THE BUNDESWEHR AND THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE

JÜRGEN KUHLMANN

Jürgen Kuhlmann is researcher at the Institute for Social Research of the German Armed Forces, Winzenstr. 52, D-80797 München.

Introduction

The future of the Bundeswehr had just begun, announced boastfully a spokesman of the ruling CDU party, when German defence minister Rühe enforced the engagement of the German Bundeswehr in Somalia in the spring of 1993, and then tried to make the decision palatable to a largely disinterested public. With this venture, the political and military establishment of the Bundeswehr in fact left the former firm position where both the German society and the military had felt safe for years, and entered an insecure terrain instead - since then experiencing only modest support.

Comparing the officially so called "**unavoidable new challenges**" to those tasks which so far had been effective in the short life of the Bundeswehr, a deep structural and restorative distortion becomes visible. Those who had personally experienced the Bundeswehr in the fifties and early sixties - the present defence minister did not - suddenly feel taken back to that "future". Under the new political leadership of defence minister Rühe not only leadership style and social manners in the defence resort have become rude - the cold climate within the troops has carried on. Because the Bundeswehr's existence can - to a growing fraction of society - hardly be legitimated by defence of the country, additional and different arguments had to be brought in the playground. Suddenly the military should be an "integral part of the reason of state", an "legitimate means of the state's foreign policy", a "military reinsurance against multiple unforeseeable future risks" and should serve as an instrument to "restore international public law" in case it was violated (Nassauer 1993, 53). Confronted with the **new** military missions one cannot be surprised when detecting an increasing number of critics who see the Bundeswehr endangered to drift away to the rightists. Especially liberal officers would "increasingly often take the chance to leave the Bundeswehr before the end of their contract". And, on the other hand, "there was a clearly visible number of volunteers with political right-wing, if not extreme rightist orientations".[1]

Reorganisation of the Bundeswehr: From Defence to Deterrence[2]

Charles Moskos (1992, 1) recently classified the societal development in Western countries after World War II by identifying an early and late phase of the Cold War, followed by an emerging society after the end of the cold war that he characterised a warless society. It obviously is justified to assume that the armed forces of this future society will be in need of fundamental reorientation. This approach roughly applies to German society and its armed forces and will be used in the following.

The date to be set for the end of the cold war is not definitely settled yet. In the developed western as well as in the East European societies at any rate a growing loss of legitimacy and acceptance of everything concerning the military could be noticed long before in Malta Bush and Gorbachev officially declared the cold war's end. In Germany we may equate the end of the cold war with the fall of the Berlin wall in October 1989, although the development along that line had set in both of the German states even long before.

Within the years following the (hot) Second World War until 1989, an **early** and a **late** phase of the cold war can be identified in Germany. While the early phase can be characterised as that of a society "ready for defence" quite appropriately, the consciousness of the subsequent generation "prepared for deterrence" is characterised by the effort to avoid a hot war by the threat of ultimate military means among other things. In the Federal Republic the transition from the society "ready for defence" to the one oriented towards deterrence should probably be set around the mid-sixties.

In 1995, the Bundeswehr of the now united Germany is entering a new phase in its history. At least formally, parts of the forces of the former German Democratic Republic have been fully integrated by now. The strength of military personnel, which before the unification amounted to 495,000 soldiers in West Germany is intended to have dropped to 370,000 men for a territory that due to the unification has extended by about 44%. The Bundeswehr will be provided with a new organisational structure and will have stationed their units on the territory of the former ideological and military opponent, too.

Only when, and as soon as, this formal reorganisation has been completed, however, the Bundeswehr will be faced with the actual fundamental changes. More than ever before, the armed forces will have to face the functional expectations placed in them by society. They will have to examine the decline in the significance of military means for the preservation of peace alongside a simultaneous increase in the reputation of non-military means. In view of the enormous problems connected with the funding of German unity they will also have to allow a more intensive questioning than up to now as to what benefit they make on the funds invested in them.

During the early phase of the cold war the predominant mood among the population of the Federal Republic and, after their formation in 1956, among the Bundeswehr as well was one characterised by fear of, but also by a high degree of readiness for war. The **de facto** absolute rivalry between the two opposing ideologies, the communist and the "western" one, manifested itself in mutual hostility. They spoke of a cold war and behaved accordingly. Disregarding the irritations dating back to the time the Bundeswehr was built up that lingered on for some year ("count-me-out" movement) we can say that in the Federal Republic of Germany the public looked upon its own forces as well as upon the allied forces stationed in the Federal Republic favourably or at least without major reservations.

This was fundamentally due to the fact that society perceived a massive military threat emanating from the East. There was no ambiguity as to where the threat came from and who the enemy was and there was no disagreement about the fact that if need be he

would have to be countered vigorously by military means. Because of the threat the state and its armed forces had joined closely. The state was represented "by its army". On the other hand, the armed forces regarded themselves as important upholders of the concept of the state in the Federal Republic.

In the mid-sixties, the basic concepts of security policy characterised by fear of and readiness for war began to be superseded by the strategic concept of nuclear deterrence. Although deterrence of an opponent by military means is as old as humankind itself, only modern mass destruction weapons rendered it possible to threaten the potential opponent convincingly with total destruction and thereby to prevent him from military aggression. In place of war, the threat became the means of affecting the enemy's intentions.

Some twenty years later at the threshold to the eighties, severe doubts concerning the sense of nuclear deterrence began to arise. Increasingly, nuclear weapons themselves became perceived as unusable in principle. They were increasingly understood as political weapons or, to be more precise, as weapons of a politically symbolical character. This change resulted from the understanding that due to the limited controllability of their effective radius, due to the fact that present-day societies are not suited for war and due to the unpredictable collateral damages weapons of mass destruction when employed would also destroy what is actually meant to be protected by their existence. Since then, for Central Europe at least, war no longer automatically constitutes the continuation of politics by other means.

Since the seventies, new perceptions of threat have assumed concrete shape. It is characteristic of these threats that they extend beyond the previous confines of ideological systems and intra-social demarcation lines. It is assumed that the former "enemy" is affected by the risks and thus by the threats just like oneself. This "solidarity" enforced by circumstances results in a fading of old enemy images. In substance, this concerns environmental disasters (ozone hole, climatic disaster), the resurgence of "irrationalisms" that were supposed to have been outgrown (nationalism, religious fundamentalism) and shifts of economic power.

