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Carolin Hehr

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“On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.”

Carolin Hehr

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C Hehr', written in a cursive style.

ABSTRACT

After 1990, the international security environment had undergone significant changes and the international pressure on a unified Germany to enhance its military commitments in this new environment rose exponentially. For these new tasks the Bundeswehr required adaptation and hence several reform efforts were introduced in the 1990s. However, instead of leading to an adequate adaptation of the forces to the new security demands, a large gap between the quantitative and qualitative intensity of commitments and the considerably inadequate state of the Bundeswehr to fulfil these commitments emerged. Despite great efforts, why have previous attempts to adapt the Bundeswehr to the new challenges of international security led to a reduction in its capacity? By applying the theoretical framework of *Compatibility and Consensus* by Wolfram F. Hanrieder, this master thesis analyses chronologically how domestic consensus and international compatibility have developed and influenced this discrepancy and to what extent the conditions for a successful reform process to diminish the discrepancy have changed. This analysis reveals that the reasons for the failure to adapt the forces accordingly have changed over time. Whilst the reform efforts have always been compatible with the international system, domestic consensus only slowly increased and remains fragile until today. Moreover, this research reveals that additional factors such as a sense of urgency and the preference given to domestic over security issues play an important role in preventing an effective implementation of current reforms. The results of this research are an important contribution to the overall academic debate regarding the normalisation of Germany's foreign and security policy and to the current debate on Germany's defence-spending.

Der internationale Druck auf das wiedervereinigte Deutschland, seine militärischen Verpflichtungen im veränderten Sicherheitsumfeld zu vergrößern, ist nach 1990 exponentiell gestiegen. Für diese neuen Aufgaben war es notwendig, die Bundeswehr zu reformieren. Doch statt für eine adäquate Anpassung der Streitkräfte zu sorgen, um sie auf ihre neuen Aufgaben vorzubereiten, wurde die Diskrepanz zwischen der quantitativen als auch qualitativen Intensivierung von Verpflichtungen und dem relativ mangelhaften Zustand der Bundeswehr, immer größer. Diese Masterarbeit widmet sich daher der Fragestellung, warum die Reformversuche nicht zu einer Reduzierung der Diskrepanz, sondern lediglich zu einer Reduzierung der Kapazität geführt haben. Hierfür wird, durch Anwendung des theoretischen Rahmens *Compatibility and Consensus* von Wolfram F. Hanrieder, chronologisch analysiert, wie sich nationaler Konsens und internationale Kompatibilität der Reformversuche entwickelt und diese Diskrepanz beeinflusst haben. Anschließend wird untersucht, ob und inwiefern sich die Bedingungen des aktuellen Reformversuches die Diskrepanz zu verringern, verändert haben. Die Analyse zeigt, dass sich die Gründe für die herrschende Diskrepanz über die Jahre stark verändert haben. Zwar waren die ersten Reformversuche stets international kompatibel, der nationale Konsens hingegen entstand nur langsam und bleibt bis heute instabil. Darüber hinaus sind noch weitere Faktoren hinzugekommen, die eine effektive Implementierung der Reformen, und demnach eine Reduzierung der Diskrepanz, verhindern. Die Antworten dieser Forschungsarbeit sind ein wichtiger Beitrag zur akademischen Debatte über die Normalisierung Deutscher Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik, sowie zur aktuellen Debatte bezüglich Deutscher Verteidigungsausgaben.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AfD	<i>Alternative für Deutschland</i> (Alternative for Germany)
BMVg	<i>Bundesministerium der Verteidigung</i> (German Federal Ministry of Defence)
CDU	<i>Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands</i> (Christian Democratic Union of Germany)
CSU	<i>Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern</i> (Christian Social Union in Bavaria)
DCI	Defence Capabilities Initiative
DM	Deutschmark
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
FDP	<i>Freie Demokratische Partei</i> (Free Democratic Party)
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
KSK	<i>Kommando Spezialkräfte</i> (German Special Forces)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NRF	Nato Response Force
NVA	<i>Nationale Volksarmee</i> (East German National People's Army)
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PDS	<i>Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus</i> (Party of Democratic Socialism)
SPD	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland</i> (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
VJTF	Very High Readiness Joint Task Force
VPR	<i>Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien</i> (Defence Policy Guidelines)
WEU	Western European Union

1. Introduction

In 1989 high expectations were set by Germany's allies and neighbours for a unified Germany in central Europe. Whilst West Germany was considered 'semi-sovereign',¹ and after the economic miracle an 'economic giant but political dwarf', there were expectations by many realist scholars that the newly unified and sovereign Federal Republic of Germany was to soon become a 'normal European power'.² West Germany's foreign policy and military power had been strongly based on the principles of anti-militarism and multilateralism. Yet with German unification going hand in hand with deeper European integration, which is reflected in the conclusion of the Maastricht Treaty only two years after unification, the Federal Republic was expected to play an enhanced role in Europe.³ More explicitly, the Germany's allies "demanded more military involvement from a sovereign and powerful Germany after 1989."⁴

However, German security policy after unification has been ambivalent and developed in different directions on the political, military and societal level. On the one hand, most scholars argue that on the political level, Germany did not relinquish its core principles of foreign policy, namely multilateralism and anti-militarism, and remained a civilian power to a great extent, despite minor adjustments.⁵ On the other hand, on the military level, the Bundeswehr has increasingly participated in international operations abroad since the ruling of the Constitutional Court in 1994, allowing for out-of-area deployment. At the same time, on the societal level, the attitude of the German population regarding the Bundeswehr did not significantly change and the majority of the population remained sceptical and even critical regarding Bundeswehr operations.

In the mid 1990s, new developments in the international security environment required adaptation. The Bundeswehr was a product of the Cold War and consequently its traditional focus was territorial defence. It was not prepared for the new challenges in the

¹ Peter Katzenstein, *Policy and Politics in West Germany: The Growth of a Semi-Sovereign State* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

² See for example Hans Peter Schwarz, *Die Zentralmacht Europas. Deutschlands Rückkehr auf die Weltbühne* (Berlin: Siedler, 1994).

³ Beverly Crawford and Kim B. Olsen, "The Puzzle of Persistence and Power: Explaining Germany's Normative Foreign Policy," *German Politics* 26, no. 4 (2017): 594; Lang, Sabine, Mushaben, Joyce Marie & Wendler, Frank, "German Unification as a Catalyst for Change: Linking Political Transformation at the Domestic and International Levels," *German Politics* 26, no. 4 (2017): 446.

⁴ Crawford and Olsen, 593.

⁵ Crawford and Olsen, 594; August Pradetto, "The Polity of German Foreign Policy: Changes since Unification?" in *Germany's Uncertain Power*, ed. Hanns Maull (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 22, 26.

post-Cold War era such as fighting international terrorism and crisis intervention. Therefore, a process of reforms was initiated to transform the forces however, with only very limited success. Paradoxically, the increasing engagement of the German armed forces since 1990 were met at the same time with a constant decrease in defence spending and a continuous reduction of military capability.

These developments reveal a great paradox and discrepancy. Germany increasingly demanded more from its armed forces but it failed to match this process with the necessary capacities. On the contrary, it appears as if political expectations and demands grew exponentially, whereas military capabilities were constantly decreasing. Since the reunification of Germany, several attempts were made to reform the Bundeswehr and to adjust it to today's challenges however, these efforts are overall not considered to have been very successful, considering the task. Longhurst, for instance, noted that "Berlin should be doing better."⁶

In 2014, a new debate regarding Germany's responsibility in international security emerged.⁷ Due to the changing international security environment and the return of conventional armed conflict in Europe in Ukraine, Germany's partners and German politicians requested Germany, particularly given its economic weight, to take on more responsibility in international security. However, after decades of underfunding and severe reform struggle, many scholars argue that the German armed forces are not in a state to take on more responsibility.⁸ One of the results of this emerging debate and requests was a new national security strategy, the 2016 White Paper and a new concept for the Bundeswehr in 2018. It appears that after decades of reluctance to clearly formulate a German security policy, the debate on "Germany's new responsibility" provided new impetus to turn around this discrepancy between political and military level. In order to be able to take on more responsibility as encouraged internationally (and to some extent domestically), the Bundeswehr's capacities have to be increased. Consequently, the Minister of Defence Ursula von der Leyen initiated the "*Trendwende*" [change of trend], yet another set of reforms regarding personnel, equipment and budget. It appears that for the first time, German security policy on the political and on the military level might develop into the same direction. The question however is, whether or

⁶ Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the use of force* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 116.

⁷ See Wolfgang Ischinger and Dirk Messner (Eds.), *Deutschlands neue Verantwortung: Die Zukunft der deutschen und europäischen Außen-, Entwicklungs- und Sicherheitspolitik* (Berlin: Econ, 2017).

⁸ Franz-Josef Meisers, *Bundeswehr am Wendepunkt. Perspektiven deutscher Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2017).

not this current development is different than previous attempts to reform the armed forces and enhance German engagement in international security?

This thesis will investigate and answer two interrelated research questions: Firstly, why have previous efforts to reform the Bundeswehr led to a discrepancy between Germany's growing political commitments in international security and a reduction in its military capacity? Secondly, has the current policy environment changed and can therefore now offer the potential to reduce the discrepancy between political commitments and military capacity? To answer these questions, this study will start by providing a brief overview on the relevant academic debate on German security policy and military reforms. It then presents the analytical framework by Wolfram F. Hanrieder which will be applied in order to answer the research questions.

For the first question, this research will chronologically analyse the transformation of the Bundeswehr and the reform attempts made since the reunification in 1990. The literature suggests several factors are responsible for the decline in military capacity, most notably debt-cutting measures. However, there are also other factors influencing the reform process, such as the lack of public support, the traditional caution of German politicians as well as the influence of international partners.⁹ Therefore, the first part of the thesis will analyse not only previous reform processes in chronological order, but also the policy environment in which the reform efforts took place. What role did the lack of public support or financial constraints play? To what extent did the international community influence this process? By looking at the constraints of previous (failed) reform processes, factors and influences can be identified that have led to this discrepancy. The thesis will then go on to assess in the second part whether these factors are still relevant today by analysing the current policy environment and the current reform process initiated by Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen. Have the factors leading to the discrepancy changed? Does the impetus provided by the debate regarding Germany's responsibility in international security as well as the changing security environment offer a policy window for turning around the continuous decrease in military capacity, or is the debate merely yet another elite-driven debate without substantive consequences?

