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Is There a European Way of War?

Role Conceptions, Organizational Frames, and the Utility of Force

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Europe is the region of the world where the network of security institutions is the densest. Yet, these institutions did not erase differences about conceptions of force employment among European countries and between European countries and the United States. Why have concepts of military power and force employment remained distinct and varied in Europe, and yet, what facilitates their convergence at the European Union level into the ambiguous notion of crisis management? We argue that an important answer to these questions is endogenous to the military: both role conceptions and organizational frames of military institutions are key underlying aspects of the differences at the national level and of the common ground at the European Union level. We examine and compare empirically the role conceptions and organizational frames of the armed forces in France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom since the early 1990s.

Keywords: *crisis management; military doctrine; European Union; organizational frame; role conception; war*

Introduction: Military Role Conceptions and Ways of War in Europe¹

Europe is the region of the world where the network of security institutions is the densest. Since World War II, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Western European Union and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and increasingly the European Union play a significant security role. Yet, while these institutions contributed to a major shift in the use of force within the region, they did not erase differences about conceptions of force employment among European countries and between European countries and the United States. Why have concepts of military power and force employment remained distinct and varied in Europe, and

yet, what facilitates their convergence at the European Union level into the ambiguous notion of crisis management? We argue that an important aspect of the answers to these questions is endogenous to the military: both role conceptions and organizational frames of military institutions are key underlying aspects of the differences at the national level and of the common ground at the European Union level.

Our article has two objectives. First, we contribute to the debate opened by Stephen Biddle on the sources of variations in the meaning of military power and in military effectiveness.² Military forces do many things and proficiency in one or several tasks does not imply proficiency in others.³ If no single, undifferentiated concept of military power can apply to all states in all places and times, what are the sources of variations in force employment in an international system which does not dictate a unique response? Biddle's suggestion is to examine the domestic environment of the military, especially its relations with political leaders, but also domestic politics, as well as societal and budgetary constraints.⁴ Specifically, in the case of Europe there has been a growing interest in the alleged development of a European strategic culture through a socialization process accelerated by the institutional arrangements put in place by the European Union.⁵ Our proposition is that military institutions themselves, out of their own history and memory, develop enduring ideas about themselves and their roles. These endogenously generated ideas have an impact on conceptions of military power and force employment which previous works on the transformation of European security have neglected. In contrast to the European strategic culture literature, we focus on the military and its conceptions of force employment instead of the broad and often vague notions of "strategy" and of "culture." Using the notions of role conception and organizational frame, we suggest one way to conceptualize military doctrines sociologically. We recognize that military institutions, especially in the European Union, are formally controlled by civilian authorities and do not make military strategy in isolation. Partisan politics, for example, might play a role in European governments' decisions to get involved in peace enforcement.⁶ However, the complexity of force employment, and the military monopoly on operational expertise suggest that, even when military advisors do not prevail, the relatively autonomous logic of military power constantly influences the political choices related to the use of force, in the initial decision on whether to use force or not (and what kind of force), during the conduct, and at the end, of the operation.⁷ The political end can only be reached by coming to terms with the specific logic of the military system: the political and military dimensions constantly interact with one another.⁸

Second, this focus allows us to explore more directly and deeply whether or not there is a European way of war, i.e., an approach to force employment that might be common to the member states of the European Union (EU). We explore and compare empirically the main role conceptions and organizational frames of the armed forces in France, Germany, Italy, and the UK. While an examination of these four countries cannot be a substitute for an analysis of the military organizations and

doctrines of the twenty-seven-member states of the European Union, there are good reasons to select them. In the European Union, these four countries spend the most on defense in absolute terms, they also have the largest force in numbers, and they are heavily involved in various military deployments abroad.⁹ In short, because of their comparatively strong military capability these countries are highly relevant to European security. Whatever common ground and convergence there might be in the field of European defense and security, through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or through the EU, it is unlikely to be at odds with the defense capabilities and intentions of those countries.

In the first part of the article, we present our approach which focuses on the military's role conceptions and organizational frames. In the second part, we examine the ways in which military institutions in France, Germany, Italy, and the UK define their preferred role.

