

# Between Ambitions and Financial Constraints: The Reform of the German Armed Forces

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*After the end of the Cold War and unification, Germany's role in the international system underwent a fundamental change. The so-called Berlin Republic developed a new strategic culture, relaxed its stance on the use of force and put its interests forth in a more self-confident way. These developments mark an essential change and renunciation of many norms and principles, which dominated German security policy until the end of the Cold War. Hence, the question arises if the concept of Germany as a 'civilian power' is still valid. The adaptation to the new security environment and the development of new ambitions is reflected in a far-reaching reform of the German armed forces. As an instrument of German foreign policy, the foremost task of the Bundeswehr is no longer territorial defence, but international conflict prevention and crisis management. Bundeswehr reform, however, is not matched by sufficient financial means, and so remains imperfect and problematic.*

This article analyses the reform of the German armed forces that accompanied shifts in Germany's security system after the end of the Cold War. It focuses on the period following the Kosovo War in 1999 and the politics of Gerhard Schröder's Red-Green coalition between 1998 and 2005. The changing face of German security policy is seen in terms of the concepts of strategic culture and civilian power.<sup>1</sup> Due to its past and the international context Germany had been highly sceptical about the use of military force. With the end of the bipolar system, Germany has undertaken a partial shift in its strategic culture. The predominant attitude towards the use of force, however, 'remains framed by the distinct strategic culture that emerged during West Germany's rearmament and international rehabilitation in the 1950s'.<sup>2</sup> Military means are still exclusively used to uphold stability or peace and the use of force is seen as a last resort. Although the style of German foreign policy may have changed, its aims remain the same, and it continues to emphasise multilateralism and international cooperation. Thus, although strategic norms are gradually changing, Germany continues to perceive of itself as a civilian power, adopting a sceptical approach to the use of force. Germany's 'new' strategic culture is thus characterised by 'modified continuity'.

This article identifies the implications of the changes in Germany's strategic culture for the organisation of its armed forces. It is accepted that to meet the country's new ambitions and the growing expectations of its international partners, the Bundeswehr must be transformed from a purely defensive force to a power projection force, designed for international military operations. Attitudes toward the deployment of the Bundeswehr have been adapted to new international challenges. 'Germany has shifted to a security posture which in principle accepts the need for German

participation in military interventions outside the traditional NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organisation] context of collective defence.<sup>3</sup> The terms of participation, however, are still strongly influenced by the paradigm of a civilian power.<sup>4</sup>

Reform is thus inhibited by the absence of clear-sighted strategic debate, as well as a lack of the requisite financial resources. The new security paradigm has not yet been fully thought through, and the reform of the Bundeswehr is therefore occurring in a strategic vacuum. Reform requires a redefinition of national interests and objectives, something that Germany has been slow to undertake since unification.<sup>5</sup>

German security is related to the development of a strategic culture by the European Union. With the presentation of the European Security Strategy (ESS)<sup>6</sup> in 2003, the European Union (EU) gave itself for the first time a document defining the strategic interests of the Union and exploring the means to reach these aims. *A Secure Europe in a Better World* analyses the current international environment, the changing nature and related security threats of the international system. However, even if the 25 member states agreed on this 'Grand Strategy',<sup>7</sup> the question arises as to how far the individual states, governments, and military forces agree or disagree on the analysis and judgement of the international environment and the connected strategic aims.

#### FROM CIVILIAN POWER TO GLOBAL SECURITY

Civilian power is understood in terms of restraint from the use of force in international systems, control over of the unilateral use of force through international organisations and multilateralism, and the use of diplomatic and economic means to overcome international conflicts. It means not only 'a reluctance to use military means, but also strengthening international law, ... preserving ... human rights, acting multilaterally and ... having the power and willingness to act globally to help implement these principles'.<sup>8</sup>

The post-war founding of the *Bundesrepublik* and the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law) were deeply marked by the atrocities committed under the Third Reich. The experience of nationalism and militarism shaped the role of the Bundeswehr and judgements about the circumstances in which it could be deployed. Germany's profound abhorrence towards the use of force was expressed in its identity as a purely 'civilian power', promoting multilateralism and supranational integration and rejecting the use of force as a political instrument. All Germany's governments and a huge majority of the population opted for a pro-Western and pro-democratic course based on striving for international cooperation, integration and the transfer of sovereignty to supranational organisations.

Hans Maull summarises this orientation in the key norms 'never again' (pacifism, moralism, and democracy), 'never alone' (integration, multilateralism, and democratisation), 'politics, not force' (preference for political solutions) and 'norms define interests'.<sup>9</sup> The commitment to European and transatlantic integration meant that the Bundeswehr was restricted to the defence of German and NATO territory. Outside of collective NATO defence and humanitarian support, the Bundeswehr never participated in any out-of-area mission (not even in the form of contributions to UN peace-keeping operations).<sup>10</sup>

With unification, however, and with the emergence of new security threats in the aftermath of the Cold War, Germany has progressively accepted the necessity of

German participation in military operations around the globe. The new security orientation was neatly summed up by former Minister of Defence Peter Struck; 'Germany is defended at the Hindu Kush.' Defence now means preserving German security wherever it may be at risk. Territorial defence is no longer the main task of the Bundeswehr. Instead, the focus is on an asymmetric security threat consisting of terror and violence caused by international terrorism, non-state actors and failing states.

Defence as it is understood today means more, however, than traditional defensive operations at the national borders against a conventional attack. It includes the prevention of crises and conflicts, the common management of crises, and post-crisis rehabilitation. Accordingly, defence can no longer be narrowed down to geographical boundaries, but contributes to the safeguarding our security wherever it is in jeopardy.<sup>11</sup>

Security and defence can no longer be measured in traditional categories. The new threats are above all international terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and regional crises and conflicts.

#### GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

This new conception of security is reflected in the expansion of Bundeswehr activity. With around 6,000 soldiers participating in several international operations, the Bundeswehr is now one of the major troop suppliers for international military operations.<sup>12</sup> This section of the article outlines the factors in this expansion, asking whether a 'normalisation' of security policy has taken place, and evaluating the extent of change in Germany's strategic culture.

The first challenges to conventional German attitudes to security emerged with the Gulf War in 1990. The US and other allies criticised Germany for its refusal to be directly involved in Operation 'Desert Storm'. Germany began to realise that it was no longer possible to abstain from such kind of operations, relying merely on *Scheckbuch-Diplomatie*. The Gulf War made clear that the new security environment could lead to clashes between the Germany culture of restraint in the use of military force and the value of multilateralism and solidarity with its allies.

Subsequently, Helmut Kohl's government showed a greater willingness to take part in international military missions and paved the way for a new policy paradigm.<sup>13</sup> The Bundeswehr participated in the United Nations (UN) Transitional Authority mission to Cambodia, the UN Special Commission in Kuwait and the UN Operation in Somalia II peacekeeping mission. Wars in the former Yugoslavia triggered the development and transformation of Germany's attitude towards the use of its military forces. The country realised progressively that 'the authority which it can bring to bear depends largely on the extent to which it participates in security actions'.<sup>14</sup> As a result, German forces were deployed in the former Yugoslavia for the supervision of economic sanctions and in the monitoring of the no-fly zone over Bosnia.

These deployments initiated a broad debate over the range of Bundeswehr operations.<sup>15</sup> Hitherto, the *Grundgesetz* had generally been read as prohibiting a deployment of the Bundeswehr outside the NATO context,<sup>16</sup> and the German public remained rather sceptical about active participation in international military missions. The

terms of debate, however, were fundamentally changed by the seminal ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court in 1994 that Germany is allowed to participate in out-of-area military operations conducted by a collective security organisation (under the UN, NATO, or the Western European Union) provided that the objective is the defence of international peace and security and that the operation has Bundestag approval.<sup>17</sup> Subsequently, the Bundeswehr participated with Tornado aircraft in the late 1995 NATO attacks against the Bosnian Serbs, which was the first participation ever of the Federal Republic in combat operations.

After that, Germany contributed troops to the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) as well as to the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) and 'the CDU-led Government's incremental approach of enacting more and more Bundeswehr deployments in the 1990s succeeded in forging a new reality'.<sup>18</sup> As Maull summarises it, 'The use of the Bundeswehr crossed several important political hurdles, notably the willingness to join operations, to accept casualties and to create victims on the opposing side.'<sup>19</sup>

The Rubicon was finally crossed with the participation of Germany in the NATO Operation 'Allied Force' against Serbia in 1999. The previous year, the election of a Red-Green government had ended an era of 16 years of Christian Democrat-Liberal government. After only months in office, the new government was confronted with a far-reaching decision. China and Russia blocked a UN Security Council resolution invoking Chapter VII of the Charter, just as NATO was about to launch an attack against Serbia. Going ahead without a UN mandate in breach of international law put the new government under immense pressure.<sup>20</sup> The government's decision to participate in the operation, however, was supported by a large majority in the Bundestag. The rationale was that the humanitarian concern to end ethnic cleansing and human rights violation in Kosovo justified the resort to force.<sup>21</sup> The government and the leading elites argued that the basic norm of 'never again war' had to be overruled by the higher principle of stopping the ongoing ethnic cleansing. Although German participation in the air strikes was relatively limited (Germany contributed some Tornado aircraft and took part in humanitarian actions), its symbolic impact on attitudes towards the use of armed forces was considerable.<sup>22</sup> Participation in the Kosovo War was a qualitatively distinct from previous military deployments. It was a combat operation against a sovereign state without a mandate from the UN Security Council.

After this engagement, the Bundeswehr participated in various international operations: *inter alia* in East Timor in 2000, in Operation 'Enduring Freedom' in Kuwait, in the EU-led operations 'Concordia' in Macedonia and 'Artemis' in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Currently, German soldiers participate in the International Security Assistance Force (Afghanistan), SFOR (Bosnia-Herzegovina), KFOR (Kosovo), UN Observer Mission in Georgia, UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea, 'Active Endeavour' (surveillance of shipping traffic in the Mediterranean Sea), and 'Enduring Freedom' (anti-terror operation in the Horn of Africa).<sup>23</sup>

#### TOWARDS A NEW SECURITY PARADIGM?

Germany's security reorientation gained momentum under Schröder's new style of foreign policy, but there was still no far-reaching discussion of aims and means.

Since the end of the Cold War, important foreign policy decisions have been taken on an ad hoc case-by-case basis.<sup>24</sup> Debate intensified, however, with the Iraq War of 2003. The decision of the Chancellor not to support the US-led war represented a major break with German foreign policy traditions.<sup>25</sup> The new discourse of the 'Berlin Republic'<sup>26</sup> saw the 'emergence of greater self confidence, the introduction of a more "national" vocabulary into foreign policy statements and a less reflective attitude to transatlantic security'.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, however, it conformed to traditional German foreign policy norms: the avoidance of the use of force, the search for political solutions, and the promotion of multilateralism.