This research is of particular importance given the current debate regarding the contributions of European countries towards NATO and concerning the enhanced military cooperation at EU level. If Germany wishes to play an important role in

⁹ Wilfried von Bredow, "Bundeswehr-Reform: kleine Schritte und ein großer Sprung," *Zeitschrift für Staats- und Europawissenschaften* 8, no. 3(2010): 395.

international security and advocates for greater European military cooperation, then it first has to allow for its security policy to go hand in hand with its military capacity. Moreover, given the traditional hesitance of Germany to exercise political or military power as well as its portrayal as ‘reluctant hegemon,’¹⁰ a potential shift in Germany’s security policy and an increase in its military capacity constitutes a greater meaning to Germany’s coming of age. The analysis of this research question fits therefore into the academic debate on whether a normalisation of German foreign and security policy thirty years after reunification is possible or whether the paradox of German power remains.

2. Literature Review

Different branches of literature deal with the various topics relevant for this research. At first, general literature on the development of German foreign and security policy will be consulted. Given the complexity of German security policy, there is a significantly high number of scholars addressing this issue. To gain a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the development of Germany’s security policy, a review of literature regarding different aspects and interpretations of the issue is a relevant starting point. Certainly, this branch of literature goes back further than the existence of the Bundeswehr in the 1950s. For the scope of this research however, it is sufficient to start in 1989, because prior to the unification of Germany, the Bundeswehr and Germany’s foreign and security policy was greatly dependent on its allies. The second branch of literature relevant for this research is the literature regarding the development of the Bundeswehr and in particular studies on the various reform processes. Some of these studies extensively analyse one reform proposal or offer a chronological analysis of the development hereby highlighting the growing discrepancy between political expectations and military down-sizing. The third relevant section is literature discussing current issues. Given the current character of the debate it is to be noted that the academic literature on this is limited to only few books and journal articles. However, several think tanks, such as the *German Council on Foreign Relations* or the *German Institute for International and Security Affairs* continuously and extensively debate the recent developments and are hence valuable sources.

¹⁰ See for example Simon Bulmer and William E. Paterson, “Germany as the EU’s reluctant hegemon? Of economic strength and political constraints,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 20, no. 10 (2013): 1387-1405.

The first branch of literature on German security policy in general addresses several issues: the character of German security policy, its historical development and many more. A large branch of this literature addresses the traditional perception of Germany as a civilian power, a concept developed by Hanns W. Maull. According to Maull, a civilian power focuses on cooperation with other countries in order to achieve common objectives through non-military, particularly economic means, and to establish international institutions to commonly address and manage international challenges.¹¹ However, the unification of Germany has given rise to the question if unification would change something on the perception and of the role of Germany as a civilian power or if Germany would become a “normal” European power.

Martin Wagener defines ‘normal’ in regard to military engagement and security policy by comparing Germany’s territorial, demographic and economic resources as well as its potential with those of France and the United Kingdom, as the leading powers in Europe. Consequently, according to Wagener, Germany is a ‘normal power’ if “it utilises its resources for – and demonstrates a determination to participate in – military operations under the auspices of the UN, NATO and EU on even terms with Paris and London.”¹² The issue of “normalisation” has been addressed by several scholars before and after unification. Maull summarises this debate by identifying two opposing sides. The realist side predicted that unification will lead to territorial and economic growth and that the lack of a competitor in Europe will make Germany the central and most powerful state.¹³ Whereas the other side did not predict any fundamental change but rather a continuity of Germany’s normative foreign policy. August Pradetto suggests that in retrospect, Germany’s foreign and security policy has undergone subtle changes, such as a slowly growing self-confidence as reflected by Gerhard Schröder’s opposition to the US and the expansion of the use of force. However, he nevertheless concludes that all these adaptations were merely a response to a change in circumstances and did not constitute a break from Germany’s fundamental principles.¹⁴ Also Martin Wagener concludes that

¹¹ Hanns W. Maull, “Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers,” *Foreign Affairs* 69, no. 5 (Winter 1990): 92.

¹² Martin Wagener, “Normalisation in Security Policy?” in *Germany’s Uncertain Power*, ed. Hanns Maull (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 79.

¹³ Hans Peter Schwarz, *Die Zentralmacht Europas. Deutschlands Rückkehr auf die Weltbühne*, (Berlin: Siedler, 1994); Christian Hacke, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, (Berlin: Ullstein, 2004).

¹⁴ August Pradetto, “The Polity of German Foreign Policy: Changes since Unification?” in *Germany’s Uncertain Power*, ed. Hanns Maull (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 26.

normalisation is not yet achieved but would depend on the development of Germany's self-image and financial resources.¹⁵

Analysing the development of German security policy in the post-unification period, different theoretical schools offer various explanations for the perceived change. Realists explain the change in German security and foreign policy as a consequence of Germany's growing distance to the US.¹⁶ Constructivists and institutionalists have stressed the learning process and the process of socialisation. Through the increasing engagement of the Bundeswehr and greater European integration, Germany's policy has developed due to experiences.¹⁷ One branch of literature focuses explicitly on the influence of Europeanisation on German foreign and security policy.¹⁸ Another explanation is a generational change. Dieter Dettke for example notes that it is "no coincidence that the return of Germany as a more independent power (...) occurred at the same time as the takeover of leadership positions by the 1968 generation, the first post-World War II generation in power."¹⁹ For other scholars, the unique development of German foreign and security policy, still based on the traditional culture of restraint but also more engaged militarily, led to a new German exceptionalism.²⁰

This great variety in literature reveals the ambivalence of interpretation of Germany's security policy since 1990. Whereas some scholars argue that there has been a considerable shift away from Germany's fundamental principles, other scholars argue that these were merely small necessary adjustments. This ambivalence in literature hence reflects the ambivalence in German security policy itself. It is however, an important foundation for this research as it underlines the greater meaning of the current debate about a shift in Germany's security policy and about the discrepancy between security policy and military capacity.

Next to the literature focusing on German security policy as a whole, several scholars have paid attention to the development of the Bundeswehr after unification. One

¹⁵ Martin Wagener, 88.

¹⁶ Marco Overhaus, "Civilian Power under Stress: Germany, NATO, and the European Security and Defense Policy," in *Germany's Uncertain Power*, ed. Hanns Maull (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 75.

¹⁷ Hanns W. Maull, *Germany's Uncertain Power* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 4-5.

¹⁸ See for example Axel Lüdeke, *„Europäisierung“ der deutschen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik? Konstitutive und operative Europapolitik zwischen Maastricht und Amsterdam* (Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 2002); Alister Miskimmon and William E. Paterson: „Adapting to Europe? German Foreign Policy, Domestic Constraints, and the Limitations of Europeanisation since Unification,” in *Germany's Uncertain Power*, ed. Hanns Maull (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

¹⁹ Dieter Dettke, *Germany says "No"* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

comprehensive study within this branch of literature is the book *Die Bundeswehr als Instrument Deutscher Außenpolitik* [The Bundeswehr as instrument of German Foreign Policy] by Ulf von Krause. He extensively investigates the question of whether the Bundeswehr can and should be considered an instrument of German foreign policy. Therefore, Krause traces back the change of German perception of the armed forces as a policy instrument since the 1950s and how this changed perception has affected the structure, equipment and training.²¹ This book's insights provide a great background for this thesis on the previous reform processes. Franz-Josef Meiers in his book *Zu neuen Ufern?* [Heading to new shores?] offers a comprehensive study on the framework conditions of German security policy, German deployments and the reform process between 1995 and 2000.

Several scholars have extensively analysed the various reform proposals and processes over the years. The studies by Wilfried von Bredow and Kerry Longhurst offer chronological accounts of the change in international security environment after 1990 and the subsequent attempts to adjust the Bundeswehr accordingly, whereas other scholars focus on analysing individual reform attempts only.²² Despite analysing different aspects, all studies ultimately emphasise the challenge of underfunding and the discrepancy between security political aspirations and financial reality. Jana Puglierin for instance greatly criticises that whilst the political elite wants to have the Bundeswehr present in every conflict, it simultaneously adheres to a doctrine of austerity measures. According to Puglierin, the impetus for reforms should not be derived from the Ministry of Finance, but rather from the security environment.²³ Although most of these studies regarding the Bundeswehr reforms focus on the substance, they will provide insights into the debates regarding the previous Bundeswehr reforms, which are necessary in order to analyse whether and to what extent the policy environment has changed nowadays.

It must be noted that academic literature focusing on the policy environment in which decisions for Bundeswehr reforms had been taken is very limited. Moreover, the few studies that do exist focus mainly on domestic issues, most notably the need to

²¹ Ulf von Krause, *Die Bundeswehr als Instrument Deutscher Außenpolitik* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2013).

²² See for instance Mary Elise Sarotte, "German Military Reform and European Security," *The Adelphi Papers* 41, no. 340 (July 2001): 1-79.; Martin Agüera, "Reform of the Bundeswehr Defense Policy Choices for the Next German Administration," *Comparative Strategy* 21, no. 3 (2002): 179-202; Franz-Josef Meiers, "The reform of the Bundeswehr: Adaptation or fundamental renewal?" *European Security* 10, no. 2, 1-22.

²³ Jana Puglierin and Svenja Sinjen, "Sparen als Staatsräson. Zur Debatte über die Bundeswehrreform," *Internationale Politik* 1 (January/February 2011): 57.

reduce public spending due to the financial crisis. These studies, for instance by Wilfried von Bredow, which take into account international factors, such as the ISAF operation as a driving force for the new reform process, do not address the latest developments since 2014. Therefore, there is a significant gap in the academic literature firstly, regarding the combination of international and domestic factors influencing the reform process and secondly, regarding the significant changes in the international security environment and within German politics since 2014. This research will be the first step in filling this gap.

One of the most recent publications discussing the reform initiation by Ursula von der Leyen and the debate on Germany's new responsibility is the book *Bundeswehr am Wendepunkt* [Bundeswehr at a turning point] by Franz-Josef Meiers. He analyses the situation of the Bundeswehr in 2017 and whether the initiated reforms are sufficient to fill the gaps in personnel, equipment and financing and locates future challenges for the reform process. Meiers identifies a great discrepancy between what German allies, most notably the US, demand, and what Germany is willing to do. He concludes that it is unlikely that "more responsibility" means participation in combat missions but rather greater engagement in conflict prevention. Robin Allers is similarly critical as to whether Germany is really able to take on more responsibility. Allers analyses Germany in the role of a framework nation arguing that this engagement can be rather interpreted as "an effort to avoid and circumvent an unwanted debate on leadership and hegemony."²⁴ He concludes that it nevertheless represents a step forward and away from German passivity and further represents a normalisation of Germany's relationship to its military.

Although Allers and Meiers consider the debate about Germany's new responsibility and the subsequent political expectations and commitments, both studies focus on very specific aspects. This thesis will fill the gap in the literature that combines the literature on the Bundeswehr reforms with the literature regarding Germany's security policy while taking into account international and domestic factors and the current debate about Germany's new responsibility.

