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**DETERMINANTS AND POLITICS OF GERMAN
MILITARY TRANSFORMATION IN THE POST-COLD
WAR ERA**

by

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June 2011

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TRANSFORMATION IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA**

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ABSTRACT

Since 1990, Germany has changed its role from a passive beneficiary of collective defense to a “co-producer” of security in international affairs. At the same time, however, Germany has been reluctant to transform its military, the Bundeswehr, into an all-volunteer force and to develop capabilities for expeditionary warfare. It has also spent less on defense in relation to its resources than other European partners. This case study attempts to elaborate on this apparent inconsistency and to answer the question of why and how the Bundeswehr has changed after 1990. The thesis argues that German military transformation during this period is informed by driving forces and limiting factors on the international level, as well as the domestic level. Given Germany's preference for multilateralism, it is unsurprising that NATO and the European Union (EU), as well as the military missions conducted by these two institutions, have had an impact on the evolution of the Bundeswehr. Against this background, the notion of a distinct German strategic culture helps to explain the ambivalence of German security and defense policy. Other variables on the national level, above all the limited defense expenditure and the political interests of key decision-makers, have affected military transformation as well.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BMVg	Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (Federal Ministry of Defense)
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union (Christian Democratic Union)
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
CSU	Christlich Soziale Union (Christian Social Union)
DCI	Defense Capabilities Initiative
DLO	Division Luftbewegliche Operationen (Air Mobile Division)
DSO	Division Spezielle Operationen (Special Forces Division)
ECAP	European Capabilities Action Plan
EinsFüKdo	Einsatzführungskommando (Bundeswehr Operations Command)
EinsFüStab	Einsatzführungsstab (Joint Operations Staff)
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei (Liberal Democratic Party)
FHQ	Force Headquarters
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FüZBw	Führungszentrum Bundeswehr (Bundeswehr Operations Center)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDR	German Democratic Republic
HHG	Helsinki Headline Goal

KdB	Konzeption der Bundeswehr (Concept of the Bundeswehr)
KSK	Kommando Spezialkräfte (Special Forces Command)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
(NATO) SC	Strategic Concept
NRF	NATO Response Force
NVA	Nationale Volksarmee (National People's Army)
OHQ	Operations Headquarters
PCC	Prague Capabilities Commitment
SKB	Streitkräftebasis (Joint Support Service)
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party)
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
VPR	Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien (Defense Policy Guidelines)
WEU	Western European Union

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I dedicate this thesis to my mother, who did not live to see its completion.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

In 2005, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the German armed forces, the Bundeswehr, a former German general stated that, “an army is constantly in transformation, it never reaches a clear and definite end state. But its constant advancement should always focus on a symbiosis between traditional elements and innovations.”¹ A closer look at contemporary German security and defense policy reveals that this assessment particularly holds true for the Bundeswehr. Over the last two decades, the German armed forces have been in a constant state of flux. While such processes of change are neither rare nor uncommon, post-Cold War Germany has been a rather unique and puzzling case that has confounded many external observers. For example, although Germany is the second-largest member state of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in terms of population and economic power, it has reduced its armed forces from nearly 500,000 in 1989 to approximately 250,000 in 2010. Current restructuring proposals from the Bundesministerium der Verteidigung [BMVg] (Federal Ministry of Defense) recommend a further reduction—by one third—over the next few years.² Germany’s defense budget likely will stay at a mere 1.3-percent share of its GDP, a proportion that places it only twenty-first of the twenty-eight NATO countries.³

These strategic choices have a long-term impact and raise important questions about contemporary German security and defense policy: Why and how has the German

¹ “Eine Armee ist immer in Bewegung, sie ist niemals ‘fertig.’ Aber in ihrer steten Weiterentwicklung sollte sich immer Neues mit Bewährtem verbinden.” Ulrich de Maiziere, “Was war neu in der Bundeswehr? - Betrachtungen eines Zeitzeugen zum 50jährigen Jubiläum,” *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, June 2005, <http://www.europaeische-sicherheit.de/> (accessed May 20, 2011). Ulrich de Maiziere, a former army general and chief of staff of the Bundeswehr (1966-1972), was the father of Germany’s current Defense Minister Thomas de Maiziere.

²“Eckpunkte für die Neuausrichtung der Bundeswehr,” Official website of the BMVg, May 18, 2011, <http://www.bmvg.de/> (accessed October 30, 2010).

³ Svenja Sinjen and Johannes Varwick, “Die Bundeswehr und die Aufgaben der Nordatlantischen Allianz,” in *Bundeswehr – Die nächsten 50 Jahre. Anforderungen an deutsche Streitkräfte im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. Joachim Krause and Jan C. Irlenkaeuser (Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2006), 97.

military changed after the end of the Cold War? What driving forces and determining factors account for the evolution of the Bundeswehr since 1990? Why have Germany's military reforms not always followed a consistent path?

B. IMPORTANCE

The present work comprises an inquiry into the nature of change in German security and defense policy and institutions in the past twenty years—a subject of intense political speculation in Germany during the years 2010–2011, and one that has highly suggestive scholarly value as well. However, such an analysis is not only helpful in strategic studies by offering an academic exchange about theory, but it also speaks to the needs of policy. The answers to the aforementioned questions have real-world ramifications for Germany's ability to fulfill its international commitments in the realm of security and defense. As one of the largest European troop contributors to peacekeeping missions, Germany will continue to bear a substantial part of the military burden of current and future operations under the auspices of NATO and the European Union's (EU) Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). However, over the last two decades, western allies and observers repeatedly criticized Germany for its insufficient spending on military capabilities and its reluctance to transform the Bundeswehr into an all-volunteer fighting/intervention force capable of meeting the security challenges of the twenty-first century. As one scholar stated with reference to the perennial burden-sharing problem: “[...] rather than worrying about Europe doing too much on its own, Americans should continue to be concerned about Europe, and particularly Germany, doing too little.”⁴ This apparent gap between international expectations on the one hand, and the actual limits of German restructuring and modernization efforts on the other, requires a thorough analysis of the factors that drive and shape the ongoing transformation of the Bundeswehr.

These insights are important because a “popular question-and-answer game since German unification has been: What should be Germany's role in the post-Cold War

⁴ Mary Elise Sarotte, *German Military Reform and European Security*, Adelphi Paper 340 (New York: Oxford University Press, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2001), 65.

world?”⁵ Many scholars provided their views and predictions about this fundamental issue, as the country—now “liberated from the chains of a divided Europe”⁶—appeared to be a promising subject of research. As a result, Germany was marked by some scholars as a “central power in Europe,” as a “civilian power,” as a “precarious power,” or as an “economic power.”⁷ At the core of these diverse points of view lay the differences between a school of thought, which argued that Germany’s foreign and security policy would significantly change, and a group of scholars who insisted that the continuities of German state behavior—informed by historical experiences and processes—would prevail.⁸ Thus, this examination might also promote a deeper understanding of German security policy in general.

C. GERMAN SECURITY POLICY AND MILITARY TRANSFORMATION IN PERSPECTIVE

Since this thesis will be part of a broader body of scholarly and policy oriented work that relates to the overall topic of German defense and security, it can build on existing literature of political and social science as well as contemporary history. Nonetheless, scholarly work with a focus on military reforms does not belong to the

⁵ Franz-Josef Meiers, “A Change of Course? German Foreign and Security Policy after Unification,” in *The Berlin Republic: German Unification and a Decade of Changes*, eds. Winand Gellner and John D. Robertson (Portland: Frank Cass & Co., 2003), 195.

⁶ Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Karl Kaiser, “Academic Research and Foreign Policy Making,” in *Germany’s New Foreign Policy. Decision-Making in an Interdependent World*, eds. Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Karl Kaiser (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 4.

⁷ Rainer Baumann, “Deutschland als Europas Zentralmacht,” in *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, eds. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007) 62-72; Hans W. Maull, “Germany and Japan: the new Civilian Powers,” *Foreign Affairs* 69 (1990), 91-106; Gunther Hellmann, “Precarious Power: Germany at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century,” in *Germany’s New Foreign Policy. Decision-Making in an Interdependent World*, eds. Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Karl Kaiser (New York: Palgrave, 2001) 293-311; Michael Staack: “Deutschland als Wirtschaftsmacht,” in *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, eds. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 85-100.

⁸ Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf, and Siegmund Schmidt, “Deutsche Außenpolitik in historischer und systematischer Perspektive,” in *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, eds. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 34.

mainstream of contemporary German studies. Rather, the transformation of the Bundeswehr is mostly seen as an integral part of the general thrust of German security and defense policy.

In this context, the developments on the international scene after 1990 are one of the most common explanations for changes in German security in general, and the Bundeswehr in particular. Being part of the prosperous and relatively stable Euro-Atlantic region, states like Germany faced new challenges presented by a growing number of failing or failed states, intra-state wars, regional instability, transnational terrorism, or the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.⁹ Above all, this complex set of emerging threats made functional alterations of the German armed forces inevitable.¹⁰ At base, these threats shifted the primary area of Bundeswehr operations beyond German borders—Germany’s freedom and security had to be defended outside of Alliance territory.¹¹ The new security environment required Germany to transform its tank-heavy Cold War divisions into flexible, interoperable, and mobile forces that were able to conduct a broad array of “out-of-area” missions, ranging from humanitarian aid, monitoring of cease-fires, and peacekeeping to high-intensity peace-enforcing.¹²

Scholars also claim that these profound changes in the role and mission of the armed forces illustrate that the Bundeswehr gradually evolved into a distinct foreign policy instrument of unified Germany.¹³ Thus, this body of work is at least implicitly

⁹ Ernst-Christoph Meier, “Vom Verteidigungsauftrag des Grundgesetzes zum Begriff Vernetzter Sicherheit—Zur politischen Einordnung des Weißbuchs 2006,” in *Friedensethik und Sicherheitspolitik. Weißbuch 2006 und EKD-Friedensdenkschrift 2007 in der Diskussion*, eds. Angelika Dörfler-Gierken and Gerd Portugall (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2010), 53.

¹⁰ Sven Bernhard Gareis, “Militärische Beiträge zur Sicherheit,” in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik. Herausforderungen, Akteure und Prozesse*, ed. Sven Bernhard Gareis and Stephan Böckenförde (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009), 100.

¹¹ Benjamin Schreer, “Die Transformation des Heeres,” in *Bundeswehr—Die nächsten 50 Jahre; Anforderungen an deutsche Streitkräfte im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. Joachim Krause and Jan C. Irlenkaeuser (Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2006), 182.

¹² Martin Wagener, “Auf dem Weg zu einer “normalen” Macht? Die Entsendung deutscher Streitkräfte in der Ära Schröder,” in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik – Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder*, eds. Sebastian Harnisch, Christos Katsoulis and Marco Overhaus (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004), 100–1.

¹³ Rolf Clement, “Die neue Bundeswehr als Instrument deutscher Außenpolitik,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B11 (2004), 42–6.

informed by the main schools of thought in IR theory.¹⁴ The logic that the conditions of the international system mainly defined the course of the Bundeswehr transformation over time is basically an argument of structural realism. But, although such an analysis has a lot of explanatory power, for example, by illustrating how the emergence of such new threats as international terrorism affected security thinking, it cannot sufficiently answer the question of why the process of reforming the German armed forces often took place in a piecemeal and unassertive way. For example, Germany only recently curtailed compulsory military service—a fact that confounds this school of thought because even countries like France—as the inventor of the *levée en masse*—abandoned conscription in 2002 in the face of a dynamic security environment that called for professional forces. Additionally, some proponents of neo-realism predicted that a unified Germany—as Europe’s potentially most powerful state—would act like such other major European powers as France and the United Kingdom. This process of “normalization” most likely would result in a return to past patterns of power politics, and especially a stronger emphasis on the use of military force.¹⁵ However, the policy path of the “Berlin Republic” has taken quite a different trajectory after 1990.

Due to these apparent limits of neo-realist models, the constructivist school of thought, which relies on socially constructed beliefs, values, and norms and the way that these ideational factors shape a state’s perception of the international system, increasingly paid attention to the German case.¹⁶ In this context of constructivist explanations, the

¹⁴ Gunther Hellmann, Reinhard Wolf, and Siegmund Schmidt, “Deutsche Außenpolitik in historischer und systematischer Perspektive,” in *Handbuch zur Deutschen Außenpolitik*, eds. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 41.

¹⁵ John J. Mearsheimer, “Back to the future. Instability in Europe after the Cold War,” *International Security* 15 (Summer 1990), 5–56.

¹⁶ John S. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken. Political Culture, International Institutions, and German Security Policy after Unification* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism. National Security in Germany and Japan* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); John S. Duffield, “Political Culture and State Behavior: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism,” *International Organization* 53 (1999), 765-803; Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force: The Evolution of German Security Policy 1990-2003* (Manchester, GBR: The Manchester University Press, 2004); Björn Conrad and Mario Stumm, *German Strategic Culture and Institutional Choice: Transatlanticism and/or Europeanism?*, Trierer Arbeitspapiere zur Internationalen Politik (Trier: Lehrstuhl für Außenpolitik und Internationale Beziehungen, 2004); Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2006); Tobias Wilke, *German Strategic Culture Revisited. Linking the Past to Contemporary German Strategic Choice*, Forschungsberichte Internationale Politik 36 (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2007).

notion of culture and its interrelationship with a state's interests and behavior received growing attention in national security policy research.¹⁷ This new theoretical focus promised to account for variations in state preferences, which neo-realism had typically assumed and treated as homogenous across states.¹⁸ Thus, it did not deny "the realist's argument about the importance of the international context in which Germany's transformation took place."¹⁹ Rather, the concept of "strategic culture,"²⁰ with its inclusion of factors on the domestic level, attempted to evaluate the impact of shared historical experiences as well as persistent norms and values on specific German security policy outcomes.²¹ Strategic culture is a sub-component of the broader approach of "political culture," which may be defined as a socially transmitted set of decision rules, assumptions, and operating procedures that affect a collective's stance on its political environment.²² Despite an intense academic debate, which mainly revolved around the question of whether strategic culture is an independent explanatory variable for state behavior, no universally accepted definition has been established so far.²³

Amid an apparent lack of scholarly consensus, this thesis will begin with the presumption that strategic culture can be defined as the:

norms, ideas and patterns of behavior that are shared among the most influential actors and social groups within a given political community, which help to shape a ranked set of options for a community's pursuit of security and defense goals.²⁴

¹⁷ Jeffrey S. Lantis, "Strategic Culture and National Security Policy," *International Studies Review* 4 (2002), 87.

¹⁸ Duffield, *Political Culture and State Behavior*, 765.

¹⁹ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 3.

²⁰ Duffield called the phenomenon a German "national security culture;" at the same time Berger pointed to a distinct German "political-military culture." Nonetheless, this thesis will make use of the more common term "strategic culture."

²¹ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 1.

²² Conrad and Stumm, *German Strategic Culture and Institutional Choice*, 11.

²³ This thesis cannot participate in this ongoing scholarly dispute. For an overview of the main arguments of the debate, see: Wilke, *German Strategic Culture Revisited*, 17–24.

²⁴ Cristoph O. Meyer, *The Quest for a European Strategic Culture. Changing Norms on Security and Defense in the European Union* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 20.

Proponents of this school of thought stress that, although these ideational and normative foundations tend to be stable over time, German strategic culture can be subject to learning processes and forces of incremental change.²⁵ They claim that this hypothesis explains, for example, Germany's slowly growing willingness to participate in out-of-area military missions since the end of the Cold War. In sum, strategic culture helps to understand Germany's continuing preference for multinational and non-military modes of addressing external crises and conflicts. If this concept can answer the question of why and how German security and defense policy has been shaped, channeled, or restrained by cultural factors, it should also be able to explain the main thrust of military reform in the post-Cold War era.²⁶ In other words: military reforms should resemble alterations in German strategic culture.

In light of Germany's strong preference for multilateralism, those international organizations that are Germany's most important platforms of security and defense cooperation, namely NATO and, since recently, the EU, are to be taken into account as well.²⁷ The existing literature on these entities sheds light on the issue from different angles. Both NATO and the EU have had an impact on German military reforms, because they have been forums for pursuing security interests as well as sources of constraint due to binding treaties and obligations.²⁸

²⁵ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 148.

²⁶ A weakness of this cultural approach is its focus on elite opinions. The general public is often neglected. However, during the Iraq crisis in 2003, as well as during the Libya Crisis in 2011, electoral interests of decision-makers arguably restrained German policy behavior, which suggests that popular sentiments do matter, sometimes quite directly.

²⁷ This focus on NATO and the EU is not intended to downplay the significance of other institutions, for instance, the UN or the OSCE. However, the former have traditionally played a more important role with regard to German security and defense policy.

²⁸ Michael Staack, "Normative Grundlagen, Werte und Interessen deutscher Sicherheitspolitik," in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik. Herausforderungen, Akteure und Prozesse*, ed. Sven Bernhard Gareis and Stephan Böckenförde (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009) 45–78; Franz H.U. Borkenhagen, "Entwicklungslinien aktueller deutscher Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik," in *Die Bundeswehr 1955-2005. Rückblenden-Einsichten-Perspektiven*, ed. Frank Nögler, (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 501–518.

On the one hand, NATO especially “offered Germany a channel through which it might exercise considerable influence on Western strategy.”²⁹ On the other hand, unified Germany was presented with growing expectations and political pressure from the Alliance. With its substantial resources, Germany was supposed to graduate from its alleged role as a “security free-rider” under U.S. tutelage and to take a pro-active stance on global security affairs. Thus, NATO’s gradual paradigm shift from collective defense towards collective security, as well as readjustments of its role, strategy, and missions, had serious consequences for an organization as deeply enmeshed in Alliance structures and procedures as the Bundeswehr. Several key allies expected Germany to assume greater international responsibility and to provide well-trained troops for a growing number of crisis management endeavors on the European periphery and beyond.³⁰ Consequently, Germany’s commitments to this institutional framework³¹—for example, the enhancement of certain capabilities or military contributions to the NATO Response Force (NRF)—must be regarded as eminent forces of change in the structure, armament, and doctrine of the Bundeswehr.³² Some scholars even claim that the overall course of German military reforms since 1990 has mainly served two purposes: ensuring interoperability between the Bundeswehr and its major allies, and preserving political influence within NATO.³³

²⁹ Catherine Kelleher and Cathleen Fischer, “Germany,” in *The Defense Policy of Nations: a Comparative Study*, eds. Douglas J. Murray and Paul R. Viotti (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 164.

³⁰ Meiers, *A Change of Course? German Foreign and Security Policy after Unification*, 210.

³¹ For a brief overview of obligations within NATO and the EU see: Johannes Varwick, “Nordatlantische Allianz,” in *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, eds. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 763–778; Svenja Sinjen and Johannes Varwick, 101-106; Wolfgang Wagner, “Die Außen-, Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik der Europäischen Union,” in *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, eds. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 143–156; Johannes Varwick, “Die Bundeswehr als Teil einer europäischen Eingreiftruppe,” in *Bundeswehr – Die nächsten 50 Jahre. Anforderungen an deutsche Streitkräfte im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. Joachim Krause and Jan C. Irlenkaeuser (Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2006), 109–26.

³² Johannes Varwick, “Deutsche Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik in der Nordatlantischen Allianz: Die Politik der rot-grünen Bundesregierung 1998-2003,” in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik – Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder*, eds. Sebastian Harnisch, Christos Katsoulis and Marco Overhaus (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004), 28.

³³ Olaf Theiler, “Bundeswehr und NATO,” in *Armee im Einsatz*, eds. Hans J. Gießmann and Armin Wagner (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2009) 189.

Since the Franco-British rapprochement in the late 1990s concerning the role of the EU as an independent security policy actor, additional pressure to adapt the Bundeswehr stemmed from German participation in the EU's emerging security and defense policy.³⁴ The ambitious European plans to establish an autonomous crisis-response capacity resulted in substantial German military contributions.³⁵ The fact that ESDP/CSDP military missions did not always take recourse to NATO resources under the "Berlin Plus" arrangement made these obligations all the more burdensome.³⁶ Notwithstanding its strong commitments to NATO and ESDP/CSDP, a significant gap between Germany's official contributions to these organizations and its financial resources devoted to defense issues has been identified.³⁷ Germany's commitments, though quantitatively substantial, did not seem commensurate with the qualitative requirements of modern expeditionary forces. Thus, narrowing the analysis of military transformation to the role and influence of international security regimes would be overly simplistic.

Another category of literature about issues of German defense and security only indirectly derives from the above discussion about the effects of international institutions. These studies systematically analyze multinational crisis-response operations with a

³⁴ Hans-Joachim Reeb, "Die neue Bundeswehr," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 48 (2009), 20–1.

³⁵ Wilhelm Knelangen, "Die Europäische Union und die deutsche Sicherheitspolitik," in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik; Herausforderungen, Akteure und Prozesse*, eds. Stephan Böckenförde and Sven Bernhard Gareis (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009), 272–5.

³⁶ Autonomous European missions had to go without U.S. military capabilities and assets as well as NATO's sophisticated planning capacities.

³⁷ Wagener, *Auf dem Weg zu einer "normalen" Macht? Die Entsendung deutscher Streitkräfte in der Ära Schröder*, 109. Sarotte, *German Military Reform and European Security*. Martin Agüera, "Ambitious Goals, Weak Means? Germany's Project "Future Bundeswehr" is Facing Many Hurdles," *Defense and Security Analysis*, 17 (2001), 289–306.

German participation and their repercussions for the Bundeswehr.³⁸ The latter has participated in monitoring missions as well as in far more complex military ventures. As a result, long-term peacekeeping or state-building efforts and, above all, peace-enforcing missions presented the Bundeswehr with challenges regarding such issues as deployability, logistics, command and control, viable equipment, and the availability of combat-ready personnel. Recent works argue that Germany's constitutional norms, societal conditions, and present military capabilities do not sufficiently reflect the new reality of a fully operational Bundeswehr that has been continuously involved in out-of-area missions on three continents since the early 1990s.³⁹ However, several shortcomings in the Bundeswehr's structure, equipment, training and doctrine have been resolved because of the experiences of international military missions. These aspects tend to be overlooked by studies that solely focus on the overall scheme of security policy on the systemic level.

Furthermore, several studies convincingly portray additional driving factors on the domestic level: first, budgetary constraints; second, key actors and decision-makers; and third, electoral and economic interests.⁴⁰

The Bundeswehr has operated under increasingly constrained financial resources since 1990. Germany continuously reduced its defense spending in relative terms after unification and spent considerably less for its forces than, for example, France and Britain. Proponents of strategic culture have either no explanation at all for this

³⁸ Andreas M. Rauch, *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2006); Lutz Holländer, "Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr: Bilanz und Perspektive," in *Bundeswehr – Die nächsten 50 Jahre; Anforderungen an Streitkräfte im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. Joachim Krause and Jan C. Irlenkaeuser (Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2006), 225–236; Klaus Naumann, "Der Wandel des Einsatzes von Katastrophenhilfe und NATO-Manöver zur Anwendung von Waffengewalt und Friedenserzwingung," in *Die Bundeswehr 1955 bis 2005. Rückblenden - Einsichten - Perspektiven*, ed. Frank Nägler (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 477–494; Stephan Mair (ed.), *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr. Leitfragen, Entscheidungsspielräume und Lehren* (Berlin, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2007); Hans J. Gießmann and Armin Wagner (eds.), *Armee im Einsatz. Grundlagen, Strategien und Ergebnisse einer Beteiligung der Bundeswehr* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2009).

³⁹ Reeb, *Die neue Bundeswehr*, 17–23.

⁴⁰ Hanns W. Maull, "Normalisierung oder Auszehrung? Deutsche Außenpolitik im Wandel: Eine neue deutsche Außenpolitik?" in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B11 (2004), 21.

phenomenon⁴¹ or argue that this policy outcome is fully in line with their cultural concepts by claiming that Germany's pacifist leanings impeded an increased defense spending.⁴² However, other scholars call the lack of funding the "Achilles heel" of Bundeswehr transformation.⁴³ Several specific analyses explore the German defense expenditure and its implications for security and defense policy.⁴⁴ A review of the attendant literature reveals two main aspects: first of all, unprecedented events like the costly process of German unification, consolidation obligations like the Maastricht criteria of the EU, or systemic shocks like the world financial crisis of 2008–2009 can curtail German government spending—eventually leading to defense budget reductions and obstacles for military transformation.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the internal structure of the defense budget itself—with its high operating and personnel costs—has hindered attempts to modernize the Bundeswehr.⁴⁶ Hence, budgetary constraints represent a discrete variable for military reform in Germany, and defense spending and its repercussions for Bundeswehr transformation over time will be a recurring issue during the research of this thesis.

Apart from this financial dimension, some further consequences of domestic politics must not be underestimated. For example, in February 2011 the German media

⁴¹ Longhurst mentions the problem of reduced defense spending, but provides no comprehensive analysis for the underlying causalities; Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 114–6.

⁴² "As a culturalist might expect, defense spending retained a low priority in the context of Germany's strategic culture;" Dalgard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 145.

⁴³ Franz-Josef Meiers, "Zur Transformation der Bundeswehr," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 21 (2005), 21.

⁴⁴ Martin Agüera, "Deutsche Verteidigungs- und Rüstungsplanung im Kontext von NATO und EU: Ein (Reparatur-)Werkstattbericht," in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik – Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder*, eds. Sebastian Harnisch, Christos Katsoulis and Marco Overhaus (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004), 119–144.; Daniel Sattler, "Die Kosten der Bundeswehr und deren Finanzierung durch den Bundeshaushalt: Probleme, Perspektiven, Spielräume," in *Bundeswehr – Die nächsten 50 Jahre; Anforderungen an Streitkräfte im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. Joachim Krause and Jan C. Irlenkaeuser (Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2006), 277–290; Gregor Richter, "Ökonomisierung der Bundeswehr," in *Handbuch Militär und Sozialwissenschaft*, eds. Sven B. Gareis and Paul Klein (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 40–50; Stefan Bayer, "Die Mittelausstattung der Bundeswehr. Der Einzelplan 14 im Spannungsfeld zwischen Auftragslage und (finanzieller) Realität," in *Armee im Einsatz*, eds. Hans J. Gießmann and Armin Wagner (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2009) 224–234.

⁴⁵ The current plans for a new Bundeswehr reform have arguably been a direct result of the world financial crisis. Christian Mölling, "Für eine sicherheitspolitische Begründung der Bundeswehr," *SWP-Aktuell* 20 (2011), 1.

⁴⁶ Sattler, *Die Kosten der Bundeswehr und deren Finanzierung durch den Bundeshaushalt*, 281.

reported that the ambitious plans for a new Bundeswehr reform had been thwarted by the Chancellor's Office, a surprising turn of intra-party dissent.⁴⁷ A few weeks later, the country's leading news magazine published an article that stated that the sudden resignation of Defense Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg had *de facto* removed a political rival of Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle—who is also the head of the coalition partner party, the FDP.⁴⁸ These two episodes provide valuable insights into German political culture and have manifold ramifications for an evaluation of military transformation. Above all, the influence of and interdependencies between relevant political actors on the national level is of considerable significance. German security policy is to a large extent shaped in the political triangle of the *Kanzleramt* (Chancellor's Office), the *Auswärtiges Amt* (Foreign Office), and the BMVg (Federal Ministry of Defense).⁴⁹ In other words, the course of the Bundeswehr also takes direction from domestic sources outside the core “defense community” of the BMVg. The nature of the “balance of power” between the Chancellor and these two Ministers, as well as the question of whether security issues have a priority on the overall national political agenda, can either facilitate or hinder necessary changes of the armed forces. For example, in light of high budget deficits and a Foreign Minister who is a member of a party that is more inclined to lower taxes than raise government spending, it seems unlikely that all current restraints on the defense expenditure will be removed any time soon.

To make this matter even more complicated, the literature also stresses the need to account for the strategic interests of these top representatives of the executive. Decisions

⁴⁷ “Merkels Experten kanzeln die Bundeswehrreform ab,” *SPIEGEL Online*, February 26, 2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,747890,00.html> (accessed April 25, 2011). This critique was unexpected because then Defense Minister zu Guttenberg had been the “rising star” of the ruling Christian democratic parties, the CDU/CSU.

⁴⁸ “Kabinettsumbildung: Guido Glückspilz,” *SPIEGEL Online*, March 5, 2011, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,748873,00.html> (accessed April 25, 2011).

⁴⁹ Sven Bernhard Gareis, “Die Organisation der Sicherheitspolitik in Deutschland - Akteure, Kompetenzen, Verfahren und Perspektiven,” in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik. Herausforderungen, Akteure und Prozesse*, eds. Sven Bernhard Gareis and Stephan Böckenförde (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009), 79–98. Karl-Rudolf Korte, “Bundeskanzleramt,” in *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, eds. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 203–209.

to deploy the Bundeswehr to high-intensity conflicts, such central themes of German civil-military relations as conscription, and the sensitive issue of military basing can become very salient in times of elections, when decision-makers tend to avoid stirring resistance of the electorate or political affiliates.⁵⁰

Additionally, economic considerations with a political dimension occasionally come to the fore and inform military transformation. Such large-scale multinational procurement programs as the Eurofighter multirole combat aircraft or the Airbus A-400M transport aircraft are undoubtedly securing thousands of jobs of highly skilled workers all across Europe. “Buying European” with regard to weapon systems has a high-profile political dimension because it is supposed to support and sustain an independent European defense industry.⁵¹ This policy comes at a price, of course, because the development of new systems often consumes more time and resources than buying “off-the-shelf” solutions. In this context, frequent delays and negative effects on the operational readiness of the Bundeswehr are unsurprising. Thus, the decision to buy the A-400M, for example, so far has had a negative impact on an important aspect of German military transformation, namely the need to increase strategic airlift capacities.

Which preliminary conclusions can be drawn from the review of the existing literature on issues of German security and defense? First, the bulk of assessments tends to view the transformation of the Bundeswehr as the result or the by-product of crucial developments on the international stage on the one hand, and an ingrained unwillingness of consecutive German governments to endow the Bundeswehr with sufficient financial resources on the other. These explanations, however, omit the sway of national driving

⁵⁰ The Iraq Crisis of 2003 is a good example for the prevalence of electoral interests. The German abstention from Operation Iraqi Freedom was largely based on strong public resistance in the run-up to the 2002 federal elections. Marco Overhaus, “Civilian Power under Stress: Germany, NATO, and the European Security and Defense Policy,” in *Germany’s Uncertain Power; Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic*, ed. Hanns W. Maull (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 67. Conscription remained a controversial topic throughout the two decades after unification with ultimate decisions often delayed because of compromises within ruling coalition governments. Wilfried von Bredow, *Militär und Demokratie in Deutschland. Eine Einführung* (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008), 223–4. Any Bundeswehr reform that comprises realignments of military basing or even base closures is a highly contentious issue and likely to meet regional political resistance due to the importance of military installations for the local economy. Sarotte, *German Military Reform and European Security*, 46–7.

⁵¹ Von Bredow, *Militär und Demokratie in Deutschland*, 276–80.

forces. Second, while a cultural approach to the issue obviously helps to better understand the peculiarities and shortcomings of Germany's post-Cold War strategic choices and military reforms, notably on the domestic level, the concept seems to fall short of including such aspects as the electoral interests of relevant decision-makers.

Third, although coherent and systematic examinations of post-unification German military transformation already exist, they are unable to close all present gaps in the literature. For example, Sarotte provided a cogent study that also covered domestic variables.⁵² However, her analysis does not include the important reforms that were initiated after 2002. The dissertations of Weisswange and von Neubeck incorporate large amounts of data and offer a systematic and thorough approach on the topic of German security policy after 1990.⁵³ Weisswange attempted to elaborate on the notion of what he labels as a distinct German "security policy culture" and to account for a broad spectrum of determining factors for military reforms. But his study, like the one of Sarotte, ends in 2002, leaving almost a decade unexplored. Von Neubeck mainly discussed the political, legal, and military dimensions and consequences of the growing number of German out-of-area missions, and therefore omitted such aspects on the domestic level as the issue of base closures.

A somewhat unique research design was chosen by Dyson.⁵⁴ His study points out that in times of elections, the strategic interests of political decision-makers tend to inform military transformation.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the focus of his assessment is arguably too narrow because in trying to promote the concept of "policy leadership," which

⁵² Mary Elise Sarotte, *German Military Reform and European Security*, Adelphi Paper 340 (New York: Oxford University Press, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2001).

⁵³ Arne von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee – Eine sicherheitspolitische Analyse unter Berücksichtigung politischer, verfassungspolitischer und militärpolitischer Aspekte* (Dissertation, Julius-Maximilians-Universität, Würzburg, 2007). Jan-Phillip Weisswange, *Der sicherheitspolitische Entwicklungsprozess der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1990-2002: Neue Orientierungen einer euro-atlantischen Sicherheitskultur* (Dissertation, Albert-Ludwigs-Universität, Freiburg i. Br., 2003).

⁵⁴ Tom Dyson, *The Politics of German Defence and Security. Policy Leadership and Military Reform in the Post-Cold War Era*, (New York: Berghahn Books 2007).

⁵⁵ The author stresses the importance of strategic electoral interests of key actors, the ramifications for social policy, and the politics of base closures.

basically underscores the role of individual key actors as agenda-setters or veto-players of security policy outcomes, he left out other factors such as, for instance, the impact of out-of-area missions.

Finally, there is no literature about the far-reaching reform plans of the current German government, which were announced in May 2011. All in all, it seems promising to advance existing German security studies by taking a broad analytical approach and incorporating recent political developments.

D. ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Based on the literature review, the driving forces of German military transformation can be categorized into determinants on the international scene and domestic factors. The former category includes developments in the international security environment, the strategic direction of NATO and the EU, and the military missions in which Germany has participated. The latter category comprises Germany's unique political and strategic culture, the impact of defense spending, and the role and interests of key political actors. This general distinction guides the research of this thesis. Consequently, the analysis takes a trifold approach: first, the international context of German security and defense policy is explored. Second, Germany's domestic setting is assessed. These results serve as the basis for the third and most important part of the research—an examination of the actual content of military transformation. Major changes in the tasks, the structures, the procedures, and the capabilities of the Bundeswehr are identified and discussed in detail. Based on this general structure, this study attempts to answer the following additional questions:

- How have the external and domestic contexts of post-Cold War Germany affected military transformation?
- How does the process of transforming the armed forces reflect the strategic culture of the Federal Republic as well as its political culture?
- How has the issue of the use of military force as a political, legal, and operational problem been related to post-Cold War German military transformation?

- What has been the content of German military reform during this period—that is, in what phases has it unfolded with what essential results and what new issues arose in the midst of this reform?

These research questions are explored in a single case study of German military transformation in the period from 1990 to 2011. Figure 1 shows that this timeframe is marked by different German coalition governments. These governments have pursued different security and defense policies; their legislation and strategic decisions have set the course for the transformation of the Bundeswehr. Therefore, this study does well to follow the chronological sequence of events and security policy outcomes and to apply the analytical framework to the terms of office. Specifically, its chapters mirror the chancellorships of Helmut Kohl, Gerhard Schröder, and Angela Merkel in turn.

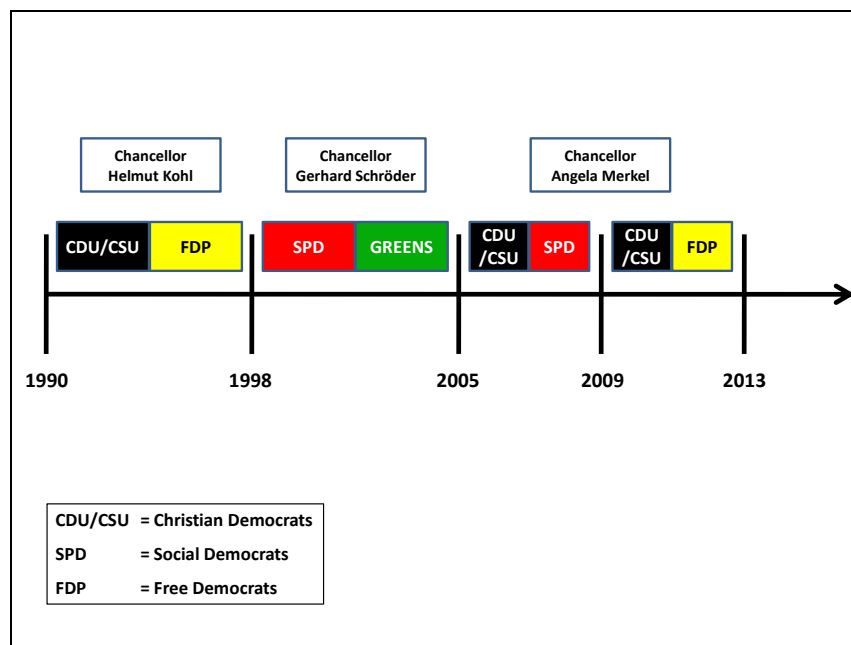


Figure 1. Coalition Governments in Germany Since 1990

Before the research questions can be addressed in detail, it is also necessary to define the term military transformation.⁵⁶ According to the German Defense White Paper 2006 “transformation is the proactive shaping of a continuous process of adaptation to the ever-changing framework conditions with the aim of enhancing the Bundeswehr’s

⁵⁶ This thesis uses the terms military transformation and military reform synonymously.

operational effectiveness.”⁵⁷ This broad definition provides at least three important elements: transformation is a deliberate process, it has a broad context, and it is supposed to result in improved military performance. The need to evaluate the outcome of transformation requires a further operationalization of the term. As a consequence, this case study of German security and defense themes uses a condensed definition that views military transformation as the intentional and target-oriented process of adjusting the Bundeswehr’s capabilities, structures, procedures, and norms in order to meet national security policy goals as well as commitments to international security regimes.

E. THESIS OVERVIEW

The thesis consists of seven chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter II briefly sets the stage for the later analysis of the post-Cold War period. It sheds light on the historical foundations of the Bundeswehr, the formation of German strategic culture after 1945, and long-term trends and continuities in the foreign and security policy of the Bonn Republic. Chapter III examines German foreign and security policy between 1990 and 1998. The focus of this part is an analysis of the limited military reforms initiated by Defense Minister Volker Rühle in light of the challenges of German reunification, staggering shifts in the security environment, and growing external obligations and political pressure. With regard to issues of German defense and security, the period from 1998 to 2005 includes such a high sequence of important events such as the Kosovo Crisis of 1999, the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the Iraq Crisis of 2002–2003 that it seems necessary to subdivide the analysis of the tenure of Chancellor Schröder. Thus, Chapter IV covers the period from 1998 to 2002, while Chapter V elaborates on the timeframe between 2002 and 2005. These two chapters, together, concentrate on the attempts of the Red-Green coalition to transform the Bundeswehr from a territorial defense force into a combat-ready policy instrument, simultaneously engaged

⁵⁷ Federal Ministry of Defense, *Defense White Paper 2006 on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr* (Berlin: October 25, 2006), 75. For the White Paper 2006 transformation is an integral part of the German concept of networked security—a mode of crisis prevention that is based on well-coordinated and closely interconnected measures of all relevant policy areas (foreign, security, defense, development, economic, and social policy as well as diplomacy). The concept is used in a multilateral, “all-embracing approach that can only be developed in networked security structures based on a comprehensive national and global security rationale.”

in missions in the Balkans and in Afghanistan, but plagued by a lack of capabilities and resources. Chapter VI includes security policy outcomes and the phase of consolidation in military reforms from 2005 onward. It also evaluates current developments, for example, by focusing on the impact of the world economic crisis in 2008–2009 and the likely consequences of recently announced reform plans. Chapter VII summarizes the main findings of this thesis and provides an outlook on future trends in German security and defense policy as well as challenges for the Bundeswehr. It concludes that although the Bundeswehr has been transformed into an all-volunteer force and a policy instrument, its role in multinational peace enforcement missions, as well as its capabilities for expeditionary warfare, will remain limited. The main causes for this assessment are the low priority of security and defense issues in German politics and the persistence of a “culture of reticence.”

II. THE LONG SHADOW OF THE BONN REPUBLIC

Historians, as well as political and social scientists, claim that the past informs the present through processes of learning and reconsideration. The evolution of (West) German politics and society in the second half of the twentieth century is a showcase of these causal mechanisms. And the last two decades of German state behavior cannot be understood without taking into account some of the continuities of the forty-year post-war history of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Specifically, this chapter explores those aspects of the “Bonn Republic”⁵⁸ that affected the course of German security and defense policy, as well as the role, structure, and characteristics of the Bundeswehr.

The end of the Second World War represented a critical juncture in German history. The country was not only divided into an eastern and a western zone (after having lost substantial parts of its former territory), but it was also put under allied occupation. Emerging from the experience of total defeat and horrified at the magnitude of death and destruction all across Europe that had been caused by German aggression and genocide, leaders and thinkers in and of Germany posited a *Stunde Null*—a “zero hour,”—that is, a notional point at which all Germans intervened in their own history to interrupt the previous trends of excessive nationalism, militarism, and megalomania. A new Federal Germany should take root in the carefully prepared soil of democracy and human rights, neither forgetting nor repeating its earlier development toward National Socialism or other extreme ideologies. In this context, constructivists emphasize “how culture originates in events of existential significance for the national community.”⁵⁹ The Second World War was such an event for Germany. “By the end of the war in 1945, [...] Germany had been shaken to the core both physically and psychologically.”⁶⁰ As a consequence, both West Germany as a state and its identity had to be reconstructed and

⁵⁸ This term refers to the fact that the small city of Bonn in North Rhine-Westphalia had been chosen as the seemingly permanent “provisional” capital of the Federal Republic of Germany, the democratic political entity that was formed by the merger of the three occupied zones of the western allies in 1949.

