and Defence Industry r.a. AGSDI (*Bundesverband der Deutschen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungsindustrie e. V. BDSVI*[5]), which is of particular interest here. Its members are connected in many ways with other economic enterprises, both through direct production and through double use goods. These other business enterprises often belong to the FGI member associations of the information industry, telecommunications and new media (*Bundesverband Informationswirtschaft, Telekommunikation und neue Medien e. V. BITKOM*), the German Aerospace Industries Association r.a. (*Bundesverband der Deutschen Luft- und Raumfahrtindustrie e. V. BDLI*) the German air transport industry (*Bundesverband der Deutschen Luftverkehrswirtschaft e. V. (BDL*), the German Metals Association (*Wirtschaftsvereinigung Metalle WVM*) and the

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[2] https://www.spitzengespraech.de/home/
[3] https://www.wirtschafthilft.info/
[4] https://FGI.eu/der-FGI/organisation/satzung
[5] https://www.bdsv.eu/home.html

mobility and transport service providers (*Arbeitgeber- und Wirtschaftsverband der Mobilitäts- und Verkehrsdienstleister e. V. Agv MoVe*). There are also joint statements by the FGI and AGSDI and the AGSDI with other industry associations. All associations are also registered associations r.a. (*eingetragener Verein*). 15 FGI state representations ensure that the "interests of the industry" are also represented at regional level. In addition to its headquarters in the House of German Economy (*Haus der Deutschen Wirtschaft*) in Berlin, the FGI has other offices[6] . The association is financed by fees and supported by the Promotion Group of German Industry (*Förderkreis der Deutschen Industrie*)[7], which consists of about 80 companies. The Promotion Group is represented on the Presidium of the FGI[8] .The FGI has an international presence with offices in Brussels, Washington and Beijing. The eight current top managers from Germany who belong to the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT) with a total of 57 members exclusively represent companies that are organised in the FGI member associations. ERT members include a senior FGI official until 2020 and a current FGI top representative[9]. Just as in Germany the FGI is officially to be heard in all legislative processes relevant to the economy, the European Commission and the ERT maintain close cooperation. The ERT also takes the initiative for legislative processes more or less "behind the scenes". The Federation of German Industries (FGI), which also influences legislation to some extent, deals with topics of economic policy importance in a total of 18 committees: Foreign Trade; Digital Economy, Telecommunications and Media; Energy and Climate Policy; Money, Credit and Currency; Health Industry; Public Procurement; Law; Industrial Property; Raw Materials Policy; Security; Taxes, Environment, Technology and Sustainability; Consumer Policy; Transport; Competition Regulation; Education and SMEs[10] . The association has its own research capacities and broad commercial and non-commercial cooperative relationships[11] . Its member associations, which are formally coordinated via the FGI Presidium and the committees rely on the executive office, are in exchange with all governmental, parliamentary and political actors relevant to them.

This text focuses on the FGI as a relevant actor of neoliberal policy and for the tendency to strengthen the military in the economy and society, for the genesis and realisation of the "turn of times". In economic and socio-political terms the influence of the FGI as well as the weight of "neoliberalism" have tended to grow, for which the political government projects "Concerted Action" (1967-1977/8), "Alliance for Jobs, Training and Competitiveness" (1998-2003) and "Alliance for the Future of Industry" (2015 up to now) and finally "Agenda 2010" were or are relevant. But in this paper, only the "Alliance for the Future of Industry" will be discussed. The very short historical reflection shows that with this alliance (like both of its

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[6] Federation of German Industries - Wikipedia
[7] https://www.industrie-foerderkreis.de/de
[8] https://lobbypedia.de/wiki/Bundesverband_der_deutschen_Industrie , see further FGI entries at https://www.lobbyregister.bundestag.de/suche?q=Bundesverband+of+the+German+Industry&searchReferer=%2Fstartpage&filter%5Bactivelobbyist%5D%5Btrue%5D=true
[9] https://ert.eu/members/
[10] https://FGI.eu/der-FGI/organisation/ausschuesse
[11] Official: https://FGI.eu/der-FGI/netzwerk

predecessors) the weight of the DSI in the social economic life and the political influence of the FGI in the prevailing politics has grown and continues to grow at present. Last but not least, it also becomes clear that the decision on the special fund for the strengthening of the Federal Army is not a reaction to the brutal Russian war against Ukraine (Solty 2022: 5-8, 10). The text leads to four conclusions that tie in with Luxemburg's thoughts on "successful struggle politics" and aim at a new alliance of emancipative-solidarity forces. Such an alliance would be the prerequisite for a "turn of the times" towards just solutions in solidarity for social and global problems, for the democratic averting of ecological collapse.

1. End of neoliberalism in government policy?

"Only the form in which ... surplus labour is squeezed out of the immediate producer, the worker, distinguishes the economic social formations, e.g. the society of slavery from that of wage labour". (Marx [1867, 1890]: 231). However, there are developments within economic formations that change the way modernising exploiters exploit dynamically changing labour. Starting points for this are technical-technological innovations, changes in the organisation of work, protests by the exploited, shocks to social life through wars, crises and cultural struggles. It is typical of neoliberal forced exploitation that the money and credit required for primary exploitation is mobilised via financial markets and that secondary exploitation is also carried out via these financial markets. The term "primary exploitation" stands for the appropriation of labour services rendered by the labour force by the owners of the means of production (who in turn commission others to do so). "Secondary exploitation" means that via circulation, labour income, wealth and property are once again redistributed in favour of the economically stronger, especially via monopoly prices, interest and patents. Part of the privately appropriated income from secondary exploitation goes directly into the mobilisation and realisation of new surplus labour in social production. A part of the profits from primary exploitation is used for the realisation of further secondary exploitation. For the generalisation and optimisation - in the sense of profit maximisation - of the interplay of primary and secondary exploitation, the following interrelated conditions are decisive: a) owners/entrepreneurs in the sphere of production and finance, or capital utilisation communities, who are capable of and interested in this. b) microelectronically supported information and communication technologies, c) expanded markets through increased productivity, liberalisation, commercialisation, privatisation of the public sector, also and especially of social security systems, through free trade and investment protection agreements, often in combination with financial bonds, d) relatively independent financial markets, e) intellectual property rights, reduction of collective social and democratic rights or increase in the social duties of individuals, weak or weakened trade unions.
In Germany, the FGI, with its interrelationships with state actors in key positions, with governments, their supporting parties and partners, is essentially responsible for the realisation of these conditions. In recent years, and especially since 24 February 2022, no structural breaks in the conditions for neoliberal policies and development can be identified - despite some concrete measures on banking regulation, against tax evasion and money

laundering, on limiting and preventing concrete social hardship, on corporate due diligence at state and EU level, on selectively strengthening ecological standards and individual rights. Reference must be made to

- The financial markets, which have become even more dynamic, complex and significant, especially in the last 25-30 years;
  Despite global financial crises, by the end of 2022 there was less trade and capital regulation and more global financial transactions and payment systems than before.