I. How Military Institutions Think About the Uses of Force: Role Conceptions and Organizational Frames

1. Military Organizations and Force Employment: Problems, Role Conceptions, and Organizational Frames

Force employment is the central challenge confronting military organizations. The command and control of operations conducted by a complex organization whose main goal is to use force is the main distinctive skill of the officer corps.¹⁰ In *On War*, Clausewitz underlined the remarkable complexity of force employment and the conditions under which military organizations and military leaders can keep and improve their problem solving capacity despite the general friction which characterize warfare.¹¹ Why do military organizations face the problems associated with the use of force in different ways?

To get a better sense of a military organization's self-comprehension of the use of force, we need to examine its overall role conception, as well as its organizational frame, i.e., its approach to solve the problems associated with force employment. Drawing on the body of work which originated in the 1970s and 1980s following Holsti's path-breaking essay on national role conception and foreign policy as well as Krotz's more recent reformulation, we define the military's role conception as a shared view, shared within one service or shared by all the services, regarding the proper purpose of the military organization and of military power in international relations.¹² A military organization's role conception is shaped by its history and memory and is used to socialize military personnel. It may evolve over time, become blurred and even contested, partially or entirely, at certain periods (which might temporarily make the notion less useful analytically), but it is not a transient attitude. Military organizations do not all have the same willingness, or the same capacity, to

assert and define their own role, however, and this is in itself an intriguing phenomenon. Finally, the military organization's role conception affects policy because, as Krotz notes, it prescribes certain goals and action, and also because it rules out some policy options, making them implausible or even unthinkable. Embedded in a role conception is also a preference for particular processes of policy making related to the use of force. The notion of organizational frame, introduced by Lynn Eden, usefully complements the notion of role conception because it focuses on the ways in which organizations attempt to solve problems. Drawing on Wiebe E. Bijker's definition of technological frame, Eden defines organizational frame as the approach used by an organization to solve problems.¹³ These frames incorporate central ideas and values regarding how the organization chooses and represents problems, how the organization develops strategies to solve them, and how it places constraints and requirements on possible solutions.¹⁴

2. Operationalizing Military Organization's Role Conceptions and Organizational Frames

To uncover military organization's role conceptions and organizational frames we draw from a variety of sources, including defense ministries and services' official publications and statements, speeches, military journals, and memoirs. To the extent that they are publicly available, which is not always the case, we especially use the services' internal documents and field manuals, an important source to uncover the service's role conception and organizational frame. These sources, especially the services' documents, publications and manuals, define the service's military doctrine. A military doctrine is a set of principles, authoritative but requiring judgement in application, which provides the military organization with guidelines about when, and how, to employ military force to reach specific goals. These principles reflect the judgement of professional military officers, and to a lesser but important extent of civilian leaders, about what is and is not military possible and necessary.¹⁵ A military doctrine is the preferred mode of a military institution for employing force. It embodies the military institution's conception of how force ought to be employed, and provides the frame of reference with which military institutions approach the employment of military power. Military doctrines specify what means should be employed and how, and serve as a broad guide to action. Military doctrine is the sub-component of grand strategy (or foreign policy) that deals specifically with military force. It is "a set of prescriptions (. . .) (about) how military forces should be structured and employed to respond to recognized threats and opportunities."¹⁶ Military doctrines notably answer two questions: What type of force shall be employed? How shall they be employed? But, in defining common conceptions and standard operating procedures, doctrines encapsulate common knowledge and explanations of events, conceptions of the history and memory of the organization, lessons learned, myths, and language.¹⁷

II. Waging War or Managing Crisis? The Military's Role Conceptions in France, Germany, Italy, and the UK

1. France: Mastering Violence and Beyond

Since the end of the Cold War, the French military, especially the army, has engineered a doctrinal revival. During the 1990s, the army leadership, which saw itself less constrained by the rigidities of France's nuclear deterrent doctrine and involved in numerous and heterogeneous missions abroad, developed ideas about the use of force and the army's operational identity as it was shifting to an all-volunteer format and redefining its core values. On January 1, 1999 the army created the Command for Doctrine and Superior Military Education, and this institutional change came together with an effort to revisit its doctrinal thinking since the beginning of the twentieth century and develop a new approach to force employment.¹⁸