⁵⁹ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 24.

⁶⁰ Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*, 24.

reformulated. The Germans reinvented themselves. The impulses for these fundamental changes stemmed from forces within the West German society and its new political class, as well as from the outside. Above all, the western allies, the “Three Powers,” tried to ensure the solidification of democracy in the FRG and to eradicate German militarism and Nazism. Their state-building efforts—establishing democratic political institutions and procedures, and an efficient administration—were accompanied by a strict policy of the “four Ds:” denazification, demilitarization, decartelization, and disarmament, meant to refashion German society.⁶¹ These processes and policies had profound impacts on the face of the Bonn Republic as well as on its political and strategic culture.

Additionally, the structure of the international system strongly affected West German foreign policy and finally triggered the inception of a new German military. The increasing tensions of the Cold War and West Germany’s dependence on the western allies, above all on U.S. economic aid, rendered the option of German neutrality impossible.⁶² The Cold War also deepened the divide between the two Germanys. While the Bonn Republic was bound more firmly to the western system of democracies, institutions, and security regimes, East Germany's status as a bulwark of the Soviet sphere of influence was tightened. Finally, it inevitably led to the rearmament of both German states and determined the role of the Bundeswehr as the first democratic defender of a German state for more than three decades.

A. ANCHORED TO THE WEST

One of the most important features of the Bonn Republic was its emergence as a “civilian power.” This role concept has been defined as a nation that puts an emphasis on the use of “soft power” in foreign policy, cooperation through multilateral channels and

⁶¹ Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*, 25. As a consequence, all organizations of the former Nazi regime were dissolved, active military units decommissioned, heavy industry put under allied control, and all traces, symbols, and traditions of German militarism—uniforms, war veterans' and paramilitary organizations—obliterated or banned. Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 27.

⁶² Christian Hacke, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland – Von Konrad Adenauer bis Gerhard Schröder*, (Berlin: Ullstein Buchverlage 2004), 27–8. Unlike Chancellor Adenauer and his Christian Democrats, other West German political elites, for example, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) under Schumacher, were in favor of a German status of armed neutrality. Helga Haftendorn, *Coming of Age—German Foreign Policy since 1945* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 41.

institutions, and primarily economic—rather than military—means of defending its national interests.⁶³ West Germany’s general preference for non-military policy instruments and multilateralism was both a means to an end and an end in itself. The government of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer viewed multilateralism as a way of preventing the recurrence of what had been perceived as a *Sonderweg*—a special path of undemocratic and unilateralist leanings of German political and military elites since late nineteenth century that, in the conventional view of German history, had contributed to the Nazis’ takeover of state and society.⁶⁴ In this sense, multilateralism operationalized the refrain of “*nie wieder*,” or “never again.” But in the face of West Germany’s initially circumscribed sovereignty, economic and security cooperation also provided a means of regaining influence on the international scene. Thus, the Bonn Republic made efforts “to enlarge [its] political autonomy by integrating [its] foreign policy into multilateral systems or international institutions that offered a chance for codetermination.”⁶⁵ The more apt motto, then, was “*nie wieder allein*,” or “never again alone.”

Another controversial subject was closely linked to the issue of national sovereignty and political freedom of action: how to finally find a peaceful solution to the country’s most daunting political task—accomplishing the unity of the divided German nation. Of course, this task did not just concern the Germans. As a matter of international treaties and practical politics, the Four Powers controlled the unification process.⁶⁶ Against this background, Chancellor Adenauer was convinced that the FRG had to be strongly committed to the system of western democracies. He argued that only serious

⁶³ Hans W. Maull, “Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers,” in *Foreign Affairs*, Winter 1990/1991.

⁶⁴ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 25.

⁶⁵ Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 5.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

West German contributions to NATO and other institutions would ensure the continuous support of the western allies for a peaceful unification of the two German states in the long run.⁶⁷

In the meantime, firm ties to and in the West promised the FRG the most security and prosperity. Therefore, *Westintegration* was the key imperative of the Bonn Republic's foreign policy.⁶⁸ During Adenauer's chancellorship, the young Federal Republic integrated itself deeply into such organizations as the European Community (EC)—the predecessor of the European Union—the Western European Union (WEU), and NATO. Membership in the WEU, but especially in NATO offered security vis-à-vis the Soviet Union as well as an opportunity to demonstrate West Germany's resolve to bear a part of the collective defense burden by making a strong and visible contribution to NATO's conventional forces.⁶⁹ Thus the foundation of the Bundeswehr in 1955 was not an expression of growing German self-assurance and economic power. Rather, it was the necessary answer to the growing tensions between the East and the West, as well as the political price for the Federal Republic's return to the western community of states on an equal footing with its allies.⁷⁰

Overall, Adenauer—and succeeding West German governments—wanted the country to be regarded as a reliable actor and partner in international affairs, above all in

⁶⁷ In addition, by serving as a positive example of democratic rule and economic well-being, the Federal Republic was supposed to function like a political and social “magnet” that would finally attract the people of the GDR. Karl Diefenbach, “Militärsgeschichte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg,” in *Grundzüge der deutschen Militärgeschichte*, ed. Karl-Volker Neugebauer, (Freiburg: Rombach Verlag 1993), 429.

⁶⁸ Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 40–2.

⁶⁹ The FRG's experiences within the trans-Atlantic security community also shaped its perceptions of security-political “reality.” Furthermore, German nationalism and unilateralism were to be contained by collapsing German interests with those of NATO and Western Europe. Wilke, *German Strategic Culture Revisited*, 50.

⁷⁰ Sven Bernhard Gareis, “Militärische Beiträge zur Sicherheit,” in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik; Herausforderungen, Akteure und Prozesse*, eds. Stephan Böckenförde and Sven Bernhard Gareis (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009), 101.

the eyes of the United States and France.⁷¹ Bonn's foreign policy as a whole was marked by a clear preference for bi- and multilateral arrangements, focusing on themes of reticence, humanitarianism, and cooperation.⁷² This low-profile policy persisted throughout the course of the Cold War, and it became part of West Germany's *Staatsräson* that this political "culture of restraint" enhanced rather than limited Bonn's influence in international affairs.⁷³

B. SKEPTICISM OVER THE USE OF ARMED FORCE

While German political elites attempted to embed the Federal Republic in the West via NATO and other institutions in order to regain political sovereignty and influence, large parts of the West German society remained skeptical of all things military in general, and the possible reappearance of armed Germans in military uniforms in particular.⁷⁴ Both the army as the "school of the nation" and the military establishment had been largely discredited by the events between 1914 and 1945. Representatives of all political parties were convinced that the distance between the former Reichswehr and the political institutions of the Weimar Republic (1919–1933) had contributed to the downfall of German democracy in the 1930s. As a result, they wanted to prevent the recurrence of German militarism and of armed forces that were decoupled from the democratic state.⁷⁵

Because the democratic and peaceful Federal Republic was being built on the ashes of a Germany that had been ruined by its nationalistic and overly militant ideology,

⁷¹ The close Franco-German cooperation had not only been the basis for overcoming the age-old enmity, but also formed the core of European integration. Dietmar Hertz and Christian Jetzelsperger, *Die Europäische Union* (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck 2008), 9. Because the relationship between Paris and Washington was not always free of political tensions during the Cold War, Germany attempted to avoid taking sides with one or the other of its two most important international partners. Thus, a "sowohl als auch" ("as well as" or "both and") foreign policy emerged that often mediated between diverging French and U.S. positions. Hanns W. Maull, "Normalisierung oder Auszehrung? Deutsche Außenpolitik im Wandel," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B11 (2004), 18.

⁷² Lantis, *Strategic Dilemmas and the Evolution of German Foreign Policy Since Unification*, 2.

⁷³ Gareis, *Militärische Beiträge zur Sicherheit*, 103.

⁷⁴ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 26.

⁷⁵ Horst Boog, "Die Wehrverfassung der Bundesrepublik," in *Verteidigung im Bündnis. Planung, Aufbau und Bewährung der Bundeswehr 1950-1972*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Munich: Bernard & Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1975), 92–3.

many Germans had no taste for rearmament. The potentially lethal consequences of the Cold War bloc confrontation made military solutions even less palatable. This deeply rooted skepticism over the use of force and the military became a basic feature of the German public and of parts of the political elites. Some observers called this phenomenon a “culture of antimilitarism.”⁷⁶ Against this background, notions of “*nie wieder Krieg*”—or “never again war”—were evoked.⁷⁷ These slogans contrasted with the claim of the ruling center-right parties that “never again alone” was the blueprint for German foreign policy; antimilitary voices in government and the media further questioned a West German military contribution to collective defense.⁷⁸

As a result, the question of whether or not there should be a new West German military so shortly after the national trauma of 1933–1945 perhaps affected West Germans more than any other contentious issue of the 1950s.⁷⁹ Initial plans of the Adenauer administration to contribute West German troops to the emerging European Defense Community (EDC) aroused energetic political resistance from the opposition and large parts of the public.⁸⁰ When the Federal Republic became a candidate for NATO membership after the failure of the EDC, new protests erupted, above all, because Bonn’s substantial share of the Alliance defense burden in Central Europe had to rely on universal male conscription. Objections against rearmament were voiced by political parties, labor unions, the churches and other social groups alike.⁸¹

In light of the threat imposed by the Soviets’ conventional forces, however, the FRG’s membership in NATO and the Bundeswehr were viewed as a necessary evil over time. Nonetheless, an antimilitaristic stance persisted in spite of the defensive character of the Bundeswehr. This rift became visible when the traditional social fabric of the Federal Republic was challenged by post-materialist struggles and the rise of critical

⁷⁶ For example, Thomas U. Berger, *Cultures of Antimilitarism*.

⁷⁷ This notion of “never again war” also comprised an element of “never again genocide.”

⁷⁸ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 25.

⁷⁹ Bernhard Fleckenstein, “50 Jahre Bundeswehr,” in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 21 (2005), 5.

⁸⁰ Johannes Varwick, “Bundeswehr,” in *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, eds. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007), 247.

⁸¹ Diefenbach, *Militärsgeschichte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 431.

student groups in the late 1960s and early 1970s. This emerging “new left” comprised different social movements such as women's rights, anti-nuclear, and environmental activists, and had a clearly pacifist bias. These movements were a part of West German society that loosely combined all those opposed to NATO’s nuclear rearmament on German territory, the use of military force, nuclear energy or even certain aspects of capitalism.⁸² The peace movement experienced a renaissance in the context of NATO's dual-track decision of 1979.⁸³ The prospect of a nuclear arms race partially taking place on German soil subsequently stirred resistance in significant parts of the German population.⁸⁴

Thus, “never again war” gradually joined “never again alone” as a basic tenet of the strategic culture of the Bonn Republic. The result of these two conflicting stances was a low profile security and defense policy that emphasized the strictly limited role of the West German military. National and collective defense were the only *raison d’être* of the Bundeswehr during the Cold War. Additionally, the prevalent antimilitarism called for armed forces that had to break with their historic record of authoritarianism and slavish obedience. The relationship between German soldiers and German state and society had to be completely redefined.

C. THE BUNDESWEHR AS THE NEW MODEL ARMY

When the course for West Germany’s rearmament and its NATO accession finally had been set in the early 1950s, the Adenauer government faced several challenges. Because West Germany was supposed to contribute a total of 500,000 troops

⁸² Dennis L. Bark, David R. Gress, *Democracy and its Discontents 1963–1988*, (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell 1989), 344.

⁸³ The stationing of Soviet highly-mobile SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles (IRBM) starting in 1976 had spurred new tensions between the two military blocs. NATO had responded with its dual-track decision that offered both immediate negotiations and the threat of deploying mobile U.S. medium-range ballistic missiles and cruise missiles to the European theater in order to counter the new threat and to reconstitute the principle of “mutual assured destruction.” As a consequence, the administration of then Chancellor Helmut Schmidt domestically pushed for NATO nuclear rearmament and therefore contributed to the cohesion of the Alliance, even against massive pressure from parts of the public.

⁸⁴ Anthony Glees, *Reinventing Germany: German Political Development since 1945*, (Oxford: Berg Publishers 1996), 222. For example, in October 1983 the largest demonstration in the FRG's history took place when 350,000 people protested against the stationing of new U.S. nuclear missiles in Germany. Fleckenstein, *50 Jahre Bundeswehr*, 12.

within only a few years, its new armed forces had to rely in part on former soldiers of the *Wehrmacht*.⁸⁵ While the U.S. government was not too unsettled by the idea of having battle-hardened German veterans forming a first line of defense against alleged Soviet expansionism at the time, other western allies like France were afraid of West Germany's military potential.⁸⁶ And, of course, on the domestic level Germany's homegrown antimilitarism fueled public debates about the pros and cons of rearmament.

In this context, a new strategic rationale and professional ethos for the Bundeswehr had to be found in order to calm the reservations in all quarters about the establishment of West German armed forces. The two approaches that were taken to resolve these issues had long-lasting effects on the Bundeswehr. On the international level, NATO provided a framework for harnessing the FRG's military power. The Bundeswehr had to be integrated into NATO command structures and deployed according to the respective strategic concepts of the Alliance.⁸⁷ On the domestic level, the armed forces had to be embedded in the pluralistic structures of the Federal Republic. As a consequence, a normative framework codified the primacy of democratic political control over the military.⁸⁸ Additionally, both the notion of "citizens in uniform" and general conscription served as the basis for the integration of the armed forces into West German politics and society.

1. Citizens in Uniform

The question of how to integrate armed forces into the democratic framework of a nation is of high significance for its democratic civil-military relations and the character of its defense and military institutions. The answer provides a deep insight into a

⁸⁵ Rudolf J. Schlaffer, "Der Aufbau der Bundeswehr: Reform oder Reformierung?" in *Reform-Reorganisation-Transformation. Zum Wandel in deutschen Streitkräften von den preußischen Heeresreformen bis zur Transformation der Bundeswehr*, eds. Karl-Heinz Lutz, Martin Rink, and Marcus von Salisch (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2010), 333–5.

⁸⁶ Taking into consideration that France had fought three total wars with Germany over the course of only seven decades, the initial French reluctance to support West German rearmament was unsurprising. Early proposals for the creation of the EDC therefore included plans to put future West German troops firmly under a European command.

⁸⁷ Diefenbach, *Militärgeschichte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 424–471.

⁸⁸ Wilfried von Bredow, *Militär und Demokratie in Deutschland. Eine Einführung*, 45.

country's strategic culture, as well as into the role of military power within its portfolio of policy tools in its political culture. Remarkably, the first version of the Federal German constitution, the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law),⁸⁹ had not even addressed the issue of armed forces because of West Germany's demilitarization shortly after the war.

When the Bundeswehr was founded, it was essential to fix German soldiers, as individual citizens, in the democratic principles and norms of the Basic Law. In contrast to the totalitarian ideology of the Nazi regime—which oversaw the suspension of the basic civil liberties guaranteed by the Weimar constitution and simply ignored the rest of the document—Article 1 of the Basic Law presents a firmly liberal and democratic vision of basic human rights: “Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority.” During the discussions about NATO accession for the FRG, the explicit inclusion of soldiers in this protection against the possible misuse of state power was a political precondition for rearmament.⁹⁰ As a consequence, the soldiers of the Bundeswehr were to be granted the same constitutional and democratic-participatory rights as any other citizen of the FRG, limited only insofar as necessary for military discipline during their time of military service.⁹¹ The reform-oriented founders of the Bundeswehr “desired that the recruit be first a human being; second, a citizen; and third, a soldier.”⁹²

This notion of West German soldiers as “citizens in uniform” or citizen soldiers is the core element of the concept of *Innere Führung*.⁹³ It bridges the gap between the duties and responsibilities of a soldier and the rights and liberties that inhere in an individual member of a democratic society. *Innere Führung* is the guiding principle for the inner order of the armed forces and for the relationship between the Bundeswehr, the

⁸⁹ The Basic Law had become effective on May 23, 1949.

⁹⁰ Federal Ministry of Defense, *Joint Service Regulation ZDv 10/1; Innere Führung* (Bonn, January 2008). Donald Abenheim, *Reforging the Iron Cross - The Search for Tradition in the West German Armed Forces*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1988), 88.

⁹¹ Wilke, *German Strategic Culture Revisited*, 59.

⁹² Donald Abenheim, *Soldiers and Politics Transformed—German American Reflections on Civil-Military Relations in a New Strategic Environment* (Berlin: Carola Hartmann Miles Verlag 2007), 24.

⁹³ The term *Innere Führung* is hardly translatable into English. The Joint Service Regulation ZDv 10/1 marks it as “Leadership Development and Civic Education.”

state, and society. At the same time, it provides behavioral norms as well as moral leadership, and orders the relationship between superiors and subordinates.⁹⁴ The concept of *Innere Führung* was revolutionary at the time because it created a new self-image of the Bundeswehr and deliberately broke with the military traditions of the soldiers of the Weimar-era Reichswehr and of Hitler's Wehrmacht.

In this context of binding the armed forces to democratic principles and values and perpetuating a close link between the Bundeswehr and a skeptical society, conscription played a central role and incrementally developed into a hallmark of the Bonn Republic's civil-military relations and strategic culture. Thus, compulsory military service was much more than a prerequisite for mobilizing the large manpower resources necessary for collective defense. Rather, the constant influx of recruits from all social strata would turn the Bundeswehr into a reflection of the pluralistic West German society. Conscription was therefore regarded as an ideal means "to preclude the Bundeswehr's isolation from society, to ensure the congruence of military and societal values, and to guard against the emergence of the military as state within the state."⁹⁵

2. Primacy of Democratic Political Control

The most important constitutional and legal prerequisite for embedding the Bundeswehr in the democratic state and society was the so-called *Wehrverfassung*.⁹⁶ This adjustment of the constitution in 1956 set forth the main pillars that legitimized the West German armed forces and established the outlines of an all-embracing civilian control of the Bundeswehr.⁹⁷ As a consequence, the Bonn Republic renounced the historically

⁹⁴ "Die Konzeption der Inneren Führung," Official website of the Zentrum Innere Führung, http://www.innerefuehrung.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/zinfue/!ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP3I5EyrpHK94uyk-KrMvLTSVL3MvLzUotT4NL3s_Lyq1IKSTP2CbEdFADTnmbU!/#par4 (accessed April 30, 2011).

⁹⁵ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 43–4.

⁹⁶ Intense debates between the ruling CDU/CSU and the opposition paved the way for this amendment to the Basic Law that became effective in March 1956. Official website of the Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt, <http://50jahrebw.bundeswehr.de/mgfa/abschnitt2-1-3.htm> (accessed April 30, 2011).

⁹⁷ In the context of the antimilitaristic preoccupations among elites and the general public in the mid-1950s, rigorous civilian control had to ensure that German armed forces were henceforth unable to form a state within the state again.

charged notion of supreme command vested in the head of state.⁹⁸ Rather, Article 65a stressed that the power of peacetime national military command and authority is wielded by the Federal Minister of Defense.⁹⁹ Article 87a of the Basic Law posited the essentially defensive nature of the West German armed forces and the primacy of democratic political control in the form of parliamentary scrutiny.¹⁰⁰ The Bundestag (parliament) not only had the right to approve the annual defense budget, but also the structure and the manning level of the Bundeswehr.¹⁰¹ Additionally, the unique office of the *Wehrbeauftragter* (Parliamentary Commissioner of the Armed Forces) was created with the dual purpose of enhancing parliamentary supervision and allowing the soldiers of the Bundeswehr to voice their complaints and grievances directly and outside the military chain of command.¹⁰²

This central principle of democratic control of the armed forces was not only enshrined in the Basic Law, but it was also reflected in the organizational structures within the BMVg itself. The position of the Federal Minister of Defense combined the functions of commanding the armed forces in peacetime and heading the defense administration.¹⁰³ Based on the *Ressortprinzip* (departmental principle), the Minister of

⁹⁸ Because the armed forces are part of the executive, they are subject to the overall *Richtlinienkompetenz* (power to determine policy guidelines) of the Federal Chancellor instead. Horst Boog, *Die Wehrverfassung der Bundesrepublik*, 94.

⁹⁹ According to Article 65a (1), “Command of the armed forces shall be vested in the Federal Minister of Defense.” In times of war, command is transferred upon the promulgation of a state of defense; the power of command over the armed forces shall pass to the Federal Chancellor.

¹⁰⁰ This article states that “The Federation shall establish armed forces for purposes of defense. Their numerical strength and general organizational structure must be shown in the budget.” Furthermore, Article 87b institutionalizes and separates the competences and responsibilities of the armed forces from those of a civil “Federal Defense Administration.” The latter is responsible for general issues such as legal affairs, social services, military basing, infrastructure, and supervision of the defense budget.

¹⁰¹ It also decides on issues such as the FRG’s commitment to international treaties or the duration of the compulsory service. Diefenbach, *Militärsgeschichte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, 432.

¹⁰² Article 45b of the Basic Law states that “A Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces shall be appointed to safeguard basic rights and to assist the Bundestag in exercising parliamentary oversight over the Armed Forces.”

¹⁰³ The Federal Minister of Defense is the supreme administrative authority for all soldiers. The instructions and directives of the BMVg to the Bundeswehr are issued by or on behalf of the Minister of Defense. Therefore, political control over the Bundeswehr is not confined to the basic defense policy, but also bears on the armed forces in their day-to-day routine. Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 1985*, 165.

Defense has the right to run his portfolio more or less independently.¹⁰⁴ In exercising his administrative and command authorities he was supported by civilian *Staatssekretäre* (State Secretaries/ Undersecretaries of Defense—either from parliament or the career civil service) and different military and civilian divisions within the Ministry. The latter took ministerial decisions for the Bundeswehr as a whole and planned and directed the activities of the defense administration for the armed forces; the former executed the functions of a supreme headquarters for all Bundeswehr soldiers.¹⁰⁵

It is important to note in this context that, despite its complex structures at the ministerial level, the Cold War Bundeswehr had no capacities to plan and conduct autonomous military missions outside of alliance command echelons. Because of the unease among the allied powers about West Germany's military potential, Bonn had to abdicate national command and control over most of its standing forces save for the “territorial army” that existed from the 1960s until the 1990s.¹⁰⁶ There was consensus between the allies and West German politicians that there would be no old-fashioned *Generalstab* (general staff) in the Bundeswehr.¹⁰⁷ As a consequence, the highest ranking military officer in the Bundeswehr, the *Generalinspekteur* (chief of staff, Bundeswehr), only had limited powers of leadership and command.¹⁰⁸ This four-star general acted as

¹⁰⁴ Sven Bernhard Gareis, “Die Organisation der Sicherheitspolitik in Deutschland - Akteure, Kompetenzen, Verfahren und Perspektiven,” in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik. Herausforderungen, Akteure und Prozesse*, eds. Sven Bernhard Gareis and Stephan Böckenförde (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009), 79–98.

¹⁰⁵ These dual functions contributed to a large increase in the overall size of the BMVg. The result was a large defense bureaucracy of more than 4,000 people. Dieter Bangert, “Organisatorische Entwicklung der Bundeswehr,” in *Verteidigung im Bündnis. Planung, Aufbau und Bewährung der Bundeswehr 1950-1972*, ed. Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Munich: Bernard & Graefe Verlag für Wehrwesen, 1975), 129–130.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas-Durell Young, “Post-unification German military organisation: the struggle to create national command structures,” in *Germany at fifty-five: Berlin ist nicht Bonn?*, ed. James Sperling, (New York: Manchester University Press 2004), 327. Unilateral deployments of Bundeswehr troops were categorically out of the question at the time.

¹⁰⁷ Detlef Bald, *Die Bundeswehr. Eine kritische Geschichte 1955-2005* (Munich: Verlag C.H. Beck, 2005), 41. Historically, the *Generalstab* had been a key element of Prussia's and—later on—the German Empire's military. Notwithstanding its importance for the evolution of operational art and planning, this entity was regarded as a symbol of the German militarism.

¹⁰⁸ The so-called “*Blankeneser Erlass*” (Blankenese Directive) of 1970 basically set the framework for his position as the supreme military representative of the Bundeswehr. Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 1985*, 169.

the senior military advisor to the Defense Minister as well as to the Chancellor, and was responsible for exercising oversight for the development and implementation of force planning in the Bundeswehr.¹⁰⁹ However, he was not included in the official chain of command between the Minister and the armed forces. Rather, the three services enjoyed a relatively high degree of independence. The chiefs of staff of the army, the air force, and the navy were the highest representatives of their respective service. With regard to their responsibility of assuring the operational readiness of their services, they were immediately subordinate to the Federal Minister of Defense, without any intermediate authority in between.¹¹⁰

These arrangements arguably represented a *leitmotif* of checks and balances, based on the perceived failures of the past. In this connection, they served political, if not always practical, ends. By focusing on civil control and the dispersion of decision-making power within the BMVg, West Germany acquiesced into a defense ministry that may have worked well in the parameters of the Cold War, but whose checks and balances became problematic in the past twenty years. The limited powers of the *Generalinspekteur*, along with the autonomy of the three services, brought along incoherent planning and decision-making processes, a diffusion of responsibilities, and consistent disputes over scarce resources.¹¹¹

3. The Forward Defense of German and Alliance Territory

During the Cold War, the North Atlantic Alliance was the linchpin of the Federal Republic's security and defense policy.¹¹² The foundation of the Bundeswehr in 1955 was seen as establishing the main pillar of NATO defense of Central Europe. During the

¹⁰⁹ Young, *Post-unification German military organization*, 332.

¹¹⁰ With regard to their task of contributing to the development of a concept of defense, the service chiefs also acted as ministerial heads of division subordinate to the *Generalinspekteur*. Their staffs accomplished the functions of both a service command and a ministerial division. Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 1985*, 168.

¹¹¹ Schlaffer, *Der Aufbau der Bundeswehr: Reform oder Reformierung?*, 334–5. As within any large hierarchical organization, personalities could aggravate or decrease such side-effects.

¹¹² With regard to the international obligations of the FRG, Article 24 of the Basic Law allowed for West Germany's membership in international organizations including NATO. Article 24 (1) states: "The Federation may by a law transfer sovereign powers to international organizations."

following years the Bundeswehr gradually underwent a major force build-up. Figure 2 shows that within only a decade its peacetime strength went up to more than 450,000 troops in 1966. In the late 1980s, the Bundeswehr's strength stabilized at roughly 480,000 troops. This high manning level could only be accomplished and sustained by a combination of medium- and long-term volunteers and conscripts.¹¹³

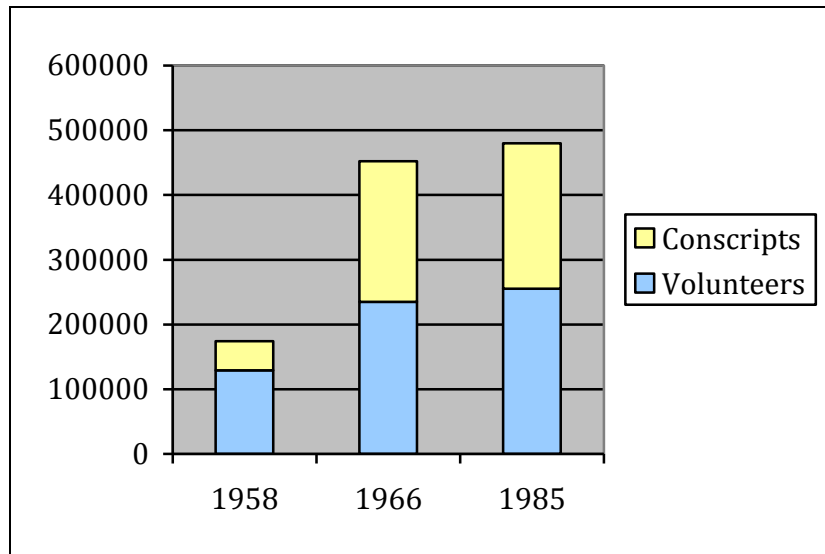


Figure 2. Peacetime Strength of the Bundeswehr During the Cold War¹¹⁴

With a total of 334,000 soldiers, the German Army accounted for the bulk of these Bundeswehr forces.¹¹⁵ As it supplied almost half of all ready land forces, it was the backbone of NATO defense at the eastern flank and consisted of the Army Field Forces and the Territorial Army.¹¹⁶ The Army Field Forces comprised a total of twelve divisions

¹¹³ In wartime this figure would have been increased to a total of 1.34 million soldiers through mobilization efforts, which made the Bundeswehr the largest governmental organization of West Germany.

¹¹⁴ Source: Varwick, *Bundeswehr*, 247.

¹¹⁵ Wilfried von Bredow. “The Defense of National Territory: the German Experience”, in *Defense Transformation in Europe: Evolving Military Roles*, eds. Timothy Edmunds and Marjan Malešič (Amsterdam: IOS Press 2005), 29.

¹¹⁶ Joseph E. Nation, *West German Military Modernization Goals, Resources, and Conventional Arms Control*, (Santa Monica: RAND 1991), 5. The Territorial Army was to stay outside the Alliance’s command structure and included three Territorial Commands with twelve home defense brigades. The Territorial Army’s mission was to protect vital installations in the rear, to maintain freedom of action of all forces on German territory, and to support NATO forces in West Germany. Federal Ministry of Defense. *White Paper 1985 - The Situation and Development of the Federal Armed Forces*, (Bonn 1985), 186.

with thirty-six combat ready brigades.¹¹⁷ These units were subordinate to three independent national army corps, which formed part of NATO’s “layer cake defense” in West Germany.

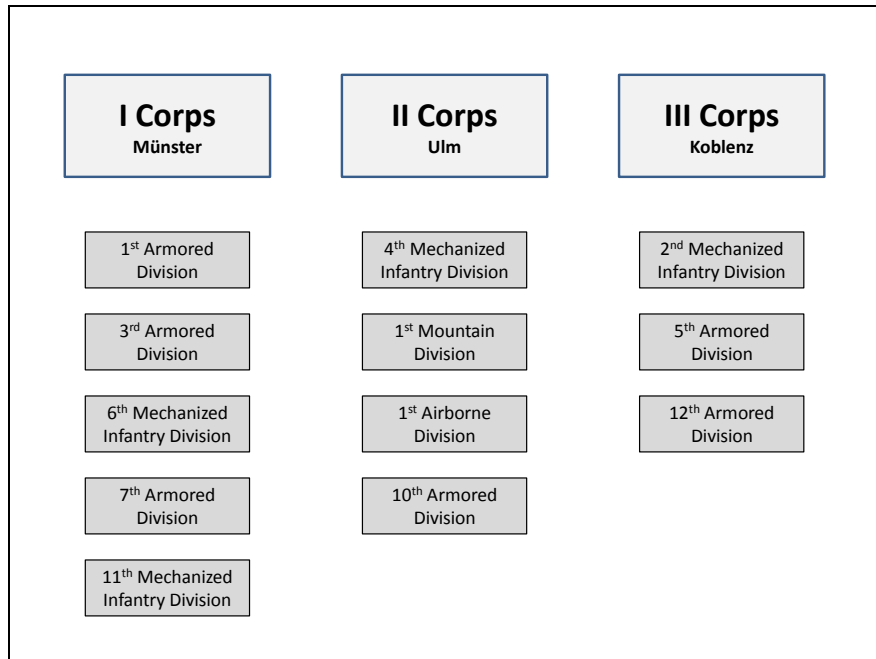


Figure 3. Army Structure 4 (ca. 1980–1992)¹¹⁸

As the main task of the Bundeswehr was to deter or to defeat any Soviet aggression, it relied heavily on a core of armored and mechanized army units. These forces were supposed to conduct combined arms operations, including air support, in order to counter advancing Warsaw Pact troops on German soil. Therefore, the whole Cold War arsenal of the Bundeswehr was based on equipment that was specialized for

¹¹⁷ Despite several consecutive structural reforms within the army, this figure remained unchanged throughout the Cold War. In the event of war the Army Field Forces would have defended in four corps sectors approximately half of the frontage between the Baltic Sea and the Alps and would also have contributed to NATO’s nuclear force posture. Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 1985*, 186.

¹¹⁸ Official website of the German army, <http://www.deutschesheer.de/portal/a/heer> (accessed October 30, 2010).

operational and tactical use in Central Europe.¹¹⁹ This focus on one single threat, namely conventional Warsaw Pact troops, came at the expense of capabilities to deploy over great distances and to operate remotely. The Bundeswehr, unlike other major Western allies, had no strategic capabilities or weapon systems¹²⁰ during this era. Other than using training installations or providing humanitarian aid, military missions abroad were unthinkable at that time; the term “power projection” was non-existent in West Germany’s military or political language.

In this NATO-centric world, organizational and structural adjustments or changes in capabilities, doctrine, and training of the Bundeswehr mainly followed alterations in the overall strategic approaches of the Alliance.¹²¹ Another aspect of this NATO-dependency was the issue of command and control. For example, the West German army had not established any form of central or joint command above the corps level because the three German corps commanders would have implemented their NATO defense plans under the respective army group headquarters of the Alliance: NORTHAG in Mönchengladbach and CENTAG in Heidelberg.¹²² The combat forces of the navy and the air force were NATO-assigned as well.

Thus, the Cold War structure of the Bundeswehr ensured a certain degree of international control over the FRG’s military potential through NATO and the allied

¹¹⁹ In the 1980s, the German army comprised a total of 2,700 main battle tanks, 1,800 infantry fighting vehicles, 600 self-propelled howitzers, and a multitude of anti-tank missile systems, anti-aircraft artillery, and rotorcraft combat aviation; the German air force could employ fighter and reconnaissance aircraft, fighter bombers, SAM batteries and tactical air transport capabilities. The German navy consisted of small vessels such as frigates, fast patrol boats, and submarines, which were optimized for naval operations in the Baltic Sea and in the North Sea.

¹²⁰ Such as aircraft carriers, amphibious assault ships, strategic bombers, cruise missiles, air-to-air refueling- and strategic airlift capabilities or satellites etc.

¹²¹ For example, NATO’s shift toward the strategy of *flexible response* at the end of the 1960s caused changes in the structure, readiness, and equipment of the army. This notion of NATO as a driving force for change is not intended, however, to neglect or underestimate the importance of other reforms at the time. Defense Minister Helmut Schmidt, for example, implemented profound reforms in the early 1970s in order to remove existing deficiencies with regard to the efficiency of structures and procedures as well as the training, education, and mindset of the soldiers. For a discussion of these reforms, see Bald, *Die Bundeswehr—Eine kritische Geschichte 1955-2005*, 70–98.

¹²² Young, *Post-unification German military organization*, 336.

forces stationed along the German-German border.¹²³ Organizational aspects and capabilities also mirrored contemporary West German views on security policy: the use of force only as a last resort, namely in an act of self defense, and the general rejection of any form of military intervention; being regarded as a reliable member of the Alliance by making a credible contribution to the overall NATO defense posture, and deterrence as a multilateral way of achieving political goals.

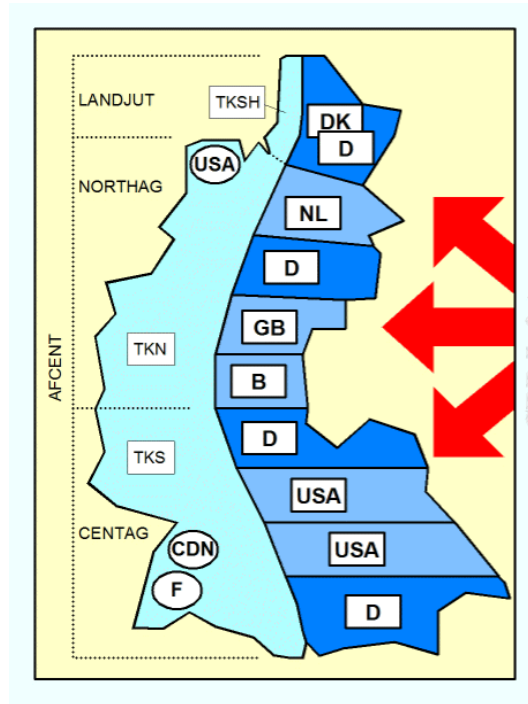


Figure 4. NATO's “Layer Cake Defense” of the FRG (ca. 1985)¹²⁴

D. CONCLUSION

In 1945, it was far from self-evident that the western remnant of Germany would eventually emerge as a democratic state with substantial military power only a decade later. The Cold War set the stage for a new international order in which the western allies embraced their former enemies. Bonn used this opportunity and committed itself to the West—politically, economically, and militarily. These efforts helped to establish a

¹²³ Detlef Bald, *Das Paradigma der Sicherheitspolitik in Deutschland – Die Rechte der vier Mächte*, SOWI-Arbeitspapier No. 36, (Munich: 1990), 6.

¹²⁴ Source: <http://www.crp-infotec.de/05sipo/kalterkrieg/grafs/vorneverteidigung.gif> (accessed September 4, 2010).

perception of the Federal Republic as a reliable partner, as well as overcoming national shame, international marginalization, and initial reservations of its neighbors. This good reputation served Bonn well over time because it could eventually begin to pursue its own political goals and interests through the multilateral channels and forums provided by NATO, the European Community, and other institutions.

Against this background, some observers might argue that West Germany's military contribution to the Alliance was just a means to an end—some sort of “admission fee” to an influential club of western democracies and organizations. Therefore, sacrificing sovereignty over its armed forces was acceptable for Bonn because it regained political influence in return. But on the other hand, the Federal Republic was not able to pursue an autonomous security and defense policy. Rather, NATO was the basic framework for all its security issues and concerns. By relying on NATO staffs, command arrangements, and resources, West Germany had no capacity for taking any unilateral military action. As a consequence, the Bundeswehr did not provide the FRG with a classical “hard power” instrument during this period.

Rather, the character of the Bundeswehr represented a compromise between the two competing elements of West German strategic culture. Embedding the young Federal Republic in western security institutions required that the Germans accept responsibility in international affairs. Rearmament was thus an expression of “never again alone,” and the Bundeswehr emerged as an instrument to demonstrate Bonn's willingness and solidarity.¹²⁵ At the same time, however, the foundation of the Bundeswehr also had to take into account the deep-rooted public skepticism about the armed forces and military service. In order to tame these domestic concerns of “never again war,” both the new organization and its soldiers had to be fully integrated into the democratic constitutional and social framework through conscription and a dense web of supervisory mechanisms and legal norms.

¹²⁵ West Germany's Cold War defense expenditures prove that it was serious about its share of the defense burden; the defense budget constantly remained at a level of above a 3.0 percent share of its GNP between 1956 and 1989. Wallace J. Thies, *Friendly Rivals. Bargaining and Burden-Shifting in NATO* (Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 2003), 197–203.

All in all, West Germany took a cautious approach of establishing its armed forces after the Second World War. In order to account for its NATO allies' historical experiences with German militarism, the Bonn Republic always emphasized the purely defensive nature of the Bundeswehr. Additionally, West German governments insisted on a restrictive interpretation of the Basic Law with regard to Bundeswehr missions abroad. As a consequence, the Alliance's territory was designated as the only area of Bundeswehr operations.¹²⁶ During the Cold War, this precept of the boundaries for the use of West German military force was repeatedly used to justify the refusal to send Bundeswehr troops into "out-of-area" missions during the Cold War. This self-restriction was countenanced, even broadly accepted, by the FRG's western allies.

In this context, the Bundeswehr could be seen as a purely territorial defense force that was legally limited to and technically optimized for the potential battlefields of Central Europe and was kept under close control of NATO. This perception was reinvigorated by the very nature of the security environment of the Cold War. Most contemporaries were aware that any Soviet surprise attack on Alliance territory would have been doomed to failure because of the nuclear deterrent and the policy of mutual assured destruction. Thus, a military apocalypse was rather unlikely at the time and the soldiers of the Bundeswehr savored their life in a relatively stable niche in the shadow of the two towering military blocs.

While the Bundeswehr conducted exercises in which it repelled fictitious Soviet invasions through the Fulda Gap, some of its closest western allies repeatedly fought proxy wars and intervened militarily in former colonies. For four decades the Bonn Republic was exempt from this form of *realpolitik* and never seriously called on to unleash its military might outside the static realm of the Alliance.

¹²⁶ Peter E. Quint, *Imperfect Union: Constitutional Structures of German Unification*, (Ewing: Princeton University Press 1997), 290.

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III. THE SEARCH FOR A NEW ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, 1990–1998

The perfect balance of German defense and security collapsed with the unforeseen fall of the “iron curtain” in 1989. The end of the bipolar world order marked a real caesura for Germany. With its unification in October 1990, the country achieved perhaps its most important foreign policy goal. On the one hand, this historical moment heralded the reclamation of full sovereignty and a significant increase in national power. But, on the other hand, the end of the Cold War also left the largest Western European military force, the Bundeswehr, without a plausible adversary, because both the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union were disintegrating. This turn of events also meant the end of the East German Nationale Volksarmee [NVA] (National People's Army). For a moment, as the last decade of the twentieth century dawned, the sudden end to the existential threat of the end-all Cold War nuclear showdown suggested that perhaps some kind of post-security age might follow.

But instead of “the end of history” and a millennium of “perpetual peace,” the aftermath of the Cold War brought a series of unanticipated security threats for which neither the previous era’s defense institutions, nor the pacifist optimism of 1989–1990, equipped Germany or its allies. To be sure, these threats did not present themselves immediately or with the clarity that they seem to have twenty years later.¹²⁷ The Iraqi aggression against Kuwait in 1990 and the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in 1991 were precursors of a rapidly changing international order in which new regional conflicts were starting to proliferate. Both the North Atlantic Alliance and Europe had to adapt their strategies and policies to these fast-paced changes in the international system. Eventually, multilateral crisis management and conflict prevention—even with military means—emerged as the proper answer.