- In 2022, the market capitalisation of the world's most powerful companies increased by 11% to $35.16 trillion. They largely managed to return to pre-19 March 2020 levels in 2022 (Covid 19-Lock downs).
  Over the past 10 years, corporations in the US defence industry have generated returns that have significantly exceeded the returns of the S&P 500[12] (Appendix 3).

- There is no structural break with
  - Austerity in the sense of restrictions of a budgetary policy in favour of public reproductive expenditure
  - a distribution policy to the disadvantage of the big profiteers, the rich and the wealthy
  - the economic policy privileging of private providers of human and infrastructure services
  - the commercialisation and privatisation of public services
  - the mobilisation of private liquid financial resources for profitable business models with public sector actors (PPP or PPP constructions).

- In summer 2022, the European Union and India resumed negotiations on a free trade agreement. They are also negotiating an investment protection agreement and an agreement on the protection of geographical indications. From 2018 to April 2023, 15 rounds of negotiations took place between the EU and Australia. Negotiations are also underway with Indonesia, Mercosur countries, Thailand; most EU member states have ratified the EU-Canada Free Trade Agreement[13] .
- In particular, it must be pointed out that since the outbreak of the covid 19 pandemic, social[14] and global[15] inequality has contradictory grown again, and patent and vaccine

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[12] https://www.handelszeitung.ch/musterportfolios/borsennews/russland-sorgt-fur-rekorde-bei-rustungsfirmen-363507
[13] https://www.gtai.de/de/trade/eu/zoll/die-wichtigsten-eu-freihandelsabkommen-im-ueberblick--541366
[14] https://www.bib.bund.de/DE/Aktuelles/2021/2021-03-11-Pressekonferenz-Datenreport-2021-Mehr-soziale-Ungleichheit-in-Corona-Zeiten.html
[15] https://www.welthungerhilfe.de/welternaehrung/rubriken/klima-ressourcen/verschaerft-covid-19-die-globale-ungleichheit

policies have been and are being pursued to the detriment of the globally poorest[16] . The social and global problems have grown with the food[17] and energy crises[18] and the displacement of people in and from Ukraine.

But neoliberal policies do not necessarily mean further globalisation. Relatively new are two contradictorily connected facts that work against globalisation: 1) The unboundedness of operational processes has lost relevant speed (Appendix 4). Especially for reasons of logistics and insecurity of locations, it turned out to be appropriate to shorten transport distances and redesign operational processes, to move concrete production back again. The Covid-19 pandemic promoted such measures and strategies[19] . Not only, but especially since the recent escalation of the confrontation between "the West" on the one hand and Russia and China on the other, neoliberal policies are increasingly linked to geopolitics or subordinated to global strategies. life shaped by them.

These demands and the alliances linked to them are possible starting points for an alliance for a "turn of the times" towards just and solidary solutions of social and global problems towards socially and ecologically sustainable development.

2. **The "Alliance for the Future of Industry**

On 25 November 2014, Federal Minister of Economics Sigmar Gabriel, FGI President Ulrich Grillo and the First Chairman of IG Metall, Detlef Wetzel, agreed on the Alliance for the "Future of Industry". On 3 March 2015, the representatives of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, nine industrial and employers' associations and five trade unions met "to systematically and cooperatively address the comprehensive challenges for the competitiveness and future of industry and industrial jobs in Germany in close cooperation and to find solutions. At the same time, politics, industry and trade unions want to jointly clarify for the public the importance of industrial value creation for prosperity and employment and the prerequisites for maintaining innovation and competitiveness."[20]. At the beginning of July 2015, the Federal Government published its "Strategy Paper to Strengthen the Defence Industry". It explained this with its obligations within the framework of NATO and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), especially in view of growing international tensions, also and in particular because of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. The government decided on 10 underpinning points:

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[16] https://www.savethechildren.de/news/eine-ungerechte-verteilung-von-impfstoffen-gegen-covid-19-verschaerft-globale-ungleichheiten/

[17] https://www.wfp.org/stories/war-ukraine-how-humanitarian-tragedy-fed-global-hunger-crisis#:~:text=The%20war%20in%20Ukraine%20has%20also%20intensified%20a%20broader%20food,communities%20in%20Africa%20and%20elsewhere.

[18] https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-022-00969-9 ; https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/impact-of-russia-s-invasion-of-ukraine-on-the-markets-eu-response/

[19] https://health.ec.europa.eu/medicinal-products/pharmaceutical-strategy-europe_en

[20] https://FGI.eu/themenfelder/wirtschaft-und-gesellschaft/buendnis-zukunft-der-industrie#/artikel/news/gemeinsam-fuer-die-internationale-wettbewerbsfaehigkeit-der-deutschen-industrie

1) Strengthening the European framework for the defence industry,
2) Increased international cooperation and integration in the field of military capabilities
3) Consolidation of the German and European defence industry
4) Determination of national defence industrial key technologies
5) Improving arms management and transparency in procurements of the Federal Ministry of Defence
6) Expansion of research, development and innovation funding
7) Export policy flanking the defence industry
8) Exploit opportunities for diversification
9) Stronger support for small and medium-sized enterprises
10) . Social dialogue on the importance of a national defence industry (Federal Government 2015: 2-7).

The strategy paper states that the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology had initiated a "comprehensive exchange of views with the defence industry, works councils and IG Metall" (ibid., 7).