In light of its missions, the military recognized the diversity of the ways in which force is, and should be, employed in a changing international environment.¹⁹ The repeated involvements of French troops in a variety of crises since the end of the Cold War led military leaders to perceive conventional war, like the 1990–1991 first Gulf War, as the exception rather than the rule. They estimated that what was usually asked of them was less to defeat a military adversary in a conventional battle, than to mobilize the resources of the military art to control spaces (ground, air, military) in which the political leadership could implement a complex political action.²⁰ To them, the military should not see itself as having only one exclusive type of mission, but as being capable to accomplish a set of different tasks including war, peace support, security, or urgent help. In this perspective, the main role of conventional forces is to contribute actively to the prevention, the limitation or, if need be, the forceful resolution of crisis and regional conflicts.²¹ The joint doctrine on force employment, as well as the Army doctrine, emphasize that the main goal of the armed forces is not the destruction of an enemy anymore.²² Rather, the use of force is designed to preserve balance, to bring back peace and stability, or to save lives. The army doctrine considers that, more than in the past, force employment is deeply shaped by political logics and influenced by a wider variety of constraints.

The Army's combined arms 901 Manual adopted in April 1999 defined two main roles for the army.²³ On the one hand, the armed forces should be able to control the ground in a durable way and hence the various situations that can occur in that environment. On the other, the armed forces should also be able to impose the decision in an air–land combat (*combat aéroterrestre*). Furthermore, the armed forces contribute to bringing life back to normal after the fighting (facilitate the reconstruction of civilian infrastructure for example). To reach political objectives, ground forces can be used in two ways, depending on the nature of the conflict: to coerce the armed forces of the adversary or to control violence.²⁴ The coercion of enemy forces is a direct strategy seeking a military victory by targeting the enemy's centers of gravity,

taking into account deception, the enemy's morale, and the public perceptions of the events. The mastering of violence type of force employment seeks to ensure or to restore security in a territory through an indirect strategy. The military leadership does not see these two modes of operations as mutually exclusive. They are instead two poles of a continuum with actual force employment usually located in between and borrowing elements of each. In both cases, the tactical action of the force is organized into four clusters: offensive, defensive, securitization and assistance. Beyond the traditional offensive and defensive modes of action, the 1999 doctrine added securitization and assistance which were both practiced before, but not self-consciously formalized. Securitization refers to the control of an area and assistance refers to an effort to help a population. The army doctrine emphasized not only the need for a controlled use of the force, but also the need for several principles of action (decision, multinationality, information, etc.) and some specific knowledge and capacity to use force in an efficient way in a new context.²⁵ This approach to war is close to the indirect approach logic, as defined by Basil Liddell Hart, and it is often accompanied by a critique of Clausewitz's ideas.²⁶ The mastering of violence is presented as a way to stop the logic of violence prevalent in internal conflicts without resorting to armed combat.²⁷ The level of force should be strictly dependent on the effect envisioned. In some situations, the army's doctrine mentions that it might be possible to give to the adversary the possibility, materially and psychologically, to disengage. Furthermore, the force is expected to conduct civil-military operations and to participate in stability operations.

In this doctrinal formulation, especially regarding the notion of mastering violence, the army leadership relied on its own memory and interpretation of colonial conquest and the wars of decolonization.²⁸ They notably emphasized the heritage of key military figures of colonial wars, like Galliéni and Lyautey, who insisted that pacification meant a careful combination of limited uses of force and society building. The 2007 version of the army's doctrine distinguishes three phases in force employment: intervention, stabilization and normalization and does not give the same importance to the mastering of violence. The mastering of violence still plays an important role, however, and the army doctrine confirms that the defeat of the enemy is insufficient to the success of the operation and is not the main objective of force employment.²⁹

In sum, the French military, and especially the French army's role conception and its organizational frame are not bounded by one exclusive, or even privileged, mode of action, like mid- to high-intensity warfare. On the contrary, the military acknowledges the limits of such a way to use force, even its partial irrelevance. It favors instead the possibility of tackling a broader range of problems, which include the deterrence and isolation of an adversary, the creation of a secure environment, and the improvement of the daily life of the population. Debates and disagreements persist within the military, however, regarding the relative emphasis given to the war-fighting missions and to the control of violence.³⁰