Germany, however, had difficulties with effectively contributing to this broad approach because its Cold War strategic culture prevented the country from acting along

¹²⁷ This phrase relates to Fukuyama's widely recognized article about the triumph of Western liberalism: Francis Fukuyama, “The end of history?” *The National Interest*, No. 16 (summer 1989).

the same lines as its western partners. It took several years until a political consensus obtained on the elite level regarding issues of security and defense and Germany pursued a more active policy in international affairs. This initial ambivalence and reticence was reflected in slow and incoherent changes in the role, mission, and structure of the German armed forces in the 1990s. The Bundeswehr remained a classical defense force that relied on large numbers of conscripts and tactical capabilities that left it ill-prepared to participate in multinational out-of-area missions.

The German military was also affected by other domestic political and economic issues, most notably the consequences of unification. The defense budget and other areas of public spending were reduced substantially in favor of the overwhelming domestic need to rebuild the five new states of the ex-GDR. Additionally, the Bundeswehr had to incorporate or decommission the personnel and materiel of the NVA.

In all, growing external political pressure, as well as domestic constraints, prevented Germany from pursuing a more coherent security and defense policy during the later tenures of Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

A. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The Alliance's London declaration of July 1990 reflected the fundamental change that was about to take place—NATO not only offered the Warsaw Pact states peaceful cooperation, but also moved away from forward defense.¹²⁸ With the Soviet military arsenal no longer poised at its borders, Germany found itself with an unprecedented degree of external security.¹²⁹

However, the international context also put Germany under growing pressure to assume greater responsibility and to contribute to the promotion of peace and stability in this newly re-ordered world to an extent that corresponded with its substantial increases

¹²⁸ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 101.

¹²⁹ The Soviet decline and Germany's unification in 1990 caused a redistribution of power in Europe. With a population of more than 80 million, substantial territorial gains, and its economic resources, unified Germany emerged as the major actor in central Europe. As a consequence, fears of Germany aggressively seeking economic and military dominance over Europe occurred among its neighbors after 1990. Abenheim, *Soldiers and Politics Transformed*, 18.

in national resources and power because of unification.¹³⁰ International organizations such as the United Nations, now free of the almost perpetual stalemate in the Security Council, were beginning to ask Germany to make contributions to multilateral efforts of peacekeeping and peacemaking.

From a NATO perspective, the Gulf War and the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia illustrated the continuing importance of the Alliance for the security of its members as well as the necessity to adapt the organization to these new challenges.¹³¹ “Crisis management,” in the form of NATO intervention beyond its territorial borders, gradually became a new focal point of Alliance activities.¹³² The new NATO Strategic Concept of November 1991 pointed out that “the risks to Allied security that remain are multi-faceted in nature and multi-directional, which makes them hard to predict and assess.”¹³³ Therefore, it called for the development of “appropriate crisis management measures as required from a range of political and other measures, including those in the military field,”¹³⁴ in addition to its traditional role of collective defense.

At the same time, the European Allies aspired to a more independent role in security and defense. The Rome declaration of 1991 underlined that NATO as a whole favored this development of a European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) within the Alliance framework.¹³⁵ “It was hoped that the ESDI would enhance Europe's capacity to take political and military action, reduce its dependency on the United States, and establish a more balanced structure within the alliance.”¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 45–7.

¹³¹ Ian Q. R. Thomas, *The Promise of Alliance: NATO and the Political Imagination* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), 158.

¹³² David S. Yost, *NATO Transformed, The Alliance's New Roles in International Security* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1998), 189–192.

¹³³ North Atlantic Council, “The Alliance's New Strategic Concept,” November 7, 1991, par. 8, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm (accessed December 7, 2010).

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, par 32. Consequently, the Strategic Concept stressed the need for NATO forces which “will include, in a limited but militarily significant proportion, ground, air and sea immediate and rapid reaction elements able to respond to a wide range of eventualities, many of which are unforeseeable,” *ibid.*, par. 46.

¹³⁵ North Atlantic Council, “Declaration on Peace and Cooperation,” November 8, 1991, par. 6, available at: http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-B4DB8582-BFC17076/natolive/official_texts_23846.htm?mode=pressrelease (accessed December 7, 2010).

¹³⁶ Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 365.

The notion of a European pillar within NATO reflected developments in the European Union. The Maastricht Treaty of 1991 established a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which was based on intergovernmental decision-making. Transforming the WEU into the defense arm of the EU was intended to give the Union a key role in the future European security order. The Petersberg Declaration of 1992 stated that the WEU would conduct a full range of crisis response tasks, including humanitarian aid and rescue missions, peacekeeping tasks, and employing combat forces to peacemaking tasks.¹³⁷ Against this background, Germany and France also proposed the Eurokorps, a multinational corps-sized military unit capable of conducting these WEU missions from the basis of the Franco-German brigade.¹³⁸ In an attempt to promote trans-Atlantic burden-sharing and to further enhance the limited European military capabilities by ensuring access to NATO assets and capabilities for European military missions, the United States proposed a Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept in NATO in late 1993.¹³⁹

B. THE DOMESTIC CONTEXT

These expectations from Germany's allies put the foundations of post-war German strategic culture to the test. Domestic political disputes ignited over the future role of the German armed forces in international security affairs. Because the opposition was unable to come to terms with the strategic choices of the Kohl government, any form of consensus over this question could only be reached after a decision of the German Constitutional Court.¹⁴⁰ At the same time, however, Germany was trying to cope with the burdens of economic and social integration of the western and eastern parts of the country. Security issues were generally low on the national agenda after unification, and

¹³⁷ Western European Union Council of Ministers, "Petersberg Declaration," June 19, 1992; available at: <http://www.weu.int/documents/920619peten.pdf> (accessed December 7, 2010).

¹³⁸ Meiers, *A Change of Course? German Foreign and Security Policy after Unification*, 201.

¹³⁹ Yost, *NATO Transformed*, 200. The CJTF concept was finally approved in 1996.

¹⁴⁰ In this formative phase, the political center right parties pointed out that external expectations as well as historic lessons called for more responsibility in international security. The political left claimed exactly the opposite. Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 45. Thus, pacifistic constraints collided with alliance solidarity and humanitarian responsibility. Wilke, *German Strategic Culture Revisited*, 73.

the *Primat der Innenpolitik* (primacy of internal affairs) limited the options for change in German security and defense policy.¹⁴¹ The German perception of being “encircled by friends and allies” reinvigorated these trends.¹⁴²

1. Adjusting to the “Real World”

Even while Germany was still engaged in bringing together the two different social, economic, and military systems of its former Western and Eastern sides, the realities of the post-Cold War world challenged German pacifism at shocking speed. The Gulf War was particularly disturbing because it forced Germany to state, in detail, how it would define its role in such a conflict.¹⁴³ Early U.S. inquiries about whether Germany would be ready to send troops to the Gulf put the Kohl administration under severe political pressure.¹⁴⁴ The Bundeswehr’s active participation in the international coalition against Iraq was regarded as a form of repaying moral and political debts to the United States and other allies for strongly supporting German unification.¹⁴⁵

However, the German chancellor faced a series of obstacles to an active military involvement. First, when Saddam Hussein’s troops invaded Kuwait in the summer of 1990, German decision-makers were still preoccupied with negotiating the Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany (2+4 Treaty).¹⁴⁶ They concluded that at this

¹⁴¹ Kelleher and Fisher, *Germany*, 160–1.

¹⁴² Gunther Hellmann, “Sicherheitspolitik,” *Handbuch zur deutschen Außenpolitik*, eds. Siegmund Schmidt, Gunther Hellmann, and Reinhard Wolf (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007) 610.

¹⁴³ Gunther Hellmann, *Beyond Weltpolitik, Self-Containment and Civilian Power: United Germany’s Normalizing Ambitions*, IGS Discussion Papers Series Number 99/10 (Birmingham: Institute for German Studies, The University of Birmingham, 1999), 7.

¹⁴⁴ Thies, *Friendly Rivals*, 157. Claiming that “being more means doing more,” U.S. Secretary of State James Baker encapsulated the U.S. position regarding the increased responsibility of a unified Germany.

¹⁴⁵ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 49. Therefore, German decision-makers like Helmut Kohl initially considered sending troops alongside the UN-mandated coalition in the form of a flotilla of German minesweepers deployed to the Persian Gulf. Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 57.

¹⁴⁶ Against this background, Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher argued that the participation of the Bundeswehr in combat operations in the Gulf might be perceived by elements of the old political establishment in Moscow as a resurgence of German militarism. Such domestic political opposition against Gorbachev, who favored German unification, could have threatened the signing of the 2+4 Treaty in the Soviet Union.

point the completion of the delicate political task of unification should have precedence over discussions about new Bundeswehr missions.¹⁴⁷ Foreign Minister Genscher also referred to alleged constitutional constraints (Article 87a) and claimed that the participation of German troops in UN peacekeeping missions outside NATO territory would require an amendment to the Basic Law.¹⁴⁸ With an election pending and the public overwhelmingly disinclined to imagine such an engagement of German troops,¹⁴⁹ the Kohl administration officially adopted the Genscher view that the Basic Law prevented German combat troops from participating in the anti-Hussein coalition.¹⁵⁰ Similarly, Kohl sought broad support for his policy; and he was willing to follow a path which could satisfy diverging internal and external pressure groups. While continuing to reject the use of military force, he wanted to prove that Germany would at least do something to fulfill its role as a reliable NATO member.¹⁵¹ The result was a compromise: Germany's contribution to the international coalition mainly entailed financial aid, its "checkbook diplomacy,"¹⁵² and massive logistical support for the coalition's war effort. Additionally, and more significantly in terms of a departure from traditional patterns of abstaining from "out-of-area" missions, Germany agreed to further Bundeswehr deployments. Thus, German political elites realized the need to find a middle ground between strictly pacifist and excessively militarist attitudes toward the use of force.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense and Security*, 53.

¹⁴⁸ Hellmann, *Beyond Weltpolitik, Self-Containment and Civilian Power*, 11.

¹⁴⁹ In the light of the first federal elections of the unified Germany in December 1990, Chancellor Kohl wanted to avoid issues of war and peace becoming salient among a volatile electorate. Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense and Security*, 53.

¹⁵⁰ During the Cold War, all West German governments had insisted on a narrow interpretation of the Basic Law that defined the Alliance's territory as the only area of Bundeswehr operations. This dogma of the geographic limits of the use of military force was repeatedly used to justify the refusal to send West German troops into "out-of-area" missions. Quint, *Imperfect Union: Constitutional Structures of German Unification*, 290.

¹⁵¹ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense and Security*, 54.

¹⁵² Critics called it an "internationalized version of German social policy." Hacke, *60 Jahre Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 502. Thus, the Kohl administration clearly failed in communicating the substantial German contributions to the Gulf War.

¹⁵³ What followed the Gulf episode can be better described as a search for national identity rather than a (re)definition of national interests. Wilke, *German Strategic Culture Revisited*, 73.

In this context of domestic divisions over the meaning of security after the Cold War and Germany's responsibilities in the international community, the UN mission to Cambodia in 1992 provided Germany with an opportunity to account for growing external obligations and internal reluctance.¹⁵⁴ This mission had two advantages. First, it was a good starting point for further Bundeswehr out-of-area missions, because this Asian country did not present Germany with any "historical burdens" or conflicting interests. Second, the mission was limited to the provision of medical and humanitarian aid, which was expected to win international public favor and to appease the opposition in the Bundestag.¹⁵⁵

The violent break-up of the former Yugoslavia in 1991–1992 was the next step toward incremental change in German strategic culture. While the Kohl government had been widely criticized for its reluctance to employ military forces before and during *Desert Storm*, it was now accused of unilateralism because of its early recognition of Slovenia and Croatia.¹⁵⁶ On the domestic level, the pressure on the political leadership increased because the public was concerned about waves of refugees from the war zone.¹⁵⁷ Above all, the fruitless series of European diplomatic activities and unsuccessful cease-fires as well as the scale of the atrocities cast doubt on Genscher's consensus policy of "responsibility."¹⁵⁸ Even pacifists gradually realized that by insisting on the "never again war" principle, Germany risked being "singularized" vis-à-vis more assertive

¹⁵⁴ In early 1992, the German cabinet decided that Bundeswehr troops would be available for military missions based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter. As a consequence, 140 Bundeswehr medical specialists were deployed to Cambodia as part of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in May of the same year. The Bundeswehr troops mainly provided the members of the UNTAC mission with medical support and also ran a field hospital in Phnom Penh. Andreas M. Rauch, *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2006), 135–6.

¹⁵⁵ Hans Frank, "Nur von Freunden umgeben. Die veränderte Sicherheit nach Vereinigung und Überwindung des Kalten Krieges," in *Die Bundeswehr 1955-2005. Rückblenden, Einsichten, Perspektiven*, ed. Frank Nögler, Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 443.

¹⁵⁶ Helga Haftendorn, *Deutsche Außenpolitik zwischen Selbstbeschränkung und Selbstbehauptung, 1945-2000* (Stuttgart, Munich: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2001), 409. Some international observers perceived this step as a sign of growing German nationalism. However, it might be more accurate to state that the recently unified Germany demonstrated respect for a people's right of self-determination.

¹⁵⁷ Weisswange, *Der sicherheitspolitische Entwicklungsprozess der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1990-2002*, 58.

¹⁵⁸ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 46.

European partners like Britain or France.¹⁵⁹ This uneasiness was reinforced by lessons of the past: despite the disreputable role of the Wehrmacht in the Balkans during World War II, images of Serbian concentration camps triggered a moral debate that touched a historic nerve.¹⁶⁰

Under which circumstances could the Bundeswehr be used outside German borders and what constitutional instruments were needed? These questions resulted in a new consensus within the ruling coalition. Because an attempt to achieve a clarifying amendment to the Basic Law had been stalled due to overly restrictive demands by the opposition and a lack of public support, the CDU/CSU-FDP government initiated a process of gradually expanding the type and number of Bundeswehr out-of-area missions.¹⁶¹

Against this backdrop, Germany's decision to support *UNOSOM II*¹⁶² with ground troops heralded a new dimension of Bundeswehr out-of-area missions.¹⁶³ The Kohl government repeatedly emphasized the purely humanitarian nature of the mission and insisted on a deployment to an untroubled part of Somalia in order to minimize the risk of clashes between German troops and militant elements of the local population. Nonetheless, members of the opposition became enraged about this alleged "militarization" of German foreign policy and filed a formal complaint with the German Constitutional Court in June 1993 in order to prevent the deployment.¹⁶⁴

¹⁵⁹ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 61.

¹⁶⁰ Kelleher and Fisher, *Germany*, 168.

¹⁶¹ Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 193. These "salami tactics" were used on several occasions, for example, during operations *Sharp Guard* in the Adriatic Sea and *Deny Flight* over Bosnia. The German government labeled these deployments as "humanitarian missions" and argued that there was no need for parliamentary approval because of their alleged non-military character.

¹⁶² UNOSOM is the abbreviation for United Nations Operation in Somalia.

¹⁶³ During a visit to Bonn in early 1993, the UN Secretary General had already tried to appeal to the German "sense of duty" by reminding the German public of the importance of a German participation in peace-keeping, peace-making, and peace-building efforts. Lantis, *Strategic Dilemmas and the Evolution of German Foreign Policy Since Unification*, 93.

¹⁶⁴ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 62.

The subsequent leading decision of the Court can be regarded as one of the turning points that paved the way for a continuous German participation in international military missions. With a final decision on July 12, 1994:

the Court ruled that the deployment of German troops in military operations outside of NATO area was constitutional, provided they formed part of a multilateral operation designed to uphold international peace and security, carried out by an organization of collective security such as NATO, WEU, or the UN.¹⁶⁵

Furthermore, each individual deployment required approval by a simple majority of the Bundestag. This groundbreaking decision was of utmost importance because it realigned the framework of German political and strategic culture. On the one hand, it promoted consensus building on the elite level and silenced moderate critics. On the other hand, it emphasized the central role of the Bundestag in questions of the use of force.¹⁶⁶ However, the ruling did not end Germany's restrained style of security policy or bring about an irreversible change to established perspectives on the use of force.¹⁶⁷

When the situation in Bosnia deteriorated and international attempts to solve the crisis gained momentum, Germany was again called on to contribute to these efforts with military means. Despite the favorable Constitutional Court decision, the debates in the Bundestag continued, but illustrated that the rift between the government and the opposition had shifted to a clash between moderate and strictly pacifist politicians within the opposition.¹⁶⁸ In this context, the mass killing of Bosnian Muslim civilians in the UN-controlled area around Srebrenica in mid-1995 marked a real turning point for numerous German pacifists.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁵ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 62.

¹⁶⁶ Therefore, it pointed to one of the cornerstones of civil-military relations in post-war Germany: the primacy of (parliamentary) political control over the Bundeswehr.

¹⁶⁷ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 65.

¹⁶⁸ Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 227.

¹⁶⁹ They realized that the "never again war" principle must not prevent intervention in cases of extreme human rights abuses and continuous aggression against ethnic minorities. Thus, "converted pacifists" later became strong advocates of a "never again genocide" stance. Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 46.

As a consequence, more than 80 percent of all Bundestag members approved the decision to deploy Bundeswehr troops to Croatia in order to support NATO's IFOR mission in Bosnia in December 1995.¹⁷⁰ NATO's follow-on operation—the Stabilization Force (SFOR)—received a similar approval and underlined Germany's new willingness to actively support multilateral peace-keeping operations which were based on a UN Security Council mandate. This evolution of strategic culture had repercussions for the German armed forces: The Bundeswehr was forced to adapt its structures, doctrine, and equipment to these new missions.

2. The Impact of Unification and the Role of Key Actors

At the same time, the staggering and ongoing costs of unification proved to be a substantial drain on national resources.¹⁷¹ The Kohl government underestimated the magnitude of the economic backlog caused by forty years of “real-existing socialism” in Germany's five new *Länder* (states). Financial transfers to these parts of Germany added up to an annual average of DM 137 billion throughout the 1990s.¹⁷² This dismal state of affairs constantly led to calls for tax increases as well as reductions in public spending.

In the absence of an immediate threat, the defense budget did not remain untouched by these cuts, with serious consequences for the Bundeswehr. The defense expenditure as a share of Germany's GDP fell from more than 3 percent to 2.2 percent

¹⁷⁰ Germany committed a total of 4,000 troops to NATO's first out-of-area ground force mission. A contingent of 2,700 ground troops was deployed to Croatia with a robust mandate. Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 71. Despite the fact that the German mission was relatively modest in comparison with some other allies, it was an important deployment: German elites had finally overcome their reservations about sending German troops into an area which had suffered badly under German occupation during the Second World War.

¹⁷¹ Other financial burdens weighed heavily on the German budget, as well: In conjunction with the 2+4 Treaty, Germany had agreed to finance the redeployment of the Western Group of Soviet forces in East Germany; these costs added up to a total of DM 15 billion. Wolfgang F. Schlör, *German Security Policy. An examination of the trends in German security policy in a new European and global context*, Adelphi Paper 277 (London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1993), 92. Germany's decision not to join combat operations against Saddam Hussein in 1991 cost another DM 18 billion in the form of financial aid for its allies. Karl Kaiser and Klaus Becher, “Germany and the Iraq conflict,” in *Western Europe and the Gulf*, eds. Nicole Gnessotto and John Roper (Paris: The Institute for Security Studies of the Western European Union, 1992), 55.

¹⁷² Michael Münter and Roland Sturm, “Economic Consequences of German Unification,” in *The Berlin Republic: German Unification and a Decade of Changes*, eds. Winand Gellner and John D. Robertson (Portland: Frank Cass & Co., 2003), 182.

between 1989 and 1994, and then dropped further to 1.6 percent between 1995 and 1999.¹⁷³ The BMVg often was forced to compensate for the reductions by taking money out of investment because personnel costs were largely fixed in the short term.¹⁷⁴ These “emergency measures” sometimes even affected the procurement of equipment that was assigned for out-of-area operations.¹⁷⁵ Dwindling resources also negatively affected the operational readiness of Bundeswehr units.¹⁷⁶ In response, Defense Minister Volker Rühle attempted to free resources by closing several military installations. However, to the extent that garrisons meant purchasing power and employment for local workers, especially in remote, economically underdeveloped regions of Germany, any such base-closing scheme was likely to spur stiff resistance by *Länder* governments and their electorates. In fact, Rühle's plans faced so much opposition by the SPD and local authorities that the initial proposal had to be withdrawn.¹⁷⁷ Even members of his own cabinet (e.g., Finance Minister Theo Waigel) did not support shutting down a large number of bases.

¹⁷³ Hellmann, *Sicherheitspolitik*, 610. Later proposals met similar patterns of behavior.

¹⁷⁴ In 1992, the Defense Minister announced reductions in expenditures on procurement by DM 44 billion over the next twelve years. Many projects that stemmed from Cold War planning were postponed, reduced, or cancelled. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 159.

¹⁷⁵ Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 272.

¹⁷⁶ Shrinking funds resulted in cutbacks in training, exercises, and maintenance. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 151.

¹⁷⁷ Schlör, *German Security Policy*, 43.

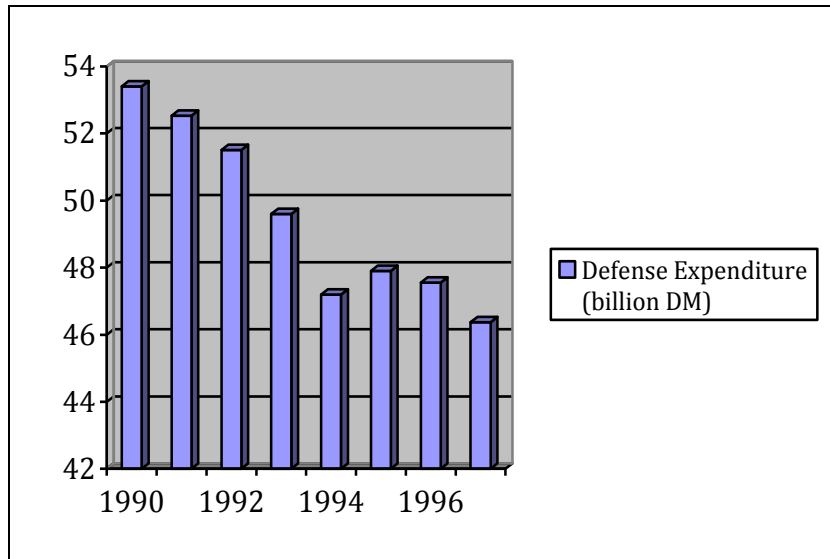


Figure 5. German Defense Expenditure 1990–1997¹⁷⁸

The period from 1990 to 1998 also illustrates why some observers have called Germany a *Kanzlerdemokratie* (Chancellor Democracy), “that is a democratic system rotating around the institution of the Chancellor who occupies center stage with the Foreign Minister and other important secretaries and their officials in supporting roles.”¹⁷⁹ Chancellor Kohl, who had played a crucial and assertive leadership role in the process of unification, often dominated German foreign and security policy issues with direct ramifications for the Bundeswehr at the time. For example, the 2+4 Treaty required the Bundeswehr to reduce its peacetime strength to 370,000 troops by 1994. However, this figure was not the result of deliberate and long-term strategic planning. Rather, it was the political concession that Chancellor Kohl had made to achieve General Secretary Gorbachev’s consent for a NATO membership of reunified Germany during a bilateral meeting of the two leaders in the Caucasus in July 1990.¹⁸⁰

Kohl sometimes even made final decisions concerning issues of security and defense without prior consultations with his Defense Minister. For example, the decision

¹⁷⁸ Source: Dirk Koob, *Deutsche Militärpolitik in den neunziger Jahren. Wie (selbst-)organisiert ist die Bundeswehr?* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 1999), 60.

¹⁷⁹ Haftendorn, *Coming of Age*, 5.

¹⁸⁰ Karl Kaiser, “Germany’s Unification,” *Foreign Affairs*, No. 1 (1990/1991), 198. This troop ceiling only later became the subject of the 2+4 negotiations as well as the CFE talks.

to send German troops to Iraq in 1991 in order to provide humanitarian aid in the aftermath of operation *Desert Storm*, as well as his agreement with the French President Mitterand to establish the multinational Eurokorps, were not initiated by the BMVg.¹⁸¹ These episodes show that developments on the international scene were not the only driving forces for the politics of German defense and security at the time.

C. THE BUNDESWEHR AFTER 1989: UNCERTAINTY AND THE BURDENS OF THE PAST

The sequence and complexity of crises and risks that emerged after 1989 did not allow for any intermission in security and defense issues. The Bundeswehr could not provide the imaginary “peace dividend” that the German public longed for. Instead of being able to take the initiative and to formulate a long-term strategic policy that would meet the new challenges, the Bundeswehr could only react to growing external and internal pressures.

1. The Incorporation of the East German National People’s Army

On October 3, 1990, West and East Germany were officially unified. One day prior to unification, the Nationale Volksarmee ceased to exist. The Bundeswehr subsequently assumed command over all remnants of the military forces of the former GDR.¹⁸² Some 90,000 East German servicemen were still on active duty at the time.¹⁸³ Despite some initial West German proposals for the instantaneous dismissal of all NVA soldiers, the BMVg decided to abolish the NVA as a whole, but to retain parts of its personnel so as to organize an orderly disbandment and to establish new structures.¹⁸⁴ Thus, starting in August 1990 substantial manpower, planning, and financial resources of the Bundeswehr were directed to plan and execute this complex task.

¹⁸¹ Wolfgang F. Schlör, *German Security Policy*, 18.

¹⁸² In 1989 the authorized strength of the NVA was 175,000.

¹⁸³ Of the 90,000 soldiers, 50,000 were regulars; 11,000 of these were later selected for employment in the Bundeswehr. Additionally, 48,000 civilian employees were still on the pay roll. Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper on the Security of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Situation and Future of the Bundeswehr 1994* (Bonn, 1994), 15.

¹⁸⁴ Abenheim, *Soldiers and Politics Transformed*, 21.

The obligations of the 2+4 Treaty—namely the condition not to station any NATO troops in the new *Länder* until 1994—forced the Bundeswehr to meet these challenges on its own. For the first time in its history the Bundeswehr established a joint command, the *Bundeswehrkommando Ost* (Bundeswehr Eastern Command) in Strausberg on the eastern periphery of Berlin. Immediately, its staff had to incorporate the remnants of the NVA, incrementally decommission its units as well as dismiss most of the personnel, exercise control over the eastern part of German territory, and closely cooperate with the Western Group of the Red Army in order to ensure a safe and orderly withdrawal of these Soviet troops.¹⁸⁵

The Bundeswehr became responsible for a total of 2,300 military installations in East Germany. Most of these facilities were in a poor state of repair and had to be renovated or sold. Additionally, the Bundeswehr had to take over extensive materiel from the holdings of the former NVA, most of which in turn had to be scrapped.¹⁸⁶ This materiel had to be concentrated at central sites, securely guarded, and prepared for a handover to international allies or destruction. The costs for the demolition and disposal of hazardous or out-dated NVA materiel alone added up to DM 1.4 billion.¹⁸⁷ As late as 1994, more than ten percent of Germany's defense expenditure was still consumed by such unification-related costs.¹⁸⁸ As a consequence, the acceptance of the NVA's "inheritance" under the terms of the 2+4 Treaty was probably "the most extraordinary phase since [the Bundeswehr's] foundation in the 1950s."¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Jörg Schönbohm, *Zwei Armeen und ein Vaterland. Das Ende der Nationalen Volksarmee* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1992), 33. The *Bundeswehrkommando Ost* was disbanded in July 1991 and the command of the new Bundeswehr units was transferred to the Chiefs of Staff of the army, the air force, and the navy.

¹⁸⁶ For example, 2,300 tanks, 85,000 motor vehicles, 192 war ships, and approximately 300,000 tons of ammunition. Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 1994*, 16–7.

¹⁸⁷ Frank, *Nur von Freunden umgeben*, 14.

¹⁸⁸ Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 149.

¹⁸⁹ Donald Abenheim, "German Unity and Military Professionalism: The Officer Corps of the German Armed Forces Confronts the Legacy of the *Nationale Volksarmee*, November 1989-January 1993," in *International Politics and German History: The Past Informs the Present*, eds. David Wetzel and Theodore Hamerow (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1997), 104. For further information about German unity and the Bundeswehr see: Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 1994*, 11–21. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Armee der Einheit 1990 - 2000*, (Bonn: 2000).

2. Strategies for the New Environment

As early as July 1990, an expert commission was established by the BMVg to develop proposals for the future role and tasks of the Bundeswehr, the first of many in the years to come.¹⁹⁰ In 1991, the commission's final report concluded that German security would continue to be influenced by the degree of stability in the former Soviet Union. As a result, territorial defense would remain the core function of the Bundeswehr.¹⁹¹ However, the report also stated that peacekeeping and peacemaking missions under the auspices of the UN should become part of the Bundeswehr's tasks.¹⁹²

The BMVg developed its own conceptual framework at the end of 1991.¹⁹³ Subsequently, this strategic proposal became a basis for the new *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien* [VPR] (Defense Policy Guidelines), which were published by Defense Minister Rühle in November 1992—but not in the form of the *Weissbuch* (Defense White Paper) as had happened in 1985.¹⁹⁴ By pointing to emerging regional conflicts on the European periphery, the VPR stressed the need to redefine the European role and strategic horizon of unified Germany. The use of military capabilities not only comprised territorial defense but also an active prevention and, if necessary, termination of crises and conflicts in Europe.¹⁹⁵

However, being the product of only one ministry, the VPR lacked broader political support. Thus, the Kohl government only published its first post-Cold War

¹⁹⁰ It was headed by Professor Hans-Adolf Jacobsen, a political scientist. Koob, *Deutsche Militärpolitik in den neunziger Jahren*, 105.

¹⁹¹ Frank, *Nur von Freunden umgeben*, 442.

¹⁹² Koob, *Deutsche Militärpolitik in den neunziger Jahren*, 106.

¹⁹³ Klaus Naumann, "Der Wandel des Einsatzes von Katastrophenhilfe und NATO-Manöver zur Anwendung von Waffengewalt und Friedens erzwingung," in *Die Bundeswehr 1955-2005: Rückblenden-Einsichten-Perspektiven*, ed. Frank Nögler (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2007), 481.

¹⁹⁴ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien* (Bonn: November 1992).

¹⁹⁵ Wilke, *German Strategic Culture Revisited*, 73. Remarkably, the VPR apparently incorporated basic ideas of structural realism as they stressed the notion of a transatlantic "partnership of equals" and also claimed that Germany was a "continental middle power" with national interests that included an unhampered access to markets and raw materials. This strategic agenda collided with traditional notions of Germany being a "civilian power." Unsurprisingly, the paper resulted in expressions of disquiet and was regarded as a harbinger of some sort of German unilateralism. Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 99.

White Paper in April 1994, nine years after the last such document and in a different, more corporate look form than the White Papers of the era 1969–1985. Direct attacks against Germany or other NATO members were seen as unlikely, but continued to pose the most risk to German security—above all, because future developments in the former Soviet Union remained unpredictable.¹⁹⁶ Such an official assessment illustrates that it was a difficult and long-term process for contemporary military and political elites to abandon their traditional patterns of security thinking, with its emphasis on classic interstate warfare. Consequently, the 1994 White Paper echoed the main findings of the 1991 BMVg commission and continued to identify territorial defense as the primary task of the Bundeswehr. At the same time, however, the Bundeswehr was supposed to contribute to crisis management within the Alliance framework, the Petersberg tasks of the WEU, or under the Charter of the UN.¹⁹⁷

The ambiguity of these three different documents (commission report, VPR, and White Paper) and their lack of strategic coherence clearly reflected all the uncertainties about possible security threats, as well as Germany's future role in international affairs that prevailed among political elites at that time. The White Paper's plans for the future force structure of the Bundeswehr also mirrored this indecisiveness. The German armed forces were to consist of standing reaction forces (RF) for crisis prevention and largely mobilization-dependent main defense forces (MDF).¹⁹⁸ While these national precepts corresponded with strategic thinking in NATO and underlined Germany's preference for effective multilateralism, they also revealed some sort of "strategic helplessness." On the one hand, a small part of the Bundeswehr had to be made available for out-of-area missions in order to manage crises where they emerged and to live up to international expectations. On the other hand, in the face of instability and obstacles for a democratic transition in the former Soviet Union, the bulk of the forces kept being organized and equipped for fending off Cold War-style attacks.

¹⁹⁶ Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 146.

¹⁹⁷ Varwick, *Bundeswehr*, 249.

¹⁹⁸ Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 1994*, 89.

In this context of perceived security threats that might still loom in the east, it is unsurprising that all of these documents also called for the retention of conscription—based on “historico-political, security-related, social and military grounds.”¹⁹⁹ Thus, a conservative risk assessment prevented Germany from taking a more ambitious approach to changing existing force structures by converting the Bundeswehr into an all-volunteer force and making serious attempts to acquire capabilities for force projection and expeditionary warfare.

3. Attempts to Restructure the Armed Forces

The obligations of the 2+4 Treaty, international arms control agreements such as the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty),²⁰⁰ and, above all, the amalgamation of the Bundeswehr and the NVA, confronted the German armed forces with Herculean tasks during the first tenure of the Kohl government. All efforts to restructure the armed forces between 1990 and 1994 focused on the tight schedule for downsizing the post-unification Bundeswehr from 588,000 to 370,000 troops—according to the ceiling of the 2+4 Treaty.²⁰¹ Another obstacle to military reform was the fact that the German army was in a transition phase to another structure that had already been planned in 1989.²⁰²

At the end of 1993, repeated cuts in the defense budget forced the BMVg to initiate further reductions in the Bundeswehr’s strength.²⁰³ Official plans that were

¹⁹⁹ Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 1994*, 85.

²⁰⁰ The arms control regime of the CFE Treaty, which was signed in November 1990, resulted in additional limits for the Bundeswehr with regard to military equipment. Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 61. For example, Germany was allowed to have 4,166 main battle tanks. However, due to the takeover of the National People’s Army (NVA) of the former German Democratic Republic, it had more than 7,000 at the time. Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 1994*, 72.

²⁰¹ Rolf Clement and Paul E. Jöris, *50 Jahre Bundeswehr 1955-2005* (Hamburg: Verlag E.S. Mittler & Sohn GmbH, 2005), 113.

²⁰² The army was restructuring from *Heeresstruktur 4* (Army Structure 4) to *Heeresstruktur 5*. The roadmap for this transition was only slightly changed after 1990 because of the incorporation of the NVA, the establishment of national structures in East Germany, and the first out-of-area missions had a higher priority.

²⁰³ Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 153. Military officials believed that these measures would free additional financial resources.

released in July 1994 called for an overall peacetime strength of 340,000 soldiers.²⁰⁴ The new concept, which was more or less similar to NATO strategy in the 1991 Strategic Concept, also implemented the White Paper's commitment to establish high-readiness reaction forces: a 50,000-strong body—the *Krisenreaktionskräfte* [KRK] (Crisis Reaction Forces)—consisting of professionals and long-term volunteers in the army, air force and navy and designed for alliance defense as well as crisis-response operations under the auspices of NATO, the WEU, or the UN.²⁰⁵ The remaining Bundeswehr troops—the *Hauptverteidigungskräfte* [HVK] (Main Defense Forces)—were intended primarily for national and collective defense.²⁰⁶ This twofold force structure resembled similar developments in NATO.²⁰⁷

Furthermore, the German army was largely affected by a general trend toward multinational staffs and units that prevailed throughout the 1990s.²⁰⁸ It participated in NATO's Reaction Forces as well as in all corps in Central Europe. These units included not only the Eurokorps in Strasbourg, but also the I German Netherlands Corps in Münster, the II German-U.S. Corps in Ulm, as well as the V U.S.-German Corps in Heidelberg, and the Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin.²⁰⁹ On the one hand,

²⁰⁴ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Konzeptionelle Leitlinie zur Weiterentwicklung der Streitkräfte* [KLL] (Bonn, July 1994). The KLL also ignited intense debates among local politicians about the economic consequences of large-scale base closures. Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 269.

²⁰⁵ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 102. The KRK would have been deployed as a “task force” that is a military contingent with troops and capabilities tailored to a specific mission. Theoretically the figure of 50,000 KRK soldiers would have allowed for a long-term deployment of approximately 10,000 troops because of rotation and training requirements.

²⁰⁶ However, the HVK required substantial mobilization efforts to achieve full combat readiness. Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 155. In addition to the KRK and the HVK, a *Militärische Grundorganisation* [MGO] (Central Military Organization) was established. The MGO incorporated all basic support functions of the Bundeswehr, for example, training and education, logistical support, and medical service.

²⁰⁷ NATO's Strategic Concept of 1991 distinguished between—Immediate and Rapid—Reaction Forces, Main Defense Forces, and mobilisable Augmentation Forces.

²⁰⁸ At the same time the German air force contributed to multinational staffs and headquarters of NATO's Air Defense and the German navy participated in the Standing Naval Forces of the Alliance. Axel Dohmen, *Sicherheitskonzepte im gesellschaftlichen Wandel. Voraussetzungen, Funktionen und Folgen der Veränderung der Konstruktion von militärischem Risiko und Sicherheit* (Dissertation, Universität der Bundeswehr München, 2006), 173–4.

²⁰⁹ The latter succeeded the German-Danish Corps, formerly known as LANDJUT. The only remaining national corps was the IV Corps in Potsdam.

Germany's contribution to these corps illustrated its traditional preference for multilateralism and international cooperation as a fundamental principle of German security and defense. On the other hand, the trend reflected the desire by its neighbors to retain their own forces in areas of traditional deployment as well as to embed the German military potential in international structures.²¹⁰ A third aspect was burden-sharing. Notwithstanding the problematic issues of command and control and national caveats, these multinational units generally facilitated a German participation in international military missions and enhanced NATO's or the EU's capacity to act which was an urgent need in the confusion of the 1990s and the impact of the peace dividend amid what in retrospect was growing conflict.

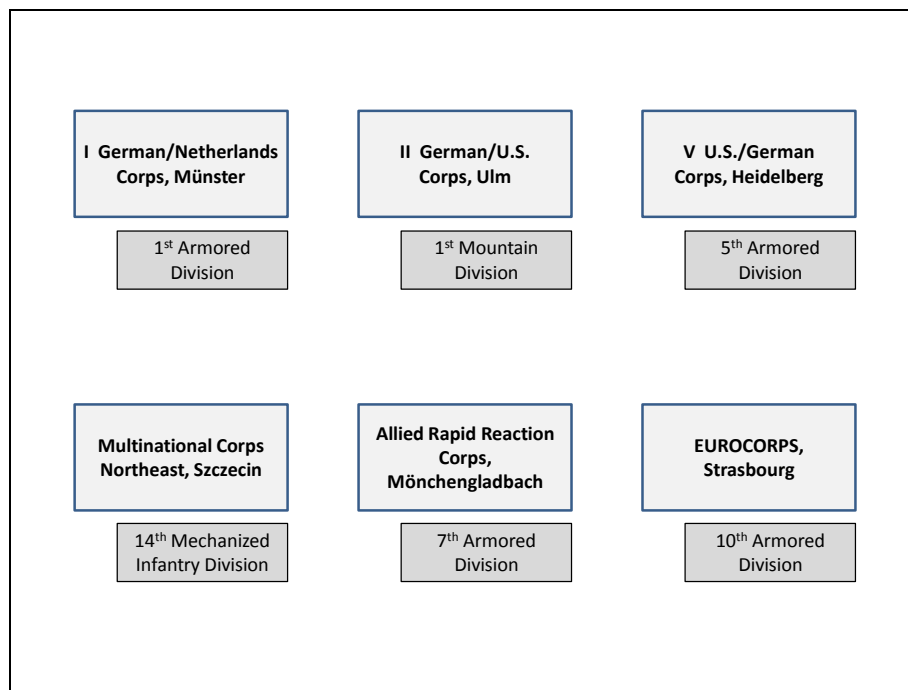


Figure 6. Multinational Corps with German Participation²¹¹

The attempt to establish a highly deployable crisis management capacity via the KRK was accompanied by at least two other innovative and specialized formations which were without precedent in the German army's history. In 1996, the *Luftmechanisierte*

²¹⁰ With the exception of the Czech Republic and the non-Nato countries Austria and Switzerland, all of Germany's direct neighbors participated in these corps structures.

²¹¹ Source: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Bestandsaufnahme. Die Bundeswehr an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert* (Bonn: May 1999), 49.

Brigade (Air Mechanized Brigade) for deep operations and the *Kommando Spezialkräfte* [KSK] (Special Forces Command) were established.²¹² Both units represented first attempts to improve the mobility and deployability of army forces and to meet the demand for a national special operations capability.²¹³ However, the foundation of the KSK met with reservations and uneasiness among some German politicians. The notion of a covertly operating military elite unit seemed to be inconsistent with post-1945 German antimilitarism and raised questions about parliamentary control.

But strategic culture could not only have limiting effects on innovations in existing force structures as in this case, it sometimes even impeded change at all. For example, initial plans to establish a joint *Streitkräfteführungskommando* [SKFüKdo] (Armed Forces Operations Command), capable of commanding all German troops deployed abroad, leaked to the press and received a critical media echo.²¹⁴ Old images of the resurgence of the infamous Prussian *Generalstab* were evoked in order to discredit this idea of coherent command and control structures. The allusion to past elements of German strategic culture was sufficient to convince the defense minister to abandon the SKFüKdo-option.