The Chief Executive of the AGSDI welcomed the announcements of the Ministry of Defence to continue the talks and of the Federal Government to conduct the dialogue on "the industrial policy consequences of a changing foreign and security policy situation" (AGSDI 2015). Referring to the decisions of the European Council of June 2015 to strengthen the basis for DSI in the EU, he demanded initiatives from the Federal Government for talks and for budgetary consequences (ibid.). As an "Alliance for the Future of Industry" in the understanding of the FGI should apparently also and in particular be an "Alliance for the Future of DSI", it published its brochure "For a Modern Security Policy: Recommendations for Action by German Industry" 2017 (FGI 2017). In it, he referred to the "2016 White Paper on Security Policy and the Future of the Federal Army" (Federal Government 2016) in order to influence and force its debate. This was to lead to a National Security Strategy. Introducing the White Paper, the at that timw Chancellor Merkel declared: "Germany's economic and political weight obliges us to assume responsibility for Europe's security in association with our European and transatlantic partners ..." (Federal Government 2016: 6). For the "best possible equipment to fulfil the mission" of the Federal Army, five problem areas were put up for discussion: "Modern arms management", "Europeanisation while preserving key national technologies", "Multinational arms cooperation with a new approach", "Innovation as the key to securing the future" and "Transparency as a strategic principle" (ibid., 126-132). Directly following this, the FGI's contribution to the debate began: "Despite its economic and political weight, Germany still has difficulties in defining its international role. For a comprehensive and strategic security policy, it is time for Germany to recognise and fulfil its importance in the international structure. It is precisely its economic and political weight that obliges Germany, together with partners, to assume more responsibility for the security and stability of Europe." (FGI 2017: 2). Concrete recommendations for action were formulated in order to comply with this. They again focus on state and societal support for DSI, on arms exports and arms cooperation, on the development and generalisation of high technologies, permeability between the military and the civilian or their networking, and overall on strengthening the military in research, in the economy, in society, both in Germany and in the European Union. The FGI document goes beyond the strategy paper of the German government in 2015 and the White Paper in 2016 in terms of targeting and concreteness. It is an expression of the position of economic and social power of the largest owners or top managers of the DSI companies, which is desired by the politically leading actors. The military has gained such organic weight in the economic sphere and in the life of society that its economic representatives articulate socio-political, "security", domestic, foreign and economic policy demands as a matter of course. On the one hand, the document is an expression of neoliberal thinking and neoliberal politics: it is to be deregulated in favour of arms exports and military research. On the other hand, it calls for state industrial policy action to increase the Federal Republic's contribution to arms cooperation and the CFSP. It forms the basis for further positions and actions of the FGI and its member associations, especially the AGSDI. It has a relevant influence on later government documents and government action. The AGSDI pronouncements feature the triad: Germany as a technology and industrial location, defence cooperation in the EU and strong transatlantic cooperation. One wants to compete successfully and one wants to cooperate if this is conducive to competitiveness and government defence contracts. SMEs are integrated into economic processes. All in all, it is about dealing with contradictions in such a way that profit maximisation is ensured in the short, medium and long term, that militarisation is continuous. The AGSDI sees itself as a representative of German industrial interests in NATO and especially in its Industrial Advisory Group (NIAG). This group promotes the integration of DSI exporters into transnational armament cooperation. The NIAG works for the Conference of Armaments Directors (CNAD) and communicates with the Main Armaments Groups as well as NATO command authorities and agencies. This involves current and future technological trends and their consequences for the procurement of military equipment, the development of system requirements and networking between NATO representatives and industry players in NATO member countries (see also AGSDI 2018). The required knowledge, the comprehensive integration into NATO structures and the other conditions to be successful in the globalised competition explain why the AGSDI or the FGI use all possibilities to formulate their positions and demands before expected cabinet papers and government proposals and publish statements immediately after the documents become known, which reflect to what extent one was able to assert oneself or whether one was more or less directly involved in the preparation of the government papers. This also applies to the "Future Market Space" (FGI 2019). Because management consultants assume that the global space market will increase tenfold by 2040 (ibid.: 5), the FGI wants to secure the largest possible share for its member associations. To do this, it is urging the state to take on concrete functions and services. "Space systems for communication, navigation and Earth observation, as well as independent European access to space, make a decisive contribution to Germany's ability to make decisions and act in foreign and security policy and to guaranteeing security provision for the entire country.

Military operations are no longer conceivable without space systems. The dependence on space-based systems and services will continue to increase with the advancing digitalisation of the armed forces. Unhindered access and the trouble-free availability of space-based systems and services are highly relevant in this context." (ibid.: 9) While the German government was searching to meet such considerations and demands of the AGSDI and FGI in its strategy paper on strengthening the security and defence industry of 12.2.2020, the US think tank RAND published the remarkable study "Extending Russia. Competing from Advantageous Ground (Dobbins, Cohen et.al 2019). Here it discusses steps or measures "to make Russia compete in areas or regions where the United States has a competitive advantage ... to overextend itself militarily or economically, or to deprive the regime of domestic and/or international prestige and influence (ibid. Iii). The "Strategy Paper of the Federal Government for Strengthening the Security and Defence Industry" (Federal Government 2020) published afterwards should also be read in this context. As it clearly follows the FGI documents on modern security policy, it received high praise from the AGSDI (AGSDI 2020a). From the perspective of the "Alliance for the Future of Industry", the five dialogue formats of the Federal Government with "industry and social actors" to implement its strategy paper were of high importance. The development of the arms and security industry is to become a joint affair of the government, economic actors, entrepreneurs and workers such as their trade unions and democratic civil society. This is seen by those in power as a condition for growing defence spending, increasing arms exports and greater military deployments. This is what that part of "academia" is committed to, which, like Lübkemeier, wants a sovereign EU as a military European and global actor alongside the USA (Lübkemeier 2020). A few months later, the AGSDI, together with its umbrella organisation FGI and its member association AGSDI (German Aerospace Industries Association), formulated DSI industry essentials for the 2021 federal election (FGI, AGSDI, AGSDI 2021). They continue the previous concepts and demands for improved production and export conditions in order to become more competitive in the EU based on the EU internal market and defence cooperation. "The German DSI welcomes the approaches for European armament cooperation at eye level ("level playing field") on the basis of the EU programmes (PESCO, EDIDP and EDF). It expects a clear strategy from the German government with a guideline on how Germany intends to participate in European armament cooperation projects both bilaterally (see German-French projects FCAS, MGCS, Eurodrone) and within the framework of the above-mentioned programmes together with other European nations. In our view, this engagement in European armament cooperation projects should be understood as a strengthening of the European pillar within NATO, contribute to the strengthening of transatlantic relations and at the same time serve to fulfil the commitments made to NATO by the German side ('NATO quota'). The European view should also be applied to arms exports ... A reliable line in export policy is an essential prerequisite for Germany to be valued as a reliable partner in the European context." (ibid.: 2-3) The associations again call for growing budgetary expenditures for research and development in DSI, more state investments and subsidies to strengthen security and defence, protection of confidence, planning security. Furthermore, they demand the integration of the security and defence industry into the National Sustainability Strategy, because security is the "basis of all sustainability" (ibid.: 4) and thus also for Germany as a "business location with a future"[21] . A few days before the start of Russia's large-scale attack on Ukraine, the FGI affirmed on the occasion of the Munich Security Conference 2022: "The expansion of the common capacity to act and the strengthening of resilience to risks must be given priority in the coming years. This requires technological capabilities – military and civilian. They form the necessary basis for reducing dependencies and building global power.