In the "ready for defence" Bundeswehr, the soldier was supposed to orient himself professionally towards the role model of the heroic fighter — perfectly in analogy to the social perceptions of threat and in continuation of historical experiences derived from the Second World War that had happened only a few years ago. The identification with respectable military virtues and values handed down from ancient times determined self-concept and motivation and thus the identity of the corps of regulars and temporary-career volunteers.

The transition to the society "prepared for deterrence" in the mid-sixties left the Bundeswehr's mission of preserving peace **formally** unchanged. It was, however, given another connotation regarding security policy. While previously the Bundeswehr believed that it had to be prepared for a "hot" war, now it was primarily a matter of convincingly demonstrating deterrence to restrain a potential aggressor from a military attack. **The soldier had to be capable of fighting to avoid the need to fight**. It was a logical part of this doctrine that was nevertheless taken little notice of that the Bundeswehr would have been compelled to admit the failure of its military mission if the potential enemy had started a military intervention. **The "emergency" was no longer represented by war but already by peace.** Service in the Bundeswehr was "a war prevention service"[3] and the Bundeswehr were declared a "peace movement".[4]

Thus for the soldier the old dichotomy of war and peace to a large extent had lost its function of creating an identity. Starting in the late sixties in the soldier's professional field the readiness for heroic self-sacrifice on the battlefield was increasingly replaced by the political-technical management of the state's monopoly to use force as an instrument

of deterrence. In the soldiers' professional self-concept, the fundamentally modified tasks increasingly caused the values of market economy to be added to the traditional military values. Managers endowed with qualifications as those requested in the economic field were in demand. Civilian or technical-economic performance qualifications were adopted for officer education and training. The civilian usability of the capabilities and skills obtained in the forces became an important incentive in military recruiting campaigns. The soldier's profession changed to a "job" comparable to many others. At any rate, the so called **sui generis** debate conducted for a long time and in some cases doggedly was no longer the focus of attention.

But even in the context of all this demythologisation of the soldier, in substance his identity remained linked to a large extent to conventional military conceptions of his part and patterns of war. Only hesitantly and incompletely the temporary-career volunteers began to develop an "identity oriented towards deterrence" adequate to the new strategy. Above all, it could not emerge because of the lack of empirical evidence: Ultimately, it was never possible to say with certainty whether deterrence would work at all in the long run.

The Bundeswehr in Search for a New Identity

After the unification of the two German states the self-concept of the soldiers of the Bundeswehr has begun to falter, particularly by the Gulf War in the spring of 1991. Being occupied themselves with the "painful birth pangs" caused by the emergence of all-German forces, the Bundeswehr firstly had to alley the foreign countries' suspicions that it intended to evolve into a new military power dominating Europe. Only a little while later the Gulf War confronted the German armed forces with the same foreign countries' demands for active participation in joint military action. "Since 1989 foreign critics have tended to make opposite demands: On the one hand, pressing the new Germany to allay fears over reviving militarism by confirming that policy would be determined by the peace commitment of our constitution. ... On the other hand, castigating Germany for not playing a more prominent military role in the Gulf crisis" (Ramsbotham 1993, 3). The political sovereign — parliament and government — to whose primacy the soldiers had subordinated themselves so far could then not resolve this contradiction and was at a loss for giving the soldiers the guidance required. Ever since then the political parties in power and those in the opposition have tended to define the mission and international role of the German armed forces in different ways.

The fiercely disputed legitimacy of employment of German soldiers in military (combat) missions outside national and alliance boundaries and/or on behalf of the United Nations or the CSCE is distracting from the actual question as to what meaning may be left for the Bundeswehr after the threat existing during the time of the cold war has ceased to exist. Since the mid-sixties the Bundeswehr as a part of NATO had been tasked with deterring the potential enemy from a military attack at the borderline between the Western and Eastern system. According to the Bundeswehr this mission has been successfully accomplished: "For more than 35 years the German Army in co-operation with the armies of our allies, has made a significant contribution to the preservation of peace in freedom — of this we are proud."[5]

Now all of a sudden the parties in power demand that in view of the changed general security setting the Bundeswehr should get rid of their original task of war prevention. "On a radically changing and troubled continent",[6] German armed forces "are to continue in future to national defence ... and make military contributions to international security within the collective defensive alliance" of NATO, "the United Nations and possibly also the EC/WEU and future CSCE commitments in order to preserve territorial sovereignty".[7]

Constituting a "peace army", the Federal armed Forces so far had drawn their legitimisation from preventing the application of military force. In this context, their mission was designed in such a way that, strictly speaking, deterrence and along with it the Bundeswehr would have failed if belligerent acts had taken place. Henceforth the German armed forces are to see themselves as a protecting and regulating power, as peacekeeping and peace making forces, even as forces of intervention operating all over the world and threatening with the use of military force to assert vital interests. "Unfortunately, the employment of military means of power for achieving political objectives even in Europe and the adjacent regions cannot be ruled out in future".[8]

The Bundeswehr soldiers' professional concept that has evolved over many years, namely "to serve the Federal Republic faithfully and to defend bravely the law and the freedom of the German people",[9] does not include tasks of this nature. On the contrary, faced with the experience of the Second World War the philosophy of the Basic Law and German military legislation were aimed at precluding once and for all the application of military force by German armed forces for other reasons than the defence of their own territory and that of NATO states.

New Military Missions and the Bundeswehr's Strength in Peace

At present there are two partly complementary functions which society expects the military to fulfil.[10] In the first place, current developments no longer allow us to define security mainly in military terms but require us to relate it first of all to "ecological and demographic disasters with global border-crossing effects ... (such as) ... population explosion, climatic disasters, lack of resources" (Vogt 1990, 17). The forces in a post-military society are advised to undergo a change of paradigms. Military power potentials would have to be reduced to forces that, due to their structure, have no attack capabilities. They would, however, be armed and employed to resist new threats to security. The future tasks of the Bundeswehr would inevitably result from the predominant risks of the future. The relatively small remaining military tasks concerning basic security would be supplemented by tasks such as military mediator functions and pacifying actions in areas of conflict and relaxed tension (promotion of peace by assuming a "constabulary" function); verification tasks in the course of the disarmament process; technical disaster relief during floods, earthquakes, forest fires, etc., or humanitarian assistance in case of industrial and environmental disasters (Vogt 1990, 80).