One reason for the more self-confident projection of these norms was participation in international and military operations since the Kosovo War. Germany feels increasingly equal with other European states and has more room for diplomatic manoeuvre.<sup>28</sup> Its stance over Iraq, however, made clear that there are still certain limitations on the use of force and that established beliefs are still central in Germany's strategic culture. Foreign and security policy have changed, and German interests are put forward more self-confidently, but in general, the Schröder government adhered to old norms without formulating a new foreign policy strategy.<sup>29</sup>

This means that Germany recognises force only as a last resort after prevention and conflict resolution have failed. This approach does not exclude the use of force, but military interventions have to be in accordance with German values. Nevertheless, military capabilities are an indispensable part of a multidimensional approach and the Bundeswehr is a major instrument of the German policy of peace.<sup>30</sup> This approach is central to the core document of Germany's current security policy, the *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien* ('Defence Policy Guidelines', hereafter *DPG*).

The political will and ability to enforce or restore freedom and human rights, stability and security with military means, if necessary, are a sine qua non of a credible comprehensive approach to security policy.<sup>31</sup>

An efficient Bundeswehr is crucial for a constructive and creative security and defence policy. In order for Germany to safeguard its interests and international influence and to play an active role in peacekeeping, it provides forces of adequate strength that can rapidly and effectively be employed.<sup>32</sup>

The Bundeswehr is thus understood to be an important and integral instrument of Germany's comprehensive security policy.

In sum, the dynamics of the last 15 years have led to a changed German strategic culture and an involvement in international military operations that was unthinkable at the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>33</sup> Due to external pressures and the growing expectations from its allies, Germany could no longer exert a mere chequebook diplomacy and had to assume more responsibility on the international stage. In this new security environment, Germany is no longer a pure civilian power. Thus military means are no longer ruled out where there are violations of human rights or a fundamental threat to international security. Despite this reorientation, however, the traditional culture of restraint continues to play a crucial role in the German approach to Bundeswehr deployment. The security culture continues to emphasise multilateral approaches to international security problems, the primacy of humanitarian concerns, and the quest for political solutions. Thus while some of the norms of German security

policy have been modified, the basic principles are still valid, and one can see continuity as well as change.

#### THE DOMESTIC DIMENSION

A crucial reason for the reluctance to use of military force is public opinion. The scepticism of the German public towards the use of force was particularly apparent over air strikes against Serbia in 1999, which took place without a UN mandate, and in the war against Iraq. Data from the *Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr*, underline the reluctance to condone the use of force, although it also suggests that attitudes are changing.<sup>34</sup> Support for Bundeswehr deployment depends very much on the objectives. Humanitarian missions of emergency and development aid are supported by a huge majority. Beyond this, however, support is much more muted. Only a relatively narrow majority (55 per cent) support peacekeeping missions. Operations against international terrorism are viewed even more sceptically, with 48 per cent support. Furthermore, support for increased German responsibility in global security is rather mixed. Only 38 per cent support an active German foreign and security policy to resolve problems and conflicts. Correspondingly, 62 per cent think that Germany should keep out of crises and conflicts in other countries. Overall, however, the results show that the traditionally reluctant attitude towards deploying the Bundeswehr is diminishing, and that there is growing support for Germany's more active role in international security.

A similar picture emerges from Collmer's comparison of poll findings concerning opinion about the role of the Bundeswehr and the aims and limits of German foreign and security policy.<sup>35</sup> It shows that since the end of the Cold War German public opinion has become increasingly favourable towards greater German responsibility on the international stage. As a corollary, there is also growing support for the wider deployment of the armed forces, especially when it is based on humanitarian considerations. An increase in support for robust interventions in peacekeeping deployments is also discernible. However, Collmer stresses that a majority of German citizens believe that such engagements should take place in European and multilateral frameworks. In sum, it can be concluded that the values of German society are congruent with the 'modified continuity' of German security policy.

In the political arena, there is now quite a broad cross-party consensus on foreign and security policy. After some cross-party debate over Bundeswehr deployment and the 'normalisation' of German security policy,<sup>36</sup> and following some initial questions over whether the Red-Green government would continue a traditional security policy, it can now be concluded that the main parties have fairly homogenous perspectives. For the most part, differences are confined to nuances,<sup>37</sup> although there were some quite sharp differences in attitudes towards the US over the Iraq crisis.

Regarding the reform of the Bundeswehr, the parliamentary opposition had three main criticisms of Red-Green government policy. First, they accused the government of disregarding the main task of the Bundeswehr, namely the territorial defence of the country and civil protection. A second criticism was that reform was driven by fiscal considerations rather than military and strategic imperatives. Defence spending, they argued, was wholly insufficient to support the reform of the armed forces. The Christian Democrats attacked Minister of Defence Struck of 'making security policy

orientated to the financial situation'.<sup>38</sup> Reform was 'a capitulation of the Minister of Defence to the Minister of Finance',<sup>39</sup> and the critics stressed the discrepancy between the new and far-reaching aims of the Bundeswehr and the very limited financial resources.<sup>40</sup> Finally, they were strongly opposed to the eventual abolition of conscription.