4. Command and Control: From Ad-Hoc Arrangements to Permanent Structures

Despite the failure to establish a *Streitkräfteführungskommando*, the need for a national operational command and control capability remained urgent. This need had already become clear during the Bundeswehr's participation in the international relief

²¹² Both were part of the new army concept called *Neues Heer für neue Aufgaben* (new army for new missions); the KSK was supposed to close a capability gap with regard to counter terrorism and the freeing of hostages. Official website of the German army, http://www.deutschesheer.de/portal/a/heer/kcxml/04_Sj9SPyKssy0xPLMnMz0vM0Y_QjzKLNzSLNw7zNwNJgjkWBS76kQjhoJRUFV-P_NxUfW_9AP2C3IhyR0dFRQAT-mbK/delta/base64xml/L3dJdyEvd0ZNQUFzQUMvNEIVRS82XzE2XzNWTzc (accessed December 9, 2010).

²¹³ Initial plans to establish German special forces emerged after German citizens working in Rwanda had to be rescued by Belgian paratroopers in 1994 because of a lack of national capabilities. Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 277.

²¹⁴ The news magazine SPIEGEL even accused the German military elite of *Größenwahn* (megalomania) and seeking to dominate security policy-making. "Größenwahn der Generäle," *SPIEGEL Online*, April 6, 1992, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13679224.html> (accessed April 30, 2011).

operations in Turkey, Iran, and Iraq in 1991.²¹⁵ However, due to the political sensitivity of the revival of autonomous, national command organizations in Germany,²¹⁶ the BMVg decided to rely on such interim solutions as ad hoc working groups on a case by case basis in the early 1990s.²¹⁷ Germany's cautious approach to out-of-area missions allowed for "learning by doing" on a small-scale level.²¹⁸ Based on these insights and experiences, the Bundeswehr subsequently established more capable command structures: Within the BMVg, the *Führungszentrum der Bundeswehr* [FüZBw] (Bundeswehr Operations Center) was created in 1995 in order to exercise command over several missions at the same time.²¹⁹

On the level of the forces, a *Führungskommando* [FüKdo] (Force Command) was established in 1994 in each of the three armed services.²²⁰ These *Führungskommandos*

²¹⁵ Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, 163. Despite the fact that only some 500 soldiers were involved, communications had to be channeled through 23 different offices in the BMVg and other agencies. With regard to the strategic level of the *Bundeswehr*, these experiences also underlined the fact that the relationships among the Chancellor, the Federal Minister of Defense and the *Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr* as well as the latter's authority vis-à-vis the *Führungsstab der Streitkräfte* [Fü S] (Armed Forces Staff) and the individual services needed to be revised. Young, *Post Unification German Military Organisation*, 333.

²¹⁶ Given German strategic culture, command was seen as an inherently political act. Therefore, any "review of [the relationship between political and military leaders] lies at the most sensitive political-military nexus where there is convergence of civilian national command authority and senior military officials who are vested with responsibility for operational command and control of the armed forces." Young, *Post Unification German Military Organisation*, 332.

²¹⁷ Holländer, *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr: Bilanz und Perspektive*, 226.

²¹⁸ For example, the deployment to Cambodia as part of UNTAC in May 1992 resulted in valuable lessons to be learned within the BMVg. The Bundeswehr gained experience with regard to the complex setting and requirements of UN peacekeeping missions, the deployability of German forces, and the need for improved command structures. Weisswange, *Der sicherheitspolitische Entwicklungsprozess der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1990-2002*, 57.

²¹⁹ Klaus Naumann, *Der Wandel des Einsatzes von Katastrophenhilfe und NATO-Manöver zur Anwendung von Waffengewalt und Friedenserzwingung*, 484. This entity was responsible for operational planning as well as operational command and control and was headed by a one-star general. This general officer was also the director of the *Koordinierungsstab für Einsatzaufgaben* [KSEA] (Coordinating Staff for Operational Tasks), a body which coordinated between the different branches and departments within the BMVg. Young, *Post Unification German Military Organisation*, 338.

²²⁰ Holländer, *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr: Bilanz und Perspektive*, 226. After the final withdrawal of the former Soviet troops from East Germany in September 1994, these operational headquarters assumed command over all active German units.

assumed command over all active units of the army, the air force, and the navy.²²¹ With regard to international missions they provided the necessary command linkage between the BMVg and deployed Bundeswehr contingents by adopting the role of a “lead command” as shown in Figure 7.²²² In the absence of a joint operational command, this solution represented the only way of implementing command structures below the ministerial level and of allowing for an effective chain of command at the time.

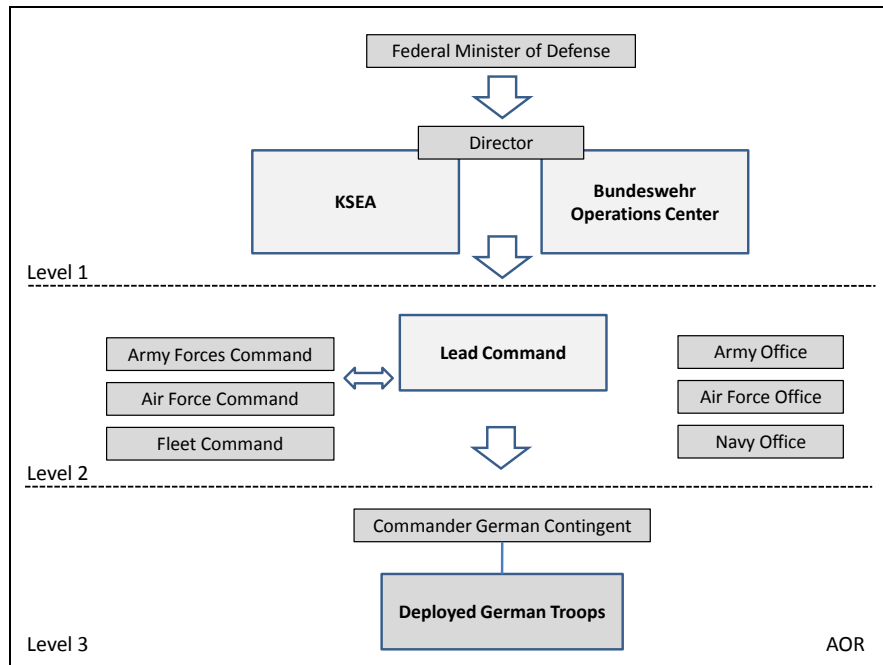


Figure 7. National Command Structures (ca. 1995)²²³

D. CONCLUSION

The analysis of the period from 1990 to 1998 suggests that a plethora of factors in state and society affected the evolution of the Bundeswehr, as well as factors within it. While most German political elites finally drew the same conclusions about the emerging

²²¹ Additionally, they complemented the existing *Ämter* (Force Offices), which had traditionally been responsible for basic support functions such as concept development, training, or logistics. The result of this measure was an identical “two-pillar structure” in all three services.

²²² For example, the *Heeresführungskommando* (Army Forces Command), which had been built around the staff of the former III Corps in Koblenz, established the command link to the German troops in Somalia. Young, *Post Unification German Military Organisation*, 337.

²²³ Source: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Bestandsaufnahme. Die Bundeswehr an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert*, 26.

security threats of the international system, they obviously did not always pursue a stringent and consistent security and defense policy to meet these challenges in the 1990s where the peace dividend and the needs of unification stood uppermost.

In this case, the concept of strategic culture offers a good explanation for Germany's initial reluctance to deploy its armed forces to out-of-area missions. The lack of consensus on the elite level about Germany's role in international affairs, which was marked by the public collision of "never again war" with "never again alone," could only be removed by the ruling of the Constitutional Court in 1994, i.e., in the middle of the decade as the ex-Yugoslav crisis worsened. As a result, the Kohl government took a cautious approach to accustom both the opposition and the German public to a growing number of Bundeswehr deployments in a kind of salami tactic. The continuous reference to the humanitarian purposes and multilateral framework of these missions illustrates that Germany could be rightfully be called a "civilian power" at that time. Germany's participation in bi- and multinational military units, its preference for sending non-combat troops into out-of-area missions, its initial reluctance to deploy to areas where the *Wehrmacht* had fought, and its adherence to conscription support this claim.

However, strategic culture alone cannot sufficiently explain the path of the Bundeswehr in the 1990s. For example, the fact that it took Germany four years after the end of the Cold War to publish a new Defense White Paper and to initiate the first serious attempts to restructure the Bundeswehr can only be understood in the context of the imperative of reunification. All measures which had been taken before 1994 constituted the integration of the former NVA troops (however few) as well as a large-scale reduction of manpower and Cold-War materiel in the light of the provisions of international obligations and incorporating the former NVA into the *army of unity*.

Even the decision to distinguish between Crisis Reaction Forces and Main Defense Forces was a political compromise rather than an optimal outcome of a thorough and comprehensive military reform. In the face of insufficient financial resources on the one hand and international expectations on the other, Germany tried to establish at least a credible force element for military missions abroad. However, with no record of expeditionary military engagements and deployments after the Second World War the

German armed forces had to build these capabilities from scratch with limited resources. Without appropriate transport-, logistic-, reconnaissance-, and command and control capacities even the deployment of a few hundred troops presented the Bundeswehr and its leadership with a real challenge at the time.

As has been shown, domestic political causes also played a role. The Kohl government sometimes delayed or circumvented decisions concerning issues of security and defense when it feared a risk of political upheaval in times of elections. For example, it eschewed discussions about base closures and prestigious but expensive Cold War procurement programs such as the Eurofighter, which secured jobs in Bavaria and elsewhere in Europe. Other projects which were regarded as too offensive in nature were simply taken off the agenda. For instance, Minister Rühle was informed by the press that members of the BMVg planned to develop an innovative *Mehrzweckschiff* (multi-purpose ship), capable of supporting crisis-response operations and equipped with modern C4I systems. Fearing that the ship would arouse political suspicions about the Bundeswehr generating “interventionist” power projection capabilities, he abandoned the plans.²²⁴ Subsequently, Minister Rühle even ordered a *Denkverbot* (ban on thinking) within the BMVg because he wanted to prevent such a form of ambitious reform proposals from becoming stigmatized again by the media as a “militarization of German foreign policy,”²²⁵ These examples show that the Kohl cabinet was far from having embraced the new role of the Bundeswehr.

The result of this unique combination of constraints and driving forces was a Bundeswehr that, despite some remarkable achievements with regard to out-of-area missions and the structure of higher headquarters, was still struggling with the legacies of the Cold War at the end of the Kohl chancellorship in 1998.

²²⁴ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense and Security*, 66–7.

²²⁵ Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 273.

IV. MILITARY REFORMS BETWEEN 1998 AND 2002: A MISSED OPPORTUNITY?

The 1998 federal elections witnessed a profound change of government in Germany with the advent of the “Red-Green” coalition of the SPD and the Greens.²²⁶ For the first time in the history of contemporary Germany, security policy-makers took office who had not experienced the Second World War and the critical juncture of *Stunde Null*. Given the political careers and attitudes of the new ruling elite—Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD), Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (Greens), and Defense Minister Rudolf Scharping (SPD)—it was far from self-evident that this troika would follow the same security policy path as their predecessors.²²⁷ Indeed, both Schröder and Fischer even had a political record of far left, antimilitaristic agitation in the early 1970s.²²⁸

Schröder, a former lawyer who had belonged to the radical Young Socialists in his younger days, had expertise in domestic, party, and German regional politics but was inexperienced in international affairs.²²⁹ Although he initially focused on domestic issues, foreign policy became a *Chefsache* (matter for the boss) when he recognized that a good international reputation proved valuable in promoting his domestic agenda.²³⁰ Schröder’s relationship to the Bundeswehr was marked by ambivalence during his chancellorship. He principally regarded the German armed forces as a costly, if necessary, means to maintain or enhance Germany’s international influence.²³¹

²²⁶ The federal elections on September 27th, 1998, were won by the *SPD* (Social Democratic Party) and *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* (The Greens).

²²⁷ Some observers even feared that this left-of-center coalition would eventually put its traditional antimilitarism into political practice by abstaining from international military missions. However, the run-up to NATO’s Kosovo air campaign and subsequent events on the international scene did not provide the new government with any leeway for a renunciation from Germany’s multilateral commitments. As a result, continuity in German foreign and security policy prevailed.

²²⁸ Hacke, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 436.

²²⁹ Gregor Schöllgen, “Deutsche Außenpolitik in der Ära Schröder,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 32–33 (2005), 3. Before his triumph in the federal elections, he had been the minister-president of the German state of Lower Saxony for eight years.

²³⁰ Schöllgen, *Außenpolitik der Ära Schröder*, 3.

²³¹ Dieter Kilian, “Gerhard Schröder, der siebte Bundeskanzler, und die Bundeswehr (1998–2005); Zweckbündnis mit einer fremden Welt,” *Auftrag*, 279 (2010), 37.

Fischer's political career had started in 1982 in the party *Die Grünen* (The Greens). During his time in the political opposition, Fischer had vehemently and repeatedly advised against any militarization of German foreign policy and the threat of resurgent German nationalism after reunification.²³² Even as Foreign Minister, he remained true to his aversion to military force as an instrument of *Realpolitik* in international relations. Instead, he preferred the notion of a "civilian power" approach, above all, in a European context.²³³

Both Schröder and Fischer subsequently became the undisputed leaders of German foreign and security policy in the media as well as in the international scene.²³⁴ In contrast to these two high-profile characters, Scharping's political star was already waning, although he had been a long-standing fellow party member of Schröder's.²³⁵ He belonged to a group of SPD politicians who had dedicated themselves to foreign and security policy issues.²³⁶ As such, he already had plans for the future of the Bundeswehr before his appointment as Defense Minister. These plans included a 300,000-strong force—which should be equally able to defend German territory as well as to participate in crisis response operations—and compulsory service reduced to six months.²³⁷

²³² Jeffrey Herf, "Legacies of divided memory and the Berlin Republic," in *Germany at Fifty-Five; Berlin ist nicht Bonn?*, ed. James Sperling (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 101.

²³³ Hacke, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 449.

²³⁴ Sometimes they did not even consult with Scharping over security policy themes. For example, Fischer had not informed the Defense Minister before he announced that Germany would send Bundeswehr medical specialists to East-Timor at the UN General Assembly in September 1999. Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 324.

²³⁵ He had run for chancellor in 1994 but lost the elections. In 1995 he had also lost his post as SPD party chair to Oskar Lafontaine. The latter became Finance Minister in 1998, but abruptly resigned in 1999. Furthermore, Scharping never had an easy access to the political circles of the chancellor's office, because Schröder regarded him as one of his internal rivals. Tom Dyson, "German Military Reform 1998-2004: Leadership and the Triumph of Domestic Constraint over International Opportunity," *European Security* 14 (2005), 366.

²³⁶ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense and Security*, 72.

²³⁷ "Lebendiges Museum Online," official website of the Stiftung Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, <http://www.hdg.de/lemo/html/biografien/ScharpingRudolf/index.html> (accessed November 22, 2010).

However, different schools of thought within his own party, which even included proposals for an all-volunteer force, prevented the SPD from taking a unified position on security and defense matters.²³⁸

Because the SPD leadership sought to avoid any divisive discussions about this topic in the wake of the 1998 elections, the party conceived of a *Wehrstrukturkommission* (force structure commission) to address the issue through an expert-level forum after an election victory. Yet, even before this commission could commence developing proposals for the future role and structure of the Bundeswehr, the attention of Germany's top security policy-makers was called to events on the international stage.

A. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The conflicts in the former Yugoslavia directly affected the European security environment in general, and Germany's in particular, as hundreds of thousands of refugees continued to pour into the country. The subsequent military action against Serbian targets that had begun more or less in 1994 and reached a climax in 1998-9 had consequences for both NATO and the European Union. Beyond that, the aftermath of the terrorist attacks against New York and Washington on September 11, 2001, posed a new dimension of threat to the Euro-Atlantic community.

1. NATO—New Missions Versus Capability Gaps

In this context, Germany's membership in the Alliance offered opportunities as well as challenges. For example, the first round of post-Cold War NATO enlargement in 1999 led to substantial gains in Germany's external security. As a result, it seemed necessary to reevaluate the German force posture, which, at the time, was largely based on forces oriented toward the air-land defense of Central Europe.

Furthermore, NATO continued to follow a path of transforming its role from a classical collective defense alliance to an emphasis on collective security during the course of the 1990s. In particular, the Kosovo episode served as a catalyst, as it caused frustrations on both sides of the Atlantic. On the one hand, the Americans were

²³⁸ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense and Security*, 76–78.

disillusioned about NATO's complex planning and consensus-building processes—the so-called “war by committee”—and the European militaries' shortfalls in command and control capabilities, aircraft, and weaponry.²³⁹ On the other hand, the European allies were dissatisfied with the apparent U.S. “paternalism” in NATO affairs.

In light of these diverging perceptions, the new Strategic Concept (SC 99), approved at the anniversary summit in Washington in April 1999, called for a bigger, more effective and flexible Alliance in particular for such peace enforcement/security missions as SFOR, as well as a reappraisal of its role and mission.²⁴⁰ While the defense of the security and freedom of its members remained NATO's core function, SC 99 also stressed that the changes in the security environment demanded a focus on conflict prevention and crisis management, including out-of-area crisis response operations.²⁴¹ These new missions required the development of “essential operational capabilities such as an effective engagement capability, capacity to deploy over distances and mobility; survivability of forces and infrastructure; and sustainability.”²⁴² As a consequence, NATO concurrently initiated a Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI) in order to enhance the military capabilities of the European allies in these key areas.

The urgency of these commitments was reinvigorated by the fact that the new Strategic Concept specifically acknowledged the growing role of the European pillar of the Alliance, enshrined in ESDI. Thus, DCI was seen as a vital issue to preserve the transatlantic link.²⁴³ Since Germany took part in DCI, it was supposed to modernize its armed forces accordingly. However, Germany—like other European Allies—failed to meet fully these high expectations or to raise its defense expenditures.²⁴⁴ Therefore, the first ever invocation of Article 5 after the terrorist attacks in September 2001 was of

²³⁹ Ryan C. Hendrickson, *Diplomacy and War at NATO. The Secretary General and Military Action after the Cold War* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 126.

²⁴⁰ Sinjen and Varwick, *Die Bundeswehr und die Aufgaben der Nordatlantischen Allianz*, 98.

²⁴¹ “The Alliance's Strategic Concept,” April 24, 1999, cipher 10, official NATO website, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_27433.htm (accessed November 20, 2010).

²⁴² “The Defense Capabilities Initiative,” NATO official press release, April 25, 1999, <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99s069e.htm> (accessed November 22, 2010).

²⁴³ Agüera, *Ambitious Goals, Weak Means*, 289.

²⁴⁴ Johannes Varwick, *Nordatlantische Allianz*, 771.

symbolic relevance only, because the United States relied on its own military strength and conducted *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF) outside the NATO framework. The subsequent fight against transnational terrorism kept earlier debates about the scope of NATO missions at bay and spurred new efforts among European allies to play a greater military role vis-à-vis the United States.²⁴⁵

2. The EU and Its Aspirations for an Independent Role

These ambitions reflected attempts to strengthen the role of CFSP.²⁴⁶ The groundbreaking French-British summit at Saint-Malo in 1998 paved the way for the implementation of a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).²⁴⁷ During its EU presidency in the first half of 1999, Germany gave up its passivity and actively supported this initiative.²⁴⁸ Thus, at the EU summits in Cologne and Helsinki the member states agreed on the buildup of *European* military capabilities.²⁴⁹ Under the so-called Helsinki Headline Goal (HHG 2003) the EU substantiated this commitment. No later than 2003, the member states pledged to be prepared to provide 50,000–60,000 troops, deployable within sixty days, in order to conduct the full range of the Petersberg Tasks for the duration of one year.²⁵⁰

During the capabilities commitment conferences, Berlin announced that it would contribute a total of 13,500 ground troops. However, this German share did not help to overcome the EU's lack of force projection capabilities.²⁵¹ It is also important to note

²⁴⁵ Olaf Theiler, "Deutschland und die NATO," in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik; Herausforderungen, Akteure und Prozesse*, eds. Stephan Böckenförde and Sven Bernhard Gareis (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009), 305.

²⁴⁶ In the first half of the 1990s, an independent military role for the EU had been out of the question, but after a change of government in the United Kingdom and the aforementioned lessons of the Kosovo crisis, the aspirations for an EU military presence gained momentum. Wolfgang Wagner, *Die Außen-, Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik der Europäischen Union*, 146.

²⁴⁷ Peter Schmidt, "Militärisches Instrument der EU – die ESVP" in *Sicherheitspolitik im 21. Jahrhundert*, Informationen zur Politischen Bildung 291 (2006), 73.

²⁴⁸ Overhaus, *Civilian Power under Stress*, 69.

²⁴⁹ Wagner, *Die Außen-, Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik der Europäischen Union*, 146.

²⁵⁰ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung/Auswärtiges Amt, *Europäische Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik*, Juni 2009, 18.

²⁵¹ Wagner, *Die Außen-, Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik der Europäischen Union*, 149.

that, to a certain extent, the EU's HHG 2003 vied with NATO's DCI for scarce financial resources.²⁵² All in all, the major shifts in the roles of both NATO and the EU confronted the Bundeswehr with new and urgent pressures to transform.

3. From Kosovo to Kabul—Germany and Multinational Military Operations

This notion of necessary and comprehensive changes in the roles, structures, and capabilities of the Bundeswehr stemmed in part from increasing military missions abroad. For example, in 1998 clashes between Serbian military and police forces and the ethnic Albanian rebels in Kosovo intensified. The member states of NATO and the EU—and especially Germany, which had already taken in over 140,000 ethnic Albanian refugees—were interested in a prompt resolution of the conflict to prevent a humanitarian disaster and a further destabilization of the region.²⁵³ After the failure of the Rambouillet negotiations NATO prepared for *Operation Allied Force*.²⁵⁴ For the first time in its history, the Bundeswehr took part in combat operations by supporting NATO air strikes against Serbian targets between March and June 1999. Fourteen Tornado jets flew approximately 500 sorties.²⁵⁵ More importantly, Germany also contributed substantially to the relief efforts to provide humanitarian aid and to the international post-conflict management, including a participation in the NATO-led *Kosovo Force* (KFOR).²⁵⁶ KFOR's task was to enable the return of refugees, the freedom of movement of the staff of international and non-governmental organizations, and the buildup of interim governmental structures.²⁵⁷ With its 4,600 troops in the Multinational Brigade (MNB)

²⁵² Haftendorn, *Deutsche Außenpolitik zwischen Selbstbeschränkung und Selbstbehauptung, 1945-2000*, 399.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 414.

²⁵⁴ *Allied Force* was supposed to hit the military capabilities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to inhibit assaults on the ethnic Albanian population. Rauch, *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr*, 185.

²⁵⁵ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Bundeswehr im Einsatz* (Berlin: 2009), 70. These aircraft were forward deployed and operated from Italy. In comparison with other NATO countries, the German contribution was modest, above all, because the German air force did not participate in attacks against Serbian emplacements. Rather, the aircraft conducted reconnaissance missions and helped to suppress Serbian air defenses. Holländer, *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr: Bilanz und Perspektive*, 232.

²⁵⁶ In June 1999, NATO deployed the 42,500-strong KFOR to establish a safe and secure environment.

²⁵⁷ Rauch, *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr*, 189.

South, as well as responsibility for its own sector in the southwestern part of Kosovo, Germany was one of the largest military contributors.²⁵⁸ The Bundeswehr was also involved in other parts of the Balkans. For example, it continued to be part of NATO's SFOR mission in Bosnia.²⁵⁹

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Germany—like other close allies—declared its solidarity with the United States through Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Since the United States initially chose to organize *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF) in Afghanistan as a coalition of the willing separate from NATO's consensus and command structure, Germany's military involvement was twofold. First, Germany supported the U.S.-led OEF against international terrorism.²⁶⁰ Second, a contingent of Bundeswehr troops was deployed to Kabul as part of an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to support the Afghan interim government.²⁶¹

While these military missions helped to enhance Germany's reputation as a reliable partner in international affairs, they also confronted the Bundeswehr with several unprecedented challenges that carried the fate of the forces into a new realm symbolized by the Afghan and other distant theaters. The operations in the Balkans and in Afghanistan entailed a long-term deployment of large troop contingents. These troops necessitated accommodation, resupply, force protection, communications, and above all,

²⁵⁸ Holländer, *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr: Bilanz und Perspektive*, 232.

²⁵⁹ Minor commitments also included a mission in Macedonia: When clashes between the Macedonian population and the ethnic Albanian minority escalated, NATO and EU diplomatic initiatives resulted in *Operation Essential Harvest*—an international task force with the mandate to collect weapons surrendered by militant ethnic Albanians that was deployed to Macedonia in August and September 2001. The Bundeswehr participated with 500 troops in this 3,500-strong force. More importantly, Germany, for the first time in its NATO membership, assumed responsibility as a lead nation for the follow-on operation, *Amber Fox*. Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 337.

²⁶⁰ This support included medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) and airlift capabilities, navy units, and special forces. All in all, the Bundestag approved the participation of up to 3,900 German troops in OEF. Wagener, *Auf dem Weg zu einer "normalen" Macht? Die Entsendung deutscher Streitkräfte in der Ära Schröder*, 81. The bulk of these forces were German navy units, which were deployed to East Africa to be part of a multinational maritime task force (MTF). The MTF's mission was to protect international sea traffic against terrorist attacks and to monitor an area of operations which comprised the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, and the Arabic Sea. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Bundeswehr im Einsatz*, 76.

²⁶¹ ISAF's mission was based on the international Afghanistan Conference in Bonn, Germany, at the end of 2001 and a subsequent resolution of the UNSCR. Rauch, *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr*, 230.

command and control arrangements.²⁶² New operational requirements, which called for satellite communications and reconnaissance, light and flexible forces, and the ability to establish and maintain remote operating bases under adverse climatic conditions, clashed with a Bundeswehr that mainly consisted of legacy forces and weapon systems at the time. Additionally, the lack of land lines of communication to and within the Afghan theater made sufficient airlift capacities a vital necessity. As a consequence, the out-of-area missions were a main driving force for acquiring new capabilities and equipment and also laid bare the shortcomings in preparations for such missions as had unfolded in the 1990s.

B. THE DOMESTIC CONTEXT

While the turmoil in the international system imposed growing transformation pressure and obligations on the Bundeswehr, it faced some contrasting trends in the domestic environment. The specific societal context at the end of the 1990s had a lasting effect on the reform of the German armed forces. Additionally, the general tenets of Germany's strategic culture continued to inform its state behavior.

1. Doing Evil in Order to Do Good?²⁶³

Despite the Kohl government's incremental approach to accustom the political elites and the German public to a growing number of multilateral out-of-area deployments, the parliamentary opposition to the CDU/CSU-FDP government had not fully come to terms with such an active use of military force. Traditionally, many members of the SPD and *Die Grünen* were driven primarily by their antimilitarism and

²⁶² Alexander Bitter, "Lessons Learned auf dem Weg zur Armee im Einsatz," in *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr; Leitfragen, Entscheidungsspielräume und Lehren*, ed. Stefan Mair (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2007), 61.

²⁶³ This is the title of a section from Niccolò Machiavelli's famous book "The Prince," which he wrote in sixteenth century Florence; cited from: *Conflict after the Cold War; Arguments on Causes of War and Peace*, ed. Richard K. Betts (New York: Pearson/Longman, 2008), 61–65. Although Machiavelli is regularly referred to as one of the godfathers of political realism, this heading is a valuable reflection of the challenges that were to be met by Germany with its self-perception as a "civilian power."

hence they preferred a limited role for the Bundeswehr.²⁶⁴ Thus, German strategic culture seemingly relapsed to Cold War patterns, when the Red-Green coalition started its tenure in office with the slogan “*Deutsche Politik ist Friedenspolitik*” (German policy is peace policy).²⁶⁵ It is important to note, however, that when these left-of-center parties accepted political responsibility as the governing majority, a significant role-reversal took place. In 1998 the Green pacifists of the 1980s found themselves in a position of actual power that presented them with urgent demands of allies and partners to participate fully in international efforts of conflict management and resolution in Europe and beyond. Therefore, the crises in the Balkans and the fight against terrorism were a real test of the Schröder government’s willingness to assume responsibility in international affairs.

NATO’s plans for military engagement in the Kosovo conflict resulted in a dilemma for German state behavior. Because military coercion seemed inevitable to end the bloodshed and ethnic cleansing, two foundational elements of German strategic culture collided: “never again war” competed with “never again genocide.”²⁶⁶ The absence of a UNSCR approval—the multilateral legitimization of the German approach of “never again alone”—caused additional uneasiness among politicians from all parties.²⁶⁷

The decision to participate in *Operation Allied Force* was therefore not without political risk for the Schröder government because it represented a constituency that traditionally objected to military means in foreign policy.²⁶⁸ The new government tried to build broad consensus in the Bundestag. Cross-partisan support was essential because the

²⁶⁴ Duffield, *Political Culture and State Behavior: Why Germany Confounds Neorealism*, 789. The often intense debates in the Bundestag in the period from 1990 to 1998 illustrate that there was no steadfast consensus among political elites on the use of force. For a detailed overview of these political debates: Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 218–261.

²⁶⁵ “Aufbruch und Erneuerung – Deutschlands Weg ins 21. Jahrhundert,” Koalitionsvereinbarung zwischen der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands und Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, IX.1., <http://archiv.gruene-partei.de/gremien/rot-gruen/vertrag/vertrag-i.htm> (accessed November 26, 2010).

²⁶⁶ Björn Conrad and Mario Stumm, *German Strategic Culture and Institutional Choice*, 52.

²⁶⁷ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 75.

²⁶⁸ One of Schröder’s predecessors, Helmut Schmidt, had resigned over such a controversial issue in the 1980s—NATO’s famous dual track decision. Schöllgen, *Außenpolitik der Ära Schröder*, 3.

Red-Green coalition continuously faced the risk of losing votes from its own left wing.²⁶⁹ In order to help overcome internal resistance, leading members of the SPD and the Greens continuously pointed out that Germany had a historical obligation and a normative responsibility to inhibit an impending genocide.²⁷⁰ Finally, the Bundestag approved the German participation in NATO air operations.²⁷¹

Thus, the Kosovo crisis was seen as the final step to a broader consensus among political elites that a Bundeswehr involvement in peace-keeping as well as in peace-enforcing military missions was not only acceptable, but also necessary.²⁷² It paved the way for subsequent decisions on the use of military force in the Bundestag. For example, the declaration of Chancellor Schröder's government on September 12, 2001, included the notion of "unconditional solidarity" with the United States and clearly reflected the momentum of change in German strategic culture.²⁷³ On the international level, NATO's new Strategic Concept and the European Headline Goal served as institutional behavioral norms and therefore facilitated and amplified these trends.²⁷⁴

Despite this apparent evolution of the foundations of German state behavior, the new consensus remained rather fragile.²⁷⁵ U.S. responses to the terrorist attacks against New York and Washington were increasingly perceived by some members of the German elite and society as a unilateral policy that one-sidedly relied on the use of force.²⁷⁶ The

²⁶⁹ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 16.

²⁷⁰ Wilke, *German Strategic Culture Revisited*, 76–79.

²⁷¹ A total of 86 percent of all Members of the Bundestag voted for the participation. Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 253.

²⁷² Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 76. Notwithstanding this greater willingness to participate in out-of-area crisis response operations, the Schröder government always tried to take a comprehensive approach to security by complementing military action with political initiatives, for example, the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe of 1999 and the Afghanistan Conference of 2001.

²⁷³ Conrad and Stumm, *German Strategic Culture and Institutional Choice*, 57.

²⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁷⁵ Parliamentary debates about a German military contribution to efforts of resolving certain conflicts highlighted that the chancellor sometimes received more support from the opposition than from his own coalition partner. For example, in the aftermath of September 11, the CDU/CSU offered the chancellor its support, based on a "national alliance of resolve." Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 336.

²⁷⁶ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 82–83.

formal request of the Bush administration, which called for a German military contribution to OEF's "coalition of the willing" in November 2001, appeared to be inconsistent with Germany's preference for both political and military means to be employed in an institutionalized multilateral framework.²⁷⁷ Because he was aware of these domestic restraints, Chancellor Schröder chose to combine the Bundestag's decision on the participation of the Bundeswehr in OEF with a formal *Vertrauensfrage* (question of confidence) in order to silence members of his own coalition who had initially articulated their disagreement.²⁷⁸ The necessary risk of corroding the ruling coalition in exchange for political allegiance brought forward the boundaries of German strategic culture at the very beginning of the twenty-first century.

These developments also had repercussions for the Bundeswehr. For example, the development of power projection capabilities would have contradicted German strategic culture.²⁷⁹ While such multilateral norms as SC 99 and EHG 2003, as well as new crises and threats in the international environment, militated for an effective transformation of the Bundeswehr from a defense force into a mission-oriented or even intervention force, German strategic culture provided major obstacles for such a path. The constraint on German policy behavior also applied to possible changes in the force structure of the Bundeswehr. Any proposal for an all-volunteer force would not have "fit in with what Germans [saw] as being the role and purpose of their armed forces."²⁸⁰ Most of the political elites continued to regard conscription as *the* cornerstone of civil-military relations in Germany and as an expression of the successful integration of the armed forces into society.²⁸¹ Thus, the basic elements of German strategic culture simultaneously promoted and constrained military reforms.

²⁷⁷ Wilke, *German Strategic Culture Revisited*, 90.

²⁷⁸ Although successful in the end, Schröder's bold political maneuver had serious consequences. A second resort to the procedure was impossible during his tenure in office. This was one of the reasons, why he announced that Germany would not be part of a military coalition against Saddam Hussein during the election campaign in August 2002.

²⁷⁹ Varwick, *Nordatlantische Allianz*, 777.

²⁸⁰ Arthur Hoffmann and Kerry Longhurst, "German Strategic Culture and the Changing Role of the Bundeswehr," *WeltTrends* 22 (1999), 162.

²⁸¹ Conrad and Stumm, *German Strategic Culture and Institutional Choice*, 54.

2. Political and Social Challenges and Budgetary Constraints

Besides these cultural factors, the overall economic and societal situation had a limiting effect on options for German security and defense policy. At the end of the 1990s, Germany's public budget was in a constant state of crisis. One of the most burdensome legacies of the Kohl era was a severe financial and structural burden worked by unification as well as the competitiveness of the German economy on the world scene because of the social welfare state. An outdated and inefficient German welfare system, as well as high unemployment rates, put additional pressure on the public budget. In this context, the European Stability and Growth Pact²⁸² meant yet another restraint for public spending.²⁸³ Therefore, far-reaching reforms in the economic and social sector were the Schröder government's top priority.²⁸⁴

Concurrently, Germany's Finance Minister, Hans Eichel, regarded a policy of budget reorganization, decreasing net borrowing and tax reductions, as inevitable.²⁸⁵ Defense and security issues were definitely subordinate to these apparently far more salient themes of statecraft and the public good.²⁸⁶ At a conference with high-ranking Bundeswehr officials in 1999, Chancellor Schröder announced that the German armed forces would have to contribute financially to the recovery of public finances. He also

²⁸² The Pact pertains to the third stage of the EU's economic and monetary union, which began in January 1999. It is intended to ensure that the member states maintain budgetary discipline after the introduction of the euro. The member states also agreed to pursue the goal of a balanced or nearly balanced budget. Finally, the Pact opens the way for the European Council to penalize any participating member state that fails to take appropriate measures to end an excessive deficit, the so-called "excessive deficit procedure." "Stability and Growth Pact," Official website of the European Union, http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/glossary/stability_growth_pact_en.htm (accessed November 26, 2010).

²⁸³ In November 2002, the European Commission even accused Germany of violating the ceiling rules for public debts.

²⁸⁴ Hacke, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 447.

²⁸⁵ In this assessment, he was strongly backed by the chancellor, who wanted to demonstrate political competence after the sudden resignation of Eichel's predecessor Oskar Lafontaine. Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense and Security*, 73.

²⁸⁶ Sarotte, *German Military Reform and European Security*, 20.

stated that “retirees, jobless persons, and most parts of the German public would have had no understanding, if the Bundeswehr had been excluded from the agreed cuts in public spending.”²⁸⁷

Thus, the defense minister had little, if any, leeway to propose reforms that called for an increase in the defense budget.²⁸⁸ Rather, defense outlays continued to stagnate at a total of 23 to 25 billion Euros in absolute terms between 1998 and 2002.²⁸⁹ To make matters worse, less than twenty-five percent of the annual defense budget could be committed to investment during this period because operating costs, such as personnel and maintenance, consumed most of the defense expenditure.²⁹⁰ As a consequence, these material constraints severely limited the scope of the efforts to restructure and reform the Bundeswehr. It was common wisdom that only substantial reductions in the overall size of the armed forces could free resources, which would then allow for a necessary modernization.²⁹¹ Additionally, Scharping made efforts to increase efficiency through a large-scale privatization program, including the sale of government owned real estates and establishing public private partnerships, as well as the employment of management tools.

²⁸⁷ “Kommandeurtagung in Hamburg - Bundeskanzler Schröder kündigt Sparmaßnahmen an,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, November 29, 1999, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/kommandeurtagung-in-hamburg-bundeskanzler-gerhard-schroeder-kuendigt-sparmassnahmen-an/107340.html> (accessed November 21, 2010); translated by author.

²⁸⁸ Rather, Scharping's influence on the domestic political stage was limited: Being convinced of the lack of financial resources for the Bundeswehr, he had already demanded the immutability of the defense budget in conjunction with his appointment as Defense Minister. Nevertheless, the Finance Minister curtailed defense spending by 0.5 percent as early as 1999. Karl-Heinz Kamp, “Die Zukunft der Bundeswehr: Die Diskussion in der CDU/CSU,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B43 (2000), http://www.bpb.de/publikationen/ODKCHV,0,Die_Zukunft_der_Bundeswehr%3A_Die_Diskussion_in_der_CDUCSU.html (accessed November 26, 2010). Only a few months later, the Finance Minister proclaimed additional cuts in the defense budget amounting to DM 18 billion over the course of the next four years.

²⁸⁹ Bayer, *Die Mittelausstattung der Bundeswehr*, 226.

²⁹⁰ The BMVg states that at least a thirty percent proportion of the defense budget is necessary to sustain armed forces with modern equipment. Compared with France and the United Kingdom, Germany not only devoted fewer financial resources to defense spending in absolute terms, but also had significantly less scope for modernization programs. While Germany's defense expenditure remained at a mere 1.5 percent level of its GDP, the levels in France (2.6 percent) and the United Kingdom (2.4 percent) were clearly higher. Sattler, *Die Kosten der Bundeswehr und deren Finanzierung durch den Bundshaushalt*, 282.

²⁹¹ Clement and Jöris, *50 Jahre Bundeswehr 1955-2005*, 129.

C. THE BUNDESWEHR AND HESITANT ATTEMPTS OF REFORM

In the tradition of the commission headed by Hans Adolf Jacobsen nearly a decade earlier, the 1998 coalition agreement between the SPD and the Greens stated that another *Wehrstrukturkommission*, headed by the former Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker, would by the year 2000 analyze the role, size, structure, armament and training of the Bundeswehr in order to make proposals for a fundamental reform of the armed forces.²⁹² As a consequence, there were no serious attempts to adapt the structures and the capabilities of the armed forces to the demands of the external context during the first two years of the Red-Green coalition's tenure in office.

1. Assessing the State of Affairs

To get a clear and unadorned picture of the status of the German armed forces, Defense Minister Scharping tasked the *Generalinspekteur* to prepare an impartial assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the Bundeswehr.²⁹³ This evaluation became the starting point of the subsequent work of the Weizsäcker Commission. The report concluded first that the Bundeswehr lacked financial resources because the defense budget's share in the German GDP had dropped by 50 percent between 1990 and 1998.²⁹⁴ Second, the structure of the German army could not meet the demands of the growing number of out-of-area military missions.²⁹⁵ Third, a lack of modern equipment

²⁹² "Aufbruch und Erneuerung – Deutschlands Weg ins 21. Jahrhundert;" *Koalitionsvereinbarung zwischen der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands und BÜNDNIS 90/DIE GRÜNEN*, available at http://archiv.gruene-partei.de/gremien/rot-gruen/vertrag/ko_vertr.pdf (accessed November 17, 2010).

²⁹³ This paper was called "*Die Bundeswehr an der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert*" and was published in May 1999. Bernhard Fleckenstein, "Bedingt einsatzfähig: Der lange Weg zur Neugestaltung der Bundeswehr," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B43 (2000), http://www.bpb.de/publikationen/9KBVWU,0,0,Bedingt_einsatzfaehig%3A_Der_lange_Weg_zur_Neugestaltung_der_Bundeswehr.html (accessed November 26, 2010).

²⁹⁴ Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 364.