A second pattern of reasoning is immediately linked with the one above. Participating in the accomplishment of tasks that are considered necessary and useful by society may help the Bundeswehr resolve their dilemma of public legitimisation (see Kohr and Lippert 1990, 7; Kern 1990, 23). Dedicated to the common cause of protecting society from the risks of modernisation, the Bundeswehr might win back some of the social approval (and acceptance) that they have lost during rising criticism about their exclusively military-oriented defence system. Actually, the Bundeswehr has always brought its admittedly efficient technical assistance into focus when providing help in the wake of disasters at home and abroad; and it has done so with excellent publicity. However, this led to the result that the Bundeswehr has gained status in a field that cannot — at least not necessarily — be derived from the original objectives of the military.

By taking over secondary functions, the Bundeswehr would come closer to the image they are associated with by the public. In public perception, primary military functions clearly play a minor role. Social tasks come first, as for example, "assistance in the wake of natural and technological disasters", or "getting the unemployed off the streets" or

"teach discipline and order to the youth" (Kohr and Rader 1989, 13).

Technically, there are, however, a lot of points against charging the Bundeswehr with non-military tasks. Basically, the military organisation is appropriate for the fast and concentrated employment of large-scale technical equipment and extensive manpower, even for non-military purposes. but military work is still characterised by "order and obedience" and still requires most soldiers to do their "duty" in the military service which involves "the renunciation of a part of the civil rights." The restrictions of these basic rights that are guaranteed in our democratic constitution are justified by the idea that without these restrictions the military would not be able to protect democracy against threats from **outside**. But where tasks are concerned that can be mastered with less restrictive organisational patterns, military structures become obsolete, or at least need to be justified. To state the facts over subtly: Charging the Bundeswehr with other than military tasks would be equal to a socially controversial militarization of the social sectors and institutions concerned.

In political practice it would be difficult, anyway to charge the Bundeswehr with non-military tasks. As a matter of fact, the "socio-economic field has almost completely been taken over by civilian organisations which are constantly on their guard against interference from rival institutions" (van Dorn 1976, 57). In Germany, civil defence and disaster control services are provided by the Technisches Hilfswerk (Technical Emergency Service), a federal agency, by private organisations, and by professional fire brigades. In the accomplishment of **humanitarian** tasks the Bundeswehr would, in addition, face competition from the central associations of private welfare and their member institutions.

Extending their activities beyond the key military missions and diversifying these missions would very likely expose the Bundeswehr to the reproach of acting with a view to further legitimising military structures. "The adoption of non-military objectives by the military (would be) understood as the obvious attempt ... to keep alive an evidently superfluous and costly institution" (van Dorn 1976, 57).

So there are good reasons for the Bundeswehr to stick to their military last like the proverbial cobbler. This will probably include verification tasks in the wake of disarmament procedures and the integration of Bundeswehr units in international and multinational component forces. A "Centre for Verification Tasks of the Bundeswehr" has already been established. And it is probably only a question of time that the required constitutional basis for the employment of Bundeswehr's units for peace-keeping tasks on behalf of the UN and outside the NATO area will be provided.

"The Future Emergency is Represented by War"[11]

Regarding the Bundeswehr's missions in a world after the Cold War the main political parties in Germany - whether in government or in the opposition's role - are trapped in a deep and fundamental dilemma. The Christian democrats (CDU, CSU) and to a minor degree the smaller liberal partner in the coalition (FDP) publicly argue the so-called new world order would put new demands on a — after the unification — bigger Germany. The international "community of nations" (Völkergemeinschaft) would expect Germany to take their part of responsibility in protecting **world-wide** human rights, in preventing genocide, in keeping world peace. German soldiers' obligation as a matter of course would be to risk their own lives in fulfilling this new mission.[12] "To identify Germany's new role with a militarization of it's foreign policy would mean a grotesque contortion".

When the German Basic Law in 1949 came into existence no military forces were provided. The German rearmament in 1956 (and the respective change of the Basic Law), however, was solely dedicated to defence of the own and the NATO's territory. Although Germany in 1973 signed the UN charter which includes military operations under UN

guidance, the Basic Law was at that time not adjusted in this respect. And despite significant doubts, whether the Basic Law and the UN Charter really match, the government now simply declares military peace-keeping and peace-enforcing operations, NATO out-of-area missions and even combat missions like the one during the last gulf war compatible with the Basic Law, as compatible as humanitarian missions and international disaster relief measures. Because at present only humanitarian help and disaster relief find support by the majority of the German parliament, the governmental parties refrain from military combat and "blue helmet" peace keeping missions, but they emphasise that they legally could order these, too.

The parliamentary opposition, especially the social democrats (SPD), vehemently contradicts this statement insisting in what they call a consensus in German society at large, that finally should end in a constitutional amendment, if that would be the outcome of a consensus. Only if and when this adoption would be reached a definite mission for the Bundeswehr after the cold war could be defined. The question, however, whether there is a political need for adapting the Basic Law splits the SPD in several fractions[13], thus presenting the party in the public in a bad shape. A strata of "peace nicks" favour a total military abstinence and see no reason to change the Bundeswehr's obligations at all. Another group supports only peace-keeping "blue helmet" missions, excluding any combat operation. Another fraction recommends to fully take over the obligations from the UN charter, chapter 7, that is to carry out any UN request for military measures, including combat operations.

Unable to change the Basic Law according to its own ideas — this would require the votes of the opposition — the Federal CDU/CSU/FDP Government is changing the practical application of the constitution instead: "Little by little it is extending the limits separating it from free disposal of the Bundeswehr. It is setting precedents and trying to establish customary rights. German soldiers have cleared mines in the Gulf, taken care of Curds refugees to Iran, and are providing medical assistance in Cambodia - altogether activities worthy of praise, but without exception resting on an uncertain legal basis" (Mutz 1992, 35). The German government has followed a "policy of 'grandmother's footsteps'. As a result there are already ... (even before the vexed engagement in Somalia) ... several hundred German soldiers stationed around the world" (Ramsbotham 1993, 2).