Lastly, this research consults a great variety of documents relevant for this topic. Most notably the documents that outlined the foundation of the reform processes, such as the White Papers of 1994, 2006 and 2016; *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien* [Defence Policy Guidelines; hereinafter: VPR] of 1992, 2003 and 2011; reports of inquiry commissions regarding the need for reform such as the Weizsäcker Commission report or

²⁴ Robin Allers, "The Framework Nation: Can Germany lead on Security?" *International Affairs* 92, no. 5 (2006): 1168.

the Weise Commission Report. These documents will be consulted to gain insights into the official plans of the Ministry of Defence as well as the current state of capacity of the Bundeswehr.

3. Theoretical Framework

As the literature review reveals, all classical international relations theories attempt to explain the development of German security policy and its armed forces in order to grasp the paradox of German power. However, there is a significant gap in literature taking into consideration the interplay of international factors and domestic factors that allow or push for a change in security policy and the adjustment of the Bundeswehr. To be able to analyse domestic and international factors influencing Germany's security policy and the reform process of the Bundeswehr, this thesis will apply the analytical framework of "Compatibility and Consensus" developed by Wolfram F. Hanrieder.²⁵

Hanrieder argues that a linkage theory bridging the international and national system in regard to foreign policy analysis is highly important at times where national boundaries vanish.²⁶ This is particularly the case for Germany due to its deep integration into the European Union and NATO as well as its strong endorsement of multilateralism. Although the mixture of international and domestic analytical level can be difficult and even dangerous, Hanrieder argues there are two concepts permitting this correlation of internal and external dimensions as both are standards of feasibility. The first concept is compatibility, addressing the degree of feasibility of foreign policy objectives given the constraints and opportunities of the international environment. The second concept is consensus, which analyses the degree of "agreement on the ends and means of foreign policy on the domestic political scene", i.e. the feasibility on the domestic level.²⁷

Compatibility assesses the "strictures and opportunities" of the international environment and its external-operational contingencies. It can be measured by assessing the "reasonable chance of realisation" not only of a specific policy goal *vis-à-vis* the international system, but also the complementarity among different goals.²⁸ Consensus on

²⁵ Wolfram F. Hanrieder, "Compatibility and Consensus: A Proposal for the Conceptual Linkage of External and Internal Dimensions of Foreign Policy," *The American Political Science Review* 61, no. 4 (Dec., 1967): 971-982.

²⁶ Hanrieder, 974.

²⁷ *ibid*, 977.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 977-981.

the other hand focuses on the internal-motivational-psychological aspects of the domestic political level. It argues that foreign policy is always also influenced by historical experiences, political culture and personal idiosyncrasies of decision-makers. Although there are in theory no limits to policy aims on the domestic level, there might be “ethical restraints, inadequate perception of opportunities, realistic perception on external strictures.” In the long-run, consensus assesses whether the foreign policy objective can be pursued “without losing popular support and office” or causing fragmentation.²⁹

This research will apply Hanrieder’s analytical framework to the research question by asking whether or not Germany’s Bundeswehr reform efforts were/are compatible with the international system and whether they were/are supported by domestic consensus and how this has led to the growing discrepancy between political commitment and military down-sizing. According to Hanrieder, a policy objective is only feasible if both, the requirement of compatibility and consensus, are fulfilled. Given the lack of success of previous reforms to adapt the Bundeswehr to the requirements of the changing security environment, the thesis hypothesises that these categories are not fulfilled. However, it is possible that several factors influencing compatibility or consensus have changed and therefore make the current reform plans feasible. Possible factors that could influence the compatibility of the reforms can be for instance the international perception of a potentially strong German army yet also the allies’ encouragement and demands to participate in military missions. Consensus regarding the reform process is necessary on the political level, that is within the Government, the Ministry of Defence and the Bundestag, but also on societal level, that is the votership’s approval.

4. Methodology

This research conducts deductive qualitative research combining the disciplines of history, international relations and political science. This thesis is built on academic literature and primary sources, most notably the relevant reports and documents regarding reform plans, reports by the parliamentary commissioner of the armed forces to gain an insight into the state of the forces, election programmes of the parties as well as coalition agreements. Based on the theoretical framework, there are different methods allowing for measuring compatibility and consensus. Whether efforts to decrease the discrepancy

²⁹ Ibid., 972-977.

between growing political commitments and a reduction in military capacity have been internationally compatible will be analysed by looking at the international reactions towards German reform plans and military engagement, for instance via speeches of politicians or international newspaper articles. Domestic consensus is analysed by looking into election programmes and coalition agreements, which reflect the general opinion of the votership. This analysis also gives greater insight into the importance of defence topics within the society, as the election programmes reflect different strands of public opinion.

5. The Transformation of the Bundeswehr

The process of transforming the Bundeswehr is generally divided in three epochs. The transformation after reunification was commonly called “*Armee der Einheit*” [Army of Unity] which symbolises the union of the two armies and the new purpose of the armed forces of a unified Germany. The purpose of the Bundeswehr however, continued to change over time and by the end of the millennium the army began to be referred to as “*Armee im Einsatz.*” The translation of this concept is ambiguous because on the one hand it can be translated as *Army in Action*, but also as *Interventionist Army*, with the latter strongly emphasising the purpose of intervening abroad. However, both translations symbolise the new and broader purpose of the Bundeswehr and the shift away from territorial defence to conflict intervention outside of its territory. In 2009, an enormous restructuring effort was made – the “*Neuausrichtung*” [reorientation]. The following analyses of the Bundeswehr reform efforts are divided along these concepts respectively.

5.1 Armee der Einheit

The end of the Cold War and German reunification was without doubt one of the most decisive points in modern German history and international politics. Almost overnight, the entire political and security environment had changed. which posed great challenges to Germany, also in regard to its armed forces. Firstly, a united Germany only needed one army. Therefore, the Bundeswehr had to absorb the East German National People’s Army [Nationale Volksarmee; hereinafter: NVA].³⁰ This was a particularly difficult task given the ideological differences and that both armies had perceived each other as enemies just

³⁰ Wilfried von Bredow, *Militär und Demokratie* (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2008).

a year earlier. Moreover, both armies were structured differently, which led to a highly complex and costly restructuring. On 4 October 1990, the incorporation of 50,000 NVA soldiers (out of 98,000 at that time in the German Democratic Republic) began. Consequently, the newly unified Bundeswehr comprised approximately 600,000 men. However, the second challenge constituted the requirements of the Two Plus Four Agreement. To alleviate Gorbachev's fear of a strong united Germany, Chancellor Kohl committed to reduce the size of the German armed forces to 370,000 until 1994.³¹ This reinforced the already challenging task of absorbing the NVA. Thirdly, the Bundeswehr had to redefine its purpose. The Bundeswehr's sole purpose for decades was deterrence and being prepared for a potential escalation of the Cold War. However, once this imminent threat was gone, it had to find a new *raison d'être*. On top of that, very soon after reunification, Iraq invaded Kuwait, and Germany was asked by its allies to contribute militarily to the Gulf War. All these challenges revealed the urgency of adapting the Bundeswehr as quickly as possible to the new circumstances.

5.1.1 1990 – 1994: A New Raison D'être

The first parliamentary election in a unified Germany took place on 2 December 1990. Looking at the party programmes of this election reveals the significant different positions of the major parties, which also reflect the divided opinion of the voters. In particular to understand the starting point of the transformation of the Bundeswehr and the difficulties of this adaptation process, this section investigates the election programmes and different party positions more carefully.

The CDU's election programme was relatively cautious in its statements regarding the Bundeswehr and in particular regarding its future role. However, it clearly stated a commitment that Germany would contribute to European security "with a smaller, but modern Bundeswehr" and by this "will fulfil its responsibility for Europe."³² It further noted that "NATO and the Bundeswehr remain indispensable." In order to fulfil this responsibility, the CDU stated that it wished to create the necessary constitutional requirements soon.³³ The FDP programme provided more detail regarding security and even an independent chapter on the Bundeswehr. For the FDP "the role of the armed forces remains to prevent wars and to secure peace." It further noted that the tasks would

³¹ Der Spiegel, "Kleinkrämer in Uniform," no. 35 (27 August 1990), 26-27.

³² All direct quotations from German sources in this paper have been translated by the author of this thesis and do not represent an official translation.

³³ CDU, *Ja zu Deutschland – Ja zur Zukunft* (Bonn: 1990), 21.

remain the same, but that the *how* would change due to the current change in circumstances requiring a change in structure and scope of the forces. For instance, it would be possible to further reduce the Bundeswehr below 370,000.³⁴ The FDP stated that Germany “will fulfil its growing responsibility towards the settlement of regional and internal conflicts through political and economic measures within the framework of the UN and the EC,” but precluded any out-of-area deployment.³⁵ Both, the CDU and FDP wanted to maintain conscription but reduce it to 12 months.³⁶

In contrast, the SPD advocated for a drastic reduction in defence spending by DM 9bn and to reduce it in the medium-term by half. It further called for reducing the size of personnel by half, for stopping the procurement of major weapon systems, and for reducing military institutions. Whereas the FDP and CDU clearly committed themselves to NATO, the SPD considered military blocs obsolete and wished to dissolve NATO. It further rejected any military operations outside of NATO and WEU territory but did not make any references regarding the future role of the Bundeswehr nor did the SPD state anything about adaptation or transformation.³⁷ The Greens were even more radical in their position and demanded a world without military blocs or armies and a society without weapons. The Greens wanted to break with NATO if necessary, abolish the Bundeswehr and replace the defence budget with a conversion budget.³⁸ The PDS similarly demanded full demilitarisation until 2000. It claimed that Germany and NATO abused the reunification to increase its military weight and that the previous reluctance to participate in military intervention was consciously reduced step-by-step.³⁹

This brief summary of the election programmes of the major parties in 1990 reveals enormous differences among the parties. It further highlights that the time after reunification was a time of such significant change that nobody knew in which direction everything would develop. The centre-left/left parties idealised taking this as an opportunity for demilitarisation. The centre-right parties were (in hindsight) more realistic and remained committed to NATO and their partners. The CDU and FDP were aware that after years of support by its allies, Germany could not just *not* contribute militarily to international security, albeit CDU was particularly cautious not to make any concrete

³⁴ FDP, *Das liberale Deutschland* (Sankt Augustin: 1990), 28.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 28; CDU, *Ja zu Deutschland – Ja zur Zukunft*, 21.

³⁷ SPD, *Der Neue Weg. Ökologisch, sozial, wirtschaftlich stark. Regierungsprogramm 1990-1994* (Bonn: 1990), 21-22.

³⁸ Die Grünen, *Das Programm zur 1. Gesamtdeutschen Wahl 1990* (Bonn: 1990), 18-20.

