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Germany Says Not Soft on Russia

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Germany is not trying to thwart a more forceful NATO reaction to Russia's seizure of Crimea, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said Friday in response to a newspaper report.

Brushing aside suggestions aired in the conservative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung that Germany is "passive and hesitant" in NATO, Steinmeier said he had no desire to enter a "blame game" before NATO foreign ministers meet next week.

"I do not understand debates like this taking place in public before the NATO meeting next week," he said when asked about the report, which quoted sources in Brussels as saying Germany had reservations about bolstering NATO in Eastern Europe.

"Naturally the expectations in some countries are a lot higher," Steinmeier added. "We will make it clear that our NATO partners can count on protection and our solidarity. We will have a fair discussion in the NATO council next week."

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