Arthur Hoffmann, Kerry Longhurst

German Strategic Culture and the Changing Role of the *Bundeswehr*

The notion that past military experiences weigh heavily upon current security policy making in Germany is surely indisputable. The task of actually identifying the impact of history upon contemporary policy is, however, not easy. One way of tackling this is by mobilising the concept of strategic culture which goes some way in assessing the relevance of the past on the present. Crucially an understanding of German strategic culture projects a picture of what 'history qualifies Germany to do'. This article attempts to employ the notion of German strategic culture, seeing it as a crucial tool to understanding elements of both continuity and change in the role of the *Bundeswehr* since the ending of the Cold War. The concept of strategic culture, first coined by Jack Snyder at the RAND corporation in 1978, was an attempt to challenge the assumed uniform rationality prevalent in security analysis, which tended to presume that in the case of Cold War nuclear confrontation the Soviets would behave in the same manner as the US.[1] Since Snyder's original work, the strategic culture school has proliferated and although a rather atomised research agenda harbours under its mantle a number of common assumptions can be identified amidst the literature.[2] Firstly, a strategic culture approach emphasises national specific attributes of security approaches and policies as deriving from historical experiences thus cancelling out the notion of a universal assumed rationality. Secondly, strategic culture is about collectives and their shared attitudes and beliefs, whether that be military establishments, policy communities or entire societies. Thirdly, it is continuities and discernible trends across time and contexts rather than change that is focused upon, change is generally portrayed as gradual in the absence of dramatic shocks and trauma. Finally, strategic culture is seen as intimate to behaviour, acting as a milieu through

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[1] Jack L. Snyder (1977), The Soviet Strategic Culture: Implications for Limited Nuclear Operations (Santa Monica: RAND R-2154-AF).

[2] For the best review of recent publications on strategic culture and similar works, see Alan Macmillan (1996), British Strategic Culture (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth), See also Carl G. Jacobsen (1990), (ed.), Strategic Power: USA/ USSR (Basingstoke: Macmillan); Alistair Iain Johnston (1995), Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Peter J. Katzenstein (1996), (ed.), The Culture of National Security (New York: Columbia University Press).

which information is received, mediated and processed in to appropriate responses. Considering this and tying it to the case of Germany the attractiveness of a strategic culture approach becomes increasingly powerful. If strategic culture concentrates upon continuities and gradual change then the trauma exemplified in the notion of *'Stunde Null'* or 'Zero Hour' and the subsequent 'manufacture' of West Germany's strategic culture after the Second World War presents an interesting challenge. The significance of the German case is then further enhanced by the ending of the Cold War which acted as the 'paradigm' within which West Germany was rearmed and with it the post war strategic culture of the Federal Republic nurtured.[3] This article will first briefly look at the seminal role played by the military in past incarnations of Germany before turning to the 'wholesale construction' of a new strategic culture after the Second World War in West Germany. The article then goes on to discuss the more recent developments which have had a revolutionary effect upon security thinking within Germany. The central argument presented here is that the strategic culture of the former Federal Republic now writ large on to the new united Germany sets the context within which security policies are designed. This strategic culture, as will be argued, acts as both a facilitating and a restraining variable on behaviour, making certain policy options possible and others impossible. Crucially, the article holds that although Germany has 'gone a long way' in meeting the demands of a new security environment the emergence of a new consensus on security policy and the use of force is still in gestation.

The Construction of West German Strategic Culture

In the various incarnations of the German state prior to but including the Third Reich an 'unhealthy' set of civil-military relations persisted, allowing the military to play a significant role in society, nation building and foreign policy. The profound role of militarism in the processes of state building in Prussia and then Germany has been well documented, Gordon Craig for example views the entire history of the German nation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as 'one long constitutional struggle',[4] in which the army played a crucial role in 'determining the political destiny of the nation'.[5] The role of the military in the construction of the identities of the two Germanies after 1949 played a significant and defining role too. The seeds of the new post war strategic culture were sown through the rearming of West Germany in the 1950's. The creation of the *Bundeswehr* represented a crucial 'break with the

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[3]   For a more comprehensive discussion of the creation of West German Strategic Culture, see Kerry Longhurst (1998), German Strategic Culture: A Key To Understanding the Maintenance of Conscription in Germany? Institute for German Studies, Discussion Paper Series No. IGS98/6.

[4]   Gordon Craig (1964), The Politics of the Prussian Army (New York: Oxford University Press), p. xiv.

[5]   ibid p. xviii.

past' and was central to the Federal Republic's new identity, international rehabilitation and domestic political evolution.[6] Given the extent of amilitarism and frustration with power politics present in West German society and amongst many of the political elites the 'design' of West Germany's rearmament involved a wholesale re-conceptualisation of the place of the military in state and society. This re-conceptualisation can be divided into four categories:

A Broad Civil-Military Framework

Re-conceptualising civil-military relations in the new Federal Republic aimed at preventing the existence of the military as a *'Fremdkörper'* (alien body) or 'state within a state'[7] devoid of broader societal contact and a soldier instilled only with the values of duty and obedience, embodied in the notion of the Prussian Kommiss. Learning from this, the architects of the new armed force aimed at creating a broad interface between society and the military together with a soldier holding full rights of citizenship. The new West German soldier, unlike his predecessors, was to be a 'thinking soldier', reflecting the strong desire never again to let '*Befehl ist Befehl* (orders are orders) count as an excuse for atrocities'.[8]The leitmotif for this 'intellectual, political and moral' reform of the military, were *Innere Führung* (moral or inner leadership) and Bürger in Uniform (Citizen in *Uniform*). Together these ideas, along with universal male conscription introduced in 1956, aimed at welding society and the military together through a new equilibrium of civil-military relations in a democratic state, to ensure that the internal structure of the armed forces were conducive to and representative of broader societal norms.[9] *Innere Führung* understood as a military ethos and the antithesis of Prussian militarism, aimed at 'civilising' relations between individual soldiers and between the military and society. *Innere Führung* entailed wide ranging political and civic education the intended end product of which being the *Bürger in Uniform*. The *Bürger in Uniform* was to be a soldier considered by himself and by society as fully furnished with those freedoms and rights to which he commits himself to defend militarily, aware 'that he is a member of a free nation standing on the side of freedom'.[10] Within this context universal

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[6] Count Wolf Baudissin (1955), The New German Army, in: Foreign Affairs, October Vol. 34, No. 1, p. 13.