²⁹⁵ Above all, the role and structure of the *Krisenreaktionskräfte* did not correspond with actual missions any more.

and weapon systems hampered performance in even those missions that the Bundeswehr could carry out. For example, the German air force had no precision-guided weapons or strategic airlift capacities at the time.²⁹⁶

2. A Bridge Too Far? Proposals of the Weizsäcker Commission

The Weizsäcker Commission, which built on these findings, was formally established on May 3, 1999.²⁹⁷ Only a few weeks after its inception, the independence of the commission's analysis was already threatened by Finance Minister Eichel's plans for budget consolidation.²⁹⁸ As a consequence, two of the fundamental premises of the commission—a 340,000-strong Bundeswehr and stable defense spending until 2000—had been overtaken by events. Since further cuts in the budget were looming, Scharping asked the commission to publish its findings six months earlier than planned.²⁹⁹

Therefore, the commission presented its final report, *Gemeinsame Sicherheit und Zukunft der Bundeswehr* (Common Security and the Future of the Bundeswehr), on May 23, 2000. The report provided an appropriate assessment of Germany's security and the deficiencies of the Bundeswehr. The German armed forces of the year 2000 were described as too big, ill-composed, and unable to fulfill their international commitments.³⁰⁰

Due to Germany's favorable and stable security environment, the report suggested that the Bundeswehr adapt its structures, capabilities, and doctrine fundamentally and concentrate on its most likely tasks: multilateral crisis prevention and conflict resolution. The Bundeswehr was expected to be able to participate in two parallel out-of-area crisis-

²⁹⁶ The absence of precision strike capabilities was one of the reasons for Germany's limited role in Operation Allied Force.

²⁹⁷ It comprised a large group of politicians, general officers, top managers, scholars, clerics, representatives of the media, and public figures.

²⁹⁸ On July 2, 1999, Eichel announced that the 2000 defense expenditure had to be reduced by DM 1.5 billion. Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 366.

²⁹⁹ Sarotte, *German Military Reform and European Security*, 34.

³⁰⁰ "Gemeinsame Sicherheit und Zukunft der Bundeswehr," Bericht der Kommission an die Bundesregierung (Berlin: May 23, 2000), 13.

response missions of unlimited duration.³⁰¹ This national “level of ambition” seemed to be informed by such international obligations as NATO’s SC 99 as well as the EU’s HHG 2003, which served as landmarks for the reform proposal.³⁰²

Remarkably, the report also pointed out that future crises and threats could emerge anywhere, and therefore called for highly deployable forces.³⁰³ In this context, the commission proposed a significantly reduced force structure with a peacetime strength of only 240,000 soldiers, including an “operational force component” of 140,000 combat-ready troops, trained and equipped to conduct crisis response operations in a multilateral framework.³⁰⁴ Conscriptio would have played only a minor role in such a Bundeswehr and would have mainly served as a pool for recruitment.³⁰⁵ Notably, the commission emphasized the need to reorganize and optimize existing command and control structures, as well as to strengthen the role and responsibilities of the *Generalinspekteur*.³⁰⁶ The report also stated that a profound reform and modernization of the Bundeswehr would free up resources in the medium term at best, but required an initial influx of funding to promote the whole process.

The far-reaching and innovative proposals of the Weizsäcker Commission were ahead of the times. Such policy could not overcome the inertia effects of German strategic culture. Despite the Kosovo crisis, German elites continued to regard the use of force as a means of last resort. Therefore, the commission’s plans for a relatively small and capable fighting force were probably perceived as attempts to transform the

³⁰¹ The contributions of the different services included the deployment of two brigade-size army contingents, up to 100 combat aircraft (including air-to-air refueling and lift capacities), two maritime task forces, and two contingents of the medical service (including mobile field hospitals and MEDEVAC capabilities).

³⁰² Dyson, *German Military Reform 1998-2004*, 364.

³⁰³ Bericht der Kommission, *Gemeinsame Sicherheit und Zukunft der Bundeswehr*, 48.

³⁰⁴ A multilateral framework means not only under the auspices of NATO or the EU but also of the UN or the OSCE.

³⁰⁵ The report mentioned a total of 30,000 conscripts and suggested that the Bundeswehr should become an all-volunteer force in the long run.

³⁰⁶ Bericht der Kommission, *Gemeinsame Sicherheit und Zukunft der Bundeswehr*, 86–87.

Bundeswehr into an instrument for interventions. Furthermore, the budgetary constraints set by the Finance Minister rendered the realization of any short-term modernization impossible.

3. Alternative Drafts of the BMVg and the Issue of Conscription

Besides the Weizsäcker proposals, two additional written reports emerged on military reform. One included an internal review of the BMVg, the so-called *Eckwerte* (parameters) paper of the *Generalinspekteur*—then General Hans Peter von Kirchbach—and was published on the same day as the Weizsäcker report.³⁰⁷ The other was Scharping's own proposal, which he announced on June 5, 2000.³⁰⁸ However, the exact reasons for the existence of three different reports remain disputed.³⁰⁹

Notwithstanding these speculations, the Scharping report as well as the von Kirchbach paper both differed from the proposals of the Weizsäcker Commission. Von Kirchbach advocated only modest force reductions and the retention of large numbers of conscripts in order to ensure territorial and collective defense.³¹⁰ Scharping's response was less cautious, but still differed significantly from the commission's plans. He proposed a reduction in the manning level from 340,000 to 285,000 soldiers, including

³⁰⁷ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr, *Eckwerte für die konzeptionelle und planerische Weiterentwicklung der Streitkräfte* (Bonn: May 23, 2000). Most notably, General von Kirchbach resigned only one day after his report had been published because he felt that he was not Scharping's top advisor on the issue any more. Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 369.

³⁰⁸ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Die Bundeswehr sicher ins 21. Jahrhundert; Eckpfeiler für eine Erneuerung von Grund auf*, (Berlin: June 5, 2000). The report was written by the *Planungsstab* (Policy Planning Staff), which provides direct support to the defense minister and performs analytical and advisory functions. The Policy Planning Staff is one of the staffs directly assigned to the Executive Group of the BMVg. Official website of the Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, <http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/> (accessed November 28, 2010). General Harald Kujat, the director of the Policy Planning Staff and the originator of the *Eckpfeiler* report, became von Kirchbach's successor.

³⁰⁹ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 105. One explanation holds that Scharping tried to be perceived as a mediator between the ambitious and innovative proposals of the Weizsäcker Commission and the reticent approach of his *Generalinspekteur* by presenting a moderate suggestion for a compromise. A second explanation points to the fact that Scharping had already consulted a vast array of commissions, conferences, and experts on the reform issue and argues that the Defense Minister simply attempted to gather as much information and advice as possible.

³¹⁰ Because General von Kirchbach regarded territorial and collective defense as the Bundeswehr's main task, he suggested a peacetime strength of 290,000 soldiers, including 85,000 conscripts. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Eckwerte für die konzeptionelle und planerische Weiterentwicklung der Streitkräfte*, 36.

80,000 conscripts. While territorial defense remained the Bundeswehr's main task, the military was supposed to keep up to 150,000 troops ready to meet the various international commitments.³¹¹ Furthermore, the report explicitly emphasized that, based on a European court's ruling and subsequent changes in German laws, all career fields of the Bundeswehr would be accessible for female applicants.³¹² Scharping's reform outline was eventually approved by the German government at the end of June 2000.³¹³

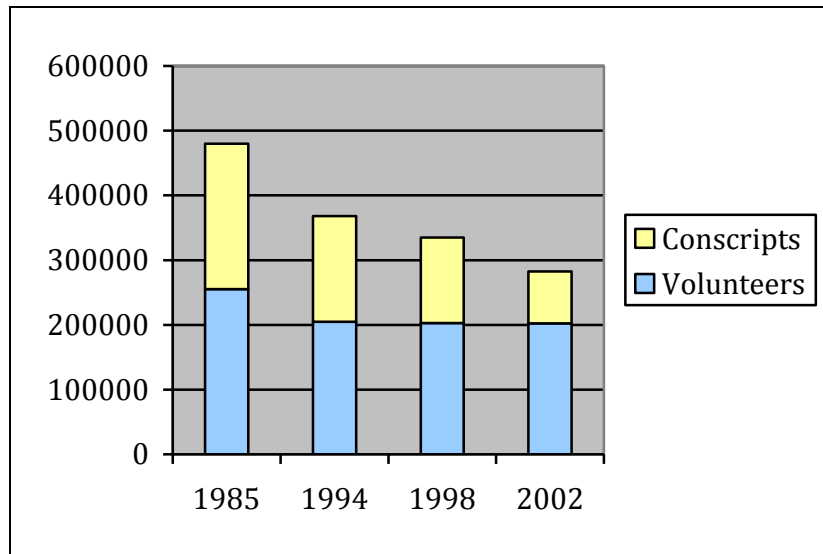


Figure 8. Bundeswehr Peace Time Strength (1985–2002)³¹⁴

One important reason for the apparent unwillingness to adopt and implement the Weizsäcker proposals was, once again, the issue of military bases. A force reduction of 100,000 soldiers would have led to a large-scale closure of Bundeswehr installations all over Germany. Even Scharping's limited approach resulted in severe protests. Local politicians criticized his plans as biased and disadvantageous, especially for *Länder* that were not governed by the SPD.³¹⁵ Thus, it took several rounds of negotiations with the

³¹¹ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Die Bundeswehr – sicher ins 21. Jahrhundert; Eckpfeiler für eine Erneuerung von Grund auf* (Berlin: 2000), 25.

³¹² Before that decision, women had only been granted very limited access to the Bundeswehr, for example, as members of the medical service.

³¹³ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 108.

³¹⁴ Source: Varwick, *Bundeswehr*, 249–252.

³¹⁵ Sarotte, *German Military Reform and European Security*, 47.

minister-presidents of certain *Länder* to finally settle a *Ressortkonzept Stationierung* (departmental concept for military basing) in 2001.³¹⁶ Due to this compromise, the concept could not be based on operational and economic considerations.³¹⁷ This development, in turn, had a negative impact on the reform efforts because military operating costs could not be reduced to the desired extent.

4. A Silent Revolution—Unified Command Structures

Although the main thrust of the Bundeswehr reform was impeded by various factors, it triggered some important organizational changes; above all, adaptations of existing command and control arrangements. The growing number of out-of-area missions had already illustrated the necessity of a centralized command in the 1990s. Since all three reform proposals underlined the importance of this requirement, the Bundeswehr was finally allowed to establish a joint *Einsatzführungskommando* [*EinsFüKdo*] (Bundeswehr Operations Command) in Potsdam-Geltow in July 2001.³¹⁸

This measure not only closed a capability gap, but was also proof of the gradual change in German strategic culture after 1990. It had taken the Bundeswehr a whole decade to prove that there would be no resurgence of the ghosts of the past. A cautious and incremental approach was necessary to overcome the deeply rooted reservations of German political elites and the media about the creation of supposedly powerful military headquarters that were reminiscent of Germany's militant history. Taking into consideration that in 1992 the German press had compared similar proposals with the

³¹⁶ Official website of the Bundeswehr, <http://www.bundeswehr.de/fileserving/PortalFiles/C1256EF40036B05B/W2652FK6894INFODE/ressortkonzept.pdf> (accessed November 29, 2010).

³¹⁷ Clement and Jöris, *50 Jahre Bundeswehr 1955-2005*, 136.

³¹⁸ The *Einsatzführungskommando* turns the political leadership guidelines into military action by issuing orders and tasks to the Bundeswehr personnel on operations. In cooperation with the troop-contributing commands of all the military organizational areas, it ensures personnel and materiel readiness. Additional information (in German as well as in English) is available at the official website of the Bundeswehr Operations Command, http://www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/fileserving/PortalFiles/C1256F200023713E/W26KXL4S657INFODE/broschuere_efk.pdf (accessed November 29, 2010).

High Command of the Wehrmacht, this was remarkable progress. Unsurprisingly, some observers called the foundation of the *EinsFüKdo* the “final painstaking step in creating a normalized [German] command structure.”³¹⁹

As a result, the single service commands—the *Führungskommandos* of the army, the air force, and the navy—ceased to have the lead in exercising command over deployed Bundeswehr forces and evolved into the role of mere “force providers.”³²⁰ Since the *EinsFüKdo* assumed command over the different German contingents for the duration of their mission, this new chain of command initially faced resistance from the three services.³²¹ As a joint headquarters organized along NATO precepts, the *EinsFüKdo* was supposed to serve as the nucleus of an Operation Headquarters (OHQ) for the EU as well.³²²

The foundation of the *Einsatzführungskommando* also corresponded with alterations in the command structures on the ministerial level. The conversion of the *FüZBw* into the *Stabsabteilung* (Division) V of the *Führungsstab der Streitkräfte [Fü S]* (Armed Forces Staff) streamlined the processes and put this element under the supervision of the *Generalinspekteur*. The latter subsequently became responsible for the planning and execution of all Bundeswehr missions. All in all, these different measures removed the fragmentation of responsibilities and increased effectiveness.

³¹⁹ Young, *Post Unification German Military Organization*, 339.

³²⁰ *Ibid.*, 340.

³²¹ Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 385.

³²² Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Bundeswehr 2002- Sachstand und Perspektiven* (Berlin: April 2002), 47.

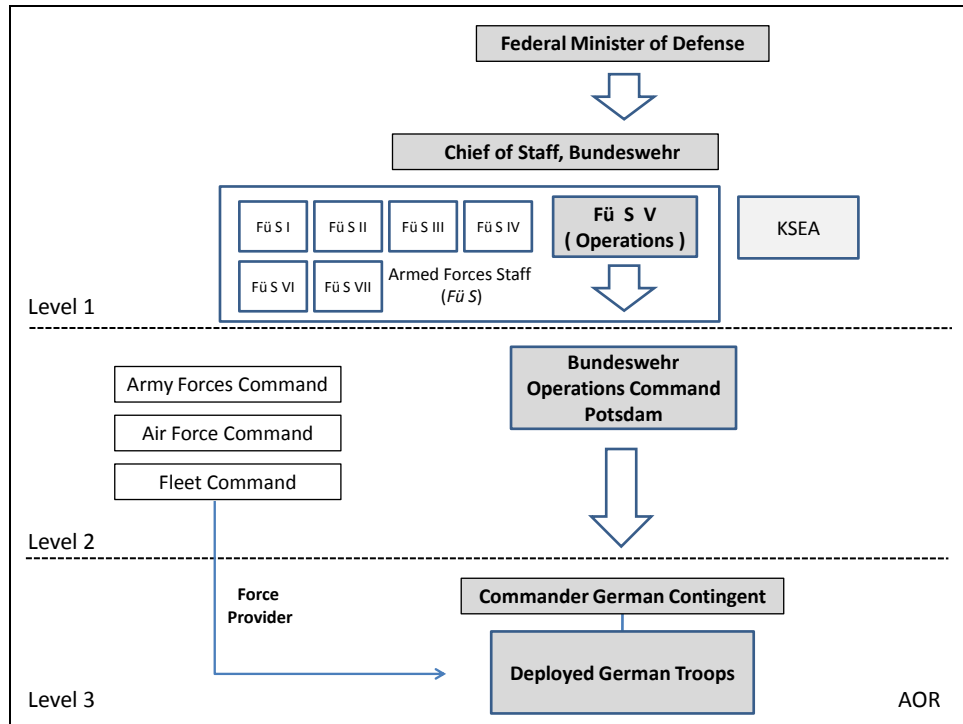


Figure 9. National Chain of Command (2002)

5. Restructuring the Forces

The “two pillar” model continued to serve as an important common element of all new Bundeswehr force structures. Below the ministerial level, all three services consisted of a force command, which exercised (peace-time) command of all active units of that service,³²³ and a service office, which was responsible for training and doctrine as well as other cross-functional tasks.³²⁴ With 134,000 soldiers, the German army remained the largest service and retained the bulk of its units, but lost substantial parts of its manpower and heavy armor. The new structure was called *Heer der Zukunft* (Army of the Future) and centered on five mechanized divisions and three specialized divisions.³²⁵ It had to increase the number of its rapidly deployable forces to be able to engage in out-of-area missions with the equivalent of a reinforced mechanized division in one theater or with

³²³ For example, the service command of the army, the *Heeresführungskommando* (Army Forces Command), exercises command over all German army divisions as well as over the German elements in the staffs of multinational army corps.

³²⁴ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Die Bundeswehr—sicher ins 21. Jahrhundert*, 37.

³²⁵ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Neuausrichtung der Bundeswehr; Grobausplanung, Ergebnisse und Entscheidungen*, (Berlin: September 2000), Stichwort: Struktur des Heeres.

two brigade-size contingents in two parallel operations in different theaters.³²⁶ To meet this requirement for lighter, more flexible forces, the German army established the *Division Spezielle Operationen* [DSO] (Special Operations Division) and the *Division Luftbewegliche Operationen* [DLO] (Air Mobile Division) in 2001 to participate in armed repatriation, operations against irregular forces, initial entry and concluding operations, and deep operations.³²⁷ The specialized roles of these two units clearly reflected the new era in which the Bundeswehr and German strategic culture had arrived.

The foundation of a *Streitkräftebasis* [SKB] (Joint Support Service) was comprised of support units of the three services and the medical branch represented a large step towards more mission-oriented armed forces. The main task of this new *Organisationsbereich* (Organizational Area)³²⁸ was to ensure basic logistical support for Bundeswehr units in Germany, as well as in out-of-area missions. Additionally, the SKB would also serve as a force enabler by providing services and performing functions such as strategic mobility, communications, intelligence, reconnaissance, electronic combat, explosive ordnance disposal, or military police.³²⁹ Remarkably, the SKB gradually became the second-largest structural element of the Bundeswehr with more than 50,000 troops.³³⁰ It also had its own ministerial representation in the form of an *Inspekteur der SKB* (chief of staff, SKB) with its own staff, the *Führungsstab der Streitkräftebasis*. In addition to the SKB, the *Sanitätsdienst* (Medical Service) was reorganized into a (fifth)

³²⁶ Official website of the German army, http://www.deutschesheer.de/portal/a/heer/!ut/p/c4/HcrLDYAwCADQWVwA7t7cQr3VFi2pwaaAJk7vJ-6cMaXhJO3YHxI2HHEKXK_XJCJGrBohY00Zo7ZCNSaF_NGkki_QfrHRO324rIaIjJ0D9pnJBs!/ (accessed November 30, 2010).

³²⁷ Wagener, *Auf dem Weg zu einer "normalen" Macht? Die Entsendung deutscher Streitkräfte in der Ära Schröder*, 86. The DSO not only comprised two airborne brigades, but also the *Kommando Spezialkräfte*, KSK, (Special Forces Command); the DLO combined an army aviation brigade and an airmechanized brigade. Another division-size unit with a special role was the *Heerestruppenkommando* (Army Troops Command) which combined battlefield support- and logistic troops.

³²⁸ This term was chosen in official rhetoric to illustrate that the joint support service is more than an annex to existing structures, but less than a traditional "service" such as the army, the air force and the navy because it has no distinct uniforms.

³²⁹ "Auftrag der Streitkräftebasis," Official website of the German Joint Support Service, http://www.streitkraeftebasis.de/portal/a/streitkraeftebasis/!ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP3I5EyprHK94uyk-ILMKr3SpNSi0jy9xNK0kqJE_YJsR0UAhIw_Uw!!/ (accessed November 30, 2010).

³³⁰ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Neuausrichtung der Bundeswehr*, Stichwort: Personalaufteilung der Organisationsbereiche.

independent organizational area.³³¹ These revisions of the force structure, although incomplete and sometimes even inconsistent, attempted to account for the changes in the external security environment and mirrored “normalization” processes in German security and defense policy behavior.

6. Procurement/Materiel and the Legacy of the Cold War

One of the reasons why the Bundeswehr could not adapt quickly to the new security environment was the limited usability of some of its equipment for crisis-response scenarios.³³² Most of its weapon systems had a purely Cold War legacy, and recent out-of-area missions had shown a lack of strategic mobility and sophisticated C4I systems as well as the need for an independent intelligence-gathering capability.³³³ However, major armament projects faced long cycles of research and development activities and tied up substantial financial resources.³³⁴

In light of the overall budgetary constraints in Germany and the evident unwillingness to increase defense spending, several modernization efforts had to be postponed or realized in the long run. In some cases even Cold War military thinking within the BMVg itself protracted the purchase of highly mobile and deployable equipment because the services staffs adhered to the procurement of heavy weapon systems which had initially been planned during the 1980s.³³⁵ In this context, the interests of the German and European defense industry also played a role. Multinational programs such as the Eurofighter, which had been criticized for their costliness, could not be halted because they enjoyed a high political visibility and secured thousands of jobs in the European aerospace industry.³³⁶

³³¹ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Neuausrichtung der Bundeswehr*, Stichwort: Personalaufteilung der Organisationsbereiche, Stichwort: Sanitätsdienst.

³³² Wagener, *Auf dem Weg zu einer “normalen” Macht? Die Entsendung deutscher Streitkräfte in der Ära Schröder*, 85.

³³³ C4I is the abbreviation for: Command, Control, Communications, Computers and Intelligence.

³³⁴ For example, the procurement of 180 Eurofighter air superiority fighter aircraft will cost € 15.42 billion over time. Wagener, *Auf dem Weg zu einer “normalen” Macht? Die Entsendung deutscher Streitkräfte in der Ära Schröder*, 85.

³³⁵ Bald, *Die Bundeswehr. Eine kritische Geschichte 1955-2005*, 172–3.

³³⁶ Koob, *Deutsche Militärpolitik in den neunziger Jahren*, 140–1.

Nonetheless, some important decisions concerning strategic capabilities were made all at the same. For example, in 2000 the Schröder government announced the development of a space-based observation capability, the SAR-Lupe system, which would consist of several radar satellites.³³⁷ In June 2001, Germany, along with several other European countries, decided to purchase seventy-three Airbus A-400M transport aircraft to replace its fleet of aging C-160 Transall aircraft.³³⁸

D. CONCLUSION

The active involvement in the military missions in Kosovo and Afghanistan underlined the fact that the Bundeswehr had *de facto* become an active instrument of German foreign and security policy at that time. While during *Operation Allied Force* the need for a humanitarian intervention was stressed—which was perceived as compatible with German strategic culture—the deployment of Special Forces to the battlefields in the Hindukush illustrated that key German decision-makers were at times even willing to disregard their traditional antimilitarism and to gradually retreat from their “culture of reticence.”

However, these remarkable developments in the German strategic culture and the increased willingness to use military force did not lead to sufficient institutional and operational efforts to adapt the Bundeswehr that would have cost substantial sums amid the financial stringency of the era. Rather, military reforms during the first tenure of Chancellor Schröder showed mixed results at best. On the one hand, the founding of a joint support service, the centralization of command and control arrangements, the creation of some highly mobile military units, and the procurement of certain systems with a strategic reach must all be viewed as steps to increase the Bundeswehr’s ability to participate in multilateral military missions. On the other hand, the Defense Minister adhered to territorial defense as the Bundeswehr’s main task. His reform lacked a

³³⁷ Sarotte, *German Military Reform and European Security*, 51. SAR-Lupe was part of a German-French initiative to develop and operate an independent surveillance system to which France contributed its optical HELIOS II satellites. The SAR-Lupe system has been operational since 2008. It was the successor of the HORUS project of the 1990s which had been abandoned because of high development costs.

³³⁸ Agüera, *Ambitious Goals, Weak Means*, 297. Due to severe technical problems, especially with the engines, the first A-400M aircraft are now scheduled to enter service in the German air force in 2015.

comprehensive approach to include all parts of the armed forces into a reorganization process according to the demands of crisis response and conflict management missions. The result was a Bundeswehr whose units often had to rely on structures and equipment of the Cold War era.

Thus, an opportunity for a sound military reform—represented by the proposals of the Weizsäcker Commission—was missed because of domestic politics, strategic culture and the conservatism of the German Ministry of Defense itself. Neither the loose obligations of NATO’s Defense Capabilities Initiative nor the Headline Goal of the EU managed to put enough external pressure on Germany to influence the evolution of the Bundeswehr.

Once again a complex set of factors, including a domestic focus on supposedly more salient political issues, electoral interests, and the imbalance of power between key decision-makers in the cabinet and parliament and beyond, determined the limited scope and depth of the Bundeswehr reform. Against this background, the German armed forces got caught in a political crossfire between high expectations, on the one hand, and a lack of powerful sponsors—as exist in such countries as the United Kingdom, France and the United States—and dwindling resources, on the other. The apparent unwillingness of the political opposition to support the concept of a more professional Bundeswehr reinvigorated these trends.³³⁹

³³⁹ The unwillingness was based on fears of a political “boomerang.” Because the Kohl government had initiated significant reductions in the defense budget after German unification, arguments for increased defense spending would have been condemned as inconsistent with CDU/CSU policies under Kohl. Kamp, *Die Zukunft der Bundeswehr: Die Diskussion in der CDU/CSU*, 3.

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V. EMBRACING MILITARY TRANSFORMATION, 2002–2005

The second term of Chancellor Schröder coincided with a time of political upheaval in the international scene associated with the post-September 11 campaigns of the Global War on Terror. This period saw both NATO and the EU trying to adapt to the new security threats of the twenty-first century. The dispute over the Iraq War in 2003 impaired trans-Atlantic relations and left the EU without a unified position. Several attempts were made to strengthen or to revive the military and political relevance of these institutions. From a military perspective, these measures were deemed crucial for the future of the Alliance because they aimed at reducing the trans-Atlantic capability gap. Most of the European NATO member states had to acknowledge that they had failed to improve their military capabilities in order to conduct autonomous operations or to remain interoperable with U.S. forces. Consequently, new initiatives were launched that aimed at closing existing gaps. These approaches also called for a more assertive German commitment.

To be sure, the Bundeswehr was already operating in different theaters, mainly the Balkans and Afghanistan. These long-term deployments proved to be a burden for the armed forces, amid their partial reforms and the persistent focus on their traditional defense role. Furthermore, continuously high operating costs because of a whole fleet of aging air and land systems, as well as a scattered and inefficient pattern of military basing and the absence of privatization revenues, all impeded modernization. The tightrope walk between demanding missions on the one hand, and piecemeal and inert reforms on the other, proved unsustainable. Rather, the widening gap between qualitatively and quantitatively increased tasks and available resources made drastic measures and changes inevitable.

Against this background, the new German Defense Minister, Peter Struck, had a lasting effect on the course of the Bundeswehr at this time. He took office in July 2002 after Rudolf Scharping had been forced to resign over a political scandal. Struck ordered

the BMVg to develop new Defense Policy Guidelines as a conceptual framework and starting point for a process that was deemed by his *Generalinspekteur*, General Wolfgang Schneiderhan, as the “Transformation of the Bundeswehr.”

A. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

The 2004 enlargement of both NATO and the EU members extended the zone of political and economic stability in Europe significantly. Germany in particular was a major beneficiary of these developments because one of its essential security interests had been the integration into Western Europe of its eastern neighbors.³⁴⁰ As this process continued, the earlier notions of territorial and Alliance defense as the main goals of German security policy—to say nothing of universal conscription—seemed to be more than obsolete.

Furthermore, Germany and its NATO and EU allies were continuously occupied with managing several crises on the European periphery and in other areas of conflict throughout the course of Chancellor Schröder's second term. The post-September 11 fight against terrorism had serious consequences for trans-Atlantic relations as well as multinational security institutions. It proved to be a determining factor for the security and defense policy of NATO and the EU member states. Both institutions experienced serious internal crises in these fateful years. At the same time, the EU emerged as an autonomous security organization and conducted its first military missions in the Balkans as well as in Africa. Germany was confronted with new risks from the dynamic international system and a multitude of demands from its partners. Would German state behavior live up to these expectations?

1. The End of the Trans-Atlantic Era?

The fact that the United States chose to rely on a “coalition of the willing” for combating terrorism in Afghanistan in late 2001—although NATO had shown unconditional solidarity by invoking Article 5—alienated some European Alliance

³⁴⁰ Michael Staack, “Normative Grundlagen, Werte und Interessen deutscher Sicherheitspolitik,” in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik; Herausforderungen, Akteure und Prozesse*, eds. Stephan Böckenförde and Sven Bernhard Gareis (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009), 62.

members. “NATO’s absence created the feeling among some Europeans that the United States had disregarded NATO.”³⁴¹ This perception of NATO’s diminishing role as the hub of U.S.-European security policy strained trans-Atlantic relations. Controversy about the right policy vis-à-vis the Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein, as well as the appropriateness of the preemptive use of military force enshrined in the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) of 2002, contributed to this erosion.

Notwithstanding these trends, the “Transformation Summit” in Prague in late November 2002 marked a milestone in NATO’s history. Under U.S. leadership, the Alliance approved not only its most ambitious enlargement,³⁴² but also a new command structure; improvements in capabilities, including the creation of a *NATO Response Force* (NRF); and—probably most importantly—an adaptation of its role. The member states agreed to the transformation of the Alliance in order to fend off the threats created by transnational terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Notably, the Alliance also abstained from setting geographical limits for its future missions, stating that “NATO must be able to field forces that can move quickly to wherever they are needed.”³⁴³ Thus, NATO was beginning to emerge as a “multifunctional security agency with global reach.”³⁴⁴

Both the ambitions for a global role of the Alliance and the technological superiority of U.S. forces urgently called for substantial increases in military capabilities of the European NATO members. As described in the previous chapter, NATO had launched a Defense Capabilities Initiative in 1999 to enhance its operational capabilities.³⁴⁵ However, progress under DCI had been mixed at best because member

³⁴¹ Ryan C. Hendrickson, *Diplomacy and War at NATO. The Secretary General and Military Action after the Cold War* (Columbia and London: University of Missouri Press, 2007), 125.

³⁴² NATO invited Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. These countries became members in 2004.

³⁴³ North Atlantic Council, “Prague Summit Declaration,” November 21, 2002, official NATO website, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_19552.htm (accessed March 10, 2011).

³⁴⁴ Gareis, *Militärische Beiträge zur Sicherheit*, 105.

³⁴⁵ These capabilities can be distinguished in five key areas: deployability and mobility; effective engagement; consultation, command and control; survivability; sustainability and logistics.

states had no obligation to report officially their individual achievements.³⁴⁶ To rectify this shortcoming, the 2002 summit inaugurated the so-called Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC). This new initiative covered more than 400 specific areas, which were grouped in eight essential fields.³⁴⁷ To prevent slow or uneven progress NATO members had to enter into specific commitments and target dates. The PCC was meant to correct capability shortfalls through cooperation, shared procurement, or the pooling of resources.³⁴⁸ As a result, several multinational consortia, headed by individual member states, were founded to allow for the development of certain capabilities.³⁴⁹

NATO members also agreed to establish a “NATO fire brigade,” the NATO Response Force, which was supposed to consist of “a technologically advanced, flexible, deployable, interoperable and sustainable force including land, sea, and air elements ready to move quickly to wherever needed.”³⁵⁰ This approximately 21,000-strong high-readiness force was to be deployable within five to thirty days.³⁵¹ The NRF was regarded as a litmus test for NATO transformation in general and the European NATO members’ willingness to invest in modernization and interoperability in particular.³⁵²

³⁴⁶ “Prague Capabilities Commitment,” November 21, 2002, official NATO website, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50087.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed March 10, 2011).

³⁴⁷ Ibid. These fields comprise: chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear defense; intelligence, surveillance and target acquisition; air-to-ground surveillance; deployable and secure command, control and communications; combat effectiveness, including precision-guided munitions and suppression of enemy air defenses; strategic air- and sealift; air-to-air refueling; deployable combat support and combat service support units.

³⁴⁸ Wolfgang Schneiderhan, “Die Weiterentwicklung der Reform der Bundeswehr,” *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, February 2003, <http://www.europaeische-sicherheit.de/alt/ausgaben/02februar2003/pages/0203,02,01.html> (accessed February 26, 2011).

³⁴⁹ “Prague Capabilities Commitment,” November 21, 2002, official NATO website, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50087.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed March 10, 2011).

³⁵⁰ North Atlantic Council, “Prague Summit Declaration,” November 21, 2002, cipher 4a, official NATO website, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_19552.htm (accessed March 10, 2011).

³⁵¹ Peter Struck, “Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik und die Bundeswehr vor neuen Herausforderungen,” *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, January 2003, <http://www.europaeische-sicherheit.de/alt/ausgaben/01januar2003/pages/0103,02,01.html> (accessed February 26, 2011). NATO announced the NRF’s initial operational capability in October 2004.

³⁵² Varwick, *Deutsche Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik in der Nordatlantischen Allianz*, 28.

2. The EU on the Road to Emancipation

The Iraq crisis represented a catalyst for promoting the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP).³⁵³ From the European perspective, U.S. unilateralism—in the form of the Bush administration’s refusal to ask NATO as a whole for assistance in *Operation Enduring Freedom* and, two years later, ousting Saddam Hussein more or less on its own—had undermined the coherence of the Alliance.³⁵⁴ European NATO members focused more on the EU as a forum for security cooperation and consultation.³⁵⁵ As a consequence, ESDP enjoyed a political appreciation in 2003.

With the “Berlin Plus” framework agreement of March 2003, the EU and NATO strengthened their cooperation and strategic partnership by providing the EU with recourse to NATO assets and capabilities.³⁵⁶ The European Council also approved a framework for autonomous EU operations in December 2003. The latter required the establishment of a planning capacity on the strategic level in the form of a civil/military cell within the EU Military Staff.³⁵⁷ On the operational level, national headquarters of a Union member—eventually reinforced by other member states—would be responsible for the command and control of a mission.

In the wake of the discord over the U.S. Global War on Terror and the notion of preemptive strikes, the EU announced its first European Security Strategy (ESS) in

³⁵³ Peter Struck, “Die Bundeswehr – Neue Aufgaben, neuer Kurs,” *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, February 2004, http://www.europaesische-sicherheit.de/alt/2004/2004_01/2004.01.02.02.html (accessed February 26, 2011).

³⁵⁴ It is also important to note that the US approach of “cherry-picking” its allies caused a rift among European members.

³⁵⁵ Olaf Theiler, “Deutschland und die NATO,” in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik; Herausforderungen, Akteure und Prozesse*, eds. Stephan Böckenförde and Sven Bernhard Gareis (Opladen & Farmington Hills: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2009), 310.

³⁵⁶ “Berlin Plus” comprised those crisis management operations where NATO as a whole was not engaged. To improve its ability to make use of NATO resources the EU established a liaison cell at SHAPE in Belgium. The Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe (DSACEUR) not only represented the EU’s point of contact but also ensured a separate chain of command. Jolyon Howorth, *Security and Defense Policy in the European Union* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 102.

³⁵⁷ Council of the European Union, “European Defense: NATO/EU Consultation, Planning and Operations,” November 2004, official website of the Council of the European Union, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78414%20-%20EU-NATO%20Consultation,%20Planning%20and%20Operations.pdf> (accessed March 11, 2011).

December 2003. This document defined not only European security interests but also a broad framework for ESDP operations. Furthermore, the ESS highlighted the dynamism of potential crises and the unprecedented dimension of the threats posed by transnational terrorism and the proliferation of WMD. In this context, the strategy called on EU members “to develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention.”³⁵⁸ Based on a comprehensive approach to security, the ESS advocated effective multilateralism and the use of both civilian and military instruments.

The ESS also served as the rule for the further development of the Helsinki Headline Goal (HHG). Since the EU had declared its operational capability to conduct the full range of Petersberg tasks in May 2003, the changes in the overall security environment and the fight against terrorism set new targets for the improvement of European military capabilities.³⁵⁹ The Headline Goal (HG) 2010 emphasized the need to develop capabilities to simultaneously conduct several small- and medium-sized operations.³⁶⁰ In June 2004, the EU member states decided to implement the HG.³⁶¹ At its core stood the proposal to create a total of thirteen European “Battle Groups” (EU

³⁵⁸ Council of the European Union, “A Secure Europe in a Better World – European Security Strategy,” December 12, 2003, Part III, official website of the Council of the European Union, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf> (accessed March 11, 2011).

³⁵⁹ EU Council Secretariat, “Development of European Military Capabilities - The Force Catalogue 2006,” November 2006, official website of the Council of the European Union, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/MilitaryCapabilitiesFC06backgroundNov06_en.pdf (accessed March 11, 2011). This declaration was a bold statement. The HHG 2003 suffered from similar deficiencies as NATO’s DCI, above all, the lack of a clear vision of the distinct character of future EU military missions as well as the voluntariness and vagueness of individual commitments. Jolyon Howorth, 104. As a result, the EU continued to face shortfalls with regard to capabilities, combat-ready personnel, and defense expenditure. Knélangen, *Die Europäische Union und die deutsche Sicherheitspolitik*, 273.

³⁶⁰ Peter Struck, “Fit für veränderte Aufgaben – Die Transformation der Bundeswehr nimmt Gestalt an,” *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, January 2005, http://www.europaeische-sicherheit.de/alt/2005/2005_01/01_Struck/2005,01,01,02.html (accessed February 26, 2011).

³⁶¹ Council of the European Union, “Headline Goal 2010,” May 17, 2004, official website of the Council of the European Union, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/2010%20Headline%20Goal.pdf> (accessed March 11, 2011).

BG)—1,500-strong high-readiness force packages, capable of launching their mission within ten days of official approval of the EU Council.³⁶²

Thus, the Union modified the HHG's initial plans to establish a large corps-sized European peacekeeping force. Instead, it shifted from a quantitative to a qualitative approach by focusing on small but advanced military units.³⁶³ Being part of the HG 2010, the European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) was adapted to a process comparable to and largely compatible with NATO's PCC. Multinational project groups attempted to develop specific measures and road maps for the removal of capability shortfalls in key areas such as combat search and rescue (CSAR), strategic airlift, or air-to-air refueling.³⁶⁴ These steps were coordinated with NATO in order to prevent overlaps and redundancies.

3. Implications and Challenges for the Bundeswehr

The broad array of transformation and modernization activities within NATO and the EU had considerable repercussions for the Bundeswehr. Germany, as the largest European member state of both institutions for example, had to make substantial contributions in terms of military personnel. Germany accepted to provide up to 5,000 troops for the NRF. Any participation in the Response Force was based on biannual rotation and required a period of austere training and certification ranging from six to twelve months prior to the stand-by phase of six months.³⁶⁵ Therefore, the calculative Bundeswehr commitment to the NRF initiative was a total of 15,000 troops.³⁶⁶ As a

³⁶² In the light of a potential crisis, the EU BGs are supposed to be able to conduct both stand-alone and initial entry operations. A Battle Group principally consists of an infantry battalion which is reinforced by combat support and combat service elements. Additional strategic enablers such as logistics and lift capacities as well as air and maritime assets are tailored to each BG mission. Jolyon Howorth, 107.

³⁶³ Giovanni Grevi and Daniel Keohane, "ESDP Resources," in *European Security and Defense Policy – The First Ten Years (1999-2009)*, eds. Giovanni Grevi, Damien Helly and Daniel Keohane (Paris: The European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2009), 73.

³⁶⁴ Johannes Varwick, "Die Bundeswehr als Teil einer europäischen Eingreiftruppe," in *Bundeswehr-Die nächsten 50 Jahre; Anforderungen an deutsche Streitkräfte im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. Joachim Krause and Jan C. Irlenkaeuser (Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2006), 115.

³⁶⁵ "The NATO Response Force," official website of the Allied Command Operations, <http://www.aco.nato.int/page349011837.aspx> (accessed March 10, 2011).

³⁶⁶ Michael Staack, "Außenpolitik und Bundeswehrreform" *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 21 (2005), 35. Due to the NRF's high readiness status, troops in the stand-by phase could not be deployed elsewhere.

result, Germany faced challenges with regard to training, equipping, deploying, and supplying these forces.³⁶⁷ But also the quality of the personnel of these new multinational units was challenging. Since the NRF and the Battle Groups would only comprise professionals and volunteers, especially the German army, which had the most conscripts of all three services of the Bundeswehr at the time, would face certain difficulties in assembling an NRF contingent.

The ambitions of the EU to conduct autonomous ESDP missions meant yet another burden for the German armed forces. After all, the Bundeswehr's contribution to the Headline Goal was confined to a maximum of 18,000 troops.³⁶⁸ Such EU military ventures also necessitated greater national efforts because of the absence of ancillary capabilities of major NATO powers. For example, in case of an autonomous EU mission with Germany as the framework nation, the *Einsatzführungskommando* (Bundeswehr Operations Command) in Potsdam would have taken the lead as a multinational operations headquarters. This would have been a daunting task given the fact that effective national command and control structures had only been established recently.

Within the framework of PCC and ECAP, Germany was confronted with additional issues. For example, Germany took over the lead for the NATO working groups that focused on capability areas such as air-to-ground surveillance, strategic lift, and CBRN defense.³⁶⁹ As a consequence, German armament policy and procurement had to account for the goals of PCC.³⁷⁰ The latter's ambitious timeframe put additional pressure on German defense policy which was already constrained by budget cuts.

Several European initiatives such as a combined training center for A-400M crews or the recourse to the Eurokorps as a headquarters for initial entry operations of

³⁶⁷ Any NRF deployment of German troops would also require the approval of the Bundestag which could lead to delays and undermine German credibility.

³⁶⁸ Varwick, *Die Bundeswehr als Teil einer europäischen Eingreiftruppe*, 114.

³⁶⁹ Sinjen and Varwick, *Die Bundeswehr und die Aufgaben der Nordatlantischen Allianz*, 100.

³⁷⁰ In the face of considerable delays in the availability of new weapon systems such as the long-range transport aircraft Airbus A-400M, the transport helicopter NH-90 and others, the Bundeswehr had to develop interim solutions to meet its obligations. For example, it chartered Ukrainian Antonov aircraft for the transport of oversize cargo to Afghanistan and other theaters on a long-term basis. This contract, called SALIS (Strategic AirLift Interim Solution), is part of a NATO-EU program.