#### THE REFORM OF THE BUNDESWEHR

Changes in the norms of German security policy are reflected very clearly in the reform of the Bundeswehr. Increased international deployments in the last decade are reflected in fundamental change to its tasks and mission spectrum. The new mission of the Bundeswehr can be summarised as crisis prevention and the fight against international terrorism. To be able to meet these new demands and to match the new ambitions and aims of Germany on the international stage, the government undertook the most extensive reform in the history of the Federal Republic's armed forces. The reform is determined by three factors: the multinational integration of the Bundeswehr and the needs of interoperability in a European and transatlantic frame, the changed operational spectrum and the new task spectrum of the Bundeswehr and the available resources/financial constraints.<sup>41</sup>

The keystone document of the reform is the 2003 *DPG*<sup>42</sup> which sets out down the principles and the profile of German security policy. They 'are the binding foundation for the work performed in the area of responsibility of the Federal Minister of Defence'<sup>43</sup> and 'provide the necessary realignment of the Bundeswehr to the significantly changed parameters and risks'.<sup>44</sup> The core message of the *DPG* is that for now and in the near future, there is no conventional threat to German territory and that the Bundeswehr has to be adapted to a completely new mission spectrum. A central characteristic of the reform is its 'transformative character'. The process is to be understood as a transformation, understood as a process without a defined endpoint. Because of the fast changing and dynamic nature of the international security system, a fixed time schedule for reform no longer meets the needs of modern military forces.<sup>45</sup> They have instead to be flexible and able to adapt constantly so as to be utilisable in the task spectrum.<sup>46</sup>

#### *Aims, Tasks and Structure*

The changing task profile of the Bundeswehr requires fundamental structural reform. 'The requisite capability profile of the Bundeswehr cannot be achieved with the current structures, materiel and equipment.'<sup>47</sup> The broadened concept of defence incorporates the new threat environment:

According to Article 87a of the Basic Law, the Federation establishes Armed Forces for purposes of territorial defence. Defence as it is understood today, however, means more than traditional defence at national borders against conventional attack. It includes the prevention of conflicts and crises, the common management of crises, and post-crisis rehabilitation. Accordingly, defence can no longer be narrowed down to geographical boundaries, but contributes to safeguarding our security wherever it is in jeopardy. (...) Armed Forces are an

integral part of foreign and security policy that aims at the prevention and containment of crises and conflicts.<sup>48</sup>

The tasks of the Bundeswehr derive from its mission and are summarised as international conflict prevention and crisis management (including the fight against international terrorism), the support of allies, the protection of Germany and its citizens, rescue and evacuation operations, and the rendering of support in the event of natural disasters.<sup>49</sup> Peace enforcement and crisis management are at the top of the new task list. These tasks are supposed to structure the entire character of the Bundeswehr.<sup>50</sup>

Important operational parameters are the contributions to the NATO Response Force (NRF), the European Headline Goal and German participation in the EU battle groups. For NATO a joint force must be kept constantly available. This commitment ties up approximately 15,000 Bundeswehr military personnel including preparation, post-action activities and the readiness phase. In the framework of the European Headline Goal, Germany promised to have on standby up to 18,000 soldiers. In addition to that, Germany continues to keep available a potential force of 1,000 military personnel in the framework of the United Nations Standby Arrangement System (to be employed in transport tasks for medical, military police, engineer and mine defence units). Finally, Germany strives to keep available a 1,000 strong force that can intervene anywhere around the globe for evacuation operations. For all possible operations, 'The political aim will define the goal, location, duration and type of an operation. The necessity for the Bundeswehr to participate in multinational operations may arise anyway in the world and at short notice and may extend across the entire mission spectrum down to high-intensity operations.'<sup>51</sup>

### *New Force Categories and Capabilities*

Operational parameters are reflected in the Bundeswehr's new force categories. At the end of 2003, Minister of Defence Struck and Chief of Staff General Wolfgang Schneiderhan presented the new force structure of the armed forces. The Bundeswehr were subdivided into Response, Stabilisation and Support Forces,<sup>52</sup> signalling an entirely new system of force categories. These measures aim at reducing personnel costs in favour of new investments and at adapting the personnel structure to the new operational parameters. With the new structure, the Ministry of Defence aims to save 26 billion euros over the next 12 years. In addition to the reduction of the Bundeswehr from 280,000 to 250,000 soldiers by 2010,<sup>53</sup> the new structure seeks to adapt the forces to the new reality of being an 'Armee im Auslandseinsatz' (army in deployment/operation). The *Financial Times Deutschland* summarised the structural change with the headline: 'Struck adapts Bundeswehr to war'<sup>54</sup> and the Defence Minister stated that 'The area of deployment is the whole world.'<sup>55</sup>

A major aim of the reform is 'achieving a balance between ... missions, tasks, equipment and resources. In view of the changed security situation, tasks of the Bundeswehr will be reprioritised. Its capabilities will be adapted accordingly. In future, financial resources will be used mainly for the provision of the military core capabilities.'<sup>56</sup> The newly defined priority areas (command and control, intelligence and reconnaissance, mobility, support and sustainability, survivability and protection)



are of central importance in fulfilling the needs of multinational operations around the globe. The forces have to be modernised in order to become more mobile, interoperable and technologically agile.

We must assign priority to creating the hitherto unavailable sub-capabilities of strategic deployability, world-wide reconnaissance and efficient and interoperable command and control systems and means; in particular because our forces may be deployed anywhere in the world now that their possible areas of operation have been extended geographically.<sup>57</sup>

The material planning is brought into line with the tasks and the financial framework and from now on only investments in priority capabilities will be made. Above all, a capacity for network centric command and warfare<sup>58</sup> and network enabled capabilities is a key project for being able to conduct the new main missions. Capability projects 'not fulfilling this need, do not have a chance any longer in the material and capability planning'.<sup>59</sup>

One way to build armed forces that are more effective and to close the capability gap with the US in particular, as well as France and the UK<sup>60</sup>, is coordination and a pooling of resources with European allies. Various efforts in the framework of the EU and NATO are underway to overcome the problem of this capability gap, which causes serious problems of interoperability.<sup>61</sup> The *DPG* states 'Armaments cooperation within a European and transatlantic framework is to be given precedence over the realisation of projects under national responsibility.'<sup>62</sup> The Ministry of Defence strives for greater harmonisation of capabilities as the 'capability to support alliance partners remains necessary. To a greater extent than before, the armed forces must be orientated towards harmonising their capabilities, means and structures with those of their partners, thereby avoiding the duplication of capacities.'<sup>63</sup> 'A high degree of interoperability is the crucial prerequisite for multinational missions and combined operations.'<sup>64</sup> Due to common priorities, which converge because of mutual mission scenarios, the formulation of European and transatlantic capability aims is extremely expedient. The formulation and implementation of such aims play a crucial role in the reform of the Bundeswehr.