[7] Martin Kitchen (1975), A Military History of Germany (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson), p. 339.

[8] Ian Buruma (1995), Wages of Guilt: Memories of War in Germany and Japan (London: Vintage), p. 24.

[9] The idea of the citizen soldier was not of course new, the idea originates from the *Levee en Masse* in France and was subsequently adopted and developed by the Prussian military reformer Scharnhorst.

[10] Count Wolf Baudissin (1955), The New German Army, in: Foreign Affairs, October Vol. 34, No. 1., p. 2.

male conscription, introduced in 1956, was clearly a central element of the Federal Republic's new strategic culture. A conscripted military wedded to society was more palatable to West Germans since it could be reconciled with the democratic ideals of the Federal Republic, it would keep the military in the view of society and in turn keep the military aware of its subordinated place in the service of state and society. Conscription also ensured that soldiers came from a wide range of social backgrounds and not just from the aristocracy.

Multilateral Security Institutional Setting

The rearming of West Germany and creation of the *Bundeswehr* represented a rupture with a traditional military vocation, namely one grounded in sovereignty and national decision making. The Federal Republic's security identity became a 'substitute identity'[11] since it was intimately bound up with the greater Western cause demonstrated by the 'penetrated' security decision making framework in the FRG and the subordination of all West German troops to NATO allied command. In this sense rearmament aided the rehabilitation of West Germany through its membership in NATO and the WEU in to the Western community.

Defence/Deterrence Posturing

Given the gravity of anti-militarism in West Germany and the widespread protests against rearmament in the aftermath of World War Two, the *Bundeswehr* had to be constructed and promoted as a force designed for deterring war rather than war fighting. This premise is codified in article 87a of the Basic Law which sees the establishment of the *Bundeswehr* as for defensive purposes only. The *Bundeswehr* was therefore legitimised as an essential tool in preventing the outbreak of war in Europe within this conscription was regarded as a 'service for peace'. The rejection of war as a legitimate tool of foreign policy was even cultivated within the *Bundeswehr* through political education and in the indoctrination of its own troops, of the idea of general disarmament and the thesis that any war signifies defeat for mankind'.[12] This central element of West German strategic culture, of equating the *Bundeswehr* as a non-fighting force was challenged in the early 1980's. A 'crisis of legitimacy' emerged with the apparent contradiction in alliance policy of maintaining the primacy of deterrence in rhetoric whilst deploying Cruise and Pershing missiles in western Europe thus making nuclear weapons part of an actual 'war fighting' strategy. The

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[11]   Gerd Knischewski, Post-War National Identity in Germany, in: Brian Jenkins/ Spyros A. Sofos (eds.), (1996), Nation and Identity in Contemporary Europe (London: Routledge).

[12]   Ludwig von Friedeburg (1968), Rearmament and Social Change: Observations on Civil-Military Relations in Western Germany, in: Jacques van Doorn (ed.), Armed Forces and Society, Sociological Essays (Mouton: The Hague and Paris).

gravity of the subsequent public debate in West Germany developed in to a full blown questioning of the raison d'être of armed forces in the nuclear age leading the German public to conclude that there is more to fear from nuclear war than from the intentions of the Warsaw Pact. Even young *Bundeswehr* Officers came to 'doubt the logic of defence in a nuclear war'.[13]

Legally Codified Stymied Territorial Role

The threat or actual use of military force other than for self-defence was not part of the Federal Republic's strategic culture 'tool kit' during the Cold War. This stance was formally manifested in the 'security political consensus' which was the result of a controversy in the aftermath of Germany's membership in the UN in 1973 which brought the issue of deploying German soldiers for UN peace missions on the agenda.[14] Germany's UN membership imposed a specific obligation under Article 43 „to make available to the Security Council on its call .... armed forces ... necessary for the purpose of maintaining international peace and security."[15] Those in favour of German involvement thought that Germany's economic weight called for a more active involvement for the maintenance of world security and peace. They also referred to Article 24 of the constitution which permits Germany to 'enter a system of mutual collective security for the purpose of preserving peace.' However, with reference to Article 87a (2) of the German Constitution of 1949 which stipulates that the armed forces may only be used for defence purposes, the Foreign Ministry rejected such a notion.[16]

On 3 November 1982 the Federal Security Council confirmed the Foreign Offices' interpretation of the *Grundgesetz: Bundeswehr* deployments - including those abroad - are constitutional in case the Federal Republic is being attacked and is executing its right of self-defence, be it on its own or together with other, simultaneously attacked states. Unconstitutional would be a *Bundeswehr* deployment to help an attacked third party if the Federal Republic has not been attacked itself. Not

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[13]   Paul Klein, Berufs- und Zeitsoldaten in der Identifikations- und Motivationskrise, in: Wolfgang R. Vogt (ed.), Sicherheitspolitik und Streitkräfte in der Legitimationskrise, Baden Baden 1983, p. 301.