European intervention forces were launched as well.³⁷¹ Additionally, Germany and several other European partners intended to create a European air transport command (EATC) by 2010.³⁷²

This pooling of scarce military resources would improve the Bundeswehr's efficiency over time. Therefore, such initiatives as the NRF reflected Germany's traditional preference for an effective multilateralism, but they also touched sensitive questions of national sovereignty and parliamentary control over the Bundeswehr. Would Germany be willing to provide air force assets on very short notice in order to redeploy British or French troops to a crisis region when push came to shove? Would Germany be a reliable ally in case of an involvement of the NRF in a high-intensity scenario?

Apart from these trends in NATO and the EU, Germany's international deployments proved to be a strong stimulus for learning processes within the Bundeswehr. According to its new post-Cold War role of a "security provider," Germany continued to participate in a plethora of international military missions. Between 1998 and 2003 alone, a total of more than 100,000 Bundeswehr soldiers had been deployed to different theaters in Europe, Africa, and Asia.³⁷³

For example, Germany sustained its engagement in the Balkans. The NATO-led *KFOR* and *SFOR* missions were the most prominent ones; they included the deployment of 3,450 troops to Kosovo and 1,350 soldiers to Bosnia.³⁷⁴ The Bundeswehr also

³⁷¹ Peter Struck, "Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik und die Bundeswehr vor neuen Aufgaben," *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, January 2003, <http://www.europaeische-sicherheit.de/alt/ausgaben/01januar2003/pages/0103.02.01.html> (accessed February 26, 2011).

³⁷² The EATC would replace the existing European airlift coordination cell (EACC), which had been established in 2001. "Ein europäisches Lufttransportkommando ist das gemeinsame Ziel," November 2006, official website of the German air force, http://www.luftwaffe.de/portal/a/luftwaffe/kcxml/04_Sj9SPykssy0xPLMnMz0vM0Y_QjzKLNzKI9zD0Ac mB2e5ezvqRcNGglFR9X4_83FR9b_0A_YLciHJHR0VFAK_b8Mg!/delta/base64xml/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS80SVVFLzZfMjBfSDFM?yw_contentURL=%2F01DB06000000001%2FW26VM9U6199INFODE%2Fcontent.jsp (accessed March 15, 2011).

³⁷³ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien für den Geschäftsbereich des Bundesministers der Verteidigung* (Berlin: May 21, 2003).

³⁷⁴ Wagener, *Auf dem Weg zu einer "normalen" Macht? Die Entsendung deutscher Streitkräfte in der Ära Schröder*, 93.

participated in the first military missions of the EU under the “Berlin Plus” agreement, *Concordia* in Macedonia in March 2003 and *EUFOR Althea* in Bosnia.³⁷⁵

Operation *Artemis* in Congo was yet another novelty. This first autonomous ESDP mission was led by France and paved the way for a larger UN operation in that country.³⁷⁶ The Bundeswehr supported the French troops by providing air transport capacities.

Although Germany had repeatedly rejected any military involvement in Iraq, it offered to increase its *ISAF* engagement in Afghanistan in compensation.³⁷⁷ Thus, the Hindu Kush remained a focal point of Bundeswehr missions at the time. NATO assumed responsibility for *ISAF* in August 2003.³⁷⁸ While this step solved the problem of finding new lead nations every six months, it *de facto* cemented the long-term deployment of German troops to Afghanistan.

All these deployments were a continuous drain on the Bundeswehr’s financial, material and manpower resources. Because international missions had to be paid from the current defense expenditure, less money was available for modernization efforts.³⁷⁹ But the financial consequences were not the only implications for the transformation of the Bundeswehr. Others stemmed from lessons learned. For instance, the increasing insurgency in Afghanistan resulted in an urgent demand for armored personnel carriers and other vehicles capable of protecting soldiers from suicide bombers, improvised explosive devices, or even mines. The Bundeswehr of 2003 faced a lack of such equipment.

³⁷⁵ The latter was a follow-on operation of NATO’s SFOR mission.

³⁷⁶ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Bundeswehr im Einsatz* (Berlin: 2009), 56.

³⁷⁷ Overhaus, *Civilian Power under Stress*, 72.

³⁷⁸ “ISAF History,” official ISAF website, <http://www.isaf.nato.int/history.html> (accessed March 10, 2011).

³⁷⁹ For example, the costs for international deployments of the Bundeswehr increased from 180 million euros in 1998 to 1.7 billion euros in 2002. Johannes Varwick, “Militär als Instrument der Politik,” in *Handbuch Militär und Sozialwissenschaft*, eds. Sven B. Gareis and Paul Klein (Wiesbaden: Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2006), 97.

Despite Germany's absence from the Iraq War, *Operation Iraqi Freedom* provided valuable insights for the Bundeswehr. It once again disclosed the technological superiority of the U.S. military. From a Bundeswehr perspective, the U.S. forces served as a landmark for the ability to conduct network-enabled military operations in a high-intensity conflict. Consequently, the concept of *Vernetzte Operationsführung* [NetOpFü] (Network Enabled Operations) became a leitmotif of Bundeswehr transformation.

Furthermore, the riots in Kosovo in March 2004 presented the Bundeswehr with a sobering experience. The official rhetoric had always pointed to the mainly humanitarian character of the mission and the media had portrayed the soldiers as “helpers in need.” However, when the peaceful *KFOR* routine was interrupted by the violent protests of ethnic Albanians, the German “peacekeepers” were ill-equipped as well as mentally and legally ill-prepared to handle the situation.³⁸⁰ This episode not only demonstrated that the Bundeswehr needed better equipment for low-intensity conflicts such as non-lethal weaponry, but also that a clear definition of the political end-state, unambiguous rules of engagement, a robust mandate, and soldierly initiative were essential prerequisites for mission success.

B. THE DOMESTIC CONTEXT

Chancellor Schröder's success in the 2002 elections was based on two events with a focus on the fate of the SPD in eastern Germany. He had demonstrated leadership during the disastrous flooding of the river Elbe prior to the elections.³⁸¹ But more importantly, through his public opposition against a possible U.S.-led invasion of Iraq during the federal election campaign German foreign and security policy “became hijacked by the domestic struggle for the chancellorship.”³⁸² The latter episode under the dictates of left versus left in the frame of a skeptical domestic politics eventually became

³⁸⁰ Von Neubeck, *Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee*, 494-503.

³⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 423. This natural disaster caused immense damages; Schröder's crisis management was perceived as strong by the German public at the time.

³⁸² Overhaus, *Civilian Power under Stress*, 67.

a heavy burden for Germany's credibility and its external relations—regaining trust of important partners and allies was therefore a political imperative.

Albeit for these profound dynamics and changes in the international environment, the primacy of domestic challenges prevailed during Gerhard Schröder's second term in office. Economic trends in Germany presented the government with major difficulties. The country was continuously plagued by slow economic growth and the persistence of high levels of unemployment. For example, with a mere 0.2 percent increase Germany featured the slowest growth rate within the euro zone, and also one of the highest unemployment rates in 2003—11.3 percent or 4.7 million in absolute terms.³⁸³ The former “economic power house” had become “the sick man of Europe.”³⁸⁴ As a consequence, the Schröder administration initiated an additional series of deep budgetary cuts by reducing unemployment benefits and other areas of public spending. The coalition agreement of October 2002 stated that the fight against unemployment and budget deficits would be a top priority of the new government.³⁸⁵

Against this background, the defense budget—like other areas of public spending—was no sanctuary. For example, the Ministry of Finance ordered a “global underissue” in 2004 to ensure the funding of the reorganized German pension insurance.³⁸⁶

The defense minister did not display strong resistance in this situation. Peter Struck was a highly prominent figure in the political establishment of the Social Democrats. As the former head of the influential SPD faction, he had a very good political network and was a reliable ally of the Chancellor. This had repercussions for the Bundeswehr. On the one hand, his position of relative power provided him with a high

³⁸³ Peter Merkl, “Run Gerhard, Run; or, is the Reformstau real?” in *Germany at Fifty-Five: Berlin ist nicht Bonn?*, ed. James Sperling (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004), 516.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

³⁸⁵ “Erneuerung—Gerechtigkeit—Nachhaltigkeit. Für ein wirtschaftlich starkes, soziales und ökologisches Deutschland. Für eine lebendige Demokratie.” *Koalitionsvertrag 2002–2006*, October 16, 2002, http://www.boell.de/downloads/stiftung/2002_Koalitionsvertrag.pdf (accessed March 12, 2011).

³⁸⁶ Peter Struck, “Die Bundeswehr – Neue Aufgaben, neuer Kurs,” *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, January 2004, http://www.europaeische-sicherheit.de/alt/2004/2004_01/2004,01,02,02.html (accessed February 26, 2011).

assertiveness within the coalition cabinet and vis-à-vis the foreign minister. On the other hand, Struck remained a loyal member of the ruling coalition and did not try to struggle for more financial resources for the Bundeswehr.³⁸⁷

C. A RETURN OF UNILATERALISM OR SCHAUKELPOLITIK?

Chancellor Schröder's second tenure received a lot of attention from political scientists because of his policy during the Iraq crisis. German state behavior obviously indicated a significant change in elite attitudes towards Germany's role in the international system in general and the use of force in particular. Schröder's public statement that the vital issues and questions regarding Germany were decided in Berlin—rather than in the capitals of close allies—was perceived as a return to old patterns of German unilateralism and therefore labeled as a “German Way” or *Sonderweg*,³⁸⁸ or the policy of choosing sides between east and west in a *Schaukelpolitik* as had existed prior to 1918 or 1933.

While German members of the realist school of thought praised the strong assertiveness of the Chancellor and his attempts to form a “counterweight” to the unilateral U.S. policy,³⁸⁹ constructivists referred to the dilemmas in German strategic culture at the time. In light of a strong anti-war sentiment in German public opinion and the federal elections of late 2002, the reluctance to support the use of force (“never again war”) finally prevailed over the commitment to multilateralism and the desire to be perceived as a reliable ally (“never again alone”).³⁹⁰ Several lessons can be derived from the events in 2002 and 2003. First, the episode illustrates that the German public had not lost its traditional antimilitarism.³⁹¹ Second, the notion of “never again war” can prevail over the other basic tenet of German strategic culture—“never again alone”—under certain circumstances. In the case of Iraq the missing UNSC resolution as a form of

³⁸⁷ Rolf Clement, “Bürgerbundeswehr,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 21 (2005), 4.

³⁸⁸ Wilke, *German Strategic Culture Revisited*, 91.

³⁸⁹ Baumann, *Deutschland als Europas Zentralmacht*, 69.

³⁹⁰ Conrad and Stumm, *German Strategic Culture and Institutional Choice: Transatlanticism and/or Europeanism*, 61.

³⁹¹ Clement, *Bürgerbundeswehr*, 4.

legitimacy, the perception of regime change as an “unjust” cause of war, and the high-intensity conflict with the prospect of many casualties on both sides were crucial elements of public thinking in Germany.

All in all, the 2003 Iraq War was not a general deviation from the foundational elements of German strategic culture. Rather, it underlined the limits of the German public’s willingness to support the use of military force. Opinion polls in Germany showed that public support for the use of force was limited to cases of defense against an immediate threat on home territory or the protection of individuals or groups abroad against security threats such as civil war or ethnic cleansing.³⁹² The promotion of values and ideas abroad, regime change, or the use of preemptive force received little to no support. Thus, the German public was less willing to accept Bundeswehr missions that were mainly based on the notion of being a loyal member of an international alliance. This trend indicated a certain rift between the general public and political elites in Germany. The new societal consensus that had emerged at the end of the 1990s and its reappraisal for the role of the Bundeswehr proved to be rather fragile.³⁹³

Notwithstanding these internal differences and the external dispute over Iraq, NATO and the EU remained the two key institutional frameworks for German security and defense policy. The proposal to transform ESDP into a supranational European Security and Defense Union (ESDU) in the long run was an example that once again underlined the German preference for “effective multilateralism.”³⁹⁴ The German government was also eager to meet all of its multinational obligations, be it in NATO or the EU, in Afghanistan, in the Balkans, or at the Horn of Africa.³⁹⁵ The German parliament, the Bundestag, had to approve sixteen international Bundeswehr missions

³⁹² Meyer, *The Quest for a European Strategic Culture*, 142–3.

³⁹³ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 94.

³⁹⁴ Germany’s striving for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council also pointed to its willingness to bear greater international responsibility and to support UN missions. Staack, *Außenpolitik und Bundeswehrreform*, 38.

³⁹⁵ Chancellor Schröder even supported the US war effort in Iraq—although indirectly. He deployed German NBC units to Kuwait, provided air space, staging grounds, and personnel to guard US bases in Germany, and contributed to the establishment of a missile defense in Turkey. Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, 93.

throughout the course of Schröder's second tenure. Most notably, any controversial debates were omitted and none of these ballots received less than 89 percent of consent. Thus, the Bundeswehr had become a self-evident instrument of a multilateral German foreign and security policy—at least from the perspective of political elites.

In March 2005 the government announced the so-called *Parlamentsbeteiligungsgesetz*,³⁹⁶ a law that regulated which Bundeswehr missions had to be approved by the Bundestag.³⁹⁷ This measure accommodated the fact that the Bundeswehr would continue to participate in multinational missions in the foreseeable future. However, this “normalcy” of military engagements was restricted to peacekeeping or mostly humanitarian missions in low to medium intensity conflicts and crises.

How did these overall trends in German strategic culture affect defense policy and the Bundeswehr? First, Germany's firm stance of “never again alone” reinforced its strong commitment to NATO and the EU and its efforts to meet the capability and interoperability requirements set by these two organizations. Second—and to some extent in line with the former conclusion—the persistence of an antimilitaristic sentiment among the German public had an impact on the scope, intensity, and character of possible military ventures that German politicians were willing to support.

D. THE BUNDESWEHR IN TRANSFORMATION

When Defense Minister Struck took office in mid-2002, the structural, financial, and technological problems of the Bundeswehr were far from being resolved. On the contrary: the general lack of salience in security and defense issues in the Berlin Republic, consecutive cuts in defense spending, a dense sequence of international

³⁹⁶ “Gesetz über die parlamentarische Beteiligung bei der Entscheidung über den Einsatz bewaffneter deutscher Streitkräfte im Ausland (Parlamentsbeteiligungsgesetz),” available (in German) at: <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bundesrecht/parlbg/gesamt.pdf> (accessed March 16, 2011).

³⁹⁷ The law's overall intention is to underscore the central role of the parliament in the decision-making- and approval process that precedes any Bundeswehr deployment. It finally implemented the Constitutional Court's fundamental decision of 1994. At the same time the law enhances the political room for maneuver of the German government with regard to small-scale military operations. For example, in a case of emergency (e.g. evacuation of German citizens from a conflict region) the government can send Bundeswehr troops without the pre-approval of the parliament. However, the Bundestag needs to be involved thereafter. Varwick, *Militär als Instrument der Politik*, 99.

deployments, and a series of halfhearted reforms under Defense Ministers Rühle and Scharping widened the gap between roles, missions and available resources as these became more acute in the ISAF mission.

In lieu of being able to play in the same military league as its peer middle powers France and the United Kingdom, it became increasingly difficult for Germany to fulfill its international obligations in comparison to these allies. Decisive action was necessary to cut the Gordian knot in this unfavorable situation.

1. The Need for a Reform of the Reform

Against this backdrop, Defense Minister Peter Struck faced a burdensome legacy. On the one hand, Germany had made substantial commitments to both NATO and the EU. Demanding and innovative projects such as the NRF and the EU Battle Groups called for an allocation of several thousand professionally trained and equipped troops as well as high value military assets. Additionally, current operations under the auspices of NATO, the EU, and the UN on three continents permanently pinned down between 7,000 and 10,000 German troops. Taking the necessary force rotations into account, these figures went up to between 20,000 and 30,000—the Bundeswehr was overstretched. The international focus on advanced military formations, capable of fighting complex and high intensity missions in a network enabled environment, also cast doubt on Germany's adherence to conscription.

On the other hand, the guiding principles of the military reform that had been initiated in 2000 did not reflect the realities of conceivable Bundeswehr missions any more.³⁹⁸ Furthermore, the promises of the German chancellor and the finance minister to abstain from further reductions of the defense expenditure had been broken.³⁹⁹ Initially the Red-Green coalition had announced the intent to freeze the defense budget at a level

³⁹⁸ Peter Struck, "Die Bundeswehr – Neue Aufgaben, neuer Kurs," *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, http://www.europaeische-sicherheit.de/alt/2004/2004_01/2004,01,02,02.html (accessed February 26, 2011).

³⁹⁹ Martin Agüera, "Deutsche Verteidigungs- und Rüstungsplanung im Kontext von NATO und EU: Ein (Reparatur-)Werkstattbericht," in *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik – Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder*, eds. Sebastian Harnisch, Christos Katsoulis and Marco Overhaus (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004), 129.

of € 24.40 billion during the period from 2003 to 2006.⁴⁰⁰ However, as early as 2004 the expenditure was reduced to € 23.80 billion for 2004 and to € 23.65 billion in 2005. These nominal cuts did not even account for additional costs in the form of international deployments, inflation, and higher wages.⁴⁰¹ If one observer is correct in stating that the size of the defense budget generally reflects the degree of political appraisal for the armed forces,⁴⁰² then the Bundeswehr apparently was not very popular among German political elites at the time.

The general budget constraints were reinforced by high operating costs and “the failure of Scharping’s efforts to raise finances from selling government real estate, privatization, and efficiency measures.”⁴⁰³ They impeded any serious attempt to modernize the Bundeswehr and to adapt it to its future roles and tasks. Furthermore, the bulk of German political elites still supported conscription—despite the fact that regular conscripts could not take part in out-of-area missions.

This twofold dilemma—external obligations in conjunction with insufficient resources—could only be solved by a revision of the Bundeswehr reform that had been implemented under Defense Minister Scharping in 2000.

2. A New Conceptual Framework

As a consequence, Defense Minister Struck published a new set of *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien* [VPR] (Defense Policy Guidelines) in May 2003, only ten months after taking office. Some scholars called these VPR a paradigm shift that would adopt the Bundeswehr to the security environment of the twenty-first century.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰⁰ Meiers, *Zur Transformation der Bundeswehr*, 20.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² Clement, *Bürgerbundeswehr*, 5.

⁴⁰³ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense and Security*, 142.

⁴⁰⁴ Borkenhagen, *Entwicklungslinien aktueller deutscher Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik*, 513.

Struck's widely recognized public statement that "Germany's security would also be defended in the Hindu Kush" apparently underlined this claim.⁴⁰⁵

With regard to the long-standing principles of German security policy, the VPR acknowledged the central role of NATO. The trans-Atlantic partnership was seen as the anchor and foundation of European and German security. ESDP was viewed as complementing NATO rather than competing with the Alliance. Apart from national evacuation and rescue operations, any German military engagement would be placed in the existing multilateral framework of the UN, NATO or the EU.

In contrast to official documents and rhetoric of previous governments, the 2003 defense policy guidelines pointed out that Germany's territorial integrity was not threatened by Cold War-type opponents any longer. Therefore, military capabilities for the territorial defense against a conventional aggressor were regarded as obsolete. Rather, the rapidly changing security environment called for a thorough reassessment of German defense policy. Notably, this conclusion resembled some of the main findings of the report of the Weizsäcker Commission of 2000: conflict prevention and crisis management—rather than territorial defense—were henceforth expected to be the Bundeswehr's main tasks. Additionally, the VPR identified the fight against transnational terrorism and the proliferation of WMD as well as their means of delivery as a major challenge for the Bundeswehr. This assessment clearly reflected the new consensus on the elite level about the legitimacy and the goals of the use of force that had emerged in the wake of Kosovo and the terrorist attacks of September 11. The VPR also rested on a very broad understanding of the term "defense," which resulted in the statement that there were in fact no geographical limits for future Bundeswehr missions. In the light of this substantial reorientation, the defense minister was aware of the necessity to limit the

⁴⁰⁵ He announced this view during a press conference in December 2002. "Die Sicherheit Deutschlands wird auch am Hindukusch verteidigt," official website of the AG Friedensforschung, <http://www.ag-friedensforschung.de/themen/Bundeswehr/weissbuch/strutynski.html> (accessed March 13, 2011).

scope and duration of German contributions to international missions in order not to overburden the Bundeswehr during its phase of reforms.⁴⁰⁶

The Bundeswehr's future structure would be primarily informed by these new missions.⁴⁰⁷ Joint military capabilities of the armed forces as a whole should have priority over capabilities of the army, the air force, or the navy, indicating a renunciation from the traditional single service-oriented thinking. In this context, the VPR defined a basic capability profile consisting of six different categories: command and control; intelligence collection and reconnaissance; mobility; effective engagement; support and sustainability; and survivability and protection.

Did the VPR represent the necessary quantum leap to prepare the Bundeswehr for the challenges of the twenty-first century? At first glance, the guidelines seemed to be in line with similar assessments of both NATO and the EU—the main landmarks of German security policy. However, the VPR suffered from a lack of broad and effective support within the Schröder administration. They had not been developed as an interagency project, incorporating the expertise of other important actors in the field of foreign and security policy. Both the need for a sufficient funding of the reforms and the German mantra of a “comprehensive approach to security” would have called for the involvement—or at least the consent—of the Foreign Office, the Chancellor's Office, the Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, and, above all, the Ministry of Finance. Instead, the VPR were solely hammered out by the Ministry of Defense.

One of the underlying reasons for this approach was Struck's attempt to circumvent any intra-governmental debates about the question of whether German security policy should focus on the trans-Atlantic link through NATO or on the European Union.⁴⁰⁸ Since both the chancellor and the foreign minister were avowed “Europeanists,” such concerns were justifiable from the perspective of the traditionally

⁴⁰⁶ Peter Struck, “Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik und die Bundeswehr vor neuen Herausforderungen,” *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, <http://www.europaeische-sicherheit.de/alt/ausgaben/01januar2003/pages/0103.02.01.html> (accessed February 26, 2011).

⁴⁰⁷ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien 2003*, par. IX.

⁴⁰⁸ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense and Security*, 134–141.

“Atlanticist” Ministry of Defense. Thus, the VPR were an important conceptual groundwork rather than a widely accepted strategic outlook.

3. From Vision to Reality—Conceptualizing the VPR

After the VPR had been released, the *Weisung zur Weiterentwicklung der Bundeswehr* [WWB] (Directive for the Advancement of the Bundeswehr) of October 2003 paved the way for the next reform steps. This directive tasked the BMVg to develop a concept for implementing the VPR, a proposal for the future role of the *Generalinspekteur*, and a draft of a new military basing concept.

The *Generalinspekteur*, General Wolfgang Schneiderhan, announced his concept for the implementation of the guiding principles and axioms of the VPR in August 2004. This *Konzeption der Bundeswehr* [KdB]⁴⁰⁹ (Concept for the Bundeswehr) made statements about and specifications for the role of the armed forces in future conflicts as well as vis-à-vis Germany’s international allies, the force structure, a portfolio of joint capabilities, and the future of conscription.

The KdB recognized the need for a new approach to military reforms. The dynamic security environment seemed to render obsolete any former series of successive reforms which had featured a clearly framed beginning and end. Rather, the Bundeswehr had to become an adaptive and flexible organization, capable of meeting future challenges through a process of permanent realignment and “transformation.” This transformation was defined as “a political task and a military goal—a mission derived from a vision for using Information Age technologies, proven business practices and management procedures, and knowledge-based leadership in security and defense management.”⁴¹⁰

Consequently, the KdB emphasized the importance of *Vernetzte Operationsführung* as one of the essential driving factors of German military

⁴⁰⁹ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Konzeption der Bundeswehr* (KdB) (Berlin: August 9, 2004).

⁴¹⁰ Manfred Engelhardt, “Transforming the German Bundeswehr: The Way Ahead” in *Transatlantic Transformations: Equipping NATO for the 21st Century*, ed. Daniel S. Hamilton (Washington D.C.: Center for Transatlantic Relations, The Johns Hopkins University, 2004), 92.

transformation. NetOpFü was regarded as a means to increase both the operational effectiveness of German forces and their interoperability by shortening the technological gap between the Bundeswehr and major allies such as the United States. This approach was expected to trigger a German version of the U.S. “revolution in military affairs.”

Furthermore, the KdB reiterated the main message of the VPR, namely that the defense of Germany must not be restrained to national borders. Rather, threats had to be met at an early stage and where they emerged. Therefore, out-of-area conflict prevention and crisis management, including the fight against international terrorism, were defined as the Bundeswehr’s main task.⁴¹¹ As a consequence, its force structure, doctrine, and equipment had to be adapted comprehensively. The Bundeswehr had to develop a joint capability portfolio along the lines of the six main capability classes of the VPR.

With regard to the overall strength of the Bundeswehr, the KdB announced a further reduction from 285,000 to 252,500 troops.⁴¹² This downsizing was mainly caused by the tense situation of the defense budget. In order to free financial resources for essential modernization and capability enhancement programs, operating costs had to be minimized. In the face of urgent internal and external transformation pressures a larger Bundeswehr was simply not affordable any more. Therefore, staff was suspended, bases were closed and major weapon systems were decommissioned.

Based on these parameters, the KdB determined the national “level of ambition (LoA):” a contingent of up 14,000 troops for peacekeeping operations, capable of operating in up to five different low to medium intensity conflicts, and a joint task force of up to 35,000 troops for multinational peace-enforcing operations. In consideration of Germany’s international commitments and the LoA, the Bundeswehr was divided into three different force categories: first, 35,000 *Eingreifkräfte* (response forces), comprising

⁴¹¹ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Konzeption der Bundeswehr*, par. 4.2. The other tasks of the Bundeswehr comprised: support of allies, protection of Germany and its citizens, rescue and evacuation operations, partnership and cooperation, relief and assistance operations at home and abroad.

⁴¹² These 252,500 troops comprised 195,000 professionals and volunteers, 55,000 conscripts, and 2,500 reservists. Simultaneously, the number of civilian employees of the Bundeswehr had to be reduced to a total of 75,000. Ernst-Christoph Meier, “Die Verteidigungspolitischen Richtlinien der Bundeswehr im Spannungsfeld zwischen internationalen Anforderungen und nationalen Beschränkungen,” in *Bundeswehr – Die nächsten 50 Jahre. Anforderungen an deutsche Streitkräfte im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. Joachim Krause and Jan C. Irlenkaeuser (Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2006), 69.

high-readiness forces of all services, trained and equipped to conduct combined operations in high-intensity environments; second, 70,000 *Stabilisierungskräfte* (stabilization forces), specialized in long-term engagements in post-conflict reconstruction and peacekeeping missions; and third, 106,000 *Unterstützungskräfte* (support forces),⁴¹³ responsible for supplementing and enabling the two other force categories and also providing basic homeland requirements and training facilities.⁴¹⁴

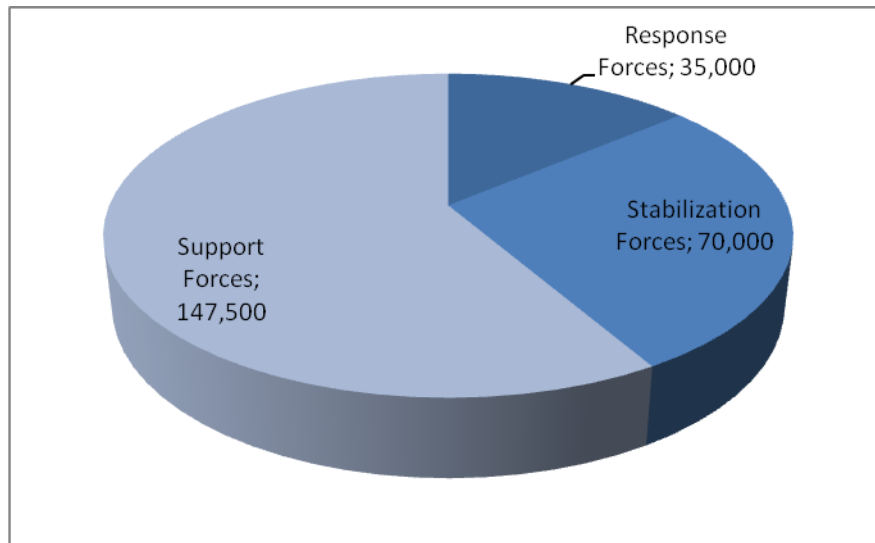


Figure 10. Bundeswehr Force Categories⁴¹⁵

At first glance, the *Eingreifkräfte*, with their profile of expeditionary warfare, seemed to deviate significantly from the antimilitaristic strand of German strategic culture. However, their total number of 35,000 simply stemmed from an addition of the 15,000 NRF troops, the 18,000 Headline Goal troops, 1,000 UNSAS⁴¹⁶ troops, and 1,000 troops for national evacuation operations. Thus, almost all of the German high-readiness forces were exclusively dedicated to NATO and the EU. In other words, the Bundeswehr was far from establishing an offensive national power projection capability. Rather, the *Eingreifkräfte* represented a strong commitment to “never again alone.”

⁴¹³ An additional 31,500 military slots were dedicated to training/education and reserves.

⁴¹⁴ Engelhardt, *Transforming the German Bundeswehr: The Way Ahead*. 104.

⁴¹⁵ Source: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung.

⁴¹⁶ UNSAS is the abbreviation for “United Nations Standby Arrangement System.”

Nonetheless, the underlying idea of these standing intervention forces remained a provocation in a sense because the German public was unlikely to support any Iraq-type venture of the NRF. Therefore, it is remarkable that the creation of this force category did not result in any public outcry in Germany. On the contrary, both political elites and the general public seemed to accept Defense Minister Struck's new concept.⁴¹⁷

After all, the gradually differentiated profiles of the three force categories accounted for the overall lack of financial resources. Only the *Eingreifkräfte* were eligible for state-of-the-art equipment. Hence, the transformation was a classical compromise—the least common denominator between external obligations and the willingness to accept different quality standards in the Bundeswehr. Thus, the combination of scarce financial resources and the traditional desire to live up to international expectations once again shaped the face of the Bundeswehr.

a. Leaner and Meaner?

How did the budgetary situation and the new conceptual tripartition of force categories affect the services as well as the organizational areas in general and the force structures in particular? First of all, the three services were faced with the necessity to disband forces and to decommission units in order to free financial resources in the short-run. For example, the German air force had to disband all its Roland and Hawk air defense units and decommission a total of ninety Tornado fighter bombers. The navy handed its remaining jet aircraft over to the air force and decommissioned parts of its fast patrol boats.⁴¹⁸ This abdication of certain military capabilities was perceived as the only way of ensuring the planned procurement of major weapon systems such as the Eurofighter, the A-400M, and the NH-90 as well as new frigates, corvettes, and submarines.

⁴¹⁷ Struck obviously tried to water down any doubts about the alleged interventionist character of these forces by calling the Bundeswehr the “largest peace movement in Germany.” “Bundeswehr ist die größte Friedensbewegung Deutschlands,” *SPIEGEL Online*, March 4, 2004, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,289999,00.html> (accesses March 06, 2011). He apparently succeeded because his plans mostly received positive comments in the media.

⁴¹⁸ Engelhardt, *Transforming the German Bundeswehr: The Way Ahead*, 101.

The German army was also hit hard by additional force reductions. From its former eight division commands only five, with a total of twelve brigades, were supposed to form the operational forces of the “New Army” of 2010.⁴¹⁹

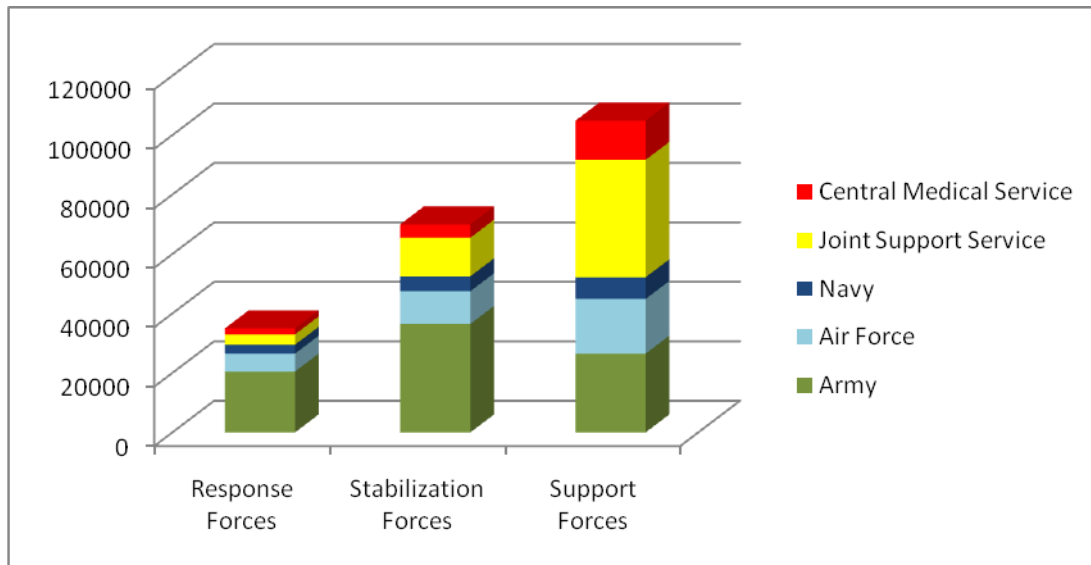


Figure 11. Bundeswehr Force Structure (2010)⁴²⁰

As Figure 11 shows, the army had to provide the bulk of both response and stabilization forces. The overall goal was to be able to bring to bear up to one army division in “NRF-like” rapid-response, high-intensity operations in a multinational setting.⁴²¹ The other four divisions were mainly labeled as stabilization forces, available for the out-of-area missions of the Bundeswehr.⁴²²

In this context, the army was confronted with several difficulties. First, the creation of a “response forces division” required thorough training, and above all, sophisticated equipment. Interoperability, including network-enabled capabilities,

⁴¹⁹ Benjamin Schreer, “Die Transformation des Heeres,” in *Bundeswehr-Die nächsten 50 Jahre; Anforderungen an deutsche Streitkräfte im 21. Jahrhundert*, eds. Joachim Krause and Jan C. Irlenkauser (Opladen: Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2006), 184.

⁴²⁰ Source: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung.

⁴²¹ Consequently, the first armored division became the core of this “intervention forces division.”

⁴²² However, one airborne brigade of the *DSO*, the air-mechanized brigade of the *DLO*, and the *KSK* became also part of the intervention forces. Official website of the German army, http://www.deutschesheer.de/portal/a/heer!/ut/p/c4/NYzNCsIwEITfaDdFij-3ighe9FLQeovp0i62Sdhs9OLD2yDOwMfADIN3XOztiwerHLyd8Iad493jDSORAPsUYaDkRnajEiSV_NQs5HtKZUEJPOVfxmt56wlc8KSFS1554SBWg0AMolNpsiwPctxjZ6rD3tTmr-qzWbXNut3W5nQ-XjDOc_MFKnXV7Q!!! (accessed March 20, 2011).

deployability and effectiveness were essential features of such a highly capable formation. However, the ongoing large-scale procurement programs of the other services rendered a short-term resolution of the army's capability shortfalls impossible. Second, the prioritization of the army's response forces was likely to have negative consequences for its stabilization forces. On the one hand, the emphasis on this force category could be perceived as a step towards a "two-tier army," with a small, but modern part at the one end and the bulk of the army with ageing material at the other.⁴²³ On the other hand, the *Stabilisierungskräfte* were permanently tied down by the current international missions of the Bundeswehr and urgently in need of better equipment. This fact would actually have called for a reversal of the army's procurement priorities at the time.⁴²⁴

Notwithstanding these challenges, the army also contributed to the establishment of additional German command and control structures by reorganizing the headquarters of the II German-U.S. army corps in Ulm. Subsequently, this corps headquarters was converted to the Kommando Operative Führung Eingreifkräfte [KdoOpFüEingrKr] (Response Forces Operations Command) in 2005. This joint command marked the nucleus of a deployable multinational Force Headquarters (FHQ) that could, for example, control EU operations according to the specifications of the Helsinki Headline Goal. Because its internal structure resembled the provisions of NATO's CJTF concept, it could meet international standards. The headquarters closed a capability gap because Germany could now provide an OHQ as well as an FHQ for NATO- and EU missions.⁴²⁵ Consequently, the new command was yet another sign of Germany's willingness to assume greater responsibility on the international stage.

While the three services faced further reductions at the time, one important result of the concept of transformation was the increased importance of the Streitkräftebasis. It has previously been mentioned that this new organizational area had

⁴²³ Schreer, *Die Transformation des Heeres*, 189.

⁴²⁴ Sascha Lange, *Neue Bundeswehr auf altem Sockel. Wege aus dem Dilemma*, SWP-Studie (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, January 2005), 27.

⁴²⁵ Jan Oerding, "Kommando Operative Führung Eingreifkräfte," *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, June 2005, http://www.europaesche-sicherheit.de/alt/2005/2005_06/05_Oerding/2005,06,05,01.html (accessed February 26, 2011).

been much more than a joint logistics organization from the outset. Rather, it combined a broad range of strategic enablers and essential support functions, thereby bridging the gulf between Germany and all Bundeswehr missions abroad.

In light of the emphasis on the joint capability portfolio of the Bundeswehr as a whole and growing international obligations the Streitkräftebasis became a focal point of transformation.⁴²⁶ Its logistics, signal, and other units contributed substantially to the capability classes of intelligence collection and reconnaissance, mobility, and support and sustainability. Furthermore, the SKB played a central role with regard to a national command and control organization. Its agencies and units not only comprised the Bundeswehr Operations Command, but were also crucial for the development of a NetOpFü framework and architecture.

In 2003, the Chief of Staff of the Joint Support Service was assigned with the responsibilities of the Vice Chief of Staff, Bundeswehr. The personal union of these two influential positions and the fact that the other services had to hand over competences, capabilities and personnel over to the *Generalinspekteur* and the Joint Support Service underlined the significance of the SKB within the Bundeswehr.

In general, the evolution of the Streitkräftebasis is an example that reflects the profound changes that were beginning to materialize within the German military. Had the reforms of the 1990s mainly consisted of force reductions and improvised measures to help fulfill international obligations, the transformation process initiated fundamental alterations and adaptations that were irreversible. Transformation and the aspect of “jointness” did not only have an impact on the capabilities and structures of the Bundeswehr. The whole system of military education, training and doctrine had to be adapted as well. Whenever feasible, single-services schools were replaced by joint schools.⁴²⁷ For example, a logistics school of the Bundeswehr was founded which served

⁴²⁶ The *Streitkräftebasis* is also a joint service in itself because its personnel comprise all three services (71% army, 22% air force, 7% navy). Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Die Streitkräftebasis* (Bonn, October 2006), 10.

⁴²⁷ Engelhardt, *Transforming the German Bundeswehr: The Way Ahead*, 98.

all three services. The establishment of a joint general staff officer education program in 2004 also proved that “jointness” was not an empty cliché any more.⁴²⁸ The Bundeswehr entered a new era.

b. Strengthening the Office of the Generalinspekteur

This new chapter also pertained to the role and influence of the *Generalinspekteur*, which had traditionally been a sensitive issue within the BMVg. The WWB instructed the director of the policy planning staff of the BMVg to develop a follow-up document for the “Blankeneser Erlass” (Blankenese Directive) of 1970 which had administered the competences and tasks of the *Generalinspekteur*.

On January 21, 2005, Defense Minister Struck published the so-called “Berliner Erlass” (Berlin Directive), which rearranged the assignment of responsibilities and the processes at the highest ministerial level.⁴²⁹ The *Generalinspekteur* remained the military advisor of the German government, the highest-ranking soldier of the Bundeswehr, its representative in all international committees at the CHOD level, and the immediate superior of the armed forces staff within the BMVg. With regard to Germany’s international obligations he was officially enthroned as the central planning, coordinating and control authority for all Bundeswehr missions in Germany and abroad. Additionally, he became responsible for force planning, concept development, and the operational readiness for the armed forces as a whole. This included the right to define military capabilities that were deemed necessary for the fulfillment of the Bundeswehr’s tasks and to issue general instructions about joint doctrine and training.

Although the new document did not fully undermine the strong position of the chiefs of staff of the single services, it strengthened the role of the *Generalinspekteur* significantly. The “Berliner Erlass” represented a major step forward with regard to coherence in defense planning and national command and control. This was also a clear

⁴²⁸ Viktor Toyka, “Die Neukonzipierung der Generalstabs-/Admiralstabsausbildung an der Führungsakademie der Bundeswehr – Eine Zwischenbilanz,” *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, October 2005, http://www.europaeische-sicherheit.de/alt/2005/2005_10/07_F%fcAk/2005,10,07,01.html (accessed February 26, 2011).

⁴²⁹ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Grundsätze für Aufgabenzuordnung, Organisation und Verfahren im Bereich der militärischen Spitzengliederung* (Berlin: January 2005).

sign of further normalization in civil-military relations in Germany. A more powerful position of the *Generalinspekteur* was the result of challenging externalities and a diminishing skepticism of political vis-à-vis military elites.

c. Additional Base Closures

Like his predecessor, Defense Minister Struck attempted to reduce the financial burden of high operating costs of the Bundeswehr by addressing the issue of base closures. He announced a new *Stationierungskonzept* (military basing concept) in 2004, which led to a further reduction of military installations.⁴³⁰ Some scholars claim that Struck expedited these base closures to ensure that this sensitive issue would not be a source of political disputes in the run-up to the next federal elections in 2006.⁴³¹ Bases in 105 locations were earmarked for closing over the next few years.⁴³² The Bundeswehr was supposed to have concentrated all of its garrisons and facilities at a total of 392 locations by the end of 2010.⁴³³ Taking an economical approach, the BMVg wanted the future military basing to be exclusively based on military and functional aspects⁴³⁴ as well as on cost-effectiveness. As a consequence, the Bundeswehr's role of being an economic “sponsor” of underdeveloped regions in Germany gradually diminished. Since the overall peacetime strength of the Bundeswehr was further reduced, mainly by drafting less conscripts, the armed forces ceased to be part of the everyday life in many German cities.