#### *Budget and Financial Constraints*

The main problem for the reform of the Bundeswehr is Germany's fiscal situation in general and the defence budget in particular. The ambitious aims and the restructuring of the armed forces stand in stark contrast to the tense financial situation. Compared to its European partners, German defence spending is already rather low<sup>65</sup> and it will probably not be increased in the near future. Total German defence spending is supposed to remain at roughly 24.4 billion euros annually and to increase then to 25.2 billion. Because of the generally tight fiscal situation, it seems very unlikely that this sum will be substantially increased by the new government. It would be very difficult to convince the public of the necessity of an increase while cutbacks in social spending and security systems are on the daily agenda.<sup>66</sup> Szabo and Hampton argue that 'the problem of under-funding is chronic and persistent'.<sup>67</sup> These fiscal facts evidently play a central role in the reform of the Bundeswehr: 'The numerical strength of the armed forces and the principles of their organisation will be determined

by their mission and the budget . . .'<sup>68</sup>. Furthermore, the *DPG* emphasises that 'Due to limited funds, structural reorientation and material modernisation are still out of alignment. It is therefore necessary to reallocate funds within the defence budget in favour of investments.'<sup>69</sup>

Another problem with regard to the fiscal situation of the Bundeswehr is the way disposable money is spent. More than 50 per cent goes on salaries while only 13 per cent goes towards new equipment.<sup>70</sup> Clearly, more resources are needed in the latter area to adapt the forces to the needs of modern peacekeeping and enforcement. However, the problem of a fiscal mismatch is recognised: 'Bundeswehr planning is no longer in line with the over all financial situation. . . . There is no leeway left for future-oriented development and procurement projects. . . . The aim is to increase the portion of the defence budget reserved for investments.'<sup>71</sup>

### *Conscription*

Since its creation the Bundeswehr has been a conscripted army. The main reasons in favour of this model are to ensure civil control of the army and to keep a broad connection to society. This aim was mainly inspired by the bad experiences of the Weimar Republic, where the small volunteer army developed into an 'undemocratic state in the state'. Two more practical reasons in favour of conscription are the fact that the Bundeswehr recruits 40 per cent of its professional soldiers from conscripts and that conscription provides a cheap pool of workers in the social area out of those draftees who choose civilian instead of military service.

Nowadays, however, the time of duty service is only nine months and the majority of the young men of an age group do not perform any military service at all.<sup>72</sup> The latter point raises questions of equity ('*Wehrgerechtigkeit*'). More importantly, it is very doubtful if conscription is still a useful model at a time when the main task of the Bundeswehr is no longer territorial defence. Modern armed forces need fewer, well-trained, mobile and experienced personnel. Whether soldiers can be prepared in nine months to meet these needs is questionable. Moreover conscripts are not generally sent on peacekeeping missions. Nevertheless, the *DPG* is committed to conscription, which 'remains an indispensable requirement for the operational readiness, effectiveness and economic efficiency of the Bundeswehr'.<sup>73</sup>

The majority of the political parties are also committed to conscription. Only the three smaller parties in the German Bundestag – the Free Democratic Party (FDP), the Greens and Die Linke.PDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) – are striving for an end to conscription. The official line of the two bigger parties the CDU and the SPD (Social Democratic Party), which form the current governing coalition, is to support conscription. Even though the SPD officially sticks to conscription, signs of change are recognisable. The fact that the majority of the population, and above all young voters are against conscription<sup>74</sup> could trigger a strategic shift by the SPD in the future. More and more Social Democrats of the party switch to the conviction of their former coalition partner, the Greens. They argue that conscription does not meet the needs of the modern Bundeswehr any longer and that it is too expensive and inefficient.

With the coming into office of the new CDU-SPD coalition government in November 2005, it is however not foreseeable yet, in which direction the discussion

will develop. One thing however is clear: there will continue to be a broad discussion between advocates and adversaries of *Wehrpflicht* (compulsory service). Today German democracy is very stable and it is doubtful if the 'democratic and civil control' argument supporting conscription is still valid. In addition, almost all Germany's important partners professional militaries and in the long term a professional army is reputed to be cheaper than a conscription army.

## CONCLUSION

After the end of the Cold War, Germany's strategic culture changed and the country voiced its interests and ambitions with more self-confidence. The 'Berlin Republic' is characterised by a normalisation of Germany's foreign and security policy, and in particular its attitude towards the use of force. Many of the historical restraints concerning deployments of the Bundeswehr have been abolished or modified. This change of perspective regarding the use of force was accompanied by an apparent reorientation and reform of the Bundeswehr. The German armed forces are transforming from a defensive force, exclusively designed for territorial defence, to a power projection force, designed for international conflict and crisis management operations.

Despite this change, the traditional culture of restrained military force still holds and continuities with the past are clearly recognisable. Germany has not become a completely 'normal' country in this regard, but has adapted its security policy to the transformed international system by fine-tuning rather than fundamentally changing its strategic culture. This happened not only because of internal changes, but particularly due to external pressures, arising from the expectations of its allies in a changed international environment. However, traditional principles are still central in German foreign and security policy: close cooperation with partners and allies, the prominence of multilateralism, understanding the use of force to be a last resort and an emphasis on non-military instruments. In particular the restraint on the use of military force and the preference for non-military instruments for conflict resolution is perfectly in line with the concept of Germany's strategic culture as a civilian power. Nevertheless, national security policy and the Bundeswehr have undergone a fundamental reform over the last few years.