At present we do not experience an attempt to define a role for Germany that is oriented towards peace and humanity and to search for a large societal consensus. Instead it is attempted to dissolute the "culture of restraining" towards the application of military violence. ... The up to now by a majority of the population rejected idea of extending the tasks of the Bundeswehr shall be undermined step by step. ... The German soldiers have more obligations than just to defend the territory and the citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany (Huber 1992, 20).

This exactly seems to be the mid-term strategy of the present government and its defence minister: that the German public all that sudden couldn't get along with new international measures by the Bundeswehr applying military violence. "After forty years of education for peace the population only with difficulties can be convinced of combat missions".[14] German society therefore should be given its time to become accustomed to new realities. It is only consequent when speakers of the CDU comment on the German military involvement in Somalia that "the future of the Bundeswehr just began"[15] or that Germany now gives up the special role held so far and should be prepared to face all challenges that the UN would put on it.[16]

Main strata of the news mass media in Germany however warned that Somalia meant a multiple uncertain adventure for the Bundeswehr and for the government.[17] "A dangerous step-by-step policy, a strategy of slow assimilation ... because a decent change

of the political course by means of a constitutional amendment is not possible at the time." "The government doesn't publicly admit this policy ... it sings the song of humanitarian engagement instead, well knowing that engagements of this kind generally tend to disappear into the (constitutional) grey zone of peace-keeping."[18]

It is a shocking and in a final analysis incredible experience that Bundeswehr authorities deploy soldiers on an uncertain legal basis thus exposing them to a fundamental conflict. On the one hand soldiers swear "to uphold and defend the constitution", on the other hand they are expected to obey orders which could not be covered by the constitution, which at least could be doubted to be in line with the Basic Law. The spirit of "Innere Führung", namely to take account of the needs of the subordinates (Fürsorgepflicht), could as well been interpreted to keep such ambivalent situations away from the soldiers.

The affected soldiers themselves question whether the "terms" (Geschäftsgrundlage) under which they made their contract with the government oblige them to other than defence missions. "To every career military the chance should be given to think over again whether he personally would be willing to support new missions for the Bundeswehr. This question has to be asked and answered now and not when an acute deployment is directly impending. This would be an essential contribution to a self appreciation (Selbstfindung) of the Bundeswehr". "We are treated like easily available mercenaries and I feel annoyed about it, even though in the essence I agree with changing the Bundeswehr's mission".[19]

This kind of criticism by the involved soldiers about the officially announced future tasks of the Bundeswehr and about the way this obviously painful problem is handled by the government as well as by the top brass is, however, seldom heard publicly - it seems to be mainly kept under cover. Looking at the history of the Bundeswehr and its tradition of Innere Führung an attitude like this really would signal a change of the inner morale of the troops (Truppenmoral). Public discussion on urging questions of the military has always been a core concern in the philosophy that goes along with the perception of German soldiers being "citizens in uniform" (see Abenheim 1990, 31). Citizens in uniform, according to prevailing philosophy, don't practise unquestioning obedience but follow orders because they are convinced of their necessity (independent judgement = mitdenkender Gehorsam). To achieve this goal different perceptions and opinions should be discussed thoroughly between establishment and the basis before they are declared official policy.

It is in this context noteworthy that the emerging trend towards a decline of the Innere Führung, which has been perceivable since a number of years, started to shape more clearly in the aftermath of German unification and of the 1991 Gulf War without any perceivable reaction by the military and governmental authorities as it was, for example, the case in the mid 1960s, when a similar restoration movement came into full swing. Suddenly and in all its openness surprisingly military "hard-liners" started a discussion which in its statements reminded on the mid-1960s dispute. Major General Johann Adolf Graf von Kielmannsegg[20], claimed for himself and his co-mates "a military ethos" - not a civilian one which in his opinion "has passed into oblivion".[21] This ethos, "rests in the categories of law and freedom, serves the common interest and the fellow creature and means, in case it would be necessary, to fight a war. ... The term 'war' got more and more pushed into the background ... We violated the hard and fast principle, that an army has in the very first place to be capable of warfare. ... Towards combat-readiness of the Bundeswehr everything has to be oriented, training, equipment and the organisational structure. The emergency case was not represented by peace but by war.

The wheel of history tends to turn back from time to time. Kielmannsegg's personal opinion, of an undoubtedly honourable man, comes dangerously near to a statement that should be recalled here: "You cannot train an army, of a great value, if the aim of its

existence is not the preparation for war. Armies do not exist to keep peace but to triumphantly win wars."[22]

Public Opinion and the "New" German National Security Policy

Survey data are a highly perishable good: they may already be obsolete when one has managed to evaluate them. This does not, however, impede anyone to use them for the purpose they are - amongst others - made for: to support his or her own position and policy by referring to the "people on the street". In this sense, the German defence minister Rühe was fully in trend when he was claiming that the new international obligations of the Bundeswehr were accepted by the majority of the population.[23]

It is, however, a well known "secret" that such a judgement often depends highly on the source of the data and on their interpretation. Observers who are not so closely linked to governmental politics argue — by referring to the same sources — that "the population's opinion towards combat missions seems to be in general sceptical and disapproving". ... "It is true that at present there are no political relevant protests but I doubt whether one may value this as token of acceptance."[24] SPD member of parliament Wallow openly accuses the MOD of deliberately deceiving the parliament and the public.[25] In fact government officials refer to empirical data that "have to be rated unreliable information as they don't meet the core of the present discussion, that is to differ between blue helmet missions and combat operations".[26] By doing so it becomes clearly visible that only a minority of the German population supports combat missions of the Bundeswehr.