4. Retaining Conscription

The fact that regular conscripts would comprise less than one-fifth of the Bundeswehr cast doubt on the future role of conscription. Compulsory military service had always taken center stage in civil-military relations. It had been deeply ingrained in

⁴³⁰ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Die Stationierung der Bundeswehr in Deutschland* (Berlin: November 1, 2004).

⁴³¹ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense*, 122.

⁴³² Meiers, *Zur Transformation der Bundeswehr*, 19.

⁴³³ Borkenhagen, *Entwicklungslinien aktueller deutscher Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik*, 514.

⁴³⁴ These factors included, for example, a base's distance to the nearest training area or its potential to accommodate larger troop formations such as a whole brigade.

German strategic culture as a means to prevent the reemergence of German militarism and a “state within the state.” A whole generation of “elder statesmen,” influential politicians of the catch-all parties, and high-ranking Bundeswehr officials kept being informed by this notion. However, this axiom was not only questioned by the long-standing and strict democratic control over the armed forces, but also by the growing number of international obligations and missions that called for volunteers.

In particular, the Green party, as well as the oppositional FDP, advocated an intermission of conscription. Since an agreement between the SPD and the Greens could not be reached over this controversial issue during the negotiations about a coalition agreement in 2002, a final decision was postponed to the end of the legislative period.⁴³⁵

Being a strong proponent of the idea of integrating the Bundeswehr into society, Defense Minister Struck retained conscription. Consequently, his VPR stated that conscripts were deemed vital for the overall readiness and efficiency of the Bundeswehr as well as its ability to reconstitute in case of a serious crisis or an emergency such as a natural disaster or a terrorist attack. There were some practical reasons for this stance as well. Conscripts had always been a valuable pool for recruitment—many officers and enlisted personnel had started their Bundeswehr careers that way.⁴³⁶ Additionally, the future force structure would provide a total of 25,000 positions for conscripts who could voluntarily serve an extended period of up to twenty-three months. These volunteers would be available for international military missions.⁴³⁷ Thus, the VPR were used to defend conscription against its political opponents.⁴³⁸ In this case German strategic culture as well as practical deliberations impeded a radical shift in this particular area of German defense policy.

⁴³⁵ The coalition agreement stated that the constitutional foundations of conscription would be revised at the end of the fifteenth legislative period. “Erneuerung – Gerechtigkeit – Nachhaltigkeit. Für ein wirtschaftlich starkes, soziales und ökologisches Deutschland. Für eine lebendige Demokratie.” *Koalitionsvertrag 2002 – 2006*, October 16, 2002, http://www.boell.de/downloads/stiftung/2002_Koalitionsvertrag.pdf (accessed March 12, 2011).

⁴³⁶ Another argument was the large number of conscientious objectors who had to complete their Civilian Service. The German social welfare system depended to some extent on this cheap labor at the time.

⁴³⁷ Engelhardt, *Transforming the German Bundeswehr: The Way Ahead*, 112.

⁴³⁸ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defense*, 134.

E. CONCLUSION

This section has shown that the transformation of the Bundeswehr, which had been initiated in 2004, was once again shaped by external developments and trends as well as domestic factors, including strategic culture. Transformation was a decisive and drastic attempt to adapt essential parts of the notoriously underfunded German armed forces to its most likely future tasks. By deliberately sacrificing obsolete structures, bases and equipment it finally increased the Bundeswehr's leeway to modernize. Although the Bundeswehr could not match the operational readiness and the professionalism of, for example, the British or the French forces at the time, its new threefold structure and the emphasis on capabilities of the Bundeswehr as a whole rather than on single Services or even systems facilitated a future-oriented approach.

The focus on network enabled capabilities paved the way for developing innovative programs that would improve the Bundeswehr's interoperability in the medium term. Transformation also laid the foundations for a change of the predominant mindset within the forces by triggering a joint and more mission-oriented way of thinking which was essential for gradually overcoming the traditional dominance of the Services. The new force categories ensured that Germany was able to meet its obligations with regard to NATO, the EU, and current out-of-area missions. Taking the initial difficulties to establish national command and control structures during the 1990s into account it was one of the remarkable achievement of transformation that Germany was even able to provide headquarters for multinational missions at the end of 2005.

Nonetheless, the overall lack of resources once again resulted in a security and defense policy that reacted to external developments rather than seizing the initiative. Therefore, agenda setting took place elsewhere. Although Germany had become a “security provider” and an increasingly capable partner in international military missions, it was far from being an active “framer” of security policy.

All in all, Defense Minister Struck's decision to shift the role of the Bundeswehr from territorial defense to conflict prevention and crisis management was a major leap forward and initiated the most fundamental military reform in the post-Cold War era. At

the same time, however, Struck tried to “calm down” calls for an end of conscription and opposition against alleged German “intervention capabilities” and therefore abstained from any thorough discussion among political elites and the general public. His project remained exclusively in the hands of the BMVg. Struck and others did not seek a broad elite or societal consensus about the question of why Germany's security had to be defended in places like the Hindu Kush. As a consequence, the remarkable processes of change that were beginning to transform the Bundeswehr into a full-fledged foreign policy instrument remained largely unrecognized by the general public—a fact that contributed to spurring new discussions about the role of the Bundeswehr in following years.

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VI. SECURITY POLICY AND MILITARY TRANSFORMATION SINCE 2005

The federal elections of 2005 brought a grand coalition of the CDU and the SPD into power, the first such cabinet since that of 1966-1969. Chancellor Angela Merkel, Germany's first female head of government and protégé of former Chancellor Helmut Kohl, sought reconciliation with the United States over the Iraq issue at the beginning of her tenure.⁴³⁹ She also attempted to maintain good bilateral relations with France and Russia and to spur new initiatives for European integration after the failure of the EU Constitutional Treaty. All in all, her foreign and security policy initially followed traditional patterns and was marked by a return to the classical role of a "balancer" in the triangle between Washington and Paris and the desire for being perceived as a reliable ally.⁴⁴⁰ Most recently, however, Germany's refusal in 2011 to participate in Anglo-French-U.S. NATO military operations in Libya has called this reliability into question and has recalled the Schröder policy of Germany between the camps as in former times.

Merkel's first Defense Minister, Franz-Josef Jung, was stigmatized by the German media and professional soldiers as the weak minister in her cabinet because he often seemed to be overstrained by his position.⁴⁴¹ Jung was not an agenda-setter like his predecessor, Peter Struck. It is therefore unsurprising that during his tenure from 2005 to 2009, the transformation of the Bundeswehr mainly meant an implementation of the reforms that had been initiated earlier. Nonetheless, new impulses for change stemmed from the international environment, namely from the experiences gained during the

⁴³⁹ Cristian Hacke, "Deutsche Außenpolitik unter Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 43 (2006), 31.

⁴⁴⁰ At the same time, however, Chancellor Merkel always tried to cultivate a more businesslike style and to keep a certain distance to other heads of government. Some observers have therefore called her a proponent of a pragmatic political approach of "small steps" rather than of strategic vision. Carlo Masala, "Möglichkeiten einer Neuorientierung deutscher Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 43 (2008), 25.

⁴⁴¹ "Franz-Josef Jung - Der Mann, der durch Loyalität nach oben kam," *ZEIT Online*, November 26, 2009, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2009-11/jung-pannen-karriere> (accessed May 16, 2011). Prior to his position as defense minister, Jung had no political experience on the federal level.

ongoing German engagement in Afghanistan that became more violent and problematic in these years, as well as from new security and military missions under the auspices of the EU and the UN.

Military transformation during the second tenure of Chancellor Merkel was first and foremost caused by an external shock: the world financial crisis of 2008–2009 atop the strains caused by the impact of September 11 on the international system. This crisis resulted in the need to consolidate government deficits anew. Subsequent cuts in defense spending were regarded as inevitable by the ruling CDU-FDP coalition. In this context, Franz-Josef Jung’s successor as Defense Minister, Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg (CSU)—a high profile politician celebrity and rising star in the cabinet—proved crucial for initiating proposals for a new reform and bringing conscription to an end in 2010.

A. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

Apart from the role played by individual decision-makers, the international environment continued to inform German security and defense. The period from 2005 onward saw both NATO and the EU at a crossroads. While NATO’s involvement in Afghanistan became a growing source of discord among the member states, the failure of the EU’s Constitutional Treaty threatened the future of ESDP and defense integration.

The diverging perspectives between NATO and the EU were yet another area of concern. These views partially stemmed from different approaches on both sides of the Atlantic, or as one observer notes: “[...] the United States has tended to prioritize military instruments over diplomatic, unilateral approaches over multilateral, war-fighting over nation-building and *ad hoc* coalition forming over Alliance nurturing. The EU, for its part, has done pretty much the opposite.”⁴⁴²

1. Major Developments in NATO

The trans-Atlantic rift and the notions of an “old” versus a “new” Europe that had emerged in the years 2002–2005 amid the Iraq War led to a crisis in NATO as serious as the one in 1956 over Suez. The course of events resulted in a rapprochement of the allies

⁴⁴² Howorth, *Security and Defense Policy in the European Union*, 175.

after 2005, granted the alternative (NATO's collapse and unacceptable political costs for all). Because of their large-scale military commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States in the second Bush cabinet "rediscovered" NATO as a forum for mutual support and burden-sharing.⁴⁴³ The Merkel government, on the other hand, reemphasized the role of the Alliance as the anchor of German security and moved away from overly close bilateral security cooperation with France and the flirtations with the Russia of Vladimir Putin.

NATO's expanding military security building and possible combat role in Afghanistan, however, was a source of further tensions within the Alliance. The longer the ISAF mission continued, the larger the gap became between political rhetoric and actual military commitments by certain the allies. Capability shortfalls, a lack of domestic public support, and diverging assessments about the right approach to stabilize the country proved to be additional obstacles to Alliance cohesion, as did the operational and legal restrictions—also known as national caveats and a feature in NATO of long standing—of Germany and other participating countries.⁴⁴⁴ In short, most NATO members that participated in ISAF were plagued by "deployment fatigue."

Furthermore, the escalation of violence and the increase in military forces deployed to Afghanistan also affected the NATO Response Force—the catalyst of NATO transformation. The NRF had been declared fully operational at the Riga Summit in November 2006.⁴⁴⁵ Granted the NRF's character as a strategic reserve and expeditionary force, its troops did not participate in peacekeeping and stabilization missions in Kosovo or Afghanistan and hence represented an additional military burden to troop-contributing

⁴⁴³ Michael Rühle, "Entwicklungslinien des Atlantischen Bündnisses," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 43 (2006), 5.

⁴⁴⁴ The example of the Netherlands illustrates that the mission in Afghanistan represents a real political risk: the ruling coalition government collapsed because of an internal dispute over an extension of the deployment of Dutch troops to Afghanistan in 2010. "Niederländische Regierung zerbricht," *ZEIT Online*, February 20, 2010, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2010-02/niederlande-regierung-afghanistan> (accessed May 14, 2011).

⁴⁴⁵ North Atlantic Council, The Riga Summit Declaration, November 29, 2006, para. 23, official NATO website, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/SID-42D51838-0757B9C7/natolive/official_texts_37920.htm?selectedLocale=en (accessed May 14, 2011).

nations. Therefore, in 2008 the Alliance adopted a more flexible cadre structure for the NRF, relying on a core of immediately available troops and reinforcements with a lower readiness status.⁴⁴⁶

All in all, NATO's post-2001 course toward becoming a global actor that was perpetually engaged in costly military ventures was marked by the recurrent divergence of interests and policies, as is the norm in NATO.⁴⁴⁷ These different perspectives made a compromise and a reappraisal of NATO's role inevitable in order to keep the Alliance intact.

As a consequence, NATO developed a new Strategic Concept, announced at the Lisbon Summit in November 2010 to replace the document of 1999. This concept reflected influences of different interest groups within the Alliance because it simultaneously underlined the importance of collective defense, crisis management, and cooperative security.⁴⁴⁸ Based on a revised threat assessment, member states decided to complement NATO's conventional and nuclear defense posture with such new capabilities as ballistic missile defense, cyber defense, a capacity to contribute to energy security, and civilian crisis management. Because the EU already had civilian crisis management capabilities and instruments, the latter goal raised questions about the future of NATO-EU relations.

2. Major Developments in the European Union

In this context, the small island of Cyprus in the Mediterranean, as an expression of greater issues of security and geography, became a real obstacle to better cooperation

⁴⁴⁶ "Eingreiftruppe am Ende," *SPIEGEL Online*, September 17, 2007, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-52985261.html> (accessed May 14, 2011).

⁴⁴⁷ Basically three different factions emerged among the member states: Under U.S. leadership a group of allies tried to promote a reform agenda in order to transform NATO into a flexible and capable security agency with global reach. Another group, that for example included France and Germany, rejected a radical transformation, emphasized the need for cooperation and wanted to preserve the status quo. Finally, many of the new eastern European NATO members regarded collective defense as the Alliance's core function—especially in the light of the Russian military action in Georgia in 2008. Johannes Varwick, "Das strategische Konzept der NATO," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 50 (2010), 25–6.

⁴⁴⁸ North Atlantic Council, "Strategic Concept for the Defense and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization," November 20, 2010, para. 4, official NATO website, <http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf> (accessed May 14, 2011).

between the two organizations. Due to the fact that the southern part, the Republic of Cyprus, had been admitted to the EU in 2004 without a previous political solution for the Turkish-Greek dispute over the divided island, the issue has hampered a closer security cooperation between NATO and the EU ever since.⁴⁴⁹ This stalemate has effectively blocked EU military missions with recourse to NATO resources under the “Berlin Plus” framework because of the fate of Turkey in the European system. Consequently, the EU had to conduct its missions autonomously after 2004. Without access to NATO’s vast pool of military capabilities, efficient planning processes, and command structures, EU members had to make greater national efforts and contributions to missions. Thus, Germany and other countries had to ensure that they had sufficient capabilities at their disposal to support EU missions.

After the failure of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, the Lisbon Treaty marked the attempt to regain momentum in the process of European integration. With regard to CSDP, the document provided the notion of a “permanent structured cooperation,” which basically allowed for a group of member states to intensify their cooperation on issues of security and defense. In theory, this concept provided an excellent vehicle for enhanced European defense integration and military transformation, especially among the more powerful member states. However, Germany’s reluctance to include more than training, logistics, and command structures in the approach was not received well by Paris and London.⁴⁵⁰ Thus, France and the United Kingdom agreed to a bilateral defense initiative outside the institutional framework of the permanent structured cooperation in 2010. Observers agree that this bilateral approach casts doubt on the future of CSDP because the latter is not viable without an active commitment of the “big three:” France, Germany, and the United Kingdom.⁴⁵¹ These bilateral activities pose a real threat to German military transformation. Since the institutionalization of ESDP/CSDP in 1999,

⁴⁴⁹ Because the Republic of Cyprus is not recognized by Turkey and neither a member of NATO nor the Partnership for Peace program, Turkey refuses to accept a Cypriot attendance at the negotiating table.

⁴⁵⁰ These two member states wanted to strengthen the EU's capabilities to conduct medium to high-intensity operations. From their perspective, the permanent structured cooperation should focus on capabilities for expeditionary warfare.

⁴⁵¹ Ronja Kempin and Nicolai von Ondarza, “Die GSVP vor der Erosion?” *SWP-Aktuell* 25 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2011), 3.

the EU has always been a driving force for the development and improvement of military capabilities of the member states. If France and the United Kingdom turned away from this established *modus operandi* because of frustrations over a lack of real progress, Germany would be unable to fill that gap.

3. Implications and Challenges for the Bundeswehr

Notwithstanding these more fundamental aspects of European defense integration, actual ESDP missions had a concrete impact on the Bundeswehr. For example, in December 2005, the EU was invited by the UN to deploy armed forces to an assistance mission in the Democratic Republic (DR) of Congo. After the request had been approved by the EU Council in March 2006 Germany provided the Operation Commander and the Bundeswehr Operations Command in Potsdam assumed responsibility as the EU Operation Headquarters (OHQ) for the mission. Additionally, Germany's commitment comprised 780 military personnel.⁴⁵² The operation once again underlined the capability shortfalls with regard to strategic airlift.⁴⁵³ It also proved that the Operations Command did not have enough capacities to run an international mission and to oversee all other German deployments simultaneously.

While such EU missions were clearly limited in scale, intensity, and duration, the German participation in ISAF presented the Bundeswehr with the most serious challenges in its history—mainly because the nature of the mission changed fundamentally over time from peace building without violence to a combat role amid security and state building. The difference could not have been more striking between the situation in 2003, when roughly 2,000 German troops were fielded in Kabul and conducted their patrols without helmets, and the situation in 2010, when a contingent of

⁴⁵² Claudia Major, "The military operation EUFOR RD Congo 2006," in *European Security and Defense Policy – The First Ten Years (1999-2009)*, eds. Giovanni Grevi, Damien Helly and Daniel Keohane (Paris: The European Union Institute for Security Studies, 2009), 314.

⁴⁵³ As a result, Germany and other participating countries faced difficulties in deploying reserves as planned.

5,350 Bundeswehr soldiers employed over 1,100 armored vehicles, pieces of heavy artillery, and dozens of infantry fighting vehicles against insurgents in northern Afghanistan.⁴⁵⁴

Against this background, the ISAF mission brought several unresolved problems of strategy, operations, command, and materiel to the fore. Given the chronic lack of strategic and modern tactical airlift capacities, it remained a challenge for the Bundeswehr to operate and resupply in that large area and under adverse climatic conditions. As the growing insurgency called for a robust military presence, more and more armored vehicles, above all with mine protection, were needed.⁴⁵⁵ Thus, the Afghan theater often served as a catalyst for new operational and technical requirements or as a test bed for new weapon system.⁴⁵⁶

The substantial increase in deployed Bundeswehr troops and the urgent need for light forces also underscored a general lack of infantry units in the German army as it has evolved since 1990. The long-term character of the Afghanistan mission cast doubt on the three force categories of the Bundeswehr: response, stabilization, and support forces. Above all, the stabilization forces of the army proved insufficient to sustain their different operations abroad. Therefore, the army had to deploy parts of its response forces to Afghanistan—a force category that was not earmarked for this kind of stabilization operation.

⁴⁵⁴ As a consequence of the attempts to support the Afghan government in establishing a safe and secure environment, NATO gradually expanded its mission to Afghanistan as a whole and divided the country into four areas of responsibility. Germany subsequently assumed command over the Regional Command North (RC North) and located its headquarters in Mazar-e-Sharif. While the early years of the deployment were marked by mostly favorable security conditions in the Bundeswehr's area of operations, the situation deteriorated in Northern Afghanistan in 2006 and 2007, when different groups of insurgents regained control over whole districts. This regional insurgency comprised Taliban as well as other radical Islamic groups such as Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's "Hezb-e Islami," the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and al-Qaida. Guido Steinberg and Nils Wörner, "Eskalation im Raum Kunduz - Wer sind die Aufständischen in Nordafghanistan?" *SWP-Aktuell* 84 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2010), 4-6.

⁴⁵⁵ Due to the fact that the defense industry had to develop this type of equipment and in the face of limited financial resources, the Bundeswehr could only gradually extend its pool of such vehicles.

⁴⁵⁶ For example, Germany employed prototypes of reconnaissance UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicle), new generations of C4I-equipment, patrol vehicles, and other systems.

Apart from these technical or organizational aspects, the ISAF mission also raised the fundamental issue of German casualties. For the first time in German out-of-area military missions since 1990, Bundeswehr ground troops had to conduct costly counterinsurgency operations and suffered battle deaths and wounded.⁴⁵⁷ The long-term effects of soldiers who have experienced continuous fighting and of a growing number of Afghanistan veterans with post-traumatic stress disorders or disabilities on the self-perception and inner order of the Bundeswehr cannot be fully estimated yet. The growing number of fallen or injured soldiers also ignited heated debates among German political elites and increased public opposition against a German military involvement in Afghanistan because these concomitants of the mission challenged the traditional element of antimilitarism in German strategic culture.

B. GERMAN STRATEGIC CULTURE—BACK TO THE ROOTS?

While Bundeswehr missions abroad had generally experienced high levels of political support in the Bundestag during the second tenure of Chancellor Schröder, this trend did not endure fully during the Merkel chancellorship.

One of the controversial issues was the EU's military support for the UN peacekeeping mission MONUC⁴⁵⁸ in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2006. Initially, France had proposed to deploy one of the new EU Battle Groups to that country. However, Germany as the lead nation of that Battle Group at the time was unwilling to bear the whole military and financial burden and to shoulder such a potentially dangerous venture basically on its own.⁴⁵⁹ As a consequence, France and other EU members agreed to contribute troops and to conduct the mission without recourse to the Battle Group. The subsequent deployment of European troops under German command was only approved

⁴⁵⁷ Thus far, 48 German soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan. "Todesfälle im Auslandseinsatz," official website of the Bundeswehr, http://www.bundeswehr.de/portal/a/bwde/!ut/p/c4/DcjBDYAgDAXQWVYA3r25hXohRT7YgMUEIITpJe_2aKdB-ZXITYpyppW2Q2b3Gfd5mAgPTVDT-cxQ-6i3gVMb04pHDYycYeWyEK3cOtIpmX5GIQYT/%22%20/!%20%22par5 (accessed May 18, 2011).

⁴⁵⁸ MONUC is the abbreviation for: Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies en République démocratique du Congo (United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo).

⁴⁵⁹ Thomas Jäger, "EUFOR RD Congo: Defizite eines glücklich verlaufenen Einsatzes," in *Armee im Einsatz*, eds. Hans J. Gießmann and Armin Wagner (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2009) 355.

because Germany wanted to strengthen the multilateral security regimes of the UN and the EU.⁴⁶⁰ Opponents of a Bundeswehr participation stated that Germany had no vital interests in the area and should not get involved into issues of such former European colonial powers as France or Belgium. After the debates in the Bundestag in early June 2006, only seventy-five percent of the parliamentarians voted in favor of the mission—a number that was significantly lower than previous ballots.⁴⁶¹ Even the government itself was not eager to send German troops deep into Africa as part of an autonomous ESDP mission. The fact that German decision-makers insisted on stationing Bundeswehr combat troops as an “over-the-horizon” force in the neighboring Gabon instead of the RD Congo and that the mission was limited to four months underlines this reluctance. Thus, EUFOR RD Congo highlighted that Germany’s *Bündnisraison*—its preference for “never again alone”—was far from becoming the dominant hallmark of its strategic culture.

Another mission that stirred political disputes was the maritime support for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). While it had been self-evident that Germany would provide Lebanon with humanitarian aid and technical assistance after the short but violent Israeli campaign in 2006, the plans for a deployment of German armed forces met domestic resistance. Politicians from all parties claimed that there remained a risk of Bundeswehr troops as part of the UN peacekeeping force in Lebanon getting involved in accidental firefights with soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).⁴⁶² Given Germany’s historic responsibility for the Holocaust, such a worst-case scenario had to be avoided under all circumstances. On the other hand, representatives of the Merkel government pointed out that it was exactly Germany’s historic responsibility for the state

⁴⁶⁰ Denis M. Tull, “Die Führung und Beteiligung der Bundeswehr an EUFOR RD Congo,” in *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr; Leitfragen, Entscheidungsspielräume und Lehren*, ed. Stefan Mair (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2007), 69.

⁴⁶¹ 135 politicians (out of a total of 581) from all parties voted against the military mission. “Namentliche Abstimmungen der 16. Wahlperiode,” official website of the Bundestag, http://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/datenhandbuch/07/07_13/07_13_06.html (accessed May 16, 2011).

⁴⁶² Muriel Asseburg, “Der Bundeswehreinsatz im Libanon: Die Maritime Task Force im Rahmen von UNIFIL plus,” in *Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr; Leitfragen, Entscheidungsspielräume und Lehren*, ed. Stefan Mair (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2007), 100.

of Israel that called for an active involvement in the UNIFIL mission.⁴⁶³ As a result, German participation in the Maritime Task Force (MTF) UNIFIL was approved by a majority of seventy-two percent of the members of the Bundestag in September 2006.⁴⁶⁴ The discussions about the first ever Bundeswehr mission in the Middle East close to Israeli borders brought a re-interpretation of “never again genocide” to the fore: because ensuring the survival of an independent state of Israel had always been part of Germany’s post-war *Staatsräson*, a military effort to stabilize the region would contribute to this primary goal. However, Germany decided to deploy only navy units in order to minimize the risk of getting caught in any kind of crossfire with IDF forces.

It was the Afghanistan mission that mutated into the most contentious issue in the German strategic discourse. It proved that the anti-war elements of German strategic culture could not and cannot be easily overcome. German participation had initially been based on solidarity with the United States, and not on support for the notion of a Global War on Terror that called for decisive military action. Therefore, the way in which German political elites tried to elucidate the importance and purpose of this military involvement to the German public between 2001 and 2009 underlined that it remains difficult for Germany to come to terms with a more assertive stance on security and defense issues. Representatives of almost all political parties always emphasized the peaceful aspects of the Bundeswehr’s activities—delivering humanitarian aid and rebuilding a viable Afghan state which could not be held hostage again by extremist groups and terrorists. They portrayed the German troops in Afghanistan as some sort of “armed development workers” who mainly drilled well holes and built roads and schools.⁴⁶⁵ However, when the insurgency spread through the southern and eastern

⁴⁶³ Mara Albrecht, “Einsatz im Nahen Osten: Die UNIFIL und die Maritime Task Force im Libanon,” in *Armee im Einsatz*, eds. Hans J. Gießmann and Armin Wagner (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2009) 369.

⁴⁶⁴ The fact that both Israel and Lebanon publicly announced their support for the Bundeswehr deployment made the decision easier on the German side.

⁴⁶⁵ In this context, the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) with their military and civilian capacities were regarded as a successful instrument of the comprehensive approach to Afghan security.

provinces of Afghanistan and the death toll among ISAF troops began to rise after 2006, it became increasingly difficult to uphold this notion of a purely peacekeeping and stabilization mission.

Public statements and coverage in the German media even tried to contrast the robustness of allied military operations in the south and in the east that apparently resulted in many civilian casualties and collateral damage with the peaceful German approach in the north.⁴⁶⁶ Consequently, the German government rejected claims of the United States and other NATO allies to send troops to those hard-fought regions. In the face of strong public resistance against a German participation in combat operations in Afghanistan, German decision-makers tried to avoid these calls of “Germans to the front” at all cost.⁴⁶⁷ Instead, Germany offered to deploy Tornado reconnaissance aircraft to Afghanistan in 2007.⁴⁶⁸ This measure can be seen as yet another compromise between the need to meet the demands of its international partners and a domestic anti-war sentiment.

Even when the insurgency spilled over to the German area of responsibility in northern Afghanistan and Bundeswehr troops were attacked regularly, Defense Minister Jung was reluctant to clearly denote those events as an “armed conflict” or “war” in his official rhetoric, granted the legal issues and the anti-war political culture more generally. Only in 2008 did he use the term “killed in action” for the first time for soldiers who had been killed by improvised explosive devices (IED) or suicide bombers.⁴⁶⁹

This evasive approach became a political boomerang when the most severe civil-military incident of crisis in command in conflict in Germany’s post-war era took place:

⁴⁶⁶ Dieter Weiss, “Deutschland am Hindukusch,” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 43 (2008), 9.

⁴⁶⁷ “Germans to the Front,” *Handelsblatt*, November 20, 2006, <http://www.handelsblatt.com/germans-to-the-front/2735298.html> (accessed May 13, 2011).

⁴⁶⁸ Subsequently, six RECCE TORNADO jets were deployed to Mazar-e-Sharif. Gareis, *Militärische Beiträge zur Sicherheit*, 108. From 2007 to 2010 these aircraft conducted several thousand reconnaissance flights over the whole Afghan territory and contributed substantially to the situational awareness of the ISAF mission. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Die Bundeswehr: modern und leistungsstark* (Berlin: February 2009), 32.

⁴⁶⁹ “Jung spricht erstmals von Gefallenen,” *Die WELT*, October 25, 2008, http://www.welt.de/welt_print/article2624476/Jung-spricht-erstmals-von-Gefallenen.html (accessed May 13, 2011). Prior to that, he had talked about soldiers who had “lost their lives” during the ISAF mission.

the accidental bombing of Afghan civilians on September 4, 2009.⁴⁷⁰ The incident came at a time when there was a clear strategic and operational divide between Europe and the United States over the appropriate strategy for the overall campaign in Afghanistan.⁴⁷¹ Because the U.S. commander of the ISAF mission, General Stanley McChrystal, had ordered that civilian casualties and collateral damage be kept to a minimum, Germany was heavily criticized by both the Afghan government and its international partners for the incident. At the same time, the dilemmas of command were dissected in the media, and opinion polls demonstrated that a growing number of Germans objected to further participation of Bundeswehr troops in the ISAF. Taking the aforementioned rhetoric about the peaceful German stabilization operations in northern Afghanistan into account, it was unsurprising that the incident provoked political upheaval in Germany about policy, civil military relations, the nature of conflict and the role of soldiers. In its aftermath three high-ranking officials, Minister Jung, then *Generalinspekteur* Wolfgang Schneiderhan, and one of the undersecretaries of defense, all lost their posts once the new Defense Minister, Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg, assumed office in 2009 as the new broom to sort out the problems with the Bundeswehr. Eventually, even Chancellor Merkel had to testify in front of a parliamentary investigation committee.

In light of the immense political costs, it can be argued that the Kunduz episode may have a lasting effect on German security thinking by reaffirming the traditional “never again war” stance in security and defense policy. Germany’s 2011 abstention in the UN Security Council in conjunction with a resolution allowing for air strikes against the Libyan dictator Gaddafi amid the Arab Spring of 2011 and the subsequent German refusal to participate in the military operations might be a consequence of the accidental bombing in Afghanistan in 2009, at least to some extent.

⁴⁷⁰ On September 4, 2009, the German military commander of the PRT in Kunduz requested a U.S. airstrike against a fuel truck which had been hijacked by insurgents because he feared a terrorist attack against his own troops and also wanted to target some Taliban leaders. Because parts of the local population tried to steal fuel from the truck, which had a break down in a dry riverbed, the bombing not only killed the insurgents but also several civilians from nearby villages. Press reports about the attack stated that over 100 people were killed in the incident. “Schneiderhan fühlt sich aus dem Amt gemobbt,” *SPIEGEL Online*, March 18, 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,684391,00.html> (accessed May 13, 2011).

⁴⁷¹ “NATO Strike Magnifies Divide on Afghan War,” *The New York Times*, September 4, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/05/world/asia/05afghan.html> (accessed May 13, 2011).

In the case of Libya in 2011, there are also other reasons for Germany's show of un-solidarity. The Anglo-French decision to attack the Libyan regime had to be made in the run-up to important regional elections in Germany, vital for the survival of the CDU/CSU/FDP cabinet. Therefore, it is most likely that the ruling coalition wanted to avoid issues of war and peace from becoming prominent among a skeptical electorate during this critical period.⁴⁷² This kind of behavior reconfirms a previous conclusion: the concept of strategic culture alone cannot sufficiently explain German security policy outcomes. Rather, the strategic interests of political key actors have to be taken into the equation as well.

C. CONSOLIDATING MILITARY REFORMS 2005–2009

From a military perspective, the first chancellorship of Angela Merkel from 2005 to 2009 was basically a period of consolidating and fine-tuning the transformation that had been initiated by the Red-Green coalition. Thus, the Bundeswehr mainly focused on the implementation of its “Force Structure 2010” that comprised a restructuring and a reduction to a total 252,500 troops, consisting of 35,000 response forces, 70,000 stabilization forces, and 147,500 support forces. This task was not easy, given Germany's international obligations and operations that had to be maintained simultaneously.

1. The White Paper 2006

One visible expression of the course of consolidation was the publication of a new Defense White Paper in 2006, the first since 1994. The document was based on the Defense Policy Guidelines of 2003 and the Concept of the Bundeswehr of 2004.⁴⁷³ With regard to the main functions of the Bundeswehr, the White Paper demonstrated continuity with those preceding strategic documents by stating that crisis management and conflict prevention, including the fight against international terrorism, remained the most likely task for the German armed forces in the foreseeable future. Given the disputes within

⁴⁷² This pattern recurs in German state behavior because Chancellor Kohl had refused to participate in *Desert Storm* in 1990–1991 and Chancellor Schröder had rejected a German military involvement in Iraqi Freedom in 2002 because of domestic concerns during election campaigns in Germany.

⁴⁷³ Ernst-Christoph Meier, *Vom Verteidigungsauftrag des Grundgesetzes zum Begriff Vernetzter Sicherheit*, 55.

NATO about the Iraq War, the White Paper reemphasized the importance of the Alliance. The document called NATO the “cornerstone of German security and defense.” Nonetheless, it also pointed to the legitimizing role of the UN and the relevance of the EU as an independent security actor. Against this background, the White Paper introduced the concept of “networked security,” a comprehensive approach to security which underlined that the classic instruments of foreign, security, and development policy had to be complemented by and interconnected with economic, environmental, financial, educational, and social policies in a multilateral institutional framework.⁴⁷⁴

This interagency approach with a focus on civil conflict prevention represented the leading thoughts of the notion of Germany playing the role of a cautious “civilian power:” multilateralism, the preference for soft power instruments, and the use of military force as a last resort. “Never again alone” required a visible commitment to NATO (NRF) and the EU (Battle Groups), but at the same time “never again war” called for an emphasis on non-military means. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the Bundeswehr made only very modest attempts, for example, to increase its force projection capabilities while such other major European powers as France and Britain developed plans for the largest aircraft carriers in the history of their navies at the time.

2. Fine-tuning Command and Control Structures

Six months after the publication of the White Paper, a group of former general officers was established by the BMVg to evaluate existing preparatory measures as well as planning and decision-making procedures for out-of-area missions. The team announced its findings in July 2007. The report comprised proposals to enhance the effectiveness of the coordination between the services, the division of labor between different commands, mission training, and the role of the BMVg.

⁴⁷⁴ Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 2006 on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr*, (Berlin: October 2006), 23. The concept of “networked security” was in line with parallel developments in NATO, namely the *Comprehensive Political Guidance* of 2006 and the “comprehensive approach” which was announced at the Bucharest Summit. North Atlantic Council, “Bucharest Summit Declaration,” April 3, 2008, official NATO website, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_8443.htm?mode=pressrelease (accessed May 20, 2011).

Some of these recommendations were implemented. For example, training courses in crisis management missions were standardized and the Bundeswehr Operations Command gained more competences vis-à-vis the other services. Furthermore, the Response Forces Operations Command (RFOC) in Ulm assumed responsibility for establishing an OHQ in 2009 in addition to its role as a European FHQ.⁴⁷⁵ In light of the current limits of the “Berlin Plus” framework, this visible commitment to the CSDP of the EU is likely to remain an important asset and thus contributes to Germany being perceived as a reliable European partner.

The most important change in existing command arrangements was the conversion of the Operations Branch in the Armed Forces Staff (Fü S V) into a full-fledged *Einsatzführungsstab* [EinsFüStab] (Joint Operations Staff) in 2008.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁵ “Das Kommando Operative Führung Eingreifkräfte,” official website of the Joint Support Service, http://www.streitkraeftebasis.de/portal/a/streitkraeftebasis!/ut/p/c4/DckxDoAgDADAt_iBdnfzF-piiiBpMG0DRRNfL7nxcMdB6OFMzip044rbyXN4oZVwGH8QOUlzMK1eib1Biap29ZQK9JBqF6B-jctoZZI-14csEA!!/ (accessed May 21, 2011). Since then, the RFOC has gained experiences by conducting a series of multinational exercises and has been regularly earmarked for assuming command over possible EU Battlegroup operations.

⁴⁷⁶ The Joint Operations Staff (JOS) is responsible for developing strategic guidance on operations and commitments. In accordance with this strategic guidance, the Bundeswehr Operations Command tailors contingents to missions and provides them for multinational out-of-area operations.

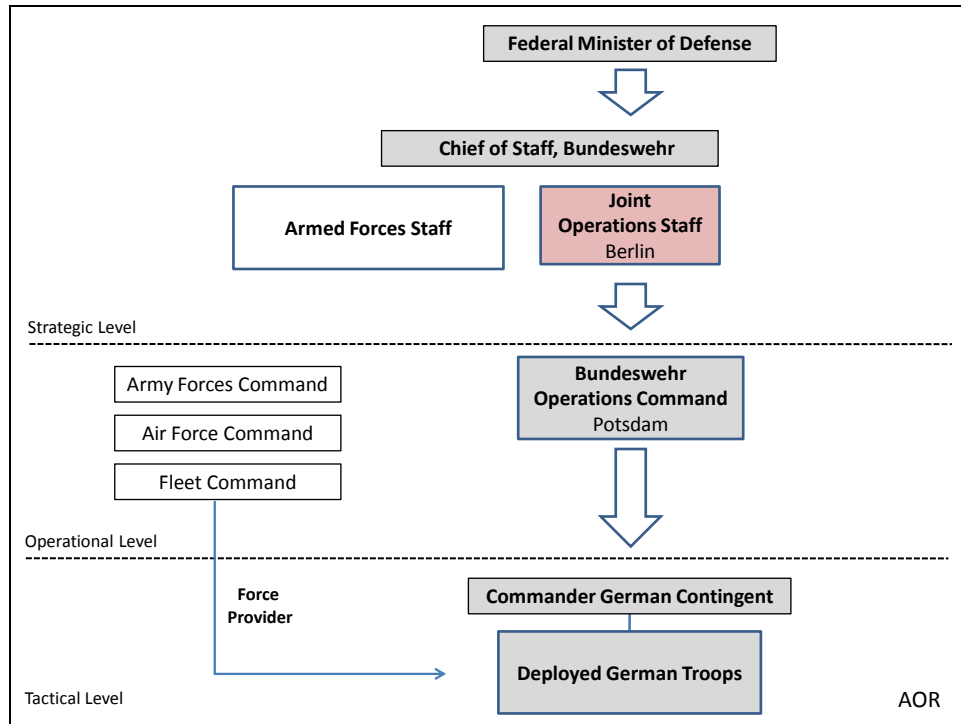


Figure 12. National Command and Control Structures (ca. 2008)⁴⁷⁷

This staff was directly subordinate to the *Generalinspekteur* and represented the first serious attempt to incorporate all relevant actors within the BMVg. In order to make the whole range of ministerial expertise available for the political and military decision-makers at short notice, a process-oriented organization was established that not only included representatives of the military services, but also representatives of the civilian directorates.⁴⁷⁸ On the one hand, this was a clear sign that the strict divide between military and civilian branches within the BMVg was beginning to diminish in favor of a more operational approach that broke with ministerial custom. On the other hand, the fact that it took sixteen years after the first Bundeswehr out-of-area deployment to establish such an organization underlined the inertia effects in German political culture and military institutions and the difficulties in overcoming reservations about the military.

⁴⁷⁷ Source: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung.

⁴⁷⁸ Lutz Krake, "Einsatzführungsstab - Ziele, Aufgaben, Fähigkeiten, Strukturen," *Europäische Sicherheit Online*, September 2008, http://www.europaeische-sicherheit.de/Ausgaben/2008/2008_09/05_Krake/2008,09,05.html (accessed May 05, 2011).

Remarkably, the Joint Operations Staff even comprised liaison elements of other governmental agencies. It was shaped by the White Paper's call for networked security because it established a formal link between different security actors on the national level. Other examples of such cooperation included a new division of labor between the Bundeswehr and the Bundesnachrichtendienst [BND] (Federal Intelligence Service) in the field of intelligence gathering and situation analysis.⁴⁷⁹ And, although some progress has been made so far with regard to interagency cooperation, plenty of room for improvement remains in this area. Thus, efforts to better coordinate with other security actors will be an important part of Bundeswehr transformation in the future.

D. DEFENSE SPENDING AND THE IMPACT OF THE 2008–2009 FINANCIAL CRISIS

Despite the diplomatic upheaval in the trans-Atlantic community that had been caused by the different perspectives on the Iraq War, issues of security and defense had only played a minor role in German politics during the second term of Chancellor Schröder. This trend also continued after Angela Merkel's takeover. The high government deficit spending presented her Grand Coalition with one of its largest political liabilities. Because of the stagnation of the German economy and Schröder's labor market reforms, tax revenues had decreased and social transfer payments increased between 2001 and 2005. These developments resulted in German violations of the EU's Maastricht Criteria.⁴⁸⁰ As a consequence, the Merkel government declared budget consolidation as one of its most urgent political tasks. The coalition agreement of 2005 even called for a "common national effort on all levels" to fight deficit spending and to promote economic growth.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁹ Additionally, several other agencies and working groups were established. These comprised, for example, a National Air Security Center, a Joint Counterterrorism Center, and an inter-ministerial steering group for crisis prevention and conflict resolution.

⁴⁸⁰ Germany had exceeded the three percent margin of the ratio of government deficit to GDP in 2002 and 2003.

⁴⁸¹ "Gemeinsam für Deutschland - mit Mut und Menschlichkeit," Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD, November 11, 2005, official website of the CDU, http://www.cdu.de/doc/pdf/05_11_11_Koalitionsvertrag.pdf (accessed May 18, 2011).