Germany ... is rightly expected to play a clear leadership role here ... In view of the increasing importance of the strategic dimension of space, the focus should be on 'Responsive Space'... in particular. German know-how and capabilities can and should be brought to bear in many ways in order to strengthen Europe and thus ourselves and our closest partners."[22]

In February 2022, the European Commission presented several initiatives to strengthen defence and security in the EU in its Contribution to European Defence (Defence Package II)[23]. The Commission paper was based on the first EU Complex Threat Assessment ("Strategic Compass") of November 2020. (It was updated after the Russian attack.) The European Commission concluded: "A quantum leap in European defence is an integral and indispensable part of securing the Union and its citizens in the years and decades to come." (ibid., 1). It identifies several "success criteria": increasing investment in defence research and common capabilities, fostering synergies between civilian and military research and innovation, and reducing strategic dependencies; stimulating joint procurement of jointly developed defence capabilities; taking action for more streamlined and convergent export control practices, in particular for jointly developed defence capabilities; strengthening the security and defence dimension of space at EU level; strengthening the EU's resilience, including by enhancing cybersecurity and defence against cyber and other hybrid threats; improving military mobility; and addressing the challenges of climate change for defence (ibid., 3). The European Council of March 2022 followed the Commission and focused on the "success criteria" and thus on decisive measures to strengthen and develop the defence industry, including active SMEs here[24] .

Between the two events was the large-scale Russian attack on Ukraine. "The world afterwards is no longer the same as the world before[25] ", the Chancellor declared in a special session of the Bundestag called at short notice and announced a 100-billion-euro special fund for the Federal Army (see in detail Solty 2022). "The goal is a powerful, ultra-modern, advanced Federal Army that reliably protects us." (footnote 24, 15) And again three days later, the First Chairman of metal workers' union (*IG Metall)* Jörg Hofmann and FGI President

[21] https://FGI.eu/spezial/wir-machen/zukunftsort-deutschland
[22] https://FGI.eu/artikel/news/was-ist-uns-unsere-sicherheit-wert-msc-muenchner-sicherheitskonferenz
[23] https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/com_2022_60_1_en_act_contribution_european_defence.pdf
[24] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54773/20220311-versailles-declaration-en.pdf
[25] https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/992814/2131062/78d39dda6647d7f835bbe76713d30c31/bundeskanzler-olaf-scholz-reden-zur-zeitenwende-download-bpa-data.pdf , 7.

Siegfried Russwurm: "who are also co-founders of the alliance 'Future of Industry'" announced that they "strongly [support] the sanctions measures against Russia imposed by the German government, the European Union and the Western allies. These sanctions can also lead to disadvantages for Germany, its companies and employees, which we must cushion as much as possible together with politicians. We are convinced that sustainable economic success can only be achieved on the basis of peace, freedom and democracy, and we are ready to make our contribution to this." (FGI, IGM 2022). What all this means and that "as far as possible" is a matter of interpretation, the answer to which will be contested, was concealed by Hofman.

On 28 April 2022, the Bundestag decided by a large majority to supply heavy weapons to Ukraine. In reaction to the drastically increased costs for electricity and gas and the development of inflation, the parliament decided on 21 October with the majority of the coalition factions on a "defensive umbrella" as a credit-financed aid programme in the amount of 200 billion euros. This includes the so-called gas price brake, which is to enable basic supply at reduced prices for households, small and medium-sized enterprises. Previously, the FGI had called for aid for SMEs and family businesses in particular[26] . Those of them who live from the arms business often complained that the upswing in the DSI was passing them by[27] .
In mid-December 2022, in the last session week of the year, the Bundestag passed the "electricity price brake", which was not least demanded by the FGI.
The Chancellor's term "turn of the times", which therefore in no way stands for a turning away from neoliberal policies, was and is repeatedly taken up by the FGI to lend emphasis to its demands. In October 2022 it declared: "The political turn of the times is also a turn of the times for the supply of mineral raw materials" (FGI 2022a) and formulated concrete demands. It must be emphasised that with reference to geopolitical escalations, in the creation and development of which the FGI and its members have played their part, demands are now being made once again that were or are not permissible or tolerated so far according to the legal basis and the public's awareness of the problem (domestic mining, fracking). On the one hand, the realisation of the five demands would exacerbate ecological problems in Germany as well as in other countries and thus create new risks; on the other hand, it would only be possible repressively in Germany and the other countries concerned and would increase international uncertainties. Thirdly, it would require investment entrenching and expanding socially and ecologically destructive production structures and denying or destroying resources and opportunities for socio-ecological solutions. The FGI demands were based on detailed studies which shaped the "Raw Materials Congress: Changing Times for a Secure and Sustainable Raw Materials Policy". Alongside energy and the key technologies of the 21st century, raw materials were discussed as a "geopolitical weapon"[28] . In the spring of 2023, the AGSDI problematised the dependencies on raw

[26] https://FGI.eu/artikel/news/mittelstand-und-familienunternehmen-vor-existenziellen-herausforderungen/
[27] E.g. Wirtschaftswoche 6.4.2023, 45ff.
[28] https://FGI.eu/artikel/news/titel-der-veranstaltung0/

materials in the DSI (Atzpodien, Haag, Albers 2023: 11-13). Alongside this, geopolitical scenarios and conclusions for more commitment to unified action within the EU and to the development of the EU as a global actor were incessantly debated.