[14]   However, in a less explicit way, this consensus existed since the creation of the Bundeswehr. In the early 1950s it was German strategists and politicians who were afraid of getting involved in colonial conflicts of their potential Alliance partners and therefore insisted that German troops should only be deployed in Europe. Furthermore, at the time, there was the fear that German troops could be made available for operations in Korea; see: Van Orden (1991), van Orden, Geoffrey: The Bundeswehr in Transition; *Survival,* July/August 1991, Vol. XXXIII, no. 4: 354.

[15]   van Orden (1991),p. 355.

[16]   Hans-Georg Ehrhart, Germany in: Findlay, Trevor (ed), (1996), SIPRI Research Report No. 12: Challenges for the New Peacekeepers (Oxford University Press), p. 37.

permissible either would be a *Bundeswehr* deployment solely for the protection of economic interests. Within the limits of the Constitution would be *Bundeswehr* missions such as humanitarian aid activities, logistic support of UN peace troops or support of relief organisations. [17] The Federal Security Council's stance formed the basis for a (legalistic-constitutional) security political consensus (government and SPD-opposition) and was not seriously challenged until the time around German unification, particularly during the Gulf-War 1990/1.[18]

Together these four elements, constitute the fabric of West German strategic culture, a fabric which largely endured throughout the Cold War and as will be argued here continues to shape German security policy behaviour at the end of the Cold War. Within the scope of this paper we look at two particular elements of German strategic culture, the legally constrained role together with civil-military relations and especially conscription.

The Ending of the Cold War: Germany's Strategic Emancipation?

> *'What does a nation do with its liberated power in the post-bipolar age when the 40-year-old strategic threat has disappeared that previously posed all the major questions and delivered most of the major answers?'*[19]

The ending of the Cold War had profound implications for German thinking on security. Through unification Germany was propelled to the heart of Europe, raising both expectations and fears of a more assertive security policy. In dealing with these expectations and fears, Germany has enacted a range of both re- and pro-active moves aimed at abating fears but also fulfilling demands for Germany to contribute more fully to European and international security.

The Out-of-Area Debate - Incremental Change

The Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 catapulted the out-of-area debate to the main stage of German politics. Due to the constitutional constraints Germany made a high financial but no military contribution to the liberation of Kuwait which

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[17] Thomas/Nikutta (1991), Thomas, Caroline; Nikutta, Randolph: Bundeswehr und Grund-gesetz; Zur neuen Rolle der militärischen Intervention der Außenpolitik, (Militärpolitik Dokumentation: Heft 78/79, 1991),p. 72.

[18] Karl-Heinz Kamp (1991), Die Debatte um den Einsatz deutscher Streitkräfte außerhalb der Bündnisgebietes; (Internal Study, No. 22; Research Institute of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation),p. 15ff, and Siedschlag (1995), Siedschlag, Alexander: Die aktive Beteili-gung Deutschlands an militärischen Aktionen zur Verwirklichung Kollektiver Sicher-heit, (Europäische Hochschulschriften; Peter Lang: 1995), p. 35-38.

[19] Josef Joffe (1996), German Grand Strategy after the Cold War, in: Bertel Heurlin (ed.), Germany in Europe in the Nineties, (Macmillan: London). p. 261.

earned Germany the accusation of using 'cheap excuses'[20] and of being 'lacklustre, weak, pacifistic, and neutralist.'[21] More generally, international demands were raised to 'normalise' German foreign policy and reacquire a 'normal' set of strategic traditions and perspectives.

Such demands for a more active military role in international affairs obviously clashed with the old FRG's non-military foreign policy culture. In fact, „the issue of using the military as a foreign policy instrument other than for pure self-defence caused the biggest cleavage between the political parties over a foreign policy issue since *Ostpolitik* was adopted. Even the INF deployment in Germany, though attracting far more public attention, didn't divide the political elite as much."[22]

As a consequence the German government has pursued a strategy which has often been referred to as a 'salami tactic'[23] or an 'incremental approach'[24] of more and more far-reaching *Bundeswehr* missions in order to get the German public and the military used to out-of-area deployment of German soldiers. With this strategy the Government was ahead of both public opinion and the federal law (the Federal Constitutional Court fully endorsed the government's policy in July 1994) and by 1996 former Defence *Minister Rühe* suggested: 'In a few years a new consensus has formed with regard to the core tasks of German security policy and to the job and the role of the German armed forces. I both welcome and I am thankful for this development'.[25] The *Bundestag* had voted in favour of *Bundeswehr* participation in both NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilisation Force SFOR with 543 to 107 and 499 to 93 votes respectively. Worries that the newly elected SPD-Green coalition might break with Bonn's established foreign and security policy were quickly dispersed. The new Foreign *Minister Joschka Fischer* and Chancellor *Gerhard Schröder* promised continuity.[26]

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[20] Alan Sked (1991), Cheap Excuses. Germany and the Gulf Crisis; The National Interest, No. 24: 51-60.

[21] Harald Müller, German Foreign Policy after Unification, in: Stares (1992), Stares, Paul B.(ed.), The New Germany and the New Europe, (Washington: Brookings, 1992), p. 135.

[22] Harald Müller (1994), Military Intervention: The German Debate, in: Freedman (1994), p. 131.

[23] Asmus (1995), Asmus, Ronald D: Germany's Contribution to Peacekeeping; Issues and Outlook; (RAND; Santa Monica: 1995), p. 4.

[24] see Ehrhart (1996), III. The incremental approach of the new Germany, in: Findlay (1996), p. 34ff., and Hampton (1996), Institutions and Learing: Explaining Incremental German Foreign Policy Innovation.

[25] Volker Rühe (1996), Growing Responsibility in German Comments, Vol. 42, April 1996, p. 37.

[26] Fischer verspricht Kontinuität; Süddeutsche Zeitung; 11.11.1998.

What is to be Continued?