A major headache for the transformation process, however, is the fact that the new stance does not correspond with Germany's security policy resources. Neither the actual capabilities of the armed forces nor the defence budget are designed to fit the new ambitions and the growing expectations of international partners. The lack of satisfactory financial resources endangers Germany's interoperability capacity as well as the credibility of new ambitions in the area of foreign and security policy with adequate military capabilities. The priority of federal budget consolidation means that it will be difficult to overcome this problem, and the defence budget will probably remain underfunded. Public opinion is sceptical about any increase in defence spending, and remains unconvinced about the enlarged task spectrum of the Bundeswehr. Although elites and the majority of the political parties acknowledge Germany's new responsibility and the need to reform the armed forces for deployment worldwide, this conclusion is not shared by the wider public. This lack of adequate defence spending clearly hampers the fulfilment of the far-reaching ambitions of reform.

Nonetheless, the reform of the Bundeswehr is an important first step in trying to close the gap between demanding ambitions and the lack of capabilities. The threat analysis presented in the *DPG* and the new definitions of the Bundeswehr's task are helping to adapt German security policy to the new conditions of the international setting. In more general terms, the *DPG* can help to overcome the lack of a clear definition of Germany's security interests and to catch up with its allies in the area of defence.

However, the necessary strategic debate on these issues has yet to take place and the far-reaching rhetorical aims have to be put into practice. It has to become clear when and for what reasons Germany is willing to deploy the Bundeswehr and use military force. A strategic vision of how national interests are linked to decisions on the use of military force is needed because such decisions are currently based on ad hoc and short-term considerations. The proposed solution to this problem and to the further reform of the Bundeswehr by the new government coalition between the CDU and SPD under Chancellor Angela Merkel remain to be seen.

It is clear, however, that the current reformulation of the basic principles of German security policy has to be embedded in a more far-reaching strategic debate on fundamental defence and security questions. This should lead in the long term to the development of a national security strategy, for which the ESS provides a useful starting point. Moreover, the efforts to provide the Bundeswehr with the necessary capabilities to be fully interoperable with its partners and to fulfil the demands of the new task spectrum have to be turned from exigent rhetoric into political and material practice. Germany either has to formulate more modest ambitions or has to provide more means to put flesh on the bones of its foreign and security policy aims.

#### NOTES

1. The term 'civilian power' was coined in the 1970s by the late François Duchêne to describe the European Community. Furthermore, the term was often used to analyse Japan and Germany's foreign and security policy. For an excellent account of the German case, see Hanns W. Maull, 'Germany and the Use of Force: Still a "Civilian Power"?' *Survival* 42/2 (2000), pp.56–80.
2. Piotr Buras and Kerry Longhurst, 'The Berlin Republic, Iraq, and the Use of Force', *European Security* 13/3 (2004), p.215.
3. Maull, 'Germany and the Use of Force', p.56.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Gregor Schöllgen, 'Die Zukunft der deutschen Außenpolitik liegt in Europa', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B11/2004, p.16.
6. *A Secure Europe in a Better World*. European Security Strategy, adopted by the European Council on 12 Dec. 2003.
7. Certainly, it is very debatable if one can speak of a 'Grand Strategy' of the EU just because of the mere presentation of the ESS. Concerning the meaning and notion of the term 'Grand Strategy', see *inter alia* John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Post-war American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Paul Kennedy (ed.), *Grand Strategies in War and Peace* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991); Richard Rosecrance and Arthur A. Stein (eds.), *The Domestic Bases of Grand Strategy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993).
8. Nina Philippi, 'Civilian Power and War: the German Debate on Out-of-Area Operations 1990–1999', in Sebastian Harnisch and Hans W. Maull, *Germany as a Civilian Power? The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), p.64.
9. Maull, 'Germany and the Use of Force', p.66ff.
10. For an overview of Bundeswehr missions from the 1950s onwards see <[www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/C1256F1D0022A5C2/Docname/Abgeschlossene\\_Einsaetze\\_Home](http://www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/C1256F1D0022A5C2/Docname/Abgeschlossene_Einsaetze_Home)>.