Table I: The Percentage of Respondents' Choices of Major Forms of Bundeswehr Deployment under an UN Mandate

Opinion poll institute		For defence only	Blue helmet missions	Combat missions	No opinion
Forsa	(Dec. 92)	44	29	15	12
Infas	(Jan. 93)	44	32	19	5
Allensbach	(Feb. 93)	--	46	26	--
Forsa	(Apr. 93)	53	21	12	14

This trend goes in line with empirical evidence elaborated by the German Armed Forces' Institute for Social Research (SOWI). Since the unification of Germanies, SOWI has administered three surveys "to ascertain German opinions and attitudes towards national security and defence policy".[27] A number of polls were conducted on the subject because "one is currently skating on thin ice when interpreting national-security related opinion poll findings. This is particularly true for survey wholesale products, e.g., polls on national defence policy that are produced from the beginning to the end by commercial institutes and must be taken as they are (bought as a package). Empirical sociological research has shown that questionnaires, especially when answers are standardised, are used by respondents as a source of information and a frame of reference for their responses. That means that specific wording of questions in the interview artificially produces answers of the respondents they had not thought of before".[28]

SOWI data on public opinion in Germany contradict the defence minister's rather optimistic interpretation. A bit less than two thirds (61.5%) of the German citizens believe that the Bundeswehr should be employed only to prevent wars; only slightly more than

9% oppose this attitude. The majority (55%) is in favour of staying out of international crises and conflicts as far as possible; 42% are for an "active policy", e.g., to help to deal with international crises and conflicts.

Thirty-eight per cent are against amending the constitution to authorise Bundeswehr deployment under UN command and supervision. Slightly less than a third of the population (30%) approves amending the constitution, even outside the Nato theatre of operations. 28% are undecided.

German public views blue helmet operations in which the Bundeswehr might take part as humanitarian, i.e. as non-military operations, and they therefore are acceptable to a majority. In the light of these results the government's strategy to call the Somalia military engagement of the Bundeswehr a humanitarian operation turns out to be a clever move: the combat mission under the humanitarian label is formally in line with the German Basic Law and no one actually would refrain from taking part in humanitarian missions.

A comparison of the results of all three SOWI polls reveals only slight changes but no qualitative shifts in opinion which might be termed a "change in mentality". The new national security policy may have gained a slight degree of public acceptance, yet the percentage increase has been insignificant. One might say that, despite some evident shifts in opinion, the majority of the population continues to adhere to "established patterns of thought". The majority of German citizens feel that the military national security dilemma has been resolved. Other problems now have priority on the agenda. One may conclude that national security policy has been pushed aside in the race for public attention by more urgent political issues.

The relatively high degree of public approval expressed for the core defence mission cannot be credited to the account of an altered range of future Bundeswehr operations. It is not very likely that the new national security policy will be granted irrevocable and confirmed credit visa "a change in mentality". Only a partial consensus can be reached, i.e., it must be attempted and reached anew each time the occasion arises. Whether there will be majority approval of extending military activities beyond German territory, even when such operations are promoted and authorised by the community of nations, depends entirely on the concrete circumstances attending each case and they must be both unprecedented and extraordinary.

German Officers Commenting on Future Bundeswehr Tasks

It surely is only a minor surprise that German officers reveal towards defence and security matters a slightly different opinion than the "average citizen". However, as the following sections will show, basic trends do broadly match in the military and in society. The data reported here are taken from a cross-national survey in the armed forces of eight European countries including based on the sample of more than 6,000 officers (Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and the U.K.). The German sample of n=519 was drawn in 1991 from officers who were members of the Bundeswehrverband.[29] Unfortunately, the original poll did not succeed to find support by the German ministry of defence,[30] neither would the ministry follow a proposal by its own staff to update the poll later on for all officers.

Figure 1: The Percentage of Bundeswehr Officers Who Would (Not) Approve Different Future Tasks of the Bundeswehr (n=519)

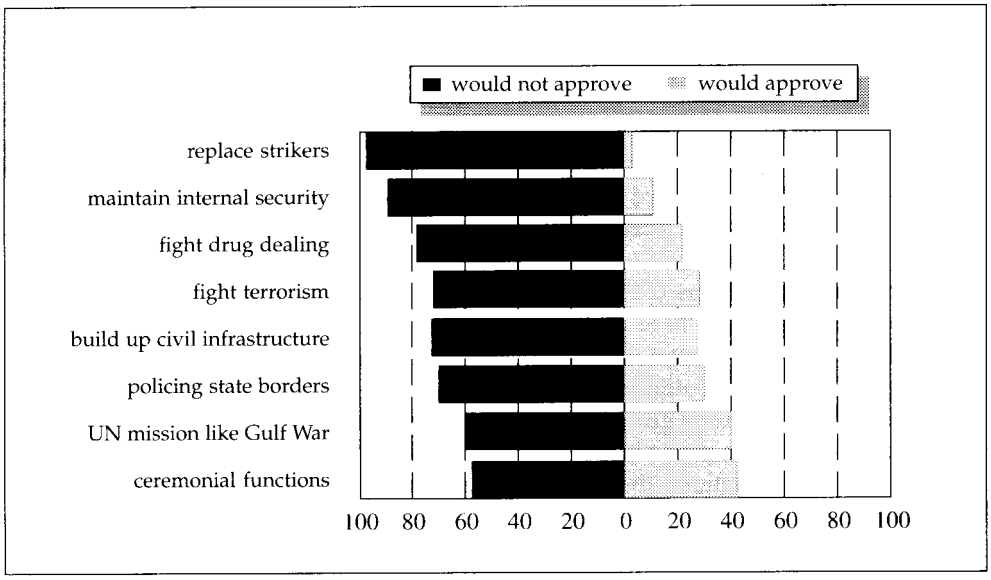
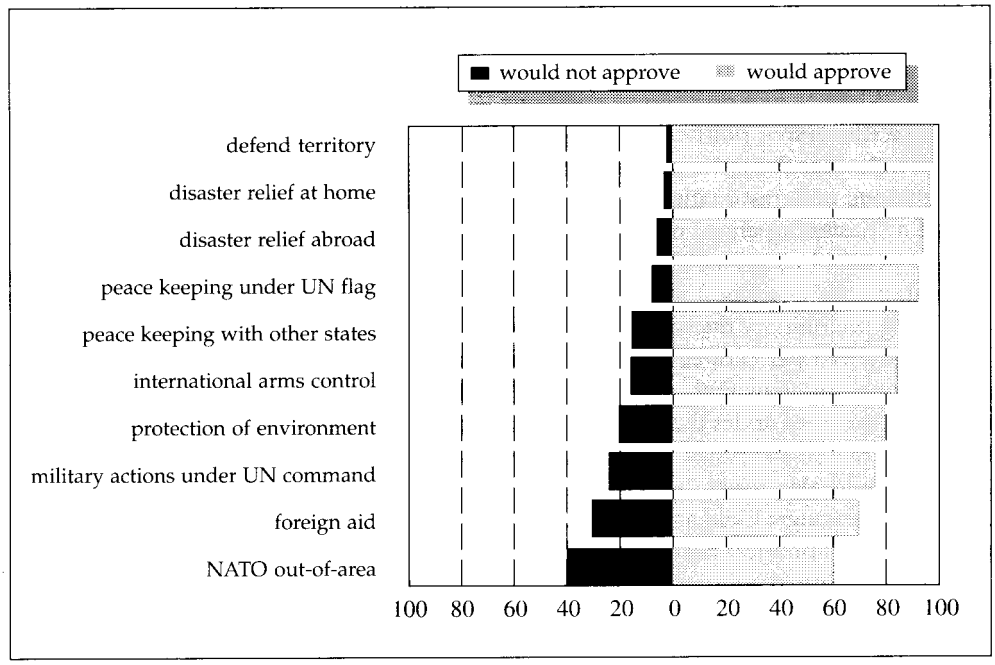