2. The UK: Minimum Necessary Force and Potential for Escalation

Since the early 1990s, the British armed forces capitalized on what they identified as their historical expertise in robust counterinsurgency operations and imperial policing. Nevertheless, extensive force reductions and the general willingness to “trade force size for capabilities”³¹ have resulted in the overstretch of armed forces personnel, particularly in light of the high level of commitments to forces during the multiple parallel missions of the 1990s and the 2000s. These burdens on the armed forces result from the shift in long-term defense planning initiated by the 1998 Strategic Defense Review. It changed the focus from “stability based on strategic deterrence and fear” to “stability based on the active management of risks” through an expeditionary strategy.³² While retaining a small strategic deterrence capability, “frequent, smaller operations are becoming the pattern.”³³ In these operations, the British military deploys a medium weight expeditionary force with counter-terrorism and robust peace support mandates and focuses on “conflict prevention and stabilisation, rather than the defeat of opposing forces.”³⁴

Moving away from earlier lightly armed United Nations (UN)-style peacekeeping missions, the most recent British military doctrine for peace support operations draws attention to the growing need for coercive force and counter-insurgency-type operations in crisis management: “The game has become more violent, and thus needs some referees to control it (for example, ice hockey rather than cricket).”³⁵ In complex crisis management operations that are “being conducted in a far less certain, and potentially more volatile international environment”³⁶ the British armed forces thus increasingly prepare for the coercive use of military force, a trend we also found in the French military. The British armed forces’ self-understanding of force employment in these operations is characterized both by its predilection for using minimal force where possible and by its ability to escalate the level of force if necessary. Similar to the French notion of “mastering violence,” the UK employs military power in peace support operations not as a primarily destructive and lethal force to destroy an enemy, but as a coercive means to foster conflict management through military presence. Hence, British armed forces are held to restrain their use of force in peace support operations, since “an unduly heavy-handed approach with excessive use of force is unlikely to aid in the promotion of consent.”³⁷

Nevertheless, this strategy of using minimal force in peace operations is carried out on the assumption that the UK armed forces can overmatch any potential opposition. In the words of the British Defense Doctrine, the nature of peace support “must not be allowed to divert the Armed Forces from the reality that their success in them has been based on their ability to escalate the level of force they deliver when the circumstances demand it.”³⁸ The ability to “apply lethal force in a measured and deliberate fashion when necessary”³⁹ does not only extend to crisis management missions, but is central to the British approach to the use of force across all types of

operations. The core of the UK's military doctrine is thus a "warfighting ethos": the British armed forces' war fighting skills "must remain the key to their credibility and effectiveness"⁴⁰ and give them the ability to fight and win in warfare. Even in nonwar operations, for instance the Navy operational concept concluded that the British armed forces' "ability to discharge functions at the lower end of the conflict spectrum will derive principally from our capability to fight at high intensity. The reverse must not be assumed."⁴¹ These concepts of using minimal force and escalating it only when necessary combine with a specific approach to force protection. Assuming that excessive force protection inhibits the successful execution of military missions, the British armed forces manage the risk to the force, rather than seeing force protection as an ultimate goal in itself. As a result, the British armed forces visibly behave differently during deployments than for instance German or U.S. troops. In recent operations in Iraq or on the Balkans, British troops actively engaged with local authorities and tried to establish good relations with the population "by establishing headquarters in central urban areas; by avoiding body armour and carrying weapons slung where possible; by discouraging the wearing of sunglasses; by permitting vehicles to travel alone if threat conditions warrant."⁴²

The main aspects of the military's organizational frame are the notions of mission command and the maneuverist approach to operations that the British armed forces adopted in the late 1980s.⁴³ The latter approach is based on the principle of "shattering the enemy's overall cohesion and will to fight, rather than his materiel."⁴⁴ Maneuver warfare is thus based on the idea that "wars are ultimately won or lost in the hearts and minds of men and women."⁴⁵ Defeat and disruption of an enemy are brought about by destroying his centre of gravity with considerable strength through "taking the initiative and applying constant and unacceptable pressure at the times and places the enemy least suspects."⁴⁶ In contrast, attritional warfare reduces the effectiveness of enemy forces by destroying enemy forces and their materiel. The concept of mission command is the second central tenet of British Defense Doctrine. It refers to a decentralized style of command that delegates responsibility for military action down to the lower levels, while the commander retains the overall direction. Commanders use a "minimum level of control so as not to limit unnecessarily his subordinate's freedom of action" and ensures that "his subordinates understand his intentions, their own missions, and the strategic, operational and tactical context."⁴⁷