11. *Defence Policy Guidelines* promulgated by Minister of Defence Peter Struck, 21 May 2003, Berlin. Accessible at [http://www.bmvg.de/portal/PA\\_1\\_0\\_LT/PortalFiles/C1256F1200608B1B/W268AHEHSIOINFOEN/VPR\\_en.pdf?yw\\_repository=youtatweb.](http://www.bmvg.de/portal/PA_1_0_LT/PortalFiles/C1256F1200608B1B/W268AHEHSIOINFOEN/VPR_en.pdf?yw_repository=youtatweb.), p.3.
12. For current and regularly updated figures and numbers see <[www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/en](http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/en)>.
13. Cf. Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force: The Evolution of German Security Policy 1990–2003* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).
14. Reinhard Rummel, 'Germany's role in CFSP: "Normalität oder Sonderweg"?', in Christopher Hill (ed.), *The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy* (London: Routledge, 1996), p.55.
15. For details on this 'out-of-area debate' see Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*.
16. Article 87a states that the use of force is only allowed in the case of defence and Article 24.2 allows German participation in military operations only in systems of collective security. Since 1982 (when the government used the Basic Law to refuse any participation by the Bundeswehr in out-of-area operations), these articles were mainly interpreted as prohibiting Bundeswehr participation in operations outside the NATO area.
17. This precondition makes the Bundeswehr a *Parlamentsarmee* and the character of this rule is questioned and debated nowadays. The concept includes that the German Bundestag has to agree with the deployment of *any* soldier abroad (even it is about the deployment of only one soldier). The government is thinking about initiating an *Entsendegesetz* that gives itself more freedom. However, there is no law underway yet that would reduce the necessity for parliamentary acceptance of deployments (which would need a change of the Basic Law).
18. Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, p.66.
19. Maull, 'Germany and the Use of Force', p.58.
20. The public debate about a possible intervention was very broad and intense in Germany; the traditional policy of avoiding the use of force clashed with the necessity to stop humanitarian suffering. Overall, the situation was very delicate for the new government. This becomes clear, when one thinks about the fact that the Greens emerged from the pacifist movement in the 1980s and the fact that the SPD is traditionally pacifistic as well.
21. For a detailed overview of the different positions and discussions on the Kosovo intervention in the German political sphere as well as among the public and for the development in the Kosovo case in the domestic context, see Maull, 'Germany and the Use of Force'.
22. For a good and detailed overview of the German debate on out-of-area operations see Philippi, 'Civilian Power and War'.
23. For detailed figures of the number of soldiers deployed, see <[www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/einsatz\\_aktuell/index.php](http://www.einsatz.bundeswehr.de/einsatz_aktuell/index.php)>.
24. Werner Link, 'Grundlinien der außenpolitischen Orientierung Deutschlands', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 11/2004: 3-8, p.3ff.
25. First, because of the frank opposition against the US and second because of the refusal to participate in any military action against Iraq, even if a second UN Security Council resolution had been obtained.
26. This notion is used to describe the changed nature of Germany after unification and the transfer of the capital from Bonn to Berlin. This transfer is generally related to the transformation of Germany's political culture, which is particularly evident in the area of foreign and defence policy. See *inter alia* Dieter Dettke (ed.), *The Spirit of the Berlin Republic* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2003); Piotr Buras and Kerry Longhurst, 'The Berlin Republic, Iraq, and the Use of Force', *European Security* 13/3 (2004), pp.215–45; Johannes Gross, *Nachrichten aus der Berliner Republik 1995 – 1999* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1999).
27. Buras and Longhurst, 'The Berlin Republic, Iraq, and the Use of Force', p.215.
28. Cf. Buras and Longhurst, 'The Berlin Republic, Iraq, and the Use of Force'.
29. Cf. Hanns W. Maull, "'Normalisierung" oder Auszehrung? Deutsche Außenpolitik im Wandel', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 11/2004, pp.17–23. About the new and more self-confident style of German foreign policy see also *Financial Times*, 'Schröder's Germany shows new self-confidence in world arena', 7 April 2004, p.3.
30. 'Deutschlands Interessen'. Ministry of Defence, 20 July 2004. See <[www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/kcxm1/04\\_Sj9SPykyssy0xPLMn\\_Mz0vM0Y\\_QjzKLt4w3DvUHSYGYRqbm-pEwsaCUVH1fj\\_zcVH1v\\_QD9gtYIckdHRUUAjNSzjg!!/delta/base64xml/L3dJdyEvd0ZNQUFzQUMvNEIVRS82XzlfM1VS](http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/kcxm1/04_Sj9SPykyssy0xPLMn_Mz0vM0Y_QjzKLt4w3DvUHSYGYRqbm-pEwsaCUVH1fj_zcVH1v_QD9gtYIckdHRUUAjNSzjg!!/delta/base64xml/L3dJdyEvd0ZNQUFzQUMvNEIVRS82XzlfM1VS)>.
31. *Defence Policy Guidelines*, p.9.
32. *Ibid.* p.15.
33. Szabo and Hampton even state that the issued *Defence Policy Guidelines* would have been seen as both utopian and unacceptable by the SPD in 1994. Stephen F. Szabo and Mary N. Hampton, *Reinventing the German Military*, AICGS Policy Report 11 (2003), p.9.
34. Thomas Bulmahn, *Bevölkerungsbefragung zum sicherheits- und verteidigungspolitischen Meinungsbild in Deutschland Ergebnisbericht 2004* (Strausberg Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, 2004).