Figure 2: The Percentage of Bundeswehr Officers Who Would (Not) Approve Different Future Tasks of the Bundeswehr (n=519)



The officers of Bundeswehr give an unmistakable rebuff to all tasks, which generally could be accomplished by means of the military organisation, but traditionally always have been refused as not corresponding to the core military self perception.[31] Replacing civilian workers on strike, to maintain internal security for instance by taking over police tasks are strictly rejected.

Just as little do the officers think to be suitable for fighting against terrorism or organised drug dealing or to protect the environment. Assistance in policing state borders (especially in case of mass immigrations — as it recently was brought into public discussion by the German minister for the interior), missions to build up the civilian infrastructure, i.e., road construction, programs against illiteracy, harvesting, assistance for refugees and the like, meet only little acceptance of the officers. A dominating group of refusing officers (between 71% and 98%) in faced with relative few supporters of in no case more than 29%.

The majority of officers (61%) would disapprove Bundeswehr's participation "in military enforcements of UN resolutions without a supreme UN command, as it was the case in the Gulf War." Nevertheless, with respect to this very controversial matter, the supporters — mainly the officers who sympathise with the CDU and CSU — represent with 39% a relatively strong group. As a matter of congruence, those supporting missions similar to the Gulf War predominantly also agree that "events like the Gulf was show that, contrary to expectations, the post-cold war era makes armed forces more rather than less acceptable."

No surprise comes with the officers' opinion that the future existence of the Bundeswehr is primarily justified by military defence of German and NATO territory (99%). On the one hand, the Bundeswehr was founded exactly because of this mission. On the other hand, the Bundeswehr considers the collapse of the East-West confrontation a direct consequence of fulfilling this task.

Considering the present controversial public debate about future missions of the Bundeswehr, the vote in favour of **peace-keeping** operations, whether under the UN flag or in co-operation with other states, turns out to be astonishing (85% and 93%, respectively, in favour). Similar to the acceptance of international arms-control-missions the officers show a broad consensus in soberly estimating future prospects. One has, however, to admit, that military authorities — as pointed out above — largely influenced the troop's opinion. Whereas in a democracy decisions — ideally — should only be made after an intensive discursive political process, the top brass fixed the future missions of the Bundeswehr "for domestic use only" long before the political bargaining process ended. This obvious underestimation of the primacy of politics by the military partly must be valued a "hastening-ahead obedience" (vorauseilender Gehorsam) but on the other side may be justified as military people always tend to get nervous when they lack a clear orientation. As described above this gap still continues and therefore such an inter mediating preliminary decision — as military officials put it — is understandable.

Seventy-five per cent of German officers would even support the participation in international missions that would include combat operations. The acceptance for peace **enforcing** missions under the supreme command of the UN, however, is remarkably below the one in favour for peace **keeping** actions (85% vs. 93%). Thirty-nine per cent of the officers would also reject the NATO extending its territorial competence to out-of-area operations, amongst them again above all sympathisers of the SPD and those who do not prefer a special political party.

An overall broad willingness can be detected for help in case of civil disasters, whether at home or abroad, as well as for humanitarian and development aid. Nearly 95% of the officers agree that peace keeping and humanitarian missions would improve the public

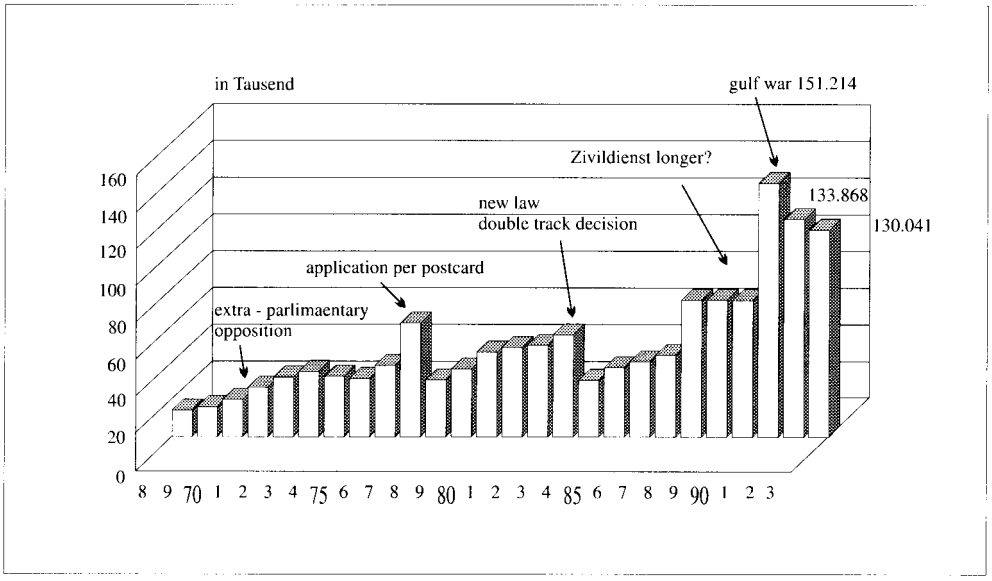
acceptance of the Bundeswehr and its officers, which to their own estimation is bad enough: Seventy per cent are not satisfied with the officers' public image. On a scale ranging from 1 (very positive) to 8 (very negative), they rate their public image at a statistical mean of 2.8 — an overt indication for a regrettable vanishing self-confidence.