3. Italy: The Military Prestige of Humanitarian Interventions

Before the end of the Cold War, Italy's armed forces have had less exposure to questions of the use of force than the UK and France. While the British and French armed forces have a long and diverse history of military operations, including during the Cold War, the Italian military's role conception has been shaped by the article 11 of the 1948 Italian Constitution:

Italy rejects war as an instrument of aggression against the freedoms of others peoples and as a means for settling international controversies; it agrees, on conditions of equality with other states, to the limitations of sovereignty necessary for an order that ensures peace and justice among Nations; it promotes and encourages international organizations having such ends in view.⁴⁸

Throughout the Cold War, NATO and Atlanticism, more than operational deployments abroad, shaped the Italian military's role conception and organizational frame.⁴⁹ However, two missions in Lebanon, in 1982 and 1984, altered this tradition and initiated a period in which Italian armed forces could be employed beyond national borders. Even more frequently and significantly throughout the 1990s, the Italian armed forces participated in a variety of missions conducted mostly within multilateral frameworks, like NATO and/or the UN, but also on its own.⁵⁰ The Kosovo intervention in 1999, in particular, was a turning point and led to the publication of a new military doctrine.⁵¹ The Kosovo conflict has been perceived by both the military and the public opinion as proof of the expertise which the Italian armed forces had obtained after their twenty years of experience in the field. These military interventions became a salient element of Italy's foreign policy and a source of pride and prestige for the armed forces. This was not an easy transition, however, and domestic factors, as well as the relationship with the United States, continue to shape the decision-making process before and during the conduct of these operations.⁵² A key characteristic of the military's evolving role conception is that the use of military force is firmly embedded in multilateral operations and that the armed forces are dependent on NATO for the formulation of their doctrine.

To respond to the challenges of the evolving strategic context, the chief of the Italian Defense Staff published in 2005 the Strategic Concept which outlines "the conceptual reference frame for the planning, predisposition and employment of the Armed Forces, as the concrete technical-military implementation of the political-military guidelines contained in the ministerial directives."⁵³ The Strategic Concept addresses "the national military instrument transformation process coherently with the current evolution in the Atlantic Alliance environment and with the building process of European Union Common Security and Defense Policy."⁵⁴ The armed forces' role conception is shaped by three main principles. First, since defense and security capacity are no longer limited to the national territory but projected abroad, the armed forces must be capable of sustaining various engagements related to the support of diplomatic action, crisis management, and low- to mid-intensity post-conflict management on a global level in support of national interests and within the context of coalitions or alliances. Second, the armed forces must adopt a holistic approach (global, integrated, interdisciplinary), aimed at developing operational capabilities suitable for carrying out of a wide spectrum of missions, from humanitarian operations to crisis prevention and management to high-intensity conflict.⁵⁵

Third, for the prevention or the management of high-intensity conflicts, the military is influenced by the revolution in military affairs approach, coming from the United States and from NATO. The Italian military does not exclude the necessity of partial or full-blown high-intensity operations to safeguard vital or strategic interests. Similarly, from the military's point of view, the recurrence, in the longer term, of traditional military threats to Italian or to NATO territory can not be excluded. For these reasons, even though responding to asymmetric threats, managing crises and conducting post-conflict stabilization activity will represent the most frequent forms of intervention, the Italian armed forces seek to maintain the capability to conduct, within the framework of coalitions, high-intensity operations with forces capable of facing—in quantity and quality—significant threats. This conception is based on the idea that a surveillance capability, combined with command and control and flexible expeditionary forces will favor “effect-based” operations. The military sees the development of such capability, and notably the adoption of a network centric conception of force employment, as an important contribution to national security.⁵⁶

The crisis management missions have been considered by the military leadership as proof of the military's rapid and effective adaptation to a changing international environment which contributed to Italy's external influence. Neither the military leadership, nor military personnel consider that these interventions threaten their institutional identity, quite the opposite.⁵⁷ The army leadership presents the service as a good illustration of the shift of the Italian military to a force that is actually employed and not only held in reserve. The Army has in various contexts emphasised its specialization in stabilization and reconstruction tasks intended to restore normal social and political conditions of life in the areas of crisis.⁵⁸ In the military doctrine, as well as in several articles published in the various services' magazines and books, a strong emphasis is put on peacekeeping and humanitarian forcible interventions, as well as on political and social considerations linked to force employment.⁵⁹ Furthermore, the Strategic Concept underlies the overriding necessity of extending military action to the most recent forms of asymmetric conflict, with particular reference to international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Because of the deployment of the Carabinieri, a mixed police/military force, Italian peacekeeping is also characterised by the relevance given to security functions and activities. The Carabinieri deployed abroad represent more than 10 percent of the total number of Italian soldiers in missions. Moreover, they hold responsibilities within multinational missions that no Italian force had obtained before. In Sarajevo, for example, they had the leadership of the NATO-led Stabilisation Force (SFOR), and it was the first time that Italy received such an important role and recognition.⁶⁰ In sum, since the beginning of the 1990s, the Italian military has moved from a tradition of nonintervention to a cautious interventionism into international crises.

4. Germany: Force Beyond Territorial Defense

The German military's approach to the use of force has been undergoing a far-reaching change since the end of the Cold War. During the Cold War and particularly since the German rearmament in 1955, force employment for the Bundeswehr meant a territorial self-defense posture focusing on high-intensity warfare within NATO. Because of its traumatic past and the international context Germans have been sceptical about the use of military force and the deployment of the Bundeswehr abroad. With the end of the bipolar system, however, the role conception of Germany's armed forces, embedded in the civilian power identity and the culture of restraint, evolved within that framework.⁶¹ Foreign and security policy, and also the armed forces' approach toward the use of force were adapted to the 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 context of collective defense."⁶² Landmarks in this development were the wars in the former Yugoslavia, the judgement of the Federal Constitutional Court concerning the deployment of the Bundeswehr in 1994, the participation of Germany in air strikes against Serbia in 1999, and the threat of international terrorism and the fight against terrorism after the 9/11 attacks. As of today, the German armed forces take part in several peacekeeping and crisis management operations and around 7,300 Bundeswehr soldiers are deployed around the globe.⁶³

The beginnings of German military interventions abroad were accompanied by a long and tempestuous public debate about the legitimacy of these "out-of-area" interventions.⁶⁴ This conflict was settled by the 1994 decision of the Federal Constitutional Court that allowed the German armed forces to operate outside the NATO area.⁶⁵ Ever since this historic verdict, German participation in multilateral crisis management operations mushroomed and the tasks and the mission spectrum of the Bundeswehr changed accordingly. The Bundeswehr is currently undergoing a major reform and the German security policy is being adjusted to the new character of the international environment. In this regard, the 2003 "Defense Policy Guidelines" are a central document concerning the transformation of the German armed forces. They underline that German defense includes "the prevention of conflicts and crises, the common management of crises, and post-crisis rehabilitation. Accordingly, defense can no longer be narrowed down to geographical boundaries, but contributes to safeguarding our security wherever it is in jeopardy." It is made very clear that no conventional threat to the German territory is to be expected in the near future and that the Bundeswehr's spectrum of operations has accordingly changed in a fundamental way.

To transform the Bundeswehr from a defensive, heavily mechanized force into a power projection force allowing to fulfill what the political and the military leadership presented as its international obligations, an important reform was put into place. The *Grundzüge der Konzeption der Bundeswehr* of August 2004 underlines the flexible character of the transformation to be able to adapt constantly to the force and to

make it usable in a variety of contexts.⁶⁶ Despite the ongoing reform, which does not suppress conscription, and despite the military's new approach of force employment, the political, social and military framework within which the military role conception is embedded has not been turned upside down. Military force is not perceived as an efficient or exclusive instrument of security policy, it has to be embedded in a comprehensive security approach, and the notion that it can only be a very last resort is prevalent.⁶⁷ The majority of the German public is convinced that the Bundeswehr should not take part in high-intensity ground combat operations.⁶⁸

The "White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr" published in 2006 puts forward that

the Bundeswehr's "raison d'être" and core function continue to be the defense of Germany against external threats. Additional responsibilities include the defense of allies in the event of attack and assistance in crises and conflicts that might escalate into actual threats. Thus, the central task of the Bundeswehr continues to be national and collective defense in the classical sense.⁶⁹

However, the White Paper acknowledges that the Bundeswehr is an instrument of German foreign and security policy and that "for the foreseeable future, the most likely tasks will be the prevention of international conflicts and crisis management."⁷⁰ Peace enforcement and crisis management operations are at the top of the task list of the armed forces and these expected functions and operational needs decide on the structure of the capabilities, command and control systems, availability, and equipment of the Bundeswehr. The ongoing reform of the Bundeswehr is influenced by these operational scenarios and to meet the current challenges, the German Armed Forces are being reorganized into the categories of response, stabilization, and support forces that are trained and equipped according to their respective functions. Furthermore, the armed forces are supposed to keep available an adequate contingent composed of forces from all services as a contribution to coping with contingencies in the event of conflict. Finally, the reform stresses the need of adequate military capabilities and weapons in the context of joint network centric high-intensity operations, inspired from the revolution in military affairs promoted through NATO. This includes the improvement of operational readiness across the entire mission spectrum and better joint force thinking and interaction between land, air, and maritime forces.

Conclusion

There are both significant differences as well as an overlap in the ways in which military institutions in France, Germany, Italy, and the UK envision the use of force. On the one hand, military institutions in the UK and in France, drawing on their colonial heritage (however contested and controversial) and having been involved in different interventions abroad before the end of the Cold War, value roles which go

beyond conventional high-intensity warfare. The French armed forces, in particular, see conventional wars as exceptions and emphasize their role in ensuring or restoring security in a territory through the mastering of violence (*maîtrise de la violence*). In the field of peace operations and crisis management, both the British and the French armed forces perceive the direct defeat of an adversary as an only secondary goal and focus instead on the control and stabilisation of specific territories. The British military accordingly emphasises the use of minimal force wherever possible, although its “expeditionary” role conception emphasises the need for a high escalation potential whenever necessary.

On the other hand, military institutions in Italy and Germany expanded their role beyond territorial self-defense. In contrast to the Cold War period, both militaries prepare for interventions abroad, particularly for peace operations in multilateral settings. The Italian armed forces continue to draw mainly on NATO for their doctrine formulation, but see their role in contributing to a wide spectrum of both high-intensity and lower-spectrum multilateral operations. The German Bundeswehr’s transformation during the last decade has been striking. Moving away from its former strict orientation toward territorial self-defense, the German armed forces deploy worldwide within different multilateral peacekeeping missions. Nevertheless, its ingrained culture of restraint and its role conception as the defender of a civilian power Germany give it a predilection for low-end peacekeeping and stabilization missions, rather than for high-intensity ground operations.

Overall, the ways of war of these military institutions remain distinct, and these differences are not residual: there is no single “European” way of war.⁷¹ Military institutions’ preferred ways of war in France and in the UK appear to be closer to one another, while military institutions in Germany and Italy also share preferences in the ways they approach force employment. It is also easier to find a clear-cut position of the armed forces on ways of war in France and in the UK than it is in Italy or, most of all, in Germany. Despite these differences in organizational frames and role conceptions, military institutions in all four states have converged toward doctrines that emphasise crisis management and peace operations tasks, albeit through different trajectories. Coming from the opposite spectrum of role conceptions, French and British military institutions moved away from a former emphasis on stability based on deterrence toward an expeditionary role conception based on risk management. German and Italian role conceptions moved from territorial self-defense to cautious forms of multilateral interventionism. This convergence of role conceptions around a “crisis management core” has facilitated the joint deployment of French, British, German, and Italian forces in the EU’s multilateral crisis management missions. Yet, the notion of crisis management has remained conveniently ambiguous: since “its meaning has not been clearly defined at the EU level,”⁷² EU crisis management operations remain a one-size-fits-all notion that can incorporate distinct military role conceptions and understandings of the use of force.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this article was presented at the conference "American and European Ways of War and Peace," European University Institute–Robert Schuman Center for Advanced Studies, Transatlantic Programme, Fiesole, Italy, June 9–10, 2006 and at the conference "European Security Since the Fall of the Berlin Wall," University of Montréal, Canada, Institute for European Studies, February 11, 2008. We thank the participants, as well as two anonymous reviewers, for their comments and suggestions.

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