In this context, the German defense spending was not exempted from the general need to consolidate and save. As Figure 13 illustrates, the defense budget did not change substantially between 2005 and 2011.

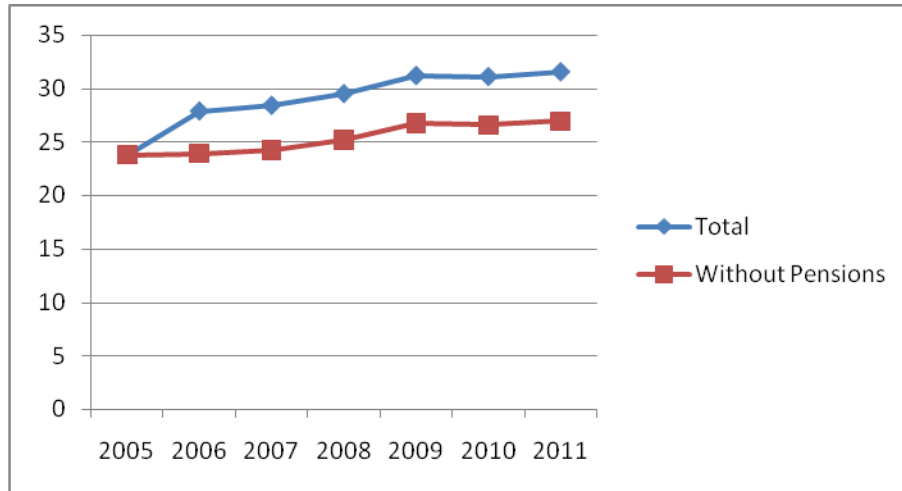


Figure 13. German Defense Expenditure (Billion €)⁴⁸²

The nominal gains in 2006 that can be depicted from the blue line represent no real increase. Rather, they account for the pensions of former soldiers and civilian employees who had to be incorporated into the balance sheet of the BMVg. The red line excludes these payments and reveals that the defense expenditure only increased slowly over time, ranging from € 23.8 billion in 2005 to € 26.9 billion in 2011.⁴⁸³

However, these additional financial resources were often dissipated by increases in personnel related costs or higher operating costs. For example, the Bundeswehr deployment to Afghanistan required an annual funding of well over € 1 billion.⁴⁸⁴ Consequently, fewer resources could be invested in research and development as well as in procurement. These factors were real obstacles for short- and medium-term modernization efforts and hence impeded the transformation of the Bundeswehr. In spite

⁴⁸² Source: Official website of the Federal Ministry of Defense, www.bmvg.de (accessed May 18, 2011).

⁴⁸³ This nominal increase of 13% does not account for inflation.

⁴⁸⁴ “Bundeswehreinsatz in Afghanistan dreimal so teuer wie bekannt,” *SPIEGEL Online*, May 20, 2010, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,695430,00.html> (accessed May 18, 2011).

of the increases in the defense expenditure between 2005 and 2009, the German armed forces fell short of achieving their goal of a balanced budget. That is a ratio of 70 percent operating and personnel costs and 30 percent investment, which is seen as a necessary prerequisite for maintaining armed forces with modern, combat-ready equipment. Figure 14 shows that only one-quarter of the current defense budget is available for investment.

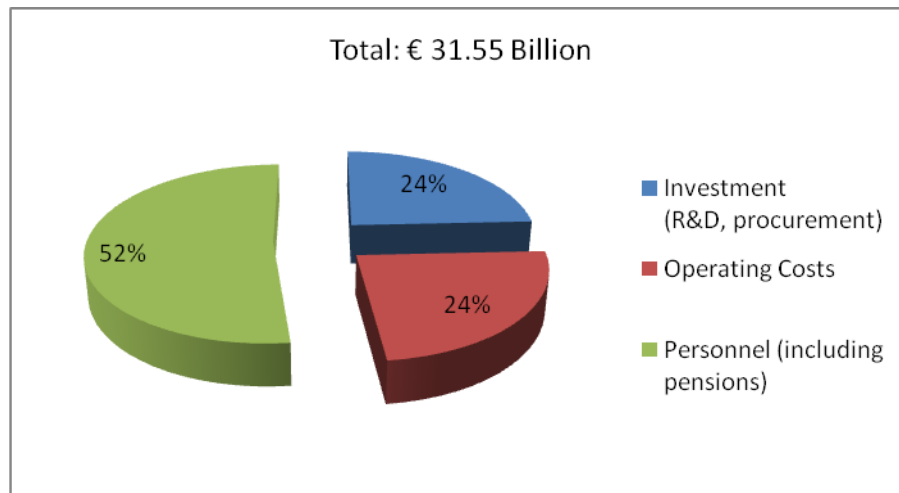


Figure 14. German Defense Expenditure (2011)⁴⁸⁵

The diminishing significance of defense spending in Germany can also be assessed by looking at the defense expenditure as a share of the federal government budget. It remained at a 10 percent share of the overall budget between 2005 and 2011. Thus, Figure 15 not only indicates this long-term trend in German defense spending, but also shows the overall low priority of security and defense issues in German politics. The underfunding of the German armed forces had two major implications. First, decision-makers in Germany were always inclined to reduce the peacetime strength of the Bundeswehr in order to save personnel and operating costs. Second, the overall tempo of military transformation was slowed.

⁴⁸⁵ Source: Official website of the Federal Ministry of Defense, <http://www.bmvg.de> (accessed May 18, 2011).

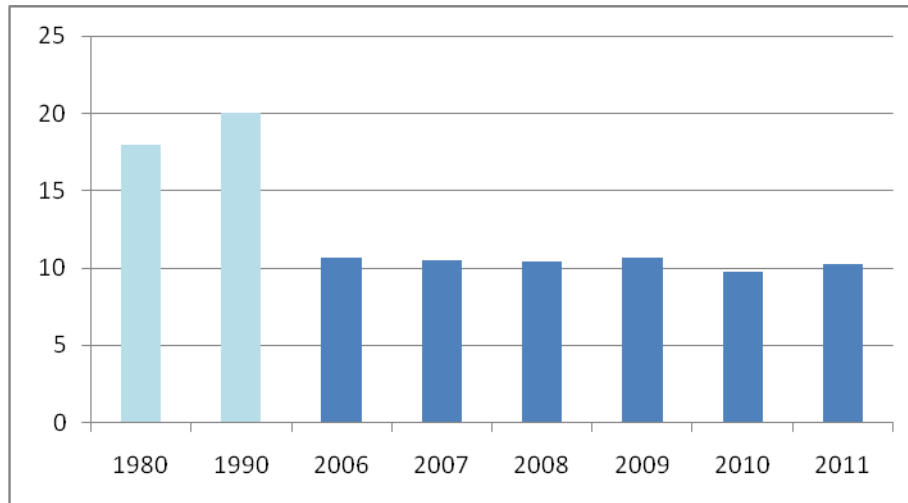


Figure 15. Defense Expenditure as a Share of the German Federal Budget⁴⁸⁶

The year 2009 had a strong impact on both the economy and on the government budget. Economic activities in Germany, above all exports, were hurt badly by the slump in international demand that had been triggered by the world financial crisis. After a phase of growth in 2006 and 2007, Germany faced the most severe economic downturn in sixty years. Large-scale governmental recovery initiatives to fight the recession resulted in the highest annual new indebtedness in German history.⁴⁸⁷

These emergency measures made consolidation efforts inevitable in order to keep deficits under control. Observers described the situation as follows:

What we are looking at is not a blip but a lasting reduction in revenues and spending, so the consolidation process will have to aim beyond short-term cuts to seek structural spending reforms designed to bite in the medium term.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁶ Source: Data derived from the official websites of the Federal Ministry of Defense (<http://www.bmvg.de>) and the Federal Government (<http://www.bundesregierung.de>); (both accessed May 18, 2011).

⁴⁸⁷ The German government had to contract € 44 Billion new debts in 2010. "Haushaltsabschluss 2010," Bundesministerium der Finanzen; official website of the Bundesministerium der Finanzen, http://www.bundesfinanzministerium.de/nr_53848/DE/BMF_Startseite/Aktuelles/Monatsbericht_des_BMF/2011/02/analysen-und-berichte/b02-haushaltsabschluss-2010/Haushaltsabschluss-2010.html?_nnn=true (accessed May 19, 2011).

⁴⁸⁸ Sophie-Charlotte Brune et al., "The German Armed Forces and the Financial Crisis," *SWP Comments* 13 (May 2010), 1.

As a consequence, the government budget in general, and defense spending in particular, came under pressure. The German cabinet decided in June 2010 that the Bundeswehr had to save a total of € 8.3 billion over the next four years.⁴⁸⁹ Several weapon systems, such as fighter bombers, submarines, and tanks, were put out of service in order to save operating costs.⁴⁹⁰

The Merkel government also agreed to a further reduction of A-400M orders. The German air force will only put forty of these urgently needed transport aircraft into service.⁴⁹¹ Since the A-400M will be operated in different roles—transport, tanker, and medical evacuation—this significant reduction casts doubt on Germany’s ambitions to increase the number of troops readily available for international crisis response operations. Additionally, Germany announced its intention to sell the last tranche of the new Eurofighter, which will consist of thirty-seven aircraft, to foreign bidders.⁴⁹² Further cutbacks to other major weapon systems cannot be ruled out, as shown in Table 1.

Program	Role	Initial Order	2011
A-400M	Transport Aircraft	60	40
NH-90	Light Transport Helicopter	122	80?
Tiger	Combat Support Helicopter	80	40?
Eurofighter	Multirole Combat Aircraft	180	143?
F-125	Multirole Frigate	4	3?
Puma	Infantry Fighting Vehicle	405	280?

Table 1. Potential Changes in Major Procurement Programs⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁹ Christian Mölling, Sophie-Charlotte Brune, and Marcel Dickow, *Finanzkrise und Verteidigungskooperation*, Arbeitspapier Forschungsgruppe Sicherheitspolitik, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (Berlin: October 2010), 7.

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

⁴⁹¹ “Bundeswehr bekommt noch weniger A-400M,” *Financial Times Deutschland*, January 25, 2011; <http://www.ftd.de/politik/deutschland/:groesstes-europaeisches-ruestungsprojekt-bundeswehr-bekommt-noch-weniger-a400-m/60002621.html> (accessed May 18, 2011). Due to higher than expected development costs most of the European A-400M customers reduced their orders. Germany, which had initially agreed to buy a total of 73 aircraft in 2001, reduced its orders to 60 in 2003 and to 53 in 2010.”Der lange Weg zum A-400M,” *Tagesanzeiger*, November 5, 2010, www.tagesanzeiger.ch/wirtschaft/agenturen-ticker/Ruestungsindustrie-Der-lange-Weg-zum-A400M/story/24063888 (accessed May 18, 2011).

⁴⁹² Brune et al., *The German Armed Forces and the Financial Crisis*, 4.

⁴⁹³ Source: Mölling et al., *Finanzkrise und Verteidigungskooperation*, 8-9.

E. THE BUNDESWEHR OF 2011 AND BEYOND

Against this background of financial shortfalls, the coalition agreement of 2009 stated that compulsory military service would be reduced from nine to six months and that an expert commission would develop proposals for a new force structure, a more efficient chain of command, and improved administrative procedures for the Bundeswehr until the end of 2010.⁴⁹⁴

1. The Weise Commission 2010

The new force structure commission was headed by the chief executive of the Federal Employment Agency, Frank-Jürgen Weise, and comprised a total of six members.⁴⁹⁵ Their high economic expertise already indicated that the question of how to make the Bundeswehr a more efficient and effective organization would be the focal point of their work. Although the decision to make use of a commission had already been made in October 2009, it was constituted as late as April 12, 2010. This delay resulted in a tight schedule for the commission because it was supposed to present its proposals in October 2010. The assessment of the commission was based on two main sources: first, it evaluated internal analyses of the BMVg;⁴⁹⁶ second, it conducted a series of confidential interviews with active and former members of the Bundeswehr as well as political, corporate, and international military representatives.

⁴⁹⁴ Koalitionsvertrag 2009, 124. The decision to reduce compulsory service to six months was a classic political compromise. While the CDU/CSU still regarded conscription as necessary to sustain the link between the armed forces and society and therefore wanted to uphold the status quo, its coalition partner, the FDP, wanted to curtail conscription. Consequently, both parties agreed to a shortened period of service.

⁴⁹⁵ The commission consisted of Dr. Weise, who is a colonel of the Bundeswehr reserve, two German top managers, the political coordinator for trans-Atlantic relations, a former president of the German Federal Court of Auditors, and General Karl-Heinz Lather, who was chief of staff of Allied Command Operations at the time.

⁴⁹⁶ Between January and April 2010 all military and civilian branches within the BMVg had to analyze existing strengths and weaknesses in structures, procedures, and capabilities. "Die Strukturkommission," Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, April 12, 2010, <http://www.bmvg.de> (accessed May 20, 2011).

The final report of the commission was issued on October 22, 2010.⁴⁹⁷ Remarkably, it explicitly referred to the findings of the Weizsäcker Commission of 2000, indicating that its goal was an evolutionary, rather than a revolutionary reform. Its main critique pointed to the fact that the Bundeswehr with its 252,000 military personnel had difficulties achieving its desired level of ambition; that is, being able to sustain international operations with a deployment of up to 14,000 troops to up to five different theaters.⁴⁹⁸ The report also observed deficiencies in the procurement processes of the Bundeswehr, notably the long time frames for the introduction of modern weapon systems into the forces and the inability to adjust current development programs to new or additional operational needs. Finally, the commission criticized the number and complexity of existing structures and procedures on the level of the BMVg (Figure 16) and below.

⁴⁹⁷ “Vom Einsatz her denken. Konzentration, Flexibilität, Effizienz,” Bericht der Strukturkommission der Bundeswehr, October 2010.

⁴⁹⁸ Instead, the Bundeswehr faced operational limits even with only 7,000 to 8,000 troops being deployed, mainly to the Balkans and to Afghanistan.

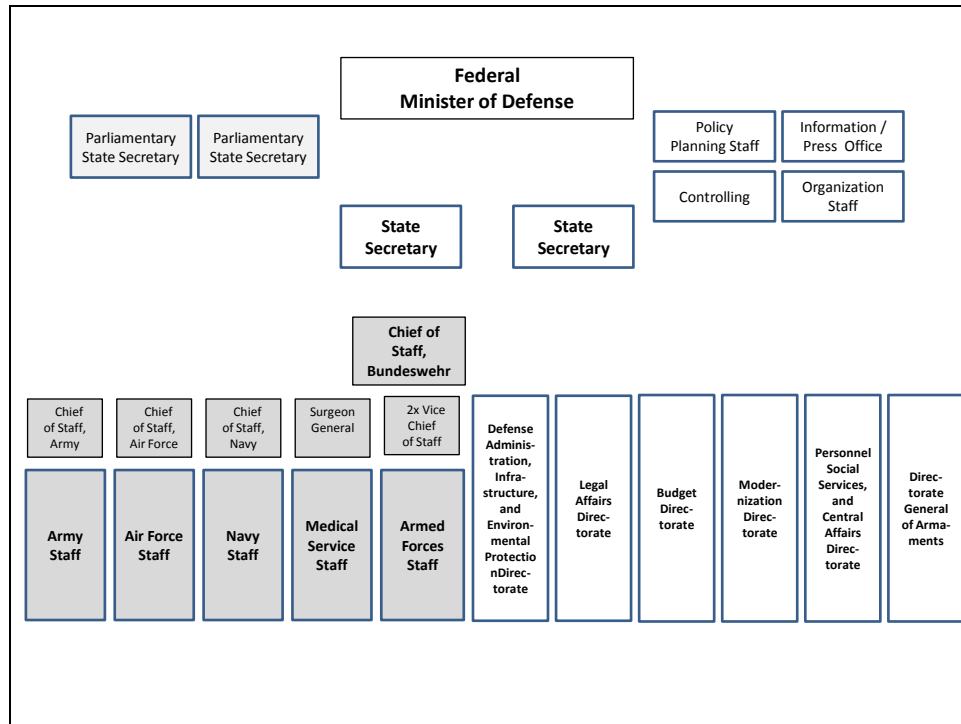


Figure 16. Structure of the BMVg (ca. 2006)⁴⁹⁹

Based on this assessment of the state of affairs in the Bundeswehr of 2010, the commission proposed some remarkable changes to improve the situation. These included a streamlined defense planning, a process-oriented, adaptive organization that would replace inflexible “stovepipe” hierarchies, the creation of “capability commands,”⁵⁰⁰ and incentives to improve recruiting. The commission report also prompted a substantial downsizing and complete restructuring of the BMVg which was perceived as too large, too unwieldy, and inefficient. The new ministry was supposed to reorganize and fuse existing tasks and to subsequently dispense with nine of its seventeen directorates and 2,000 of its 3,500-strong staff. The result would blur the traditional divide between the military and the civilian branches within the BMVg.

Another important adjustment was the notion of a chief of defense. The commission attempted the fairly radical step to place the *Generalinspekteur* at the top of

⁴⁹⁹ Source: Federal Ministry of Defense, *White Paper 2006*, 87.

⁵⁰⁰ Capability commands, such as a Joint Logistics Command or a Joint Medical Command, were regarded as alternatives to traditional command arrangements.

the chain of command of all Bundeswehr soldiers by excluding the chiefs of staff of the services and military organizational areas from the structures of the BMVg. This was a radical proposal for two reasons. On the one hand, it would place the chief of defense on the same hierarchical level as the state secretaries,⁵⁰¹ an approach that challenged more than fifty years of civil-military custom within the Bundeswehr, namely that the “executive group”⁵⁰² of the BMVg only consists of civilians. On the other hand, it would finally put an end to the powerful positions of the chiefs of staff of the different services, which traditionally had a strong voice vis-à-vis the *Generalinspekteur*.

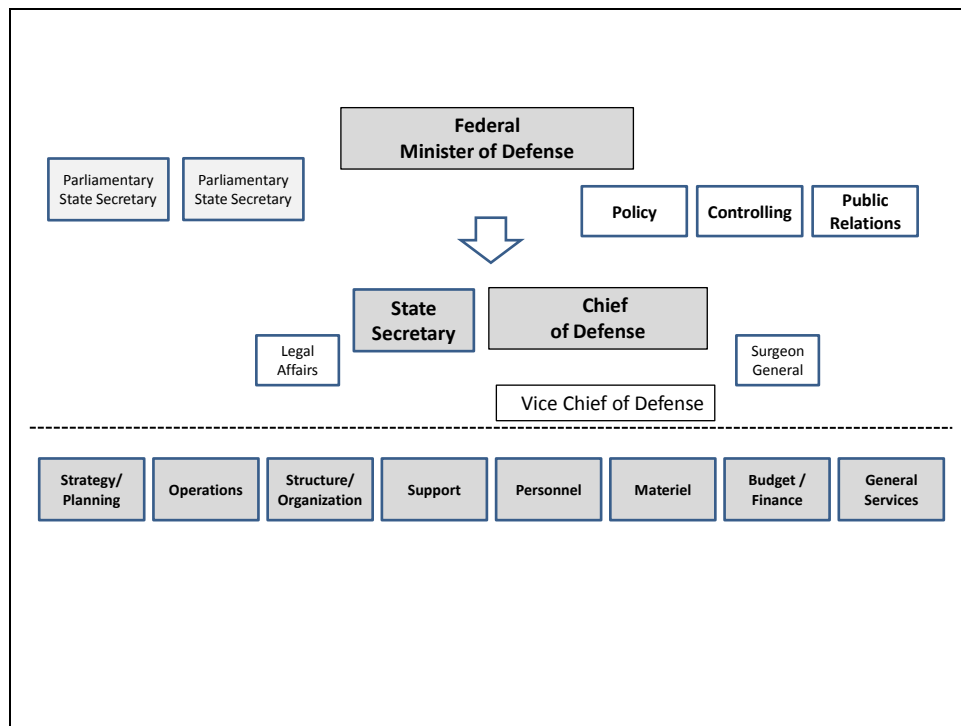


Figure 17. Restructuring Proposal for the BMVg 2011⁵⁰³

⁵⁰¹ A German state secretary equates to a U.S. undersecretary of defense.

⁵⁰² The executive group consists of the defense minister, two Parliamentary state secretaries and two additional civil service state secretaries and represents the highest echelon of authority within the BMVg. The state secretaries act on behalf of the defense minister in his capacity as head of a supreme federal body in the areas of responsibility assigned to them. The Parliamentary state secretaries assist the defense minister in his political functions, for instance by deputizing for him in the Bundestag, the Bundesrat – the second chamber of the German legislature - or in governmental meetings.

⁵⁰³ Source: Bericht der Strukturkommission, 60 (translated by author).

With regard to the Bundeswehr as a whole, the report suggested creating an all-volunteer force of approximately 180,000 soldiers by curtailing conscription. Of course, this proposal represented a significant deviation from all preceding military reforms because it challenged one of the core elements of democratic civil-military relations in Germany: the citizen in uniform. The commission, however, argued that in light of the lack of existential external threats and the diminishing acceptance of conscription in society the adherence to compulsory service was obsolete.⁵⁰⁴

2. Curtailing Conscription

The recommendation to intermit conscription was seized by new Defense Minister zu Guttenberg.⁵⁰⁵ He arguably played a significant role in bringing conscription to an end. Being perceived as charismatic and one of the most promising political talents within the ruling coalition in 2009–2010, his celebrity reputation helped him to pacify potential opposition against his proposal. Minister zu Guttenberg even managed to overcome objections within his own party, the CSU, which had historically been a strong supporter of conscription. He could underscore his proposal with objective arguments: Although the Bundeswehr was able to convince 7,000 to 8,000 conscripts per year to become long-term volunteers, the training of these young men permanently tied down substantial amounts of equipment and infrastructure as well as 10,000 instructors.⁵⁰⁶ The end of conscription would free these resources for more urgent tasks. Subsequently, draft legislation was developed in order to curtail conscription and to implement a volunteer military service of up to twenty-three months.⁵⁰⁷

The general preference for an end to compulsory service might be explained by two additional arguments. First, it might underscore the claim that the Bundeswehr had

⁵⁰⁴ As an alternative to conscription the commission proposed to establish a voluntary community service of up to 23 months open to all German adults.

⁵⁰⁵ “Guttenberg will Wehrpflicht aussetzen,” *Focus Online*, June 2, 2010, http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/sparplaene-guttenberg-will-wehrpflicht-aussetzen_aid_514791.html (accessed May 20, 2011).

⁵⁰⁶ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Bericht des Generalinspektors der Bundeswehr zum Prüfauftrag aus der Kabinettsklausur vom 7. Juni 2010* (Berlin: September 2010), 49.

⁵⁰⁷ From July 1, 2011, compulsory military service will be intermitted in Germany. Although it remains a part of the Basic Law, no conscripts will be drafted anymore.

become an integral and commonly accepted part of state and society. Consequently, conscripts were not needed any more to maintain this link. Secondly, the lack of urgency of security and defense issues among political elites as well as in public perception might have led to a general lack of interest in the matter over time. It is most likely that both explanations apply to some extent. Zu Guttenberg, however, failed to serve through the reforms, as a political scandal in early 2011 about plagiarism and his doctoral dissertation cost him his office, adding an additional element of drama to the making of defense policy and the future of the Bundeswehr.⁵⁰⁸

3. The Outline of a New Bundeswehr in Mid-2011

The end of conscription was only the first of several steps that will change the character, the size, the structure, and the capabilities of the Bundeswehr profoundly. Based on the findings of the Weise Commission and additional assessments of the BMVg, Defense Minister Thomas de Maizière⁵⁰⁹ announced both a new set of Defense Policy Guidelines (VPR) and his outline for new Bundeswehr reforms on May 18, 2011.⁵¹⁰

Given Germany's reliance on NATO, it is unsurprising that the VPR 2011 are in line with the Alliance's new strategic concept. Their risk and threat assessment is basically identical; the only deviation from SC 2010 is the missing reference to the threat posed by ballistic missiles.⁵¹¹ Similar to current developments in NATO, the new VPR focus on collective defense as the Bundeswehr's top priority. However, crisis management, including the fight against international terrorism, and military missions in

⁵⁰⁸ "Guttenberg geht, die Probleme bleiben," *ZEIT online*, March 1, 2011, <http://pdf.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2011-03/guttenberg-ruecktritt-fragen-antworten.pdf> (accessed May 21, 2011).

⁵⁰⁹ Thomas de Maizière became the new defense minister on March 3, 2011, after the resignation of Karl Theodor zu Guttenberg.

⁵¹⁰ Federal Ministry of Defense, *Defense Policy Guidelines - Safeguarding National Interests, Assuming International Responsibility, Shaping Security Together* (Berlin: 2011).

⁵¹¹ The absence of the missile threat and the aspect of missile defense might have been caused by the uncertainty of the Alliance's plans for a NATO missile defense and the fact that the United States has recently cancelled its further participation in the trilateral (U.S.-German-Italian) MEADS (Medium Extended Air Defense System) program, which could have complemented the NATO system.

the framework of CSDP are still perceived as the most likely tasks.⁵¹² In this context, it is remarkable that the VPR place an emphasis on national interests: “In each individual case, there must be a clear answer to the question of whether German interests require and justify an operation and what the consequences of non-action would be.”⁵¹³ On the one hand, this sentence seems to indicate a new form of German assertiveness in international affairs that may collide at times with its traditional “never again alone” stance. On the other hand, it may also be regarded as an attempt to provide a criterion or precept for the participation in international military missions, an alternative to “reflexive multilateralism.” In the face of dwindling resources the VPR also scale down Germany’s national level of ambition. Instead of a maximum of 14,000 troops, Germany now wants to be able to field and sustain only 10,000 troops in long-term crisis management operations. In the context of tight defense budgets, Germany promotes the notion of “pooling” and “role sharing” of military capabilities on the European level. All in all, the Defense Policy Guidelines set the stage for a Bundeswehr that will play a limited role in both NATO and the EU in the future.

Apart from the VPR, the defense minister also outlined the main goals for the new military reform. The Bundeswehr will be reduced to a peacetime strength of 170,000 regulars and temporary-career volunteers. These troops will be augmented by 5,000 to 15,000 military service volunteers.⁵¹⁴ These figures basically resemble the proposals of the Weise commission. However, Defense Minister de Maizière will not fully implement its recommendations for a reorganization of the BMVg. Although the chiefs of staff of the services will head their services outside the Ministry and the *Generalinspekteur* will become the administrative superior of all German troops in his new function of “chief of defense,” the state secretaries, together with the minister, remain the highest authorities in the BMVg.⁵¹⁵ The most important change in the structure of the Ministry will be the *de*

⁵¹² Consequently, the Bundeswehr remains committed to its international obligations in the form of contributions to the NATO Response Force and the EU Battlegroups.

⁵¹³ Federal Ministry of Defense, *Defense Policy Guidelines 2011*, 4.

⁵¹⁴ Federal Ministry of Defense, *The Reorientation of the Bundeswehr*, (Berlin: May 18, 2011), para. II.1.

⁵¹⁵ The commission's proposal to lift the position of the chief of defense to the same hierarchical level as the state secretaries has arguably been perceived as too radical.

facto abolition of the distinction between military and civilian branches. Rather, the reorganized directorates will be staffed with a mix of civilian and military personnel.⁵¹⁶ This development may be seen as another step toward a military that is no longer viewed with a historical skepticism by German political elites.

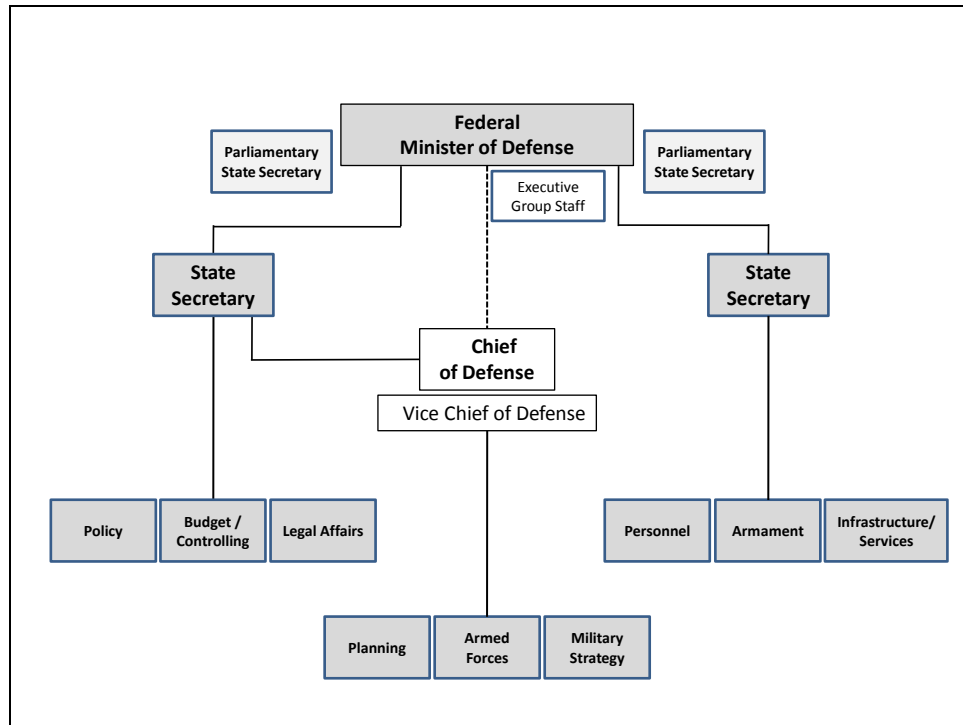


Figure 18. Future Structure of the BMVg⁵¹⁷

⁵¹⁶ This measure is likely to create frictions in the short term, but will strengthen cohesion and efficiency in the long-run.

⁵¹⁷ Source: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung (translated by author).

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VII. CONCLUSION

This thesis started with a puzzle of policy and arms: the alleged gap between Germany's substantial political and economic power on the one hand, and the limited resources it has devoted to defense since 1990 on the other. By comprehensively exploring the last two decades of German security and defense policy this study has not only attempted to elaborate on the root causes in theory and practice for this apparent contradiction, but also to shed light on the fundamental factors of state and policy that shape or restrain German security policy outcomes in general and military reforms in particular. The analysis underscores that an understanding of German state behavior and military transformation requires a broad approach which relies on a distinct set of variables on the international as well as on the domestic level.

In this context, NATO and the EU have historically played a crucial role as foundations of German security and defense. They presented (West) Germany with an opportunity to regain sovereignty in the 1950s and to overcome its pre-war *Schaukelpolitik* through a process of political, economic and, above all, military integration into the western system of democracies. Since the Adenauer era, NATO has served as a strategic compass that helped to navigate the German defense policy and the armed forces from the NATO strategies of massive retaliation and flexible response in the Cold War to global crisis management tasks in the twenty-first century. This Atlantic strategic orientation continued after the end of the bipolar world in 1990 because it was based on a common threat and risk assessment of the allies; yet, at the same, time new factors have arisen which have formed the subject of this paper. Germany's White Papers and Defense Policy Guidelines since 1969 have been congruent with the evolution of overarching strategies of the Alliance and remain so today. The ensuing transformation of NATO into an organization that attempted to resolve crises and project stability beyond its borders had an essential impact on changes in the role, structure, and capabilities of the Bundeswehr.

Because of the advent of the EU as an independent security actor at the end of the 1990s, the same holds for the Common Security and Defense Policy. European Union

policy and strategy emerged as a new lode star in the making of German defense and the work of the armed forces in the past decade, a signal development.

By employing the concept of strategic culture, this thesis has illustrated that Germany's strong adherence to these two organizations is not mainly based on a rational cost-benefit calculus and burden-sharing. Rather, this general preference for multilateral security regimes reflects Germany's deep-rooted "never again alone" stance in politics and society as an answer to the militarism and lost wars of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus, the specific character of German strategic culture proved to be a powerful tool to explain Germany's actions and the general course of the Bundeswehr since 1990. The recourse to another basic element of German strategic culture, the notion of "never again war," helps to understand the piecemeal fashion of German military reforms after unification. This stance closed certain avenues to a more vigorous military transformation as might have been had in other NATO countries, for example, by impeding the development of force projection capabilities that would have been perceived as too "interventionist" by political elites and the general public. Especially in the 1990s, all concerned regarded as inconsistent with post-war German antimilitarism to transform the Bundeswehr into an all-volunteer force. Even today, there is ample evidence that the foundational elements of post-war German strategic culture will prevail in this and other issues. For example, the CDU-FDP coalition agreement of 2009 states that German foreign and security policy will continue to be guided by its traditional "culture of reticence."⁵¹⁸

There are, however, other important factors on the domestic level that need to be taken into account as well. Above all, continuous low levels of defense spending which can be partially explained by the aftermath of reunification, namely high government deficits and slow economic growth, limited military modernization efforts. Furthermore, some basic features of the political culture of the Berlin Republic cannot be taken off the

⁵¹⁸ "Wachstum, Bildung, Zusammenhalt," Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und FDP, October 26, 2009, official website of the CDU, <http://www.cdu.de/doc/pdfc/091026-koalitionsvertrag-cducsu-fdp.pdf> (accessed May 13, 2011).

equation. The balance of power between the main security policy actors as well as their strategic interests sometimes affected the scope and depth of military reforms.

All in all, the Bundeswehr has continuously sailed between the Scylla of international obligations and the Charybdis of domestic constraints after the end of the Cold War. While such a fact might enrage those who insist that Germany shared a larger burden in collective defense, such statecraft has well served the overall ends of state, policy and society in Germany what with so-called lessons of the twentieth century and a national ambivalence about power.

In light of these complex set of driving forces and determinants, additional questions come to the fore: What has been achieved by the architects of German military reforms thus far? Where do the German armed forces stand today in their transit from the roles and missions of 1990 until the present? The Bundeswehr has come a long way. The Bundestag has sent German troops into several dozen military missions since then, ranging from low intensity and low profile observer missions to high intensity peace enforcement and humanitarian intervention. The Bundeswehr of 2011 represents a proactive and capable tool of German foreign and security policy in the framework of the Alliance and the European Union. To achieve this status, a process of gradual reforms was necessary that often did not follow a straight path.

The period from 1990 to 1994 was marked by the consequences of reunification, namely the need to cope with the legacy of the former National People's Army and to fulfill the obligations of 2+4 Treaty. These large-scale reductions of personnel and materiel rendered any purposeful reform impossible. Nonetheless, the Bundeswehr, under the auspices of the UN, made its first cautious attempts to deploy troops beyond the classic geographical realm of the Cold War. Without established national command and control structures or expeditionary capabilities at hand, these early out-of-area missions required a great deal of improvisation.

From 1994 to 1998 the Bundeswehr has established a pool of troops earmarked and ready for international peacekeeping missions: the crisis reaction forces. In light of insufficient funds to ensure an all-embracing modernization of the armed forces as a

whole, these troops were better equipped than the other parts of the Bundeswehr. However, this twofold force structure was not based on a long-term strategic military reorientation of the most cohesive sort. Rather, it reflected Germany's willingness to meet the expectations of its closest allies who wished for German military contributions in international affairs as alliance statecraft. The fundamental ruling of the German Constitutional court of 1994 finally paved the way for such out-of-area missions. Consequently, the Bundeswehr tried to develop or acquire strategic military enablers. Thus, armaments programs that comprised, for example, space-based communications and reconnaissance assets, airlift capacities, and C4I-systems were initiated at the time.

Between 1998 and 2002 obviously a gap persisted between German political ambitions to actively participate in peacekeeping and peace enforcing missions, on the one hand, and sufficient military capabilities, modern equipment, and adequate structures, on the other. Drastic reforms were inevitable, but their implementation was watered down by inertia effects among political and military decision-makers. Subsequent attempts to substantially increase the number of combat-ready forces proved overly ambitious and were doomed to failure. Nonetheless, this timeframe also saw the introduction of permanent national command and control structures as well as the foundation of the innovative Joint Support Service—important steps toward jointness and a more mission-oriented Bundeswehr.

After 2002 the discrepancy between resource-intensive, long-term out-of-area deployments and dwindling resources caused a rethinking in defense priorities and initiated a profound conceptual overhaul of existing structures and procedures. Its main goal was to establish an à la carte Bundeswehr: a core of network-enabled expeditionary forces for high-intensity operations of NATO or the EU, a larger contingent of forces for low- and medium-intensity peacekeeping missions, and the bulk of forces for the support of ongoing operations and routine duty. In this context, crisis management and conflict prevention were regarded as the Bundeswehr's most likely tasks of the future.

Over the following years, however, the long-term stabilization efforts in the Balkans (IFOR, SFOR, KFOR) and, above all, in Afghanistan (ISAF), demonstrated that the Bundeswehr was still confronted with an unfavorable “tooth-to-tail ratio;” that is, a

limited number of rapidly deployable light to medium forces on the one hand, and a multitude of bureaucratic and hierarchical headquarters, staffs, and installations with research, training, and administrative functions on the other. Therefore, the current reform of 2011 is likely to disestablish the aforementioned force categories and to focus on an overall increase in efficiency. And, more importantly, the Bundeswehr will become an all-volunteer force.

However, despite this remarkable progress, reforming the Bundeswehr has been a rather cumbersome project, especially in the view of soldiers in the field and those in senior echelons of command who within alliance integration confront differing postures in allied forces. In retrospect, it seems unsurprising that the armed forces which were constrained by German strategic culture and faced limited funding as a result of the “peace dividend” of the early 1990s and which had to build the capacity to deploy, command and sustain troops abroad from scratch were a laggard of military transformation compared to other European allies. Amidst this process, one central recurring pattern for military reforms in Germany has emerged: whenever the armed forces were in need of funding for modernization programs and restructuring efforts, financial resources were made available by reducing the overall strength of the Bundeswehr rather than by increasing the defense expenditure. It is far from clear that the most recent plans to scale down to 175,000 troops will be the last cut for the years to come.

This leads to the question mark that stands above the future of the Bundeswehr in 2011, granted the upheaval that has surrounded this institution especially in the years from 2009-2011. Given the general low salience of security and defense topics on German political and public agendas and the severe financial crisis within the eurozone, the Bundeswehr will most likely have to continue to cope with stagnating or declining financial resources. In recent years, the German armed forces have managed these shortfalls by equipping military units according to varying standards. While this pattern is likely to persist in the future, the magnitude of the current crisis and its negative long-term effects on public spending in most member states demands closer defense cooperation in the EU.

Against this background, the German Defense Policy Guidelines of 2011 propose the “pooling” and “sharing” of capabilities and resources on the European level. While these are effective ways of burden-sharing, current developments in CSDP call them into question. Germany, for example, has stated that mutual dependencies on the European level must not lead to a situation in which a member state can be put under pressure to pursue a specific policy.⁵¹⁹ As a consequence, it has recommended focusing on such areas as training, logistics, and command structures. Member states like France and the United Kingdom, on the other hand, are interested in enhancing the EU's expeditionary warfare capacities. They have already agreed to better coordinate their defense policies in the future, but outside the EU framework of “permanent structured cooperation.” These diverging perspectives not only pose a threat for the cohesion of the EU, but also for Germany's military transformation because ESDP/CSDP has provided an important impetus in recent years.⁵²⁰ Furthermore, it also remains unclear to what extent NATO will be a driving force for change in the Bundeswehr in the future. Although the NATO Strategic Concept 2010 points to some new focal points of collective defense such as cyber or missile defense, these have not evolved into concrete measures yet.

With regard to Bundeswehr's coming participation in international military missions, it seems unlikely that Germany will divest itself of its “culture of reticence” and instead adopt a “culture of responsibility.” The 2011 abstention from an active involvement in NATO operations against the Gaddafi regime in the face of important *Länder* elections of the same year, which determine the fate of the Merkel cabinet, underscore that German political elites are susceptible to the swings in sentiment in the general public in the age of social media as well as in the age of insecurity worked by the forces of the twenty-first century, which seem to resemble the less fortunate ones of the past. Given these preoccupations it is not unlikely that a German decision to participate in

⁵¹⁹ Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, *Bericht des Generalinspektors der Bundeswehr zum Prüfauftrag aus der Kabinettsklausur vom 7. Juni 2010*, 9.

⁵²⁰ This problematic is aggravated by the fact that reductions in defense spending and cutbacks in capabilities have only been made on a unilateral basis so far. There have been no negotiations about the question of who reduces what between the European partners.

future military missions will remain highly selective and will be based on several political considerations that in turn dominate the shape of armies, navies and air forces.

In this context, current volatile and skeptical trends in German society and public opinion must not be underestimated. Some observers point out that after having experienced a period of over twenty years without an existential threat: “the German society neither wants to make sacrifices nor to bemoan casualties.”⁵²¹ Attempts of German political decision-makers to explain to a skeptic German public the necessity for a participation of the Bundeswehr in the costly counterinsurgency and stabilization campaign in Afghanistan have failed thus far. While German soldiers nowadays receive decorations for their valor and earn combat medals in the Hindu Kush, public opinion in Germany strongly embraces its traditional “never again war” stance. Against this background of a self-absorbed and uninterested German society, and a security elite unwilling and unable to convince the public otherwise, the recruitment of talented specialists in a now all-volunteer force that simultaneously remains true to the tradition and ideal of “citizens in uniform” will probably become one of the biggest challenges for the Bundeswehr.

⁵²¹ “Beruf: Töten,” *ZEIT online*, May 20, 2011, <http://www.zeit.de/2011/21/Berufsbild-Soldat?page=2> (accessed May 20, 2011).

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