Taking the main thrust of the *Kohl* Government then 'continuation' of the *Bundeswehr's* out-of-area role would mean two things: first, a continuation of the incremental approach whereby Germany should eventually be able to contribute - militarily if necessary - to all kinds of internationally sanctioned, multilateral crisis missions, including Desert Storm types (Gulf War 1990/1991).[27] This goal, which for some observers and practitioners alike would constitute the ultimate 'normalisation'[28] of Germany's security policy, had never been discussed too explicitly. The White Paper (1994) of the Federal Government on security and defence policy[29] did highlight that the *Bundeswehr* acquired a new role - in addition to its core function of collective defence - in support of international conflict prevention and crisis management measures, either in 'multinational NATO and WEU crisis management activities' and/or 'in an appropriate manner in operations conducted under the auspices of the UN and the CSCE.'[30] For this purpose parts of the *Bundeswehr* had to be transformed into highly mobile forces *(Krisenreaktionskräfte)* which could cover the entire spectrum of possible missions ranging from modern guerrilla warfare to Gulf-style combat missions.[31]

However, the debate was never really conducted in such language. The *Kohl* government - and former Defence *Minister Rühe* in particular - instead usually justified *Bundeswehr* missions in a humanitarian language, thereby 'building words which contain the word peace.'[32] In a country where militarism twice brought ruin

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27 This view - that the aim of the CDU/CSU/FDP government was to enable (not only legally) the Bundeswehr to contribute eventually to all kinds of military crisis management missions - is also shared by Dr. Karl-Heinz Kamp, Head of the research group for foreign and security policy at the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Bonn; Discussion with the author at the Institute for German Studies, Birmingham, 9. March 1998.

28 See particularly the section on Normalisation-Nationalists, in: the excellent overview and conceptualisation of different policy prescriptions and strands of thought in the German discourse on the future direction of German foreign policy, by Hellmann (1996), Hellmann, Günther: Goodbye Bismarck? The Foreign Policy of Contemporary Germany; Mershon International Studies Review, (1996), 40, p. 1-39; see also: Gordon (1994), Gordon, Philip H.: Berlins Difficulties. The Normalisation of German Foreign Policy; Orbis 38, p. 225-243.

29 White Paper (1994), White Paper on the Security of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Situation and Future of the Bundeswehr; Federal Ministry of Defence.

30 ibid.: No. 510/519.

31 White Paper (1994), No. 538.

32 At the very end of the German Bundestag debate in November and December 1995, on deploying German Troops to the former Yugoslavia as part of the NATO implementation force (IFOR) which was tasked with the enforcement of the Dayton peace accord an older opposition speaker sighed in despair that: no one speaks of war anymore. They only build words which contain the word peace. cf. Bach (1997), Bach, Jonathan, P.G.: Between Sovereignty and Integration: German Foreign Policy and National Identity, (PhD Dissertation; The Graduate School of Syracuse University), p. 210.

and misery, redefining the military as a humanitarian tool ('peace troops') allowed the associative meanings of military deployment to be positively rather than negatively weighted. It is quite clear that the government's labelling and language only reflected a deep concern to avoid at all costs the appearance of sending German troops to fight a war. Such labelling obviously helped the government discourse „to create pre-suppositions favourable to its purpose."[33] But it failed to openly address the actual political objectives as outlined above which the government had already identified around the time of the Gulf War.

Second, a relatively clear-cut division of labour in the system of 'inter-locking' institutions. The shape of this system evolved over time and under the particular impression of events in the former Yugoslavia. Referring to the experience of UNPROFOR, its failure and the fact that the Serbs played 'dancing bear' with the UN, several officials outlined in interviews the key features of Germany's 'framework for action'.[34] There was the (not too unanticipated) argument that German military crisis management missions would always have to be multilateral. Not startling either was the fact that all missions would require an international mandate.[35] More surprising were recurrent arguments with regard to command and control arrangements.

Only in very clear cases of traditional chapter VI peace-keeping or purely humanitarian missions was a *Bundeswehr* deployment under UN command conceivable. All other forms of *Bundeswehr* deployment, i.e. combat/peace enforcement missions, would have to be mandated by the UN or OSCE but deployed under NATO command and control (or possibly WEU in the future). This implies that there could certainly be no automatic formula for German participation as envisaged by the concept of a UN 'standing force' and very little chance of getting a German commitment to UN 'stand-by-forces' as the latter would also envisage UN command arrangements. Completely rejected was the idea of peace-keeping forces for the OSCE. Overall, then, 'sub-contracting' had become the new formula. Operational crisis management could only be pursued by the existing military organisations NATO and WEU with virtually no role for the UN or the OSCE in the operational field.

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[33] Bach (1997), p. 214.

[34] Based upon the author's interviews conducted with officials in the German Embassy, London, April 1997; officials in the Planning Cell, BMVg; officials in FüS III, BMVg; officials in the Foreign Office from different departments (Arms Control, EU, NATO, WEU, Balkans), June 1997.

[35] The first example falsifying these two principles was the very successful national military evacuation operation *without* a UN mandate in March 1997. The Bundeswehr evacuated about one hundred people of various nationalities from Albania in what was the Bundeswehr's first nationally staged military operation in its history. Interestingly, when the cabinet informally inquired (before the actual deployment took place) about the opposition's position, the SPD parliamentary group in the Bundestag as well as Joschka Fischer signalled their consent. Fischer subsequently had to revise his position because his colleagues argued against the mission; Interview with Karsten Voigt, Bonn, 5. June 1997.

About Internal Rifts, Cautious Language and the SPD-Green Coalition-Agreement[36]

The new SPD/Green coalition – even more than the previous one - is no fan of political brinkmanship and has therefore avoided explicit statements in their Coalition Agreement on the above two points. Apart from a pledge to offer the United Nations 'stand-by forces'[37] the Governwent's Coalition Agreement remains elusive and merely promises to continue and develop the 'baselines' of previous German foreign policy.[38] This caution is understandable given the fact that it is particularly these military-security issues which have the potential to cause severe rifts between and within the two parties.

The SPD, in its striving to become *regierungsfähig* (fit to govern), has come a very long way, from 'humanitarian support operations' to 'peacekeepers only' under UN command to a more 'calculable, reliable and Euro-compatible'[39] foreign policy. For this purpose the SPD moved to a position which would allow *Bundeswehr* deployments 'on peacekeeping operations, as it is currently in Bosnia.'[40] The huge degree of vagueness inherent in such a formula is obviously necessary bearing in mind the still existing internal differences on military issues.

First, there are those who are still generally extremely critical of military missions. *Katrin Fuchs*, Member of the SPD Foreign and Security Commission maintained in a speech that 'some (here *Fuchs* referred particularly to *Karsten Voigt*) want us to believe that todays risks can be solved with military means'. This, she maintained, is a wrong analysis.[41] According to a member of the SPD Security Working Group for MP *Kolbow* this view was still shared by a hard-core minority within the SPD. Second, taking support for IFOR and SFOR to mean general support for all kinds of international crisis management tasks is misleading. After all there is something rather special about the former Yugoslavia which undoubtedly created a consensus within the SPD to use the military in intra-state conflicts in order to stop atrocities or 'ethnic cleansing'.[42] But what about other missions, those more obviously in support of

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[36] Koalitionsvereinbarung (1998), Aufbruch und Erneuerung - Deutschlands Weg ins 21.Jahrhundert, (Koalitionsvereinbarung zwischen der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands und Bündnis 90/Die Grünen; Bonn 20. Oktober 1998).

[37] ibid.: 45

[38] ibid.: 41

[39] Wehrpflicht ist für SPD kein Tabu mehr; DPA; 03.06.1997.

[40] Discussion Paper of the SPD Commission on Foreign and Security Policy for the Conference on 18. June 1997 in Bonn: Social Democratic Foreign Policy in the Transition to the 21st Century, p.22.

[41] Speech delivered at the SPD Foreign Policy Congress: Challenges of the 21st Century: 18. June 1997 in Bonn; authors own notes.

[42] see: The Importance of Yugoslavia, in: Hoffmann (1998), Hoffmann, A.: Germany and the Role of the Bundeswehr; Institute for German Studies, Discussion Paper Series, No. 9, p. 25-26.

stability and international security?[43]

The Alliance 90/The Greens has even greater problems with military issues since it has always considered itself to be a non-militaristic party and a party of non-violence, thereby strictly rejecting the use of the military as a political instrument. In the aftermath of the Gulf War the party line was therefore relatively clear-cut: no deployment of German soldiers abroad. Since then, however, the party has witnessed serious internal quarrels as the crisis in ex-Yugoslavia intensified. The first major split became obvious in 1993 when the group's Regional Council voted for both German participation in UN missions in cases of outright aggression and genocide and for UN military intervention in Bosnia. The reason was that the war and associated atrocities had become a human rights issue for many of their members, particularly the feminist wing of the party which was shocked by the raping of Bosnian women by the Tchetnik soldateska and consequently became one of the strongest supporters for military measures.[44]

Although this stance was supported by some 'realists' within the Alliance 90/ The Greens, it provoked fierce opposition within the party. In the end no programmatic move was made. With view to the federal elections on 27 September 1998 the party leadership - particularly *Joschka Fischer*, who has for some time considered that it is time for the party to move away from the rigid opposition to the use of force - launched another attempt to redefine the Greens' foreign policy principles at the party congress in *Magdeburg* in March 1998. However, the party leadership suffered a terrible setback when the congress voted against their motion and the official party line remains rather uncompromising. Just as in the first draft of the Green's election programme 'Green is the Change' 13 October 1997[45] the Alliance 90/Greens continued to aim at abolishing both NATO and the *Bundeswehr*.[46]

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[43] This is not to say that the crisis in Yugoslavia was not about stability or regional security: Hans Maull argues that Germany's primary concern in Yugoslavia was to prevent a destabilisation of the Balkans with its risks of an exodus of refugees and exported violence. Maull/Gordon (1993), Maull, Hans W; Gordon, Philip H: German Foreign Policy and the German National Interest: German and American Perspectives, AICGS Seminar Papers; No. 5, January 1993; see also Chapter 10: On Values and Interests, in: Michael Libal's (Head of the Southeast European Department of the Auswärtiges Amt from 1991 to 1995) book: Limits of Persuasion: Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis, 1991-1992 (Praeger Publishers, 1997). However, as mentioned before, the debate in support of deployment usually emphasised the humanitarian aspects.

[44] Harald Müller, Military Intervention: The German Debatte, in: Freedman (1994), (ed.), Military Intervention in European Conflicts (Blackwell; Oxford; 1994), p. 136.

[45] Grün ist der Wechsel; Programm zur Bundestagswahl 1998; Erster Entwurf, 13. October 1997, p. 64.

[46] see: Greens suffer blow to credibility, in: The Financial Times, March 9, 1998; and Grüne in Außenpolitik gespalten. Parteitag lehnt Militäreinsatz in Bosnien ab - Schröder nennt Benzinpreis-Beschluß unsinnig, Die Welt, 9 March 1998.

Kosovo and the 'Real Test'

Even before having officially been sworn into government the SPD and Greens were confronted with their first foreign policy challenge by events in Kosovo, a crisis rather similar in nature to the one in Bosnia. Initially, the SPD and the Greens argued that any decision about German participation could only be taken by the new *Bundestag* and German soldiers and AWACS personnel as well as the offer of 14 Tornado aircrafts would have to be withdrawn in the meantime. There were also serious objections within the SPD and Greens to military participation without a UN mandate.

However, the SPD and the Greens changed their position under 'massive pressure' from Washington.[47] Even NATO's Deputy Commander Europe visited *Bonn* to influence the new government.[48] In the event the new government contributed troops to the international military crisis management efforts and the splits in the SPD and Green parties remained marginal. Germany's offer of 14 Tornado aircraft was approved in the Bundestag by 500 votes to 62, with nine Green and 21 SPD MPs opposing it.[49] Ironically, it is now former Defence *Minister Rühe* who warns the new government that 'the real test' *(Bewährungsprobe)* of *Fischer* and *Scharping's* security policy is still outstanding. This 'real test', according to *Rühe*, is Iraq. He cautions the red-green coalition that they should not consider the crisis there as something that could be left to the Americans. "Going underground (abtauchen) won't do."[50]

Rühe surely remembers only too well the American reactions to Germany's general silence during the last crisis in Iraq in January/February 1998. Then Bonn decided to 'go underground' which was well reflected in Chancellor *Kohl's* prepared speech at the annual *"Wehrkunde"* European security conference in Munich in which he made not a single reference to the crisis in Iraq.[51] In return, senators McCain, *Lieberman* and Warner warned that failure to back military action in the Gulf would have negative repercussions on support for Nato in the US.[52] *Kohl*, who eagerly made some notes during the American 'bombardment'[53], replied that airbases in Germany were available to US troops and solidarity had to be shown for everything that needed to be done. If he had not said that before, he added, it was because he had not been asked. "It is a problem of communication," he said.[54]

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47   Kabinett stimmt NATO-Militärschlag zu; Die Welt, 13. October 1998.

48   Participants in the subsequent discussion in the Federal Chancellery reported that Schröder clearly endorsed American demands while SPD leader Oskar Lafontaine remained rather sceptical and the future Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer listened frustratedly; ibid.

49   Bonn divisions; Financial Times; 17./18. October 1998, p. 2.

50   Schröder verspricht Konsolidierungskurs, Abbau der Arbeitslosigkeit, außenpolitische Kontinuität; FAZ, 11.11.1998.

51   Die Welt, 9. February 1998: Die Vereinigten Staaten fühlen sich von Verbündeten allein gelassen; Amerikaner kritisieren die Haltung der Europäer im Konflikt mit Irak.

52   Financial Times, 9 February 1998 : Kohl: Support for alliance against Iraq.

53   Die Welt, 9. February 1998.

54   Financial Times, 9 February 1998.

A problem of communication or awareness/fear that there might not have been a consensus for a more active, possibly military contribution? *Rühe* and *Kohl* surely were both aware that a further escalation of the crisis would have been the 'real test' of their security policy: either leading to a German contribution in a crisis which is not so clearly about human suffering and more about strategic and international security interests - thereby providing *Rühe* with the ultimate success of his efforts of gradually enlarging the role of the *Bundeswehr*; or alternatively, revealing the rather limited nature of his alleged 'new consensus'. At least *Rühe* could count on a solid support for his policy within the CDU/CSU and FDP, something that – as outlined above - can not be said about the SPD and the Greens.

Conscription - Resisting Change

The objective indicators arguing against the maintenance of conscription are numerous and abound. To begin, on a military level, the demise of Nato's strategy of forward defence and accent upon deterrence virtually diminishes the need for mass armed forces provided for by universal male conscription. Further discounting the security value of conscription is the adoption of a more varied remit for the *Bundeswehr*, requiring technical expertise, extending beyond traditional boundaries which serves to marginalise the conscript soldier. Public support also tends to cast doubt upon the sustainability of conscription, since young German people especially seem to view the practice as increasingly inappropriate, as seen in the rising numbers of conscientious objectors since the end of the Cold War.[55] This point is echoed by the Parliamentary Ombudsman of the Armed Forces who observed that amongst youth whilst there appears to be broad acceptance of the *Bundeswehr* and its mission they take the view that it should be the job of the professional and not the conscript.[56]

These 'objective' factors have lead some to conclude that conscription is nearing its sell-by date and that Germany is likely to give up the practice soon after or maybe even before the year 2000.[57] In addition, some authors have suggested that Germany is maintaining conscription for no other reason than to sustain the *Zivildienst*, the alternative to military service.[58] Whilst observations such as these may not be wrong they do tend to eclipse the reasons for which the *Bundeswehr* was drawn up as a conscript army. They offer a reasoning based upon observable facts, drawing conclusions from 'snap shot' views of events rather than one informed with an understanding of the deeper historical context - namely the strategic culture. A look at the

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[55] The figures of conscientious objectors leaped during the Gulf War to 151, 212 objectors in 1991 (compared to 74,567 in 1990), Presse und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung January 1992.

[56] See: Report of the Wehrbeauftragte 1996, p. 17.

[57] The Military Balance 1994-1995, (1994), (London: Brasseys) p. 10-11.

[58] Jürgen Kuhlmann/ Ekkehard Lippert (1994), Conscription on its way to National Service SOWI Arbeitspapier No. 90 (München: SOWI).

party politics of conscription over the previous but also present legislative period reveals the presence and functioning of strategic culture represented in a remarkable dead-lock on the issue, which goes beyond a simple consensus.

The Endurance of Conscription
The commencement of a Red-Green coalition government suggested that change rather than continuity would be the order of the day with regards to force structure, since both parties had pledged to tackle conscription in some way. However, it is plain to see that now in government the possibility of change seems somewhat limited. Why is this?

The Conscription 'Taboo'
The sustained practice of conscription, with young men currently serving 10 months service, is a striking area of non-change in German security policy, which increasingly appears as an aberration in social, military and political terms. Now as in the previous legislative period there is no support for abandoning conscription, with the mainstream parties and other political and military elites locked in a consensus in defence of conscription, deviation from which is seen as heresy. Quite unlike the out of area debate which prised open fundamental facets of strategic culture as the nation engaged in a broad debate on the extended role of the *Bundeswehr* a profound lack of debate still surrounds the issue of conscription, so much so that it is more appropriate to call it the conscription 'non-debate'. This then, is the conscription 'taboo'.

The party politics of conscription show the CDU/CSU and SPD going to extensive lengths to confirm their dedication to military service. Conscription, it is argued, is required for a host of security, historical and social reasons. Firstly, given Germany's Zentrallage, security can only be provided and with it Germany's commitments to the Alliance fulfilled, if a mass armed force is maintained. The task of defending the heart of Europe still resides with Germany, it is argued, and can only be fulfilled via conscription which provides the means to mobilise a mass armed force.[59] Maintaining conscription was also justified by former Defence *Minister Rühe* to confirm that unlike France, after Chirac's decision to shelve conscription, Germany would not have an 'intervention army' with world wide 'power projection'.[60] The current Government also buys in to this argument, rejecting the notion of an *Afrikacorps* or readily deployable global forces.[61]

On socio-historical grounds the conscription taboo continues to be nurtured through the argument that military service keeps the armed forces firmly wedded to society and civilian in character through the continuous flow of young men in and

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[59] Paul Breuer (1 February 1996), CDU/CSU Pressedienst.
[60] Rühe addressing the Commanders of the Second Corps in Friedrichshafen 13. March 1996.
[61] Evidence given at the conference Zukunft der Wehrpflicht Wannsee, November 1998.

out of the armed forces.[62] For Chancellor *Kohl* conscription was an inherent part of the 'self-restraining and checking' policies of the old Federal Republic obviating against the unhealthy civil-military relations present in Weimar Germany where the armed forces existed as 'state within a state'.[63]

Although voices of 'dissent' were apparent within the SPD the official party line in the last legislative period was for the maintenance of conscription, however the party did acknowledge that with a dire financial situation twinned with the need to continue the down-sizing of the *Bundeswehr*, conscription would increasingly come under pressure. Defence spokesman *Walter Kolbow* stressed that conscription must not become an obstacle to the overall reduction of the armed forces, in this event it must be either shortened or suspended.[64] In line with this the SPD advocated the establishment of a parliamentary 'Defence Structure Committee' to assess wholesale the mission and force structure of the *Bundeswehr*.[65]

The conscription taboo was been breached in the previous legislative period by the smaller parties. Both *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* and the PDS, advocated the abolition of conscription, with the latter wishing to see the end of conscription as a vehicle to full demilitarisation. As detailed above *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* experienced serious fissures within their ranks over security issues with party leader *Joshka Fischer* attempting to turn the party around to accept a more pragmatic policy relevant stance. Green thinking rejected *Rühe's* 're-militarisation of German foreign policy', viewing conscription as a 'service for war' and thus advocated a volunteer based armed force comprising of short term personnel, with even greater transparency and enhanced parliamentary control.[66] The disasters of opening up conscription for intra-party debate were experienced by the FDP.[67] By attempting to make the abolition of conscription part of the Liberal Party profile, younger members of the party succeeded only in inciting intra-party strife, subsequently weakening any hopes of a clear party platform being developed on the issue.

The official line from the MoD also hailed the merits of conscription and pleaded for its maintenance. Aside from the espousal of a clear strategic rationale, the MoD argued that conscription forms an essential pool for the recruiting of career soldiers

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[62] Author's interview with the current Wehrbeauftragte Claire Marienfeld. Bad Godesberg, June 1997.

[63] Chancellor Kohl in Stichworte zur Ankündigung des französischen Staatspräsidenten über die Reform der Streitkräfte Stichwort zur Sicherheitspolitik March 1996.

[64] Walter Kolbow MdB, interview with Südwestfunk 1. 2. 96.

[65] Beschlußübersicht A1, Außen- Sicherheits- und Entwicklungspolitik, Presseservice der SPD, Hannover, 3. Dezember 1997.

[66] See: Auslaufmodell Wehrpflicht, Für Entmilitarisierung, Abrüstung und Stärkung von freiwilligen Diensten. (December 1996), (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen Bundestagfraktion: Bonn).

[67] See: Kontroverse in der FDP über eine Berufsarmee in: Neue Zürcher Zeitung, 9. Oktober 1996.

and that it makes for a more 'intelligent army', since without the draft recruitment of suitable soldiers may be problematic. Furthermore the notions of *Innere Führung* and Citizen in Uniform would lose much of their saliency in the absence of conscription.[68]

The questioning of conscription was actively 'punished' or at least condemned in this period, demonstrated most vividly in the case of OTL *Jürgen Rose* who, after writing an article questioning the relevance of conscription in Germany in FAZ, found his career prospects somewhat clipped.[69] A similar situation was experienced by a Party Foundation, which had it's plans for a seminar on the future of conscription in Germany rejected by the *Kanzleramt*, which was framed by the proposed organiser as an outright *'Diskussionsverbot'*.[70]

New Government, New Bundeswehr*?*
In the coalition treaty between the two governing parties conscription as an explicit issue is absent. Whilst the *Wehrstrukturkommission* which promises to tackle the whole range of force structure matters is perhaps best understood as a delaying mechanism, since any changes emanating from this would be implemented only in the medium to long term. In addition, shortly after becoming Defence *Minister Rudolf Scharping* confirmed his commitment to conscription. This situation of 'nonchange' and continuance of the conscription taboo has been met with a degree of disappointment by numerous anti-conscription campaign groups who foresaw that a red-green coalition would initiate an open and rational debate questioning the necessity of compulsory military service.[71] Instead, the new Government, it seems, is continuing like its predecessor to award conscription with an almost sacred status.