After one year of the "Ukraine war", the FGI's Chief Executive called at the Munich Security Conference 2023 for living the "turn of the times", i.e. to implement government announcements more forcefully, and she declared, similar to a defence or war minister: "We must ... be more strategically forward-looking, prepared. This includes recognising and using deterrence as a cornerstone of crisis prevention and risk minimisation ...[29] She seemed to have forgotten that Germany has long been part of an asymmetry in military spending in Europe; as early as 2021, the military spending of NATO countries exceeded that of Russia by almost 20 times. This has not deterred Russia from its war against Ukraine (Solty 2022: 8) Furthermore, FGI Chief Executive Gönner declared: "The protection, but also the constant further development and expansion of critical infrastructure are necessary conditions of strategic sovereignty ... "[30] And she added "... we have a considerable need to better adapt to the geopolitical situation. Innovation and technology policy is also at the heart of an effective, resilient Europe that defends its security, stability and prosperity. In this context, future technologies in the field of space travel are increasingly taking centre stage. Without the use of Western reconnaissance and Earth observation satellites or the Starlink satellite system, Ukraine might already no longer exist. These technologies have led to an information superiority of Ukraine with which it can successfully compete against the quantitative superiority of the Russian army. Our conclusion from this is clear: Germany must invest more in civilian and military technologies of the future. This also includes the development of a Responsive Space capability, which Germany can realise in a leading role in and for Europe and contribute to UN, EU and NATO missions ... We need all the more to close ranks with our partners in Europe and the world, and explicitly with our neighbours in Central and Eastern Europe. For these, as is often overlooked, are much more important for Germany in terms of economic relations than Russia ever was ... Eastern and Central Europe is elementary for German industry as a market, as an integral part of our value chains. Intensifying cooperation with the countries of the region is therefore in the strategic interest of German industry." (ibid., see also appendix 5) So the FGI CEO speaks like a top German politician, advised by SWP and DGAP. In this direction, the chairwoman of the FGI Committee on Security continued and concretised: "Turn of the times" means "that we have to understand how important it is to invest in our security, our defence capability. This also includes reducing dependencies and preventively minimising risks so that disruptions, such as sabotage of critical infrastructures, do not become catastrophes. We will only succeed in this in close cooperation between the state, the economy and the broader society.

The state and industry must finally find a new way of working together that does not only focus on the current crisis of the war in Ukraine. It must also be consolidated and allow for

[29] https://FGI.eu/artikel/news/muenchner-sicherheitskonferenz-krieg-in-europa-erwartungen-der-industrie-an-die-politik

[30] See footnote 60

strategic, forward-looking action. Politics and the economy must be thought more closely together ... What we ... need is planning security, and we can only get that through forward-looking and coordinated action by the Federal Government. We are still driving with the handbrake on - and it is precisely this brake that needs to be released."[31] Releasing the "brake" means the restructuring of society, even geared to military-supported, profit-maximising geopolitics. On the one hand, this goes hand in hand with the actions of the European Commission. In reaction to the US government's Inflation Reduction Act, the Commission presented its "Net-Zero Industry Act" (NZIA)[32] However, in the eyes of FGI, the European Commission remains too vague[33]. The European Commission wants to oblige member states to designate, develop and use CO_2 storage sites. By 2030, an annual storage capacity of 50 million tonnes of CO_2 is to be achieved. In this way, the capture and storage of CO_2 is to become economically "viable". The fact that the project must be democratically prevented from a social and ecological perspective certainly needs no justification here. In addition, the realisation of the CO_2 project requires pipeline networks, which pleases the FGI as a supporter of large infrastructure projects. It urges that CO_2 infrastructure planning be closely interlinked with the expansion of hydrogen infrastructure in order to realise the rededication of existing gas infrastructure and the construction of new pipelines for hydrogen and CO_2 in a holistic manner (ibid.). It has been proven that this approach cannot produce the allegedly expected ecological and technological effects, but rather establishes and reinforces neocolonial practices[34] . Nevertheless, the FGI presented its "Industry Requirements for the Carbon Management Strategy" (FGI 2023a) in June 2023. Shortly afterwards, it published another position paper on energy policy (FGI 2023b). It demands direct subsidies and immediate relief from the Federal Government to compensate for the high electricity prices as well as "quickly a coordinated concept for a permanently secure supply at internationally competitive costs. This requires not only a further acceleration of the expansion of renewable energies, transmission and distribution grids as well as storage capacities and backup power plants."[35]

The FGI President's speech, delivered on the Day of German Industry 2023 – "Industry day" – is contradictory, but its conclusion is clear: the government, the state should do what we say, but it should let us do what we want – so that our costs can be minimised and our exports maximised; so that the conditions for successful competition, which include expansive but functioning financial markets, are guaranteed in a growing space; so that our profits increase sustainably, our geopolitical and global economic position is strengthened. The FGI president warmly welcomed the NATO Secretary General who after seeing various DSI locations spoke at the "Industry Day". Stoltenberg informed about the ongoing work on "resilience guidelines" in NATO. The new Inspector General of the Bundeswehr is very supportive of this

[31] https://FGI.eu/artikel/news/susanne-wiegand-vorsitzende-des-FGI-ausschusses-fuer-sicherheit
[32] https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/industry/sustainability/net-zero-industry-act_en
[33] https://FGI.eu/artikel/news/net-zero-industry-act-ruestet-sich-europa-so-fuer-die-energiewende#msdynttrid=LYlLGBrnfRdB6VD8lem3JQN4dAjRaPP9-5QwSZYnIkQ
[34] https://zeitschrift-luxemburg.de/artikel/gruenen-kolonialismus-ueberwinden/
[35] Article (FGI.eu)

and called for a renewed mental orientation of the armed forces. "The mindset of militancy forms the basis for resolutely countering the simultaneity in the war picture of the turn of the times with armed forces capable of war. However, it also includes society, politics and the economy through the core demand for resilience. We are all born defenders of our country." Finally, "... change of times is ... change of thoughts in our minds" (ibid.)

3. Four brief conclusions

Firstly, the term "turn of the imes" was introduced in response to the large-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on February 2022 and linked to the decision to create a 100 billion euro special fund for the Federal Army, the announcement to reach NATO's "two per cent minimum target" (2 per cent of GDP for military spending) in the next few years, the decision to procure F-35 aircraft to participate in NATO's "nuclear deterrence strategy", to deliver weapons to war zones, to acquire armed drones. These measures were already topics in the security policy debate before the Russian attack and not least particular points of contention in the SPD. Overall, the debate went hand in hand with the strengthening of the military in foreign and security policy as well as economic policy, both in relation to the Federal Republic and the European Union. This is also the context of the article published shortly after 27 February 2022 by the head of the Security Policy Research Group of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs and the research director of the German Council on Foreign Relations on the "European turn of times". They advise the German government and orient on creating a new security order that "works without or against Russia, but already thinks about other conflicts, such as with China, and shifts in power and conflicts caused by climate change." [36] It would rest on "four pillars." Enforcement of own "principles", "geopolitics", "economy", "defence". "Germany's contribution to this European repositioning is crucial. Politically, it needs the government in Berlin to unite the other Europeans behind these goals. Economically, Germany remains the powerhouse that can lead by example ... In terms of security policy, Germany foreseeably has the largest defence budget in Europe ..."(ibid.). Since September 2022, there has been official government talk of a leading military role for the Federal Republic in Europe (keynote speech by the Defence Minister at the DGAP): "Germany's size, its geographical location, its economic power, in short: its weight, make us a leading power ... also in military terms"[37] . Therefore, and for this, a "cultural change" (ibid.) would be needed. This understanding and approach are increasingly being concretised and taken further, also and especially in the debate on "European sovereignty". The FGI and its member associations like the AGSDI are involved in these debates. The FGI focuses on the contradictory connection between geopolitics/security and defence policy, industrial/DSI development and neoliberal policy. This connection constitutes the "turn of the times". It is not new per se. What is new, however, are the dimensions and intensity with which the military capabilities and joint

[36] https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/festung-europa-2022/514219/zeitenwende-auch-fuer-die-europaeische-souveraenitaet/
[37] https://www.bmvg.de/de/aktuelles/grundsatzrede-zur-sicherheitsstrategie-5494864

action of "Europe" or "the West" are being oriented in order to contain and, if necessary, destroy the global actor China in particular or ultimately. This course is being taken in the face of dramatic technical-technological and social/cultural developments, enormous global problems and the rapid advance of ecological crises with a tendency towards the disappearance of natural living conditions.

Secondly, this also leads to new contradictions of interests both among the ruling capital elites and in society as a whole: on the one hand, capital elites demand state commitment to avert ecological collapse, to secure the supply of resources, the availability of a sufficiently suitable workforce and services of the productive, reproductive or social infrastructure, for investments in research and development, the scaling of production in specific industrial sectors and enterprises. On the other hand, capital elites demand pressure on social spending, wages, taxes especially for the wealthy, rich, corporations and the extensive prevention of social protests also by means of social policy measures. In addition, there are political divergences among the capital elites, such as on the assessment of the political and especially the international situation, on how to deal with concrete crises and global problems, on militarisation, on the role of financial market actors and markets, on sustainable industrial policies, ecological standards, migration, gender quotas for governing bodies, etc. Economic actors are challenged who are more or less sensitively affected by the geopolitical demands or decisions because they lose export sales, have to organise expensive imports, often have to carry out cost-intensive operational adjustments. They demand state compensation and support, which other entrepreneurs do not want to make possible through tax increases or levies. This threatens to further increase the burden on workers, on large sections of the population or on the majority of the population. There is a tendency for selfish moods and attitudes to increase, more or less combined with nationalism, racism and a readiness to use violence.
According to Luxemburg, however, it would have to be analysed in particular how the workers, the emancipative-solidarity-oriented actors can sharpen and exploit the contradictions of interests among the capital elites in such a way that their own interests can be defended and enforced, but wars, ecological destruction, escalation of violence in society can be stopped, reduced, fought and overcome in perspective. At the same time, it would be necessary to analyse and discuss how emancipative-solidarity-oriented actors can be encouraged and enabled to act individually and collectively to defend and increasingly open up the possibilities of socially and ecologically sustainable development. This requires political work on social alliances that address the contradictions in their own actions, communicate and cooperate in solidarity, live a culture to become bigger, more networked and more politically effective.

Thirdly: Since its foundation, the FGI has succeeded in identifying, using and expanding its opportunities for action. In doing so, it has oriented itself towards profit maximisation and the securing of corresponding conditions for the utilisation of capital, towards export and thus international competitive success for the companies and the location. This also and especially applies to arms exports (see Appendix 2) and the military location. The fact that the weight of the FGI has grown in economic and social policy, in social life, calls socialists once again and additionally to "unsparing self-criticism", which "is not merely the right to exist" but also "the supreme duty [is]" (Luxemburg 1916: 55).

Fourthly, the development of the capitalist mode of production goes hand in hand with the change of the actors and the relations between them, with the unfolding of capital relations. Historically, contradictory relationships have emerged and developed in the struggle of interests and tendencies that go back to conquest, war/colonialism, state debt/state mandate, joint-stock or capital companies, technologies, manufactory/factory/modern enterprise, credit system, capital accumulation/concentration and centralisation of capital and socialisation of labour or social exclusion (Dellheim 2020: 89-118). That is, technological and productive force development and violence underlie and are immanent to capital accumulation (Gerstenberger 2016). This violence manifests itself openly and/or becomes effective as primary and secondary exploitation in competition. The defence and improvement of the conditions for capital accumulation and thus of one's own location in social and international relations or hierarchies is in particular a question of technology application, the associated infrastructures and intellectual, economic and cultural attractiveness. Therefore, technologies play a key role. On the one hand, their more or less direct state support has brought about a technological advantage and faster growth of the DSI compared to the rest of the economy (Serfati 2020: 89-118) and helped the DSI to gain an image of creativity and progress. On the other hand, this has tended to increase the weight of the military and thus of violence in social economic life. This also tends to go hand in hand with a corresponding ideology, propaganda and culture, as well as specifically developed strategies. Their realisation in turn tends to increase the weight of the military and violence in social life.

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Appendix 1

The BDI currently has 35 members, including a working group consisting of 6 associations that share membership:

German Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA)	Main Association of the German Construction Industry e. V.
German Federal Association for Building Materials - Stone and Soil (BBS)	Association of Consulting Engineers (VBI)
Biotechnology Industry Organisation Germany e. V. (BIO Germany)	German Chemical Industry Association (VCI)
German Electrical and Electronic Manufacturers' Association (ZVEI)	Federal Association of the German Waste Management, Water and Raw Materials Industries (BDE)
German Federal Association for Natural Gas, Petroleum and Geoenergy (BVEG)	German Association of Research-based Pharmaceutical Companies (vfa)
German Property Federation (ZIA)	Association of the Potash and Salt Industry (VKS)
Federal Association of the German Foundry Industry (BDG)	Federal Association of the Glass Industry e. V.
German Association for Information Technology, Telecommunications and New Media (BITKOM)	German Ceramic Industry Association (BVKI)
German Aerospace Industries Association e. V. (BDLI)	Federal Association of the German Air Transport Industry (BDL)
German Engineering Federation (VDMA)	Wirtschaftsvereinigung Metalle e. V. (WVM) (German Metals Association)