³⁹ Die Linke Liste/PDS, *Wahlprogramm zur Bundestagswahl 1990* (Bonn: 1990), 8.

statements in order to avoid alienating their votership, as not only the parties but also the population was greatly divided. This fundamental disagreement regarding the question in which direction Germany would move impeded constructive reform efforts as initially fundamental questions had to be resolved: do we keep an army? What is the role of this army? And what is the legal foundation of this role?

The election resulted in a coalition by the CDU/CSU and FDP under Chancellor Helmut Kohl. The cautiousness of first waiting to see in which direction the public opinion and the international environment develops and the clear prioritisation of more urgent policies during the reunification process is reflected in the coalition agreement. The coalition agreement does not contain anything on the Bundeswehr or on security. It is only briefly addressed as part of finance policy stating that “due to foreign and security political developments the defence spending for the German armed forces would be significantly below the initially projected level” Moreover, the defence budget would be reduced in the following years and also the incorporation of the NVA into the Bundeswehr had to be concluded in the most cost-efficient way.⁴⁰

The most urgent security question of this legislative period became the question of the constitutionality of out-of-area deployment. The parties in the parliament and also the coalition government were divided on this, which led to several emotional debates in the Bundestag. However, the international environment did not have regard for Germany’s domestic issues. Domestic consensus for adapting the Bundeswehr was not given however, internationally it was demanded. Already in August 1990, even before the final version of the Two Plus Four Agreement was signed, the US unofficially inquired whether Germany could contribute militarily to the Gulf Crisis. The German newspaper *Der Spiegel* reported from this time that this put Chancellor Kohl in a difficult position, because he did not wish to disappoint the US, after they have been through “thick and thin” by supporting the German reunification process. Kohl wanted to send more troops, however the opposition and the coalition partner FDP warned Kohl that this could not be done without changing the constitution accordingly.⁴¹ Ultimately, international pressure was too large from the allies and in January 1991, Chancellor Kohl agreed to send 18 Alpha-Jets and 270 soldiers. Later this commitment was further extended. In total, the Bundeswehr made available 3,100 soldiers, which at this point was the greatest

⁴⁰ CDU, *Koalitionsvereinbarung für die 12. Legislaturperiode des Deutschen Bundestages* (Bonn: 1991), 15.

⁴¹ *Der Spiegel*, “Wir müssen erwachsen werden,” no. 34 (03 September 1990), 121.

mobilisation of German soldiers outside of Germany since World War II. This was also the first time the Bundeswehr was sent into a crisis.⁴² The struggle regarding the decision whether or not to participate in the Gulf War was a decisive turning point in Germany's security policy. At this point, it was realised that it cannot continue its culture of reticence, if it does not wish to isolate itself internationally. It was therefore a significant push for Germany in a direction that would lead it to increase its military commitments. However, given the clear rejection by SPD, Greens and PDS to send the Bundeswehr outside of NATO territory, the next years were marked by an emotional debate about the interpretation of the German constitution. The Constitutional Court ended this debate by deciding in July 1994 that the German basic law allows the Bundeswehr to deploy outside of NATO territory, if it has an international mandate and parliamentary approval. This ultimately paved the way for the need to adapt the Bundeswehr to a new range of tasks, because an army with the sole purpose of national and territorial defence requires different structures, weapons and training than an army that is regularly sent abroad for crisis intervention.

Besides the strong demands of Germany's allies to participate in the Gulf War, other international developments pushed for the need to adapt the Bundeswehr, too. In November 1991, the Heads of State and Government agreed on the *New Strategic Concept* of NATO. This new concept widened the definition of security by including a new focus on crisis management and conflict prevention. Moreover, it required that the Allied forces "must be adapted to provide capabilities that can contribute to protecting peace, managing crises that affect the security of Alliance members, and preventing war, while retaining at all times the means to defend, if necessary, all Allied territory and to restore peace."⁴³ The overall size of the forces were to be reduced, but required greater flexibility and mobility, as well as closer cooperation to increase cost effectiveness. Moreover, the forces were to be divided in rapid reaction forces, main defence forces, and augmentation forces.⁴⁴ Consequently, also Germany was required to make changes to its forces accordingly.

Lastly, in 1992 the member states of the WEU agreed on the Petersberg Tasks. During the Gulf Crisis, the European states became aware of their "fragmented and

⁴² Der Spiegel, "Die Deutschen an die Front!," no. 6 (04 February 1991), 18-22.

⁴³ NATO, "The Alliance's New Strategic Concept," 8 November 1991, last accessed 13 June 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm.

⁴⁴ NATO, "The Alliance's New Strategic Concept," 8 November 1991, last accessed 13 June 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_23847.htm.

hesitant responses to the conflicts in the Gulf” and also that they are only “marginally [capable of] military intervention during hostilities.”⁴⁵ This was the start of a development where the US increasingly asked for more burden-sharing with the European partners but also where the EU increasingly became aimed at becoming more independent from the US. Consequently, the Petersberg Tasks, although in 1992 only tentatively, was another push for a change in the European security environment that changed the demands of the Bundeswehr and added another reason for the adaptation of the Bundeswehr. If the EU wished to increasingly emancipate itself more from the US military, the Bundeswehr would have to contribute to this. Note that at the time of the Petersberg tasks, there was not yet any domestic consensus in Germany on whether the Bundeswehr should be allowed to participate in military missions abroad and neither had the Constitutional Court ruled on the constitutionality of this matter yet. This nevertheless marked a likely direction of where the Bundeswehr would go and therefore in which way it would have to be adapted.

Given the international pressure and rapid change in circumstances, the German Ministry of Defence certainly attempted to start a reform process and first of all define the role and task of the Bundeswehr taking into account the international development. Defence Minister Stoltenberg defined the Bundeswehr tasks in a strategy paper in 1992, commonly referred to as Stoltenberg Paper, which was mainly written by Inspector General of the Bundeswehr General Naumann. For the first time, this paper tried to define “vital German interests,” and was therefore immediately criticised. Among others, the Stoltenberg Paper stated as one of Germany’s security aims “to secure the free world trade and access to strategic resources,” which was “too far” for Foreign Minister Genscher, who pressured Stoltenberg to pull back the paper. Moreover, Genscher criticised that the paper would not sufficiently focus on national defence. Stoltenberg also requested DM 50bn per year for investment in armament until 2005 for procurement projects he had promised to the Bundeswehr. However, the defence budget for 1995 had already been reduced to DM 48bn. Stoltenberg’s attempt to advocate for out-of-area deployment was furthermore not well received by coalition partner FDP and faced strong rejection by the opposition.⁴⁶ The Stoltenberg Paper revealed the differences in opinion

⁴⁵ Neil Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union* 7th Edition (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 381.

⁴⁶ Der Spiegel, “Überholte Denkweise,” no. 9 (24 February 1992), 107-109.

regarding the role of the Bundeswehr, on what it should look like and the difficulty of defining German security policy.

Stoltenberg's successor Volker R ue published the VPR in 1992. Overall, the VPR were very similar to the Stoltenberg Paper however, more cautious regarding statements on German security interests. The VPR set a new structure for the Bundeswehr based on the new NATO Strategic Concept in main defence forces, rapid reaction forces and augmentation forces. It put a greater emphasis on crisis reaction instead of national defence and clearly stated that the development and improvement in quality of the rapid reaction forces was top priority.⁴⁷ However, shortly after the reform plans were published, Finance Minister Waigel cut the defence budget and demanded a retrenchment of DM 563m for 1993 alone and recommend another budget cut of DM 5bn for 1994, which significantly hampered R ue's possibility to build up and adequately equip the new rapid reaction forces and make the Bundeswehr ready for deployments abroad.⁴⁸ What followed was a period of great uncertainty and planning chaos within the Bundeswehr, as neither reform plans were properly implemented nor was any financing secured.⁴⁹

In April 1994, the Ministry of Defence published a new White Paper. This was a controversial move as the publication was just months before the expected ruling of the constitutional court regarding the out-of-area deployment question. The White Paper was substantively more concrete than the VPR and significantly diminished the controversial part regarding Germany's security interests. It focused more on the tasks of the Bundeswehr, which are to be found outside of NATO territory and in UN peace-keeping missions, despite the absence of the constitutional ruling at this time. Nevertheless, it remained very vague on the financing, current state and the future size of the armed forces. In general, it was criticised as being martial in some parts, and too vague in other parts.⁵⁰ Overall, it sketched out possible roles of the Bundeswehr however given the uncertainty regarding the constitutional ruling, the impact of the White Paper was very limited.

Constitutional court ruling or not, Minister R ue set new conceptual guidelines for the Bundeswehr planning on 8 July 1994, which reduced troops to 335,000, including 135,000 conscripts and 50,000 soldiers for the rapid reaction forces. The medium-term

⁴⁷ BMVg, *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien 1992* (Bonn: 26 November 1992), 16-18.

⁴⁸ Der Spiegel, "Innerer Kollaps," no. 48 (29 November 1993), 25-26; Der Spiegel, "Das h lt keine Armee aus," no. 12 (22 March 1993), 86.

⁴⁹ Johann Adolf Graf von Kielmansegg, "Verteidigungsetat als Verf ugungsmasse," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* no. 43 (20 February 1993), 6.

⁵⁰ Der Spiegel, "Schwammige Lage," no. 12 (21 March 1994), 26-27.

defence budget was reduced to DM 47.5bn and conscription was reduced to 10 months plus 2 months stand-by. In this way, the Bundeswehr should become capable of contributing to multinational operations in the framework of the UN, NATO, OSCE and EU/WEU.⁵¹ Only few days after the publication of the new conceptual guidelines, the Constitutional Court ruled that “the deployment of the Bundeswehr in peacekeeping operations was permissible within the framework of systems of collective security, as long as such systems were ‘strictly bound to the preservation of peace.’”⁵² Moreover, it required parliamentary approval for every Bundeswehr deployment. This ruling paved the way for a new purpose of the Bundeswehr.

This legislative period was marked by confrontation in parliament, the debate of fundamental and constitutional questions and great uncertainty regarding the future direction and financing of the Bundeswehr. This and the immense costs of reunification hindered the success of adapting the Bundeswehr accordingly to the new challenges it faced. At the same time, the new NATO Strategic Concept, the Gulf War and the early start of ESDP set way to greater military commitments of the Bundeswehr, and on top of that, much faster than the domestic debate, which was occupied with the fundamental debate regarding normalisation or demilitarisation,⁵³ could address this path. This period is significant to understand how the discrepancy between rising military commitments and decreasing military capability has emerged. However, although Minister Rühle’s reforms were only limitedly successful, he achieved one thing: he slowly “re-accustomed” the German population to the thought of sending its army abroad to intervene in crises, a fundamental necessity for further reform efforts.