Conscientious Objection and the Future of the Bundeswehr

The number of those who object to compulsory military service is probably the best indicator of the attitude of young people towards the deployment of military power. In the recent period, conscientious objection become an increasingly aggravating problem in the Federal Republic.[32] Despite differences in the actual motives, the continuous increase in the number of conscientious requests must be seen primarily as the result of a discussion on security policy and military strategy by a discerning public. It is apparently an indicator of the dwindling legitimisation of military defence among the young men liable to military service.

Until the mid-1960s, the number of applicants for the status of an "conscientious objector" was markedly below 6,000 per year. As a result of the widespread discussion on the Vietnam War in the German public and the activities of the so-called extra-parliamentary opposition, the number of applications increased steeply later on. In 1973, the first "mass attrition of the conscience" was reached when about 35,200 applications were recorded. The figures for the 1984-87 period (about 55,000 per year) were affected by the discussion about arms race, the stationing of cruise missiles, and the arguments of the peace movement. Whilst the number of applications then kept steady at an annual level of about 77,000 until 1990, it nearly doubled in 1991 with 151,000 applicants (citizens of the former GDR included) — about 4,500 of them being active soldiers.[33] Obviously the unification of both Germanies, the dissolution of the East-West confrontation and especially the 1991 Gulf War were of great influence.[34]

Figure 3: The Number of Applicants for the Conscientious Objector Status in Germany, 1968-1993 (the Former East Germany Included after 1991)



Source: Federal Agency for Zivildienst

The Federal Commissioner for the Zivildienst (Bundesbeauftrage für den Zivildienst) recently in the mass media shouted with joy that in 1992 the number of C.O. applications would have decreased, what to his opinion would mean an improving readiness of the youngs to serve in the Bundeswehr. But this evaluation turns out to be only half the truth. Compared to 151,000 in 1991, the figure of 134,000 objectors in 1992 actually showed a little decline but still nearly doubles the figures of 1990, the year before the Gulf War. Already this portion of young men refusing to undergo military service forms nearly 45% of all male youngsters who are apt for service and, in principal, could be drafted. The figure for 1993 (130,000 applications) still lingers at a high level: the ongoing discussion in Germany about the role of military violence in the former Yugoslavia and about extended combat missions of the Bundeswehr are calling their sacrifice.

The German minister of defence, however, continues to spread optimism. According to him, the German engagement in Somalia had caused a decline in the number of C.O. applications by 1,000 a month.[35] The public image of the Bundeswehr would have improved by the Somalia mission which actually would have caused more conscripts to volunteer for the Somalia mission than slots for them were available. It is not only the real development of the C.O. figures which contradicts the minister's publicity campaign. At the peak of the German engagement in Somalia, only 24 (!) draftees out of a total of 1,700 soldiers could be identified in the rank and file. Another factor, however, might have influenced decision making. The tax free salary for a private's six months' deployment in Somalia summed up to about 55,000 German Marks. ***The Times Magazine*** commented on July 12, 1993:

> *Though they came late and hesitantly to U.N. peace-keeping duties — they began only last year - German soldiers are almost certainly the best paid of the multinational forces. A bill passed by the Bundestag in June provides for hazardous-duty pay supplements ranging from $30 to $90 a day, depending on the degree of danger. In Cambodia the Germans get $90, while Somalia rates $60 a day — all tax free and on top of a base pay of $917 a month for a private. The German troopers get other pay supplements of at least $20,000. Since most of the soldiers are career men, they will each take home around $35,000 in pay and bonuses, most of it tax free. For comparison, a U.S. private in Somalia makes a little less than his German counterpart in base pay and supplements and draws only $ 110 a month in hazardous duty pay. Germany currently has 260 men in Somalia, and will deploy as many as 1,700 by September. The soldiers may refuse duty in Somalia if they wish; so far, only one has.*

Notes:

1. Nassauer 1993, 53. The author refers to a battalion commander of the so called quick reaction forces of the Bundeswehr. For recent empirical evidence on this subject see Kohr 1993. "The results in summary prove that ... pro-national orientation, political affinity "right from the centre" and affinity towards the Bundeswehr are clearly linked together" (Kohr et al. 1993, 91; see also 156).

2. This part of the article is partially taken from Kuhlmann and Lippert 1991. See also Kuhlmann and Lippert 1993.

3. According to the — forced to retire — Minister of Defence Gerhard Stoltenberg.

4. The former Defence Minister and now NATO-Secretary Wörner.

5. Chief of Staff, German Army: Das deutsche Heer - die Armee der Einheit. Die jüngsten Erfolge - Konsequenzen für die Zukunft. Presentation on the occasion of the Armoured Troops Meeting in Munster on 16 November 1991. Manuscript, p. 25.

6. Ibidem.

7. Unabhängige Kommission für die künftigen Aufgaben der Bundeswehr. Die künftigen Aufgaben der Bundeswehr, Abschlußbericht und Empfehlungen). Bonn, 24 September 1991, p. 25.

8. Telex message by the Federal Minister of Defense of January 11, 1992, p. 4.

9. Legal Status of Military Personnel Act, Article 7.

10. See Kuhlmann and Lippert 1992.

11. Three-star General Helge Hansen, commander in chief of the German Army, *FOCUS*, April 19, 1993, p. 11.

12. Cf. defence minister Volker Rühe, *Welt am Sonntag*, May 23, 1993, p. 25, Unser Land wächst zielstrebig in seine neue internationale Verantwortung.

13. Cf. SPD member of parliament Horst Niggemeier's intervention during the discussion. *Welt am Sonntag*, May 23, 1993, p. 26.

14. Volker Rühe in *Welt am Sonntag*, 23 May, 1993.

15. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, May 17, 1993.

16. Defence minister Rühe in *Welt am Sonntag*, May 23, 1993.

17. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, May 18, 1993.

18. Stefan Kornelius, Ein mehrfach ungewißes Abenteuer. Ungeklärte fragen der Innenpolitik belasten den Somalia Einsatz der Bundeswehr (A multiple uncertain adventure. Unsettled innerpolitical problems burden the Somalia engagement of the Bundeswehr, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, May 18, 1993.