German Petroleum Industry Association (MWV)	Employers' and Business Association of Mobility and Transport Service Providers e. V. (Agv MoVe)
Association of German Paper Mills (VDP)	German Pharmaceutical Industry Association (BPI)
Raw Materials and Mining Association (VRB)	Federal Association of the German Security and Defence Industry (BDSV)
Steel Trade Association	VAIS Association for Plant Technology and Industrial Service e. V.
German Steel and Metal Processing Association (WSM)	Federal Association of the Tobacco Industry and Novel Products (BVTE)
German Textile and Fashion Industry Association (Gesamtverband der deutschen Textil- und Modeindustrie e. V.)	Association of TÜV e. V.
Association of the German Composite Industry (VdV)	Association of the Sugar Industry (VdZ)
AG Industry Group: Game - Association of the German Games Industry e. V.	AG Industry Group: Association of the German Leather Industry (VDL)
AG Industry Group: Association of the German Vending Industry (VDAI)	AG Industry Group: Association of the German Dental Industry (VDDI)
AG Industry Group: Association of the German Wood-Based Panel Industry (VHI)	AG Industry Group: Bundesverband Schmuck, Uhren, Silberwaren und verwandte Industrien e. V. (Federal Association of Jewellery, Watches, Silverware and Related Industries)

Article (bdi.eu)

Appendix 2

The Federal Government approved arms exports amounting to 8.36 billion euros in 2022. This is about one billion less than the peak value in 2021 (9.35 billion euros). Of the authorised arms exports in 2022, war weapons exports accounted for 3.96 billion euros. Ukraine accounted for a quarter of all arms licences (approx. 2.2 billion euros). More than 90 per cent of the arms exports are said to have gone to Ukraine and close partner countries for self-defence. As late as 2021, most exports (4.34 billion euros) went to Egypt. The licences are said to have been granted under the previous government. https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Pressemitteilungen/2023/01/20230104-ruestungsexportpolitik-der-bundesregierung-im-jahr-2022-partnerlaender-und-ukraine-sind-schwerpunkt-deutscher-ruestungsexporte-in-2021.html)

([These are the countries to which Germany supplies its weapons (produktion.de)](),

Deutsche Rüstungsexporte nach Empfängerländern seit 1996.
Wert der Ausfuhrgenehmigungen des Bundessicherheitsrats

	EU-Länder		NATO(-gleich-gestellte) Länder		Drittländer		Gesamt
Jahr	Mio. €	Anteil	Mio. €	Anteil	Mio. €	Anteil	Mio. €
1996	615	28,2 %	720	33,0 %	850	38,9 %	2.185
1997	732	35,5 %	733	35,6 %	596	28,9 %	2.061
1998	632	22,0 %	1.208	42,0 %	1.033	36,0 %	2.874
1999[1]	702	23,2 %	1.543	51,0 %	783	25,9 %	3.028
2000[2]	1.284	45,1 %	964	33,8 %	600	21,1 %	2.847
2001[3]	1.330	36,1 %	1.011	27,4 %	1.346	36,5 %	3.686
2002[4]	1.364	41,9 %	1.150	35,3 %	745	22,9 %	3.258
2003[5]	1.892	38,9 %	1.359	27,9 %	1.613	33,2 %	4.864
2004[6]	1.916	50,3 %	811	21,3 %	1.080	28,4 %	3.807
2005[7]	1.440	34,2 %	1.120	26,6 %	1.656	39,3 %	4.216
2006[8]	1.863	44,5 %	1.174	28,0 %	1.151	27,5 %	4.189
2007[9]	1.297	35,4 %	1.141	31,1 %	1.230	33,5 %	3.668
2008[10]	1.839	31,8 %	809	14,0 %	3.141	54,3 %	5.788
2009[11]	1.445	28,7 %	1.106	21,9 %	2.492	49,4 %	5.043
2010[12]	2.315	48,7 %	1.056	22,2 %	1.383	29,1 %	4.754
2011[13]	1.954	36,1 %	1.163	21,5 %	2.298	42,4 %	5.415
2012[14]	971	20,7 %	1.129	24,0 %	2.604	55,4 %	4.704
2013[15]	1.168	20,0 %	1.071	18,3 %	3.606	61,7 %	5.846
2014[16]	817	20,6 %	753	18,9 %	2.404	60,5 %	3.974
2015[17]	2.474	31,5 %	763	9,7 %	4.621	58,8 %	7.859
2016[18]	1.353	19,8 %	1.827	26,7 %	3.668	53,6 %	6.848
2017[19]	1.483	23,8 %	965	15,5 %	3.795	60,8 %	6.242
2018[20]	1.054	21,8 %	1.221	25,3 %	2.550	52,9 %	4.824
2019[21]	3.142	39,2 %	1.342	16,7 %	3.531	44,1 %	8.015
2020[22]	1.904	32,7 %	1.001	17,2 %	2.919	50,1 %	5.824
2021[23]	1.620	17,3 %	1.781	19,0 %	5.951	63,3 %	9.352

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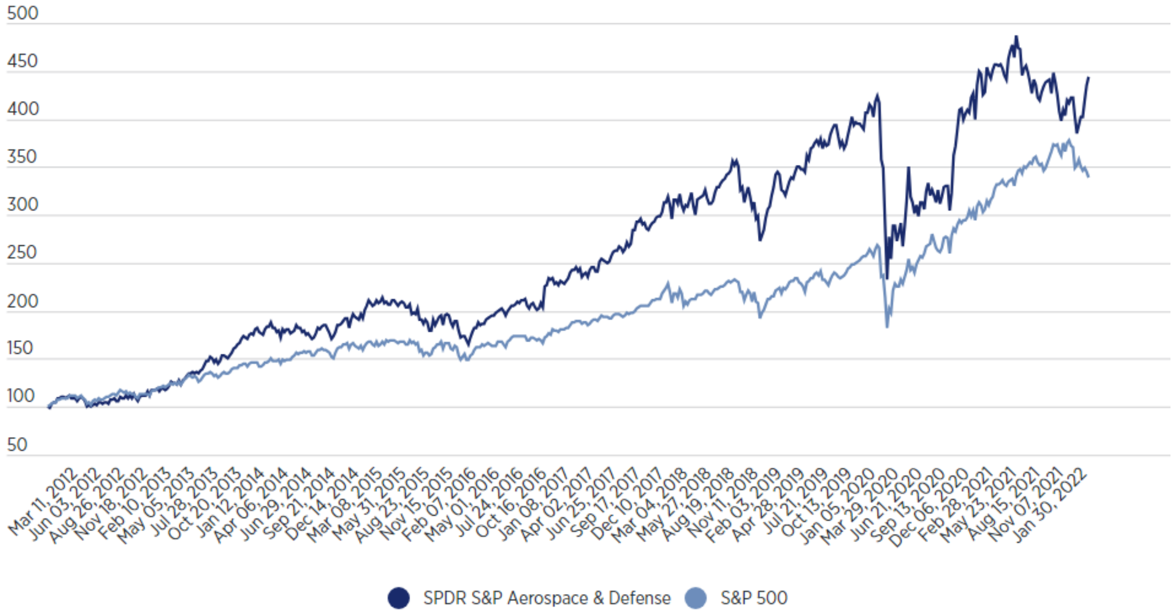
(https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deutscher_R%C3%BCstungsexport)

