Germany vs. Argentina, Quarter Finals, Saturday 16:00 [SAST]

Germany's resounding 4-1 victory over England on Sunday has given other nations competing at the World Cup notice that Die Mannschaft ("The Team") is back in the elite of world football. This comes after most commentators -- including German -- wrote off the team as too young and inexperienced to compete with the football heavyweights in 2010.

Geopolitical parallels are clear. Germany in 2010 is a country emerging from 45 years of Cold War -- when it served as the chess board upon which the US and USSR battled -- and another 10 years of attempts to integrate 16 million East Germans into a re-unified Germany. The years when external forces did not permit Germany to have a foreign policy, or it was too preoccupied internally to contemplate one, are over. Berlin is ready to take the reigns of the EU, setting the agenda for restructuring of rules that govern the Eurozone and coordinating a new foreign policy towards Russia. This comes as a minor surprise to the rest of Europe, which has grown accustomed to a relatively compliant Germany that signs checks redistributing its wealth to the peripheral countries with little more than a bitte.

The German football team is also a parallel for a modern German society, with around half of the players on the team either foreign-born or of foreign descent. The two best players on the team are of mixed German-Polish and Turkish origin, reflecting the fact that in the past 60 years Germany has become a country of immigration whether it is willing to truly accept that reality or not. With German demographics pointing towards an aging society, the question is whether Germans will be willing to accept a similar level of dependence on foreigners and ethnic minorities in Germany's society as is already practiced in the football team. In order to maintain its economic and political leadership of Europe, Germany may be forced to.

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