The new Government, although not totally harmoniously, is using similar language as the former Government to defend the status quo, whilst at the same time employing mechanisms to control the extent of debate on the subject. Undoubtedly both parties are aware of the highly sensitive and complex web of issues surrounding and symbolised by conscription, and not least the range of auxiliary tasks conscription serves through the alternative *Zivildienst*, but also the need to present current and future security policies to both the domestic audience and also neighbours and allies as a continuity of the old Federal Republic's restrained and predictable style.

There are however enough 'deviant' voices within both the SPD but especially the Greens to make sure that conscription will appear on the agenda in this legislative period. Already, groups of like minded individuals have begun to argue against the Government line, calling for both reducing the size of the *Bundeswehr* and

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68 Author's interviews at the Planungstab of the MoD, Bonn, June 1997.
69 Author's interview with Juergen Rose, November 1998.
70 Author's confidential interview, Bonn, June 1997.
71 Zukunft der Wehrpflicht, Conference run by the Zentralstelle der KDV, Wannsee, November 1998.

shedding military service.[72] The extent and likely shape of change to conscription will not emerge until the findings of the *Wehrstrukturkommission* are revealed some two years down the line. The implications for conscription will also depend upon the 'health' of the coalition, how much power the Greens are able to wield on the issue and also the extent to which the Government can find like minded allies in other parties to help forge a cross party consensus on the need to address the issue. When the debate does emerge it will be as much about security policy as about notions of duty, civil liberties and the strength of contemporary German democracy.

Conclusion

As a result of the collapse of the Cold War, the *Bundeswehr* entered a period of 'identity crisis'. Observations of the *Bundeswehr's* subsequent adaptation to the new security environment and a look at the balance sheet of change some eight years on, reveal the existence and functioning of strategic culture as an 'ideology' or 'operational code' on German security policy behaviour. This paper has shown the simultaneous constraining and facilitating role played by strategic culture through the analysis of two core elements of Germany's strategic 'tool-kit': the 'out-of-area' role of the *Bundeswehr* and conscription.

West Germany's strategic culture decisively shaped unified Germany's attempt to enlarge the *Bundeswehr's* role in international politics. Confronted with the old FRG's non-military foreign policy culture the federal government had to pursue a very prudent strategy of 'incremental change' in order to eventually achieve cross-party support for *Bundeswehr* deployments. The same strategic culture did however, facilitate Germany's active military involvement in Bosnia. German military action was deemed legitimate since profound humanitarian issues were at stake.

The new Red/Green government coalition has promised continuity with its predecessor's security policy, whilst remaining elusive about the precise meaning of such a pledge. First, there is still a non-negligible opposition within the SPD and the Greens to military missions. Second, although the CDU/CSU/FDP government succeeded in raising substantially the threshold for *Bundeswehr* deployment in out-of-area missions, it failed in its wider objective of enabling the *Bundeswehr* to participate in all sorts of military crisis management missions. Justifying deployments with a humanitarian reasoning could, by implication, only generate a limited consensus. *Bundeswehr* participation in operations which are not predominantly about human suffering and more about strategic and international security interests will be the 'real test' of the attempt to re-conceptualise substantially this element of West Germany's strategic culture. While it remains to be seen whether the new Government

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[72]   Winnfried Nachtwei MdB speech at the Zukunft der Wehrpflicht, Conference run by the Zentralstelle der KDV, Wannsee, November 1998; Ruediger Moniac (1998), SPD plant Bundeswehr light Die Welt 14.10.98.

will really continue all of the previous Government's out-of-area objectives, it is the prudence with which this issue has been tackled - if not avoided altogether - which already illustrates the continued relevance of the old FRG's strategic culture. The past still weighs heavily on the present.

Similarly, the maintenance of conscription in Germany at the end of the Cold War bears witness to the existence and functioning of strategic culture. There is clearly something 'sacrosanct' about conscription in Germany, since it is plain to see that in 'objective' strategic and social terms conscription is nearing its sell-by date. In a period of 'culture shock', namely the collapse of the Cold War paradigm, conscription provides a sense of continuity since it was a crucial component of West Germany's strategic culture 'tool-kit', assembled at the end of the Second World War.

Essentially, the idea of an All Volunteer Force (AVF) does not 'fit in' with what the Germans see as being the role and purpose of their armed forces. The practice of conscription in Germany has profound meaning, stretching beyond military necessity, party politics and an attachment to the economic benefits delivered by *Zivildienst*. Conscription, it is argued here, is a manifestation on a massive scale of some of the key ideas and structures which lay behind not only the creation of the Bundeswehr back in the 1950s but also the whole identity of the Federal Republic.

Conscription is clearly viewed by the mainstream parties as a mechanism to resist fundamental change in Germany's security policies by maintaining a healthy equilibrium and broad interface in civil-military relations. Conscription continues to provide a sense of orientation and continuity, keeping society aware of its armed forces and in turn keeping the armed forces fully aware of their subordinated place within German state and society. It is also a key factor in restraining the *Bundeswehr's* unfettered slide into an automatically deployable armed force without broad public interest or sanctioning. Changing over to an AVF would be costly for Germany, not so much in financial terms, but rather in terms of altering the mind sets formed by a strategic culture which has become legitimate and has delivered tangible benefits in the form of a high standard of material well being, a stable, responsive democratic system and a civilised military within it.

The parameters of 'acceptable behaviour' for Germany in the security realm have been considerably stretched. However, as has been demonstrated here, change will always be contingent upon strategic culture which will continue to act as a steering mechanism upon policy behaviour, permitting certain options whilst negating others. In conclusion, although the ending of the Cold War was a formative period for German thinking about security and clearly Germany has travelled a long way since 1989, of greater importance are its negative experiences prior to 1945 coupled with positive formative experiences post 1945, which have become embodied in the prevailing strategic culture in Germany.