Appendix 3

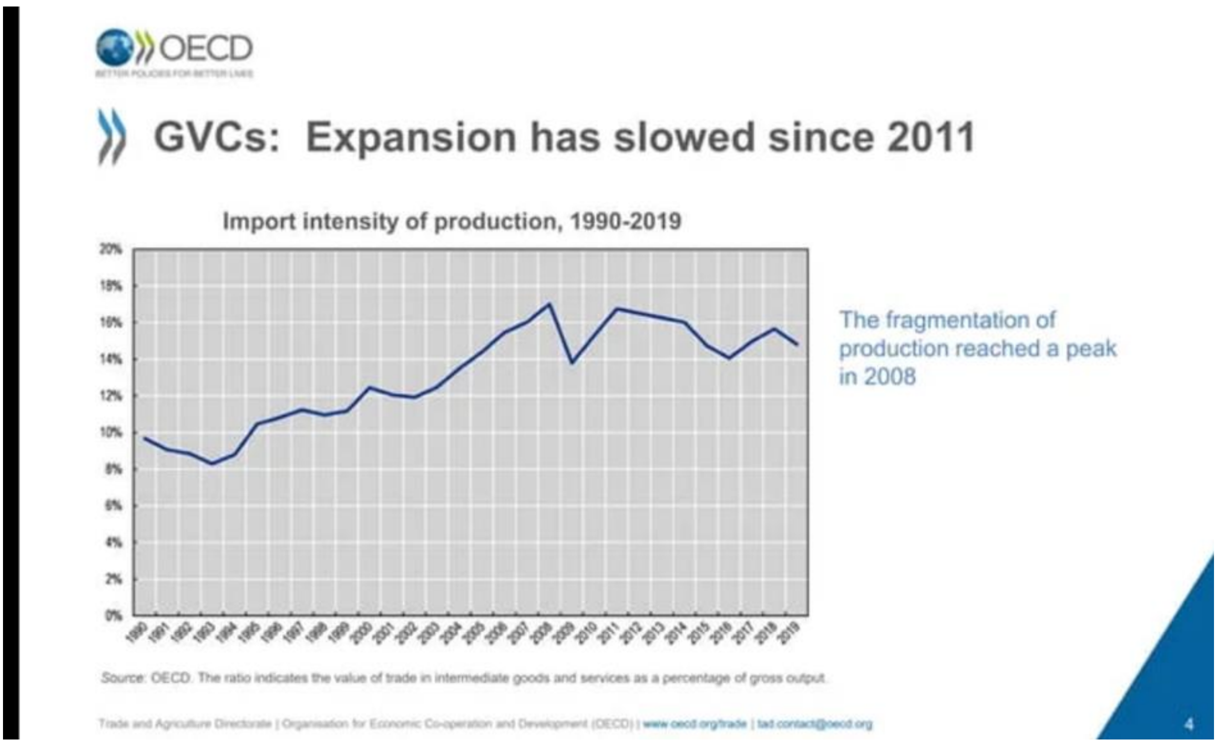
Armament ETF versus SAP 500 ETF



Daten: investing.com

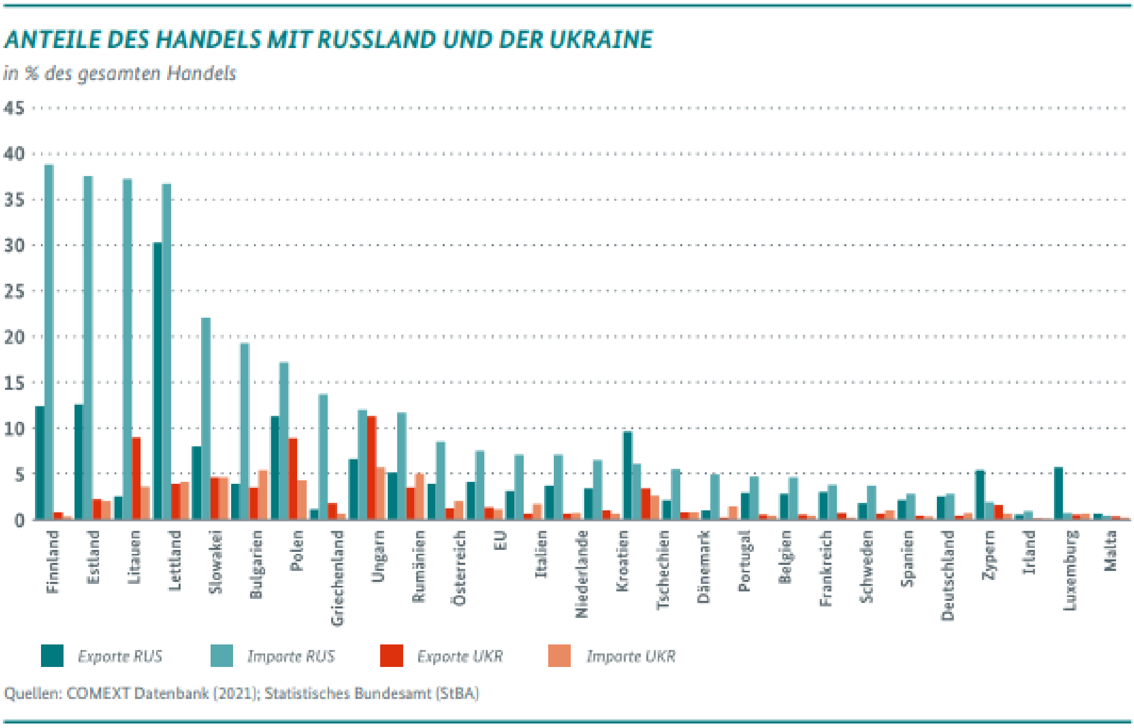
https://www.handelszeitung.ch/musterportfolios/borsennews/russland-sorgt-fur-rekorde-bei-rustungsfirmen-363507

Appendix 4



The future of global value chains (slideshare.net) 4

Appendix 5



https://www.bmwk.de/Redaktion/DE/Infografiken/Schlaglichter/2022/05/17-lieferketten-unter-druck.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&v=6 , 53

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