19. Interviews of German army battalion commanders, see Meyer 1991, 153.

20. A relative of the general with the same name who was a co-author of the so-called "Himmeroder Denkschrift" (Hummerod memorandum), that since than acts as a "magna charta of the Bundeswehr" as Donald Abenheim (1990) put it.

21. Cf. also Der Krieg ist der Ernstfall, *Truppenpraxis*, March 1991, 304.

22. Adolf Hitler, winter 1943/1944, quoted from Detlef Bald, Krieg und Frieden - Einsichten in die Geschichte der Ausbildung Deutscher Offiziere. RESPICE FINEM, in preparation, footnote 26.

23. *Welt am Sonntag*, May 23, 1993.

24. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* correspondent Karl Feldmeyer during the discussion in Berlin, see *Welt am Sonntag*, May 23, 1993.

25. MdB Hans Wallow, Mitteilung für die Presse, Verteidigungsministerium täuscht das Parlament und die Öffentlichkeit, PM 35/93, Bonn, May 7, 1993.

26. Manfred Güllner, from opinion poll institute "Forsa", ibid.

27. Fleckenstein and Räder 1993. The first poll was conducted in December 1990, the second in April 1991 after the Gulf War and the third in August/September 1992. The fourth polling was accomplished in late 1993 and generally supports the trends of the former investigations. In all three surveys the wording of some questions remained the same to facilitate the modelling of a longitudinal study and to allow even in a simple evaluation for changes which might have occurred. The following sections are - with slight changes - taken from this SOWI publication.

28. Ibidem, Summary, p. 8.

29. German Bundeswehr military trade union. This would mean only a small bias as the number of officers organised in the union is pretty high. The basic criticism of empirical opinion polls as such, however, has to be maintained here, too.

30. To the contrary, the ministry tried to take disciplinary action against the author. A Spanish poll is not available - although finished - because the results were classified "secret" by the Spanish Ministry of defence. The spanish collaborator - a full colonel - was dismissed from the forces because of his participation in the survey.

31. Cf. Jürgen Kuhlmann, Ist es noch schön Soldat zu sein: Offiziere zur Zukunft der Bundeswehr und ihres Berufes. In: Dewitz, Klein, Kuhlmann, Rohde (eds.), *Soldat - Ein Berufsbild im Wandel*, Band 2: Offiziere. Bonn, Dortmund 1993.

32. In the Federal Republic of Germany compulsory military service and conscientious objection belong together. Since 1984 young men who are fit for military service have a de facto, though not de jure choice between military service and civilian alternative service. The right of conscientious objection legally even takes precedence over compulsory military service, since this right was firmly established by the Basic Law in 1949, whereas compulsory military service was put on a legal basis in 1956 with the Compulsory Military Service Act.

33. According to the Federal Constitutional Court, anyone can cite the constitutional right to conscientious objection even if be already is or was a soldier.

34. Cf. Kuhlmann and Lippert 1993b, 98. See also von Bredow 1992, 289.

35. Rühe: weniger Verweigerer - dank Somalia (Rühe: less objectors thanks to Somalia), *Bild am Sonntag*, August 8, 1993.

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JÜRGEN KUHLMANN

BUNDESWEHR IN IZZIV SPREMEMB

POVZETEK

V času hladne vojne je nemška javnost z naklonjenostjo gledala na lastne oborožene sile, pa tudi na zavezniške sile na nemških tleh. Razlog je bil predvsem v percepciji grozeče vojaške nevarnosti z Vzhoda. V šestdesetih letih je varnostno politiko, ki je temeljila na strahu pred vojno in pripravljenosti nanjo, začela zamenjevati politika atomskega zastraševanja. V osemdesetih letih je ta politika zašla v krizo predvsem zaradi omejene uporabnosti (ali neuporabnosti) atomskega orožja za kaj več kot politično simboliko. Začetek devetdesetih let je z združitvijo Nemčije in zalivsko vojno za Bundeswehr pomenil nov izziv, ki se je po eni strani izražal v očitkih Nemčiji, da poskuša postati prva vojaška sila Evrope, po drugi strani pa v zahtevah po sodelovanju nemških sil v skupnih vojaških akcijah pakta NATO, kar je v nasprotju z nemško ustavo. Istočasno pa se je v javnosti izoblikovala prevladujoča predstava, v skladu s katero naj bi armada ne imela predvsem vojaških funckij, kot npr. vojaške obrambe in vzdrževanje statusa quo v odnosih moči, ampak naj bi opravljala "javne" nevojaške naloge v "boju" proti naravnim in tehnološkim nesrečam. Toda če bi armada upoštevala taka pričakovanja, bi pravzaprav problematizirala svoj lasten obstoj, saj z nevojaškimi cilji ne bi mogla upravičiti velikih stroškov take institucije. Kot kažejo mnenjske raziskave, je velika večina nemških državljanov prepričanih, da mora Bundeswehr opravljati izključno obrambne vojaške naloge. Po večinskem mnenju naj bi se nemška armada na noben način ne vključevala v mednarodne krize in konflikte. Toda vprašanje, ali spremeniti nemško ustavo tako, da bi omogočala sodelovanje nemških sil na kriznih območjih, je za javnost mnogo bolj sporno: v raziskavi SOWI leta 1993 je bilo 38 odstotkov respondentov proti spreminjanju ustave, 30 odstotkov je tako spremembo podpiralo, 28 odstotkov pa je bilo neodločenih. Za nemško javnost so akcije modrih čelad humantiarne in ne vojaške. Mnenja oficirjev Bundeswehra se sicer - pričakovano - razlikujejo od splošnega javnega mnenja, vendar pa se vsaj v tendenci z njim tudi ujemajo, na primer z večinskim stališčem oficirjev, da Bundeswehr ne bi smel sodelovati v vojaških akcijah, ki bi bile posledica resoulcij OZN, če ne bi bilo vrhovno poveljstvo v rokah OZN. Na pomembnost razlike med samopodobo vojske in predstavami o njej v javnosti najbolj nazorno opozarja število mladih, ki ne želijo služiti vojske. Po letu 1991 se je število tistih, ki se sklicujejo na pravico ugovora vesti, izjemno povečalo.