35. Sabine Collmer, ‘“All politics is local”: Deutsche Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik im Spiegel der ‘Öffentlichen Meinung’, in Sebastian Harnisch, Christos Katsioulis and Marco Overhaus, *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik. Eine Bilanz der Regierung Schröder* (Baden Baden: Nomos, 2004), pp.201–26.
36. Cf. Christos Katsioulis, ‘Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik im Parteiendiskurs. Alter Wein in neuen Schläuchen’, in Harnisch, Katsioulis and Overhaus, *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik*, pp.227–52.
37. Ibid. p.246. This remark does not apply to the socialist party PDS.
38. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 30 Jan. 2004, p.8. My translation.
39. *Die Welt*, 26 April 2003, p.2. My translation.
40. CDU MP Gerd Müller: ‘On the one hand the Minister of Defense Peter Struck speaks about defending Germany at the Hindu Kush, on the other hand he cancels billions in the capabilities spending.’ *Die Welt*, 13 April 2004, p.10. My translation.
41. *Defence Policy Guidelines*, p.10.
42. Other important policy documents in this regard are the *Directive on the Further Development of the Bundeswehr*. Promulgated by Minister of Defence Peter Struck, 1 October 2003, Berlin (key points are a greater focus on deployments, lower running costs and increased investments) and the *Grundzüge der Konzeption der Bundeswehr*. Promulgated by Minister of Defence Peter Struck, 9 August 2004, Berlin. This is the core document for the general conception of German military defence and the central directive for the fulfilment of the Bundeswehr’s aims. The document is based on the *Defence Policy Guidelines* and implements the *Directive on the Further Development of the Bundeswehr* in structural and planning terms.
43. *Defence Policy Guidelines*, p.4.
44. *Directive on the Further Development of the Bundeswehr*, p.3
45. Parliamentary State Secretary Walter Kolbow, Speech delivered at the conference ‘Transformation der Bundeswehr – welche Aufgabe, welche Ziele?’, 21 June 2004.
46. *Grundzüge der Konzeption der Bundeswehr*, p.12.
47. *Directive on the Further Development of the Bundeswehr*, p.2.
48. *Defence Policy Guidelines*, p.3.
49. *Defence Policy Guidelines*, pp.16 – 18. For the mission and tasks of the Bundeswehr see also *Grundzüge zur Konzeption der Bundeswehr*, p.11.
50. Cf. commenting, accompanying text to the *Defence Policy Guidelines*, p.10.
51. *Defence Policy Guidelines*, p.12.
52. In detail, the new force categories are the following (see statements on the concept and further development of the Bundeswehr by Minister of Defence Peter Struck, at the press conference ‘Waypoints for the New Course’, 13 Jan. 2004. For more details see ‘Grundzüge der Konzeption der Bundeswehr’ <[www.bmvg.de/portal/PA\\_1\\_0\\_LT/PortalFiles/C1256EF4002AED30/W268QHFU197INFODE/Grundz%C3%BCge+der+Konzeption+der+Bundeswehr.pdf?yw\\_repository=youtatweb](http://www.bmvg.de/portal/PA_1_0_LT/PortalFiles/C1256EF4002AED30/W268QHFU197INFODE/Grundz%C3%BCge+der+Konzeption+der+Bundeswehr.pdf?yw_repository=youtatweb)>:
  - Response Forces are designed for high-intensity and combined joint network centric operations. They are supposed to conduct peace enforcement measures and to be capable of rapid response. They consist of land, air and maritime forces with state-of-the-art equipment and comprise a total of 35,000 soldiers. It is from this force potential that the German contributions to the NATO Response Force (NRF), to other NATO or EU operations are generated.
  - Stabilisation Forces are to be employed in joint military operations of low and medium intensity, for a longer period across the broad spectrum of peace stability measures. They must be capable of separating parties to a conflict, monitoring ceasefire agreements, eliminating peace disturbers, and enforcing embargo measures. The stabilisation forces will comprise approximately 70,000 military personnel.
  - Support Forces are intended for support of operations and for the Bundeswehr’s routine duty at home; including command and control and the training organisation of the Bundeswehr. The support forces will consist of about 137,500 soldiers.
53. To put these figures in context: In 1990, it was 450,000 soldiers, in 1995, it was 340,000 and in 2002 it was 295,000.
54. *Financial Times Deutschland*, 19 Dec. 2004, p.13. My translation.
55. Minister of Defence Peter Struck, *Der Spiegel* (4/2004), p. 24. My translation.
56. *Defence Policy Guidelines*, p.5.
57. Ibid.
58. For details on the Bundeswehr plans on Network Centric Warfare see Chief of Staff, Bundeswehr, General Wolfgang Schneiderhan, Speech delivered at the Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V. – BDI, ‘Network Enabled Capabilities – Folgerungen für die Bundeswehr’.
59. Parliamentary State Secretary Walter Kolbow, Speech delivered at the conference ‘Transformation der Bundeswehr – welche Aufgabe, welche Ziele?’.

60. 'Germany is falling further behind not only to the United States, but also the UK and France.' Szabo and Hampton, *Reinventing the German Military*, p.21.
61. Some initiatives, which should be mentioned, are NATO's Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI) since 1999 and the European Capabilities Action Plan (ECAP) since 2001. For the influence of these initiatives on German security policy and capability planning see Martin Agüera, *Deutsche Verteidigungs- und Rüstungsplanung im Kontext von NATO und EU*, in Harnisch, Katsioulis and Overhaus, *Deutsche Sicherheitspolitik*, pp.119 – 45.
62. *Defence Policy Guidelines*, p.5.
63. *Ibid.* p.18.
64. *Ibidem*, p.19.
65. While France and the UK spent 2.4 per cent / 2.5 per cent of their GDP on defence, Germany only spent 1.5 per cent (2002). See Burkard Schmitt, 'Defence Expenditure' (EU Institute for Security Studies 2004) 5pp. at <[www.iss-eu.org/esdp/11-bsdef.pdf](http://www.iss-eu.org/esdp/11-bsdef.pdf)>.
66. Even though, the number of people supporting the raising of the defence budget increased from 12 per cent in 1997 to 26 per cent in 2003. However, this judgement is closely related to actual events of international terrorism (in 2001 support reached a peak level with 44 per cent). See *Bevölkerungsbefragung zum sicherheits- und verteidigungspolitischen Meinungsbild in Deutschland Ergebnisbericht 2004*, p.38.
67. Szabo and Hampton, *Reinventing the German Military*, p.23.
68. *Defence Policy Guidelines*, p.13.
69. *Ibid.* pp.13–14.
70. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance 2002–2003* (London: Oxford University Press for IISS, 2002), p. 254.
71. *Directive on the Further Development of the Bundeswehr*, p.2.
72. In 2003, only 120,000 out of 430,000 candidates went to the Bundeswehr, see article at <[www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,327565,00.html](http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,327565,00.html)>
73. *Defence Policy Guidelines*, p.5.
74. ZDF-Politbarometer of 12 Nov. 2004. See <[www.zdf.de/ZDFde/inhalt/3/0,1872,1020771,00.html](http://www.zdf.de/ZDFde/inhalt/3/0,1872,1020771,00.html)>.