5.1.2 1994 – 1998: Increasing Commitments

The party programmes for the 1994 parliamentary election were agreed on prior to the constitutional court ruling in July. Consequently, the programmes reflected again the different positions regarding this question. The CDU in fact listed the content of the new Bundeswehr conceptual guidelines and acknowledged a broader approach to security.⁵⁴ The FDP advocated among others for clarity regarding the future task of the forces and

⁵¹ BMVg, *Armee der Einheit* (Bonn: 2000), 21-22.

⁵² August Pradetto, “The Polity of German Foreign Policy: Changes since Unification?” in *Germany’s Uncertain Power*, ed. Hanns Maull (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 19-20.

⁵³ Arne Freiherr von Neubeck, “Die Transformation der Bundeswehr von der Verteidigungs- zur Einsatzarmee” (Doctoral Thesis, Julius-Maximilians-Universität zu Würzburg, 2007), 208.

⁵⁴ CDU, *Wir Sichern Deutschlands Zukunft. Regierungsprogramm von CDU und CSU* (Bonn: 1994), 52.

that the defence budget and the size of the forces should reflect the requirements of the Bundeswehr.⁵⁵ Moreover, it listed priorities, such as the establishment of the rapid reaction forces and the creation of capable air transport.⁵⁶ The SPD acknowledged the expectations and hopes of allies regarding Germany's contribution to security and peace however, it also stated that it wanted to prevent the Bundeswehr from becoming a freely available interventionist army.⁵⁷ Although still cautious regarding military topics, the SPD changed its tone by supporting cooperation with NATO (whereas it wanted to dissolve NATO four years earlier). The election programme by the Greens constituted overall a harsh criticism on the government which "avoids the question of Germany's role in the world (...) by trying to create facts" by sending troops into conflicts.⁵⁸ The Greens continued to reject any participation in NATO, WEU and UN peace-keeping missions or multinational corps and advocated for the dissolution of the Bundeswehr.⁵⁹ The PDS also clearly rejected out-of-area deployment.⁶⁰ The coalition of CDU/CSU/FDP under Chancellor Kohl was re-elected and this time the Bundeswehr was specifically part of the coalition agreement, by stating that "we want a Bundeswehr that remains capable for defence, but that can also unrestrictedly contribute to international crisis management."⁶¹ The coalition agreement can be seen as a clear commitment to out-of-area deployment and thus the new direction of the Bundeswehr, although it did not specify the exact task or scope of the missions. Nevertheless, in comparison to the previous coalition agreement, the role and position of the Bundeswehr had been more clarified.

In August 1992, Germany and in particular Defence Minister R  he, had "categorically ruled out its participation in any actions" in Bosnia.⁶² Two years and a constitutional court ruling later, NATO once more requested German participation in Bosnia in November 1994.⁶³ This request led to a great debate as sending German soldiers to the Balkan was considered a great taboo after WWII. R  he however, wanted

⁵⁵ FDP, *Liberal Denken. Leistung Wahlen* (Sankt Augustin: 1994), 131.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁵⁷ SPD, *Reformen f  r Deutschland* (Bonn: 1994), 72, 77.

⁵⁸ B  ndnis 90/Die Gr  nen, *Programm zur Bundestagswahl 1994* (Mannheim: 1994), 71.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

⁶⁰ PDS, *Opposition gegen Sozialabbau und Rechtsruck. Wahlprogramm der PDS 1994* (Berlin: March 1994), 20.

⁶¹ CDU, *Das vereinte Deutschland zukunftsf  hig machen. Die Koalitionsvereinbarung von CDU, CSU und FDP f  r die 13. Legislaturperiode des Deutschen Bundestages* (Bonn: November 1994), 43.

⁶² Adrian Bridge, "The Bosnia crisis: Germany rules out Balkans war role," *The Independent*, 8 August 1992, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-bosnia-crisis-germany-rules-out-balkans-war-role-1539117.html>.

⁶³ Andrew Marshall, "German jets asked to help NATO in Bosnia," *The Independent*, 2 December 1994, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/german-jets-asked-to-help-nato-in-bosnia-1388982.html>.

to check the allied request⁶⁴ and pled solidarity to NATO, which was highly welcomed by the allies and commented as ‘historical step’ for example by the British newspaper *The Independent*.⁶⁵ In June 1995, the parliament approved to send medical staff, transport planes and Tornados to Bosnia to support the UN troops. Although the deployment was approved by parliamentary majority, which suggests a step towards greater domestic coherence, the vote with 386 in favour and 258 against still symbolises great domestic opposition towards the Bundeswehr’s move towards becoming an interventionist army.⁶⁶ The vote was highly “welcomed by the United States, France and other German allies that have long pressed Bonn to commit itself militarily in a manner commensurate with its huge political and economic influence.”⁶⁷ This created a new dimension for the Bundeswehr. It was the first time the Bundeswehr was sent abroad for more than humanitarian assistance and hence marked another increase in military commitments.

During the decision-making process regarding Bosnia it also became apparent that now after the Constitutional Court had ruled, Germany could no longer “hide” behind its constitution and preclude participation in international missions. Moreover, the continuous integration of German forces into multinational corps, which were at first designed to preclude unilateral military action by a united Germany, now worked in a reverse logic, as *Der Spiegel* noted: The multinational corps do not prevent Germany from participating in military action, but force them to participate whether they want it or not because without the German forces within the corps, the corps do not function properly.⁶⁸ This integration and Germany’s participation in international missions, also underlined that Germany’s force structure needed to be complementary to its allies. The Ministry of Defence therefore focused on the creation of the main defence forces, which were planned to be ready until the end of 1998, and the rapid reaction forces, of which the first part was planned to be ready by October 1997 and the rest until 1998 and 1999 respectively.⁶⁹

Two more important developments for the Bundeswehr took place in this legislative period. Firstly, the establishment of the *Führungszentrum der Bundeswehr*,

⁶⁴ *Der Spiegel*, “Wie in Somalia,” no. 49 (05 December 1994), 18-21.

⁶⁵ *Der Spiegel*, “Kein Hurra geschrien,” no. 51 (19 December 1994), 19.

⁶⁶ Steve Crawshaw, “Germany vote to send planes,” *The Independent*, 1 July 1995, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/germans-vote-to-send-planes-1589195.html>.

⁶⁷ Alan Cowell, “Germany to send forces to Balkans to support UN,” *New York Times* (27 June 1995), p. 00003.

⁶⁸ *Der Spiegel*, “Kein Hurra geschrien,” no. 51 (19 December 1994), 21.

⁶⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, *Antwort der Bundesregierung, Drucksache 13/8473* (Bonn: 09 September 1997), 14, last accessed 13 June 2019, <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/13/084/1308473.pdf>.

which was a leadership centre placed above all forces supporting the Minister and served as a compromise for not having a *Generalstab* [General Staff]. Whether or not Germany, now after the constitutional court ruling, should have its own General Staff was another emotional debate, because the mistrust in an independent military was still great. Therefore, the creation of this new leadership structure was a very cautious attempt to find a compromise.⁷⁰ Another major development was the establishment of the *Kommando Spezialkräfte* (KSK), i.e. the German special forces. Its main aim was to rescue and evacuate German citizens abroad and to free hostages. This establishment was again greatly criticised, in particular by the Greens for the government would be able to send the KSK without parliamentary approval. Consequently, the Greens wanted to dissolve the KSK.⁷¹

To conclude this legislative period, one can say that the developments and German participation in the Balkans raised the military commitments of the Bundeswehr to a new level. At the same time, the need to adapt the Bundeswehr more to this type of mission became more and more apparent. Therefore, Defence Minister Rühle continued to make changes, for instance by continuing the restructuring of the forces in main defence forces and rapid reaction forces and by establishing the special forces. The weak compromise regarding the *Führungszentrum* once more revealed how limited the reforms were and how the reforms were still influenced by historical experiences. Moreover, the defence budget continued to decline. Whereas in 1996 the budget was DM 48.24bn, in 1997 it was already only DM 46.3bn.⁷² As a result, more savings had to be done. However, as Minister Rühle did not want to open the question of closing locations, which would create great problems with the parliament as it may have big impacts on their constituencies, the savings were mainly done in procurement.⁷³ A decision, which, despite reforms in structure and leadership, increased the discrepancy in commitments and capabilities, because the Bundeswehr urgently needed better equipment. However, domestically, the opinion about the Bundeswehr was still too divided, as the demands of the Greens to stop the setting up of the rapid reaction forces and the demand to dissolve the KSK were presented.

⁷⁰ Von Neubeck, 276.

⁷¹ Deutscher Bundestag, *Änderungsantrag, Drucksache 13/6256* (Bonn: 26 November 1996), p. 5, last accessed 13 June 2019, <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btd/13/062/1306256.pdf>.

⁷² Deutscher Bundestag, *Drucksache 13/6256*, p. 5.

⁷³ Von Neubeck, 272-273.

5.2 Armee im Einsatz

5.2.1 1998-2002: Renewal from the Ground Up

The tone of the election programmes of CDU/CSU and FDP had not changed much in this legislative period. The CDU applauded the good work in Bosnia and noted that the party would “ensure the requirements for a modern and effective Bundeswehr.”⁷⁴ The FDP also praised the Bundeswehr on how it had faced new challenges however, also demanded a reform of the structure aiming at an organisation in combat and training forces and an increase of the investment part of the defence budget by at least 30% as well as more efficiency through rationalisation and privatisation.⁷⁵ The Greens also did not change their written position and demanded among others a suspension of the VPR 1992, which state that the preservation of free world trade and unrestricted access to markets and resources is a national interest.⁷⁶ Moreover, the programme advocated for the dissolution of the rapid reaction forces and the KSK and a step-by-step dissolution of the Bundeswehr.⁷⁷ On the other hand, the Greens demanded a re-training of the military ready for peace-keeping missions. This election programme by the Greens was very clearly against any kind of military and rejected any attempt to transform the Bundeswehr to a broader range of tasks. The election programme of the SPD once more moved away from its originally strictly anti-militarist stance from the beginning of the 1990s and acknowledged that the “Bundeswehr renders an indispensable service to our society.”⁷⁸ Moreover, it noted that through an improvement of political leadership, the SPD would ensure a good reputation of “our” Bundeswehr, which constituted quite a change in language to previous election programmes. However, in comparison to for example the FDP, the programme did not contain any concrete proposals for transformation and was, albeit positive, primarily vague and general. The PDS rejected the current restructuring and demanded the immediate withdrawal from the Balkans.⁷⁹

After sixteen years of Chancellor Kohl being in power, this election resulted in a red-green coalition under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. Did this change in government suggest that the citizens rejected the security policy and Bundeswehr adaptation attempts of the previous government? In particular, since the SPD much more tentatively

⁷⁴ CDU/CSU, *Wahlplattform* (Bonn/München: 1998), 31.

⁷⁵ FDP, *Es ist Ihre Wahl* (Sankt Augustin: 1998), 101-102.

⁷⁶ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Grün ist der Wechsel* (Bonn: 1998), 147.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 146-147.

⁷⁸ SPD, *Arbeit, Innovation und Gerechtigkeit* (Bonn: 1998), 76.

⁷⁹ PDS, *Für den politischen Richtungswechsel!*, 51,52.

advocated for this adaptation process and the Greens clearly rejected it? It is rather unlikely that this topic has played a significant role in the election for the major topics of the election programme were unemployment, tax and pension reform. The unemployment rate in Germany had risen dramatically since 1996 and Schröder presented himself as innovator during the campaign, whereas Chancellor Kohl represented the *status quo*.⁸⁰ Germany at this time had great economic trouble, mainly due to the high costs of reunification and had been regarded by the foreign press as the sick man of Europe.⁸¹ Consequently, defence and security was considerably low on the agenda of this legislative period.

Nevertheless, the coalition agreement announced the plan to set up a commission that would analyse task, scope, structure, training and equipment of the Bundeswehr and would make recommendations regarding options of a future structure until 2000. Before the conclusion of this commission there would not be any budget decisions as this could alter the result of their findings.⁸² With this announcement, the new government showed that defence was on its agenda but not its priority. Instead it bought “time in its consideration of defence issues while it began planning for what it viewed as more pressing issues – tax and pension reform.”⁸³

New Defence Minister Scharping set up a commission under the leadership of former president Weizsäcker (“Weizsäcker-Commission”). The report was presented in May 2000 and used the slogan “*Erneuerung von Grund auf*”, meaning ‘renewal from the ground up.’ The report concluded that the Bundeswehr was “too big, ill-composed, and increasingly out of step with the times. In its current structure, the Bundeswehr has no future.”⁸⁴ Moreover, it noted that the current defence budget could not provide for a modernisation and international commitments could not be fulfilled in the long-term. The forces were already now overstrained.⁸⁵ Therefore, the Bundeswehr would not need more “adaptation” but a complete renewal. The report outlined on 179 pages very detailed and extensive reform recommendations that were widely considered to be “radical”– at least

⁸⁰ Süddeutsche Zeitung, “Die Bonner Zeitwende,” 08 October 2019, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/rot-gruene-bundesregierung-schroeder-fischer-1.535719>.

⁸¹ The Economist, “The Sick Man of the Euro,” 3 June 1999, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.economist.com/special/1999/06/03/the-sick-man-of-the-euro>.

⁸² Koalitionsvereinbarung zwischen der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands und Bündnis 90/Die GRÜNEN, *Aufbruch und Erneuerung – Deutschlands Weg ins 21. Jahrhundert* (Bonn: October 1998), 46.

⁸³ Sarotte, 34.

⁸⁴ Kommission “Gemeinsame Sicherheit und Zukunft der Bundeswehr,” *Bericht der Kommission an die Bundesregierung* (Berlin/Bonn: 23 May 2000), 13.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

by German standards.⁸⁶ Some of the major recommendations made included a significant reduction of the overall size to 240,000 troops but a significant increase in operational forces from currently 60,000 to 140,000.⁸⁷ These numbers reflect the recommendation to a re-orientation towards the most likely tasks of crisis prevention and crisis management, although the main priority of the Bundeswehr was to remain territorial defence. Moreover, it suggested to reduce the number of conscripts from 80,000 to 30,000 and service time to 10 months, to give more responsibility to the Inspector General, to privatise some services for e.g. logistics and procurement, and to allow women participation in the Bundeswehr.⁸⁸ Lastly, it urged a modernisation of equipment and therefore recommended to continuously increase the investment part of the defence budget by additional DM 2-3bn yearly.⁸⁹

Interestingly, Defence Minister Scharping simultaneously asked Inspector General von Kirchbach to draft an internal report, too. This report was presented on the same day as the Weizsäcker report. Von Kirchbach's report had a "much more business-as-usual approach to the future of the Bundeswehr than the Weizsäcker proposals."⁹⁰ However, von Kirchbach also recommended an increase in lighter and more deployable operational forces of 157,000, of which 87,000 would be rapid reaction forces and 70,000 augmentation forces.⁹¹ He set the overall size at 290,000⁹² and proposed a reduction of conscription to nine months, although he aimed at maintaining 85,000 conscripts, a much larger number than the 30,000 conscripts suggested by the Weizsäcker report.⁹³

Although Scharping already commissioned two reports, he also presented his own report in May 2000. These three different proposals highlight the disagreement and the difference in perception regarding the need for reform. There was no consensus on a common vision on how the adaptation of the Bundeswehr should exactly look like. Scharping's report combined some proposals of both reports, such as maintaining conscription for future unpredictability. He demanded 150,000 operational forces, of

⁸⁶ Sarotte, 37.

⁸⁷ Kommission "Gemeinsame Sicherheit und Zukunft der Bundeswehr," *Bericht der Kommission*, 15.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁹⁰ Sarotte, 39.

⁹¹ BMVg, *Eckwerte für die konzeptionelle und planerische Weiterentwicklung der Streitkräfte* (Bonn: 23 May 2000), 34.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 37.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 38.

which 80,000 were rapid reaction forces,⁹⁴ 80,000 conscripts and an overall size of 255,000.⁹⁵ His proposals were approved by the cabinet just two weeks later and in January 2001 a more detailed plan, the *Feinausplanung*, was presented. This plan envisaged a total size of 285,000 soldiers. It would abolish the previous division of rapid reaction forces, main defence forces and augmentation forces and would instead have deployable forces of 150,000 soldiers, which are assisted by the basic organisation comprised of 108,000. A new service branch was established, the Joint Support Service. Several locations were planned to be closed by the end of February 2001, which could produce savings of DM 200m. Women were allowed to participate in the Bundeswehr and the “*Gesellschaft für Entwicklung, Beschaffung und Betrieb*” (GEBB) was founded.⁹⁶ The GEBB was an organisation that could combine industry, economy and the Bundeswehr to modernise the Bundeswehr through more cooperation with the private sector.⁹⁷ Lastly, in July 2001, the *Einsatzführungskommando* replaced the *Führungszentrum*, and which would be responsible for all branches of the armed forces and for the planning and execution of deployments.⁹⁸

The implementation of the reforms was considered urgent as several international developments demanded faster adaptation during this legislative period. Firstly, the experiences in Kosovo revealed several deficits in capabilities and a greater need for mobility and lighter deployable forces. In an interview in May 2000, Defence Minister Scharping stated that the Bundeswehr was only limitedly deployable.⁹⁹ Secondly, Germany was required to fulfil the requirements of NATO’s Defence Capabilities Initiative (DCI), which was agreed on in 1999. This initiative demanded European partners to “fulfil specific goals in five areas: deployability and mobility; sustainability and logistics; NATO consultation, command and control; effective engagement; and survivability of forces and infrastructure.”¹⁰⁰ Thirdly, EU member states agreed at the Helsinki Summit in 1999 on the *Helsinki Headline Goals*, to set up a deployable European force of “50,000-60,000 troops, ready to go within 60 days and sustainable in-theatre for a year” in order to fulfil the Petersberg Tasks.¹⁰¹ For Germany, this meant that

⁹⁴ Der Bundesminister der Verteidigung, *Die Bundeswehr – sicher ins 21. Jahrhundert. Eckpfeiler für eine Erneuerung von Grund auf*, 2000, 25.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁹⁶ Sarotte, 46-47.

⁹⁷ Der Spiegel, “Ein paar schnelle Mark,” no. 49 (04 December 2000), 54-56.

⁹⁸ von Neubeck, 385.

⁹⁹ von Krause, 346; Der Spiegel, “Wir sind nur bedingt einsatzfähig” no. 22 (29 May 2000), 30-34.

¹⁰⁰ Sarotte, 59.

¹⁰¹ Sarotte, 54.

it had to reform its military quickly, as the overall success and future of the ESDP relied on the major contributors, i.e. France, the UK and Germany.¹⁰²

Given this increase in international integration and reliance on Germany's role in international security, the reform proposals by Scharping were overall welcomed by German allies. However, although the reforms indicated that Germany was on the right track to decrease its deficiencies and were quite ambitious for German standards, the reforms went not as far as hoped by its allies. The *New York Times*, for example, noted that NATO had put pressure on Germany for some time now and demanded to professionalise its army focusing on rapid reaction and deployable forces. With the Weizsäcker report, hopes went up that Germany would finally professionalise its army, thus, the "awkward compromise"¹⁰³ by the Weizsäcker proposal to maintain 30,000 conscripts was a disappointment, although it at least signalled that Germany moved into the direction of relying less on conscription. Ultimately, however, the final number of conscripts in Scharping's reform plans was set at 80,000, revealing once more that Germany was not ready for such "radical" proposals by the Weizsäcker Commission, although they would have been internationally welcomed. Moreover, there were some concerns regarding the prioritisation of tasks. Longhurst summarised the problem:

German security thinking appeared to be caught between two eras, with plans for the reform of the Bundeswehr exhibiting the need to prepare for national and alliance territorial defence, while at the same time creating an enhanced readiness to partake in peace support operations. [...] German thinking about security remained stymied by old preoccupations that manifested themselves in Scharping's defence reforms. The effects of this were captured neatly by commentator Francois Heisbourg, who used the term "Germany's Non-Revolution in Military Affairs", decrying Germany for not doing enough, especially in the areas of defence spending, reducing the size of the Bundeswehr and addressing the question of conscription.¹⁰⁴

However, the main point of criticism concerned the unrealistic financing plan. Scharping was optimistic to finance his plans solely through increased efficiency, rationalisation, privatisation, public-private partnerships and a redirection of existing funds.¹⁰⁵ Bernhard Gertz, president of the Bundeswehr Association, harshly criticised Scharping's plans. He argued that Scharping tried to hide the fact that he would have DM 500m less for 2001

¹⁰² Sarotte, 11.

¹⁰³ Roger Cohen, "Germans Plan To Trim Army And Rely Less On the Draft," *New York Times*, 24 May 2000, p. A00005, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/05/24/world/germans-plan-to-trim-army-and-rely-less-on-the-draft.html>.

¹⁰⁴ Kerry Longhurst, "Endeavors to Restructure the Bundeswehr: The Reform of the German Armed Forces 1990-2003," *Defense and Security Analysis* 21, no. 1 (July 2010): 21-35.

¹⁰⁵ Longhurst, *Endeavors*, 29.

than in the previous year. Even if his plans of rationalisation and selling Bundeswehr property would lead to some savings, this could not fill the financing gap sufficiently. And even if Scharping could manage to start implementing plans, the latest by 2002 or 2003 the budget would have been reduced even more and at this point it would become apparent that Scharping's reform plans were nothing but 'hot air.'¹⁰⁶ In total, the defence budget had been reduced by 25% since 1990. Indeed, already by the end of 2000 the Ministry of Defence was concerned about whether the reforms could be implemented and in March 2001, the Bundeswehr faced a current budget deficit amounting to more than DM 300m.¹⁰⁷ The plan to save money by closing down Bundeswehr locations did not work out either – after an assessment of 168 locations, only three could be closed.¹⁰⁸

After months of struggling, trying to find a way to finance the reforms, the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center took place, and Chancellor Schröder promised unrestricted solidarity to the US.¹⁰⁹ Given the fact that the Bundeswehr was in bad shape, current reform plans turned out to be not feasible, financing and thus procurement was not secure and the forces had almost reached their limits in Kosovo, the decision to send 3,900 soldiers, including 100 special forces to Afghanistan was remarkable. Afghanistan was a reminder, or more of a shock, that made the government and the Ministry of Defence realise that it had to make changes very quickly. Consequently, the next round of proposals – the reform of the reform– was already in progress.¹¹⁰

To sum up, the reform plans were the result of three reports, which all committed to a reorientation of the armed forces towards becoming more of an interventionist army. By adding crisis prevention and management to the range of tasks, the Bundeswehr was prepared to accept more international commitments. However, due to the constant decrease in defence budget and also because Chancellor Schröder did not consider defence a priority, the reforms, which had already been criticised for not going far enough, could not adequately be implemented. With the NATO DCI goals and the further development of the ESDP there were however more international commitments that the Bundeswehr needed to handle. Thus, also in this legislative period, despite his eagerness, the reform plans by Scharping did not lead to an adequate transformation but again to an

¹⁰⁶ Die Welt Online, "Rudi Planlos," 13.10.2000, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.welt.de/print-welt/article538259/Rudi-Planlos.html>.

¹⁰⁷ Sarotte, 44.

¹⁰⁸ Der Spiegel, "Schleppender Gang," no. 51 (18 December 2000), 21.

¹⁰⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, *Plenarprotokoll 14/186, 186. Sitzung* (Berlin: 12 November 2001), last accessed 13 June 2019, <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/doc/btp/14/14186.pdf>.

¹¹⁰ Longhurst, *Endeavours*, 30-31.

increase in discrepancy between commitments and capabilities. The main reason for Scharping's failure was, as von Neubeck puts it, that the reforms were based on need and were naïve regarding its financing. Moreover, there was still no clear domestic consensus on the exact direction the Bundeswehr should move towards to, in particular not within the coalition itself, as the different reform proposals and the subsequent criticism in the parliament have revealed. The attack on 11 September and the subsequent participation in *Operation Enduring Freedom* constituted a tremendous impetus that triggered a reconsideration of the reform proposals. Shortly before the next election, Rudolf Scharping was replaced by Peter Struck, who then began to 'reform the reform.'

5.2.2 2002-2005: Reforming the Reform

Having been the opposition, the election programme of the CDU/CSU was much more detailed than previous ones and criticised the failed reform attempts by Scharping. It acknowledged a "military-technological gap between Europeans and Americans"¹¹¹ and that the Bundeswehr "has to become fully operational again", for which the CDU would "make the necessary corrections and secure a credible financing,"¹¹² a clear critique on Scharping's insufficient financing plans. The CDU itself stated that "the gap between international commitments and actual capabilities is widening further apart," which could lead to irreversible deficits. Furthermore, in contrast to the red-green coalition, it would consider the Bundeswehr indispensable for a sovereign state, and not as a "necessary evil."¹¹³ For the first time, the election programme of the CDU/CSU also stated concrete reform proposals. It claimed the forces would need at least 300,000 soldiers, including 100,000 conscripts.¹¹⁴ This proves interesting as this would go against all recommendations of the von Kirchbach and Weizsäcker Commission as well as from partners abroad, who demanded to terminate conscription or to at least reduce the number of conscripts to 30,000. The FDP, in contrast, repeated its demands to end conscription and to professionalise the army in order to increase operational capability.¹¹⁵ The reform of the previous government would not address the actual needs of the forces. The SPD election programme was very interesting, as for the very first time, security and the Bundeswehr were placed within the first chapter of the programme, and not as usual in

¹¹¹ CDU/CSU, *Leistung und Sicherheit. Zeit für Taten* (Berlin: 2002), 70.

¹¹² Ibid., 70.

¹¹³ Ibid., 70.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 71.

¹¹⁵ FDP, *Bürgerprogramm 2002* (Berlin: 2002), 88.

the very back. The party was committed to continue its reforms and ensured that financial planning was secured.¹¹⁶ The Greens, in comparison to previous election programmes, had performed a complete volte-face. Four years ago it advocated for a step-by-step dissolution for the Bundeswehr but it appears that being in the government coalition has shown the party that it had to catch up with political reality. Although it stated that it aimed at a reduction of overall military potential of Germany,¹¹⁷ the party also committed to continuing and further developing the reforms, in particular in the light of 9/11. The programme however also revealed dissent within the coalition regarding the reform plans as the Greens referred to the Weizsäcker Commission by stating it had made “valuable and constructive contributions to the debate.”¹¹⁸ This can be interpreted as the Greens not being pleased with Scharping more or less ignoring the commission’s report and instead implementing his own vision. The PDS continued to advocate for dissolving the Bundeswehr and rejected the current modernisation and procurement plans. In comparison to earlier programmes, the tone was relatively calm.¹¹⁹

The red-green coalition was re-elected, and one major reason for this re-election was Chancellor Schröder’s promise to refrain from participating in the Iraq War. Initially, one may interpret this electoral success as the German public rejecting the deploying of the Bundeswehr, which might therefore be a constraint for further Bundeswehr reforms. This research however did not find any evidence for this interpretation. On the contrary, in the aftermath of 9/11, the majority of the German public welcomed the participation in OEF.¹²⁰ Yet at the same time the public was cautious and feared that if Germany would participate “too much” in the war on terror, it could end in a “violent clash between Islam and the West,” and therefore Germany could become a subject of a major terrorist attack too.¹²¹ This position was reinforced by the media and the government. Chancellor Schröder spoke out against “any adventures”, in which he alluded to the questionable intervention in Iraq by US President Bush.¹²² Participating in Afghanistan but precluding any participation in Iraq was therefore a compromise that mirrored quite well the thinking in Germany about security: on the one hand one has to help the Americans and the

¹¹⁶ SPD, *Erneuerung und Zusammenhalt – Wir in Deutschland* (Berlin: 2002), 19.

¹¹⁷ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Grün wirkt!* (Berlin: 2002), 88.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 87.

¹¹⁹ PDS, *Es geht auch anders: Nur Gerechtigkeit sichert Zukunft*, 2002, 24.

¹²⁰ Sabina Matthay, “Keine Stabilität in Sicht,” *Deutschlandfunk*, 01 August 2017 last accessed 13 June 2019, https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/nato-einsatz-in-afghanistan-keine-stabilitaet-in-sicht.724.de.html?dram:article_id=392504.

¹²¹ Dettke, *Germany says “No,”* 131.

¹²² Ibid.

population in Afghanistan to free them from the Taliban, but on the other hand, one does not wish to give up the self-image of a civilian power. What is more, there is no evidence that the German public in fact made a connection between sending troops to Iraq and the Bundeswehr reforms. Consequently, although a security topic might have been the decisive point for a re-election, which is scarce given the low salience of security issues in German elections in general, this has had no impact whatsoever on public approval or disapproval on further Bundeswehr reforms. Janning and Bauer noted in this regard that “the major historic achievement of the Social Democrat/Green Party government under Chancellor Gerhard Schröder was to overcome the taboo of sending troops into armed combat, while preserving the emphasis on civilian control.”¹²³

The coalition agreement included a clear commitment to the participation in OEF and a pledge to continue the reforms: “tasks, structure, equipment and budget will be brought to a balanced relation.”¹²⁴ Interestingly, the coalition agreement also stated that the guideline for further modernisation efforts will be the recommendations of the Weizsäcker Commission.¹²⁵

Even before the re-election, new Defence Minister Peter Struck continued the reform efforts by giving more power to the Inspector General, who used to only have advisory powers, but now received power of command over the troops.¹²⁶ In December 2002, Struck said one of the presumably most famous quotes by a German politician, which symbolised a milestone in Germany’s security policy. He stated national defence was no longer the main priority of the Bundeswehr but Germany’s security was also defended at the Hindu Kush.¹²⁷ The security environment and the range of tasks had changed, which is why future reform plans should focus more on out-of-area multinational operations instead of maintaining the strong focus on national defence, otherwise the Bundeswehr would continuously reach the limits of its capacity.¹²⁸

¹²³ Janning and Bauer, “Into the Great Wide Open: The Transformation of the German Armed Forces After 1990,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (Summer 2017), 537.

¹²⁴ SPD/Die Grünen, *Erneuerung – Gerechtigkeit – Nachhaltigkeit. Für ein wirtschaftlich starkes, soziales und ökologisches Deutschland. Für eine lebendige Demokratie* (Berlin: 2002), 62.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹²⁶ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, “Struck stattet Generalinspekteur mit höchsten Kompetenzen aus,” 01 September 2002, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/bundeswehr-struck-stattet-generalinspekteur-mit-hoechsten-kompetenzen-aus-169295.html>.

¹²⁷ Dirk Eckert, “Die Sicherheit Deutschlands wird auch am Hindukusch verteidigt,” *Telepolis*, 13 December 2002, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.heise.de/tp/features/Die-Sicherheit-Deutschlands-wird-auch-am-Hindukusch-verteidigt-3427679.html>.

¹²⁸ Die Bundesregierung, *Rede des Bundesministers der Verteidigung Rudolf Scharping, Bulletin 104-2* (Berlin: 20 December 2002), last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/service/bulletin/rede-des-bundesministers-der-verteidigung-dr-peter-struck--784328>.

Therefore, he announced to publish new VPR in 2003. Struck's quote and vision was welcomed across all parties, excluding the PDS.

The VPR 2003 mirror the transformation of the Bundeswehr from "*Armee der Einheit*" to the "*Armee im Einsatz*" and were a result of the attacks of 11 September and Germany's participation in OEF. Although in recent years the need to have capabilities available to participate in crisis prevention and management was increasingly acknowledged, territorial defence remained the priority. The VPR 2003 did not change this priority however, it extended it, by saying that Germany's security was defended outside of its own territory by preventing crises and conflicts.¹²⁹ Consequently, the tasks of the Bundeswehr became more proactive and were widened to include the fight against terrorism, stabilisation and deterrence, conflict prevention, peace-keeping, peace enforcement and evacuation of citizens.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, the VPR also noted that it was still relevant to maintain capabilities for national defence however, capabilities should not be "continued to be sustained purely for this purpose."¹³¹ In January 2004 Struck announced to reduce the overall size from 283,000 to 250,000 and divided the forces into three categories: 35,000 response forces ("*Eingreifkräfte*") "for operations at the upper end of the military intensity scale, including peace-enforcing missions" and who were to form Germany's contribution to NATO missions and the newly established NATO Response Force (NRF), to European Rapid Reaction Forces and EU Battlegroups. The second category would include 70,000 stabilisation forces ("*Stabilisierungskräfte*") for low and medium intensity joint military operations, for instance for peace-keeping missions. The third category would comprise 135,000 support forces that could assist the other two categories and were responsible for duties at home, such as training.¹³² In November 2004 Struck published a new stationing concept and announced to close 105 bases and reduce others, in particular mechanised units that had primarily been prepared for territorial defence.¹³³

Although the VPR were generally welcomed, the main points of discussion were again conscription and financing. The Greens and FDP had supported the abolition of conscription for some time, whereas the CDU and SPD advocated for maintaining it. Moreover, the CDU argued that the plans could not be implemented adequately, because

¹²⁹ BMVg, *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien* (Berlin: 2003), 9,11.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹³² Janning and Bauer, 536.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 537.

the current defence budget would not suffice.¹³⁴ The defence budget had continued its downward-development and therefore also Struck's plans had to be achieved through economisation, rationalisation, and redirecting funds. Struck thus used the re-orientation of the forces to economise the forces, as the structure could be slimmed down if the main priority was no longer territorial defence. Moreover, he scaled down procurement projects of equipment that was mainly intended for national defence. The savings from this could be used for new relevant equipment.¹³⁵ Moreover, the VPR supported an increased European defence cooperation and interoperability, which was thought to enable more savings by increasing sharing and pooling of resources.¹³⁶

Ultimately, despite great efforts, von Krause concludes that in hindsight due to the financial constraints, several important elements of the reform plans could not be implemented. For example, the new division of the forces as well as the change in structure of leadership could only partially be implemented. Moreover, procurement projects were significantly delayed for several years. He criticised that with Defence Minister Struck the notion of "transformation" became part of the debate and the main reason for this was to sugar-coat the failure of reaching all reform goals. If one calls it transformation, it is an on-going process.¹³⁷ With the VPR 2003 the government acknowledged a new dimension of the Bundeswehr tasks and finalised the slow transformation to an "*Armee im Einsatz.*" However, this acknowledgment occurred without a matching increase in the defence budget, although the majority of the parties stood behind Struck's proposals, which had not been the case with Scharping's plans.

5.2.3 2005-2009: Continuation

Having again been the opposition, the CDU/CSU electoral programme criticised the red-green coalition by demanding a reorientation back to national defence and that "our security is not exclusively defended at the Hindu Kush."¹³⁸ The FDP stipulated that the reforms so far did not suffice and continued to demand an end of conscription.¹³⁹ The Greens also stated that conscription cannot be justified anymore and that the restructuring

¹³⁴ Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 115.

¹³⁵ Dirk Eckert, "Die Sicherheit Deutschlands wird auch am Hindukusch verteidigt," *Telepolis*, 13 December 2002.

¹³⁶ BMVg, *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien* (Berlin: 2003), 10.

¹³⁷ von Krause, 346.

¹³⁸ CDU/CSU, *Deutschlands Chancen nutzen. Wachstum. Arbeit. Sicherheit* (Berlin: 2005), 37.

¹³⁹ FDP, *Arbeit hat Vorfahrt. Deutschlandprogramm 2005* (Berlin: 2005), 40.

had been overdue.¹⁴⁰ The SPD stated that “the successfully launched transformation process of the Bundeswehr with a focus on the tasks of international crisis management will be continued. The achievements (...) are worldwide applauded.”¹⁴¹ In fact, both Greens and SPD wrote very little on the Bundeswehr, which suggests that both thought that simply continuing implementing Struck’s plans would suffice. The PDS demonstrated its rejection of the government’s policy by stating that Germany’s security is not defended at the Hindu Kush and demanded the dissolution of EU Battlegroups and NRFs.¹⁴²

The election resulted in a grand coalition of CDU/CSU/SPD under Chancellor Angela Merkel. The coalition agreement acknowledged that the Bundeswehr was an “*Armee im Einsatz*,” committed to maintaining conscription and announced a new White Paper by the end of 2006. Overall, the coalition agreement did not contribute anything new, but focused on continuing Struck’s reforms. And indeed, new Defence Minister Franz Josef Jung continued to implement Struck’s reform plans together with Inspector General Schneiderhan, who developed the plans together with Struck. Even the new White Paper that he had published in 2006 did not include anything radically new. Expectations had been high that the White Paper would offer a clear definition of Germany’s security policy and outline a vision for the Bundeswehr, but it was merely a “status report” providing an overview of the reform.¹⁴³ An article by *Der Spiegel* with the headline “conspicuously inconspicuous” published at the end of Jung’s term concluded that Jung, who would have preferred a post in the Ministry of Agriculture rather than Defence, did not do anything for the Bundeswehr– but he was also not supposed to do anything.¹⁴⁴ In 2006, resistance in Afghanistan against foreign troops increased however, the Bundeswehr was not sufficiently prepared for such a change in situation, neither in terms of leadership nor equipment or armament. The media and the public at home grew more critical, as more German soldiers got killed.¹⁴⁵ Consequently, the government tried to keep the Bundeswehr out of the newspapers as much as possible.¹⁴⁶ Up until 2010, it was publicly debated whether the mission in Afghanistan was a stabilisation mission, a

¹⁴⁰ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Eines für Alle: Das Grüne Wahlprogramm 2005* (Berlin: 2005), 113.

¹⁴¹ SPD, *Vertrauen in Deutschland* (Berlin: 2005), 42.

¹⁴² Die Linke. PDS, *Für eine neue soziale Idee* (Berlin: 2005), 29.

¹⁴³ Janning and Bauer, 537.

¹⁴⁴ Alexander Szandar, “Auffällig unauffällig,” *Spiegel Online*, 12 August 2009, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/franz-josef-jung-auffaellig-unauffaellig-a-640016.html>.

¹⁴⁵ Von Bredow, *Kleine Schritte*, 397.

¹⁴⁶ Alexander Szandar, “Auffällig unauffällig.”

war-like situation or simply war. Von Bredow argued that “the Bundeswehr was prepared to protect civil construction and development projects, perhaps to participate in training Afghan staff. It was not prepared for a war.”¹⁴⁷ He called this “the Afghanistan Shock.” At first, German participation in Afghanistan was welcomed and successful, sending pictures to Germany of people welcoming foreign troops for freeing them of the Taliban regime. But over the years, the situation worsened and the North, where German forces had been stationed and which was initially far away from any combat, turned into an area of violent conflict. Deploying to Afghanistan had already been a great deal for Germany, since it signalled its willingness to participate in multinational out-of-area missions for crisis management purposes. However, since 2006, the worsening of the situation in Afghanistan added yet another dimension to the range of the Bundeswehr’s tasks as they realised it was not prepared for such violent combat, triggering another round of reforms. At the same time, the start of the global financial crisis required all attention and became top priority, which is why only in the next legislative period new reform efforts had been taken on.

5.3 *Neuausrichtung*

5.3.1 *2009 – 2013: Afghanistan and the Financial Crisis*

The election programmes in 2009 reflected the experiences of Afghanistan. The CDU programme included a whole paragraph justifying the Bundeswehr’s presence in Afghanistan and demanded the “best possible equipment, training and care” for the soldiers. For the first time, the CDU talked about risks of deployments and that these have to be calculable.¹⁴⁸ The FDP also focused greatly on Afghanistan but also pointed to the fact that national defence should remain a task of the Bundeswehr.¹⁴⁹ The FDP committed to a “sustainable improvement of the Bundeswehr structure” and demanded an end to the “sugar-coating” of deficits in the Bundeswehr.¹⁵⁰ The SPD supported the mission in Afghanistan too and like other parties wished to continue the transformation process of the forces.¹⁵¹ While the CDU insisted on maintaining conscription and the FDP insisted on ending conscription, the SPD advocated for “further developing conscription” to make

¹⁴⁷ Von Bredow, *Kleine Schritte*, 398

¹⁴⁸ CDU/CSU, *Wir haben die Kraft. Gemeinsam für unser Land* (Berlin: 2009), 87-88.

¹⁴⁹ FDP, *Die Mitte stärken. Deutschlandprogramm der Freien Demokratischen Partei* (Hannover: 2009), 73.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁵¹ SPD, *Sozial und Demokratisch. Anpacken. Für Deutschland* (Berlin: 2009), 91-92.

it more flexible and to use it for fulfilment of demand, but ultimately to maintain it.¹⁵² Both, SPD and FDP stipulated that the use of military force was only allowed as a last resort. The electoral programme by the Greens was very reflective, acknowledging that the Greens had not always found it easy to accept that there are situations where military measures may be necessary.¹⁵³ However, similarly to SPD and FDP's emphasis on using the military only as a last resort, the Greens set out conditions for legitimate deployment.¹⁵⁴ Moreover, the programme stated a commitment to ISAF however, depending on a change in strategy and it emphasised that the Bundeswehr's task in international missions was stabilisation and protection, not combat. It further advocated for down-sizing the Bundeswehr to 200,000 soldiers to make it more suitable for multinational missions. At the same time the Bundeswehr needed to contribute to fiscal consolidation, too, and the Greens therefore wanted to stop "this waste of money" by ending large-scale armament projects that were the results of the Cold War and would only benefit the German defence industry.¹⁵⁵ The Left Party¹⁵⁶ stated that German foreign policy had been militarised by SPD and the Greens and would pursue imperialist interests.¹⁵⁷

Overall, Afghanistan, the use of military force and conscription were important topics during this election which once more demonstrates how the experiences from Afghanistan have influenced the dialect of national security in Germany. The election resulted in a CDU/CSU/FDP coalition under Chancellor Merkel. Next to several paragraphs on Germany's international responsibility towards the Afghan people, the coalition agreement stipulated a reduction of conscription to six months by 1 January 2011, which constituted a compromise between the FDP and CDU, who intended to end conscription and the CDU who wished to maintain it. Furthermore, the coalition agreement tasked the Defence Minister with setting up a commission that would make recommendations regarding a new structure of the Bundeswehr by the end of 2010.¹⁵⁸

There were several reasons why the new Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg briefly after taking office pursued reforms much quicker than his

¹⁵² Ibid., 92.

¹⁵³ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Der Grüne Neue Gesellschaftsvertrag* (Berlin: 2009), 214.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 215.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 217.

¹⁵⁶ In 2007, the PDS and the leftist branch of the SPD merged together to form the new "Linke," i.e. Left Party.

¹⁵⁷ Die Linke, *Bundestagswahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE* (Berlin: 2009), 34.

¹⁵⁸ CDU/CSU/FDP, *Wachstum. Bildung. Zusammenhalt. Der Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und FDP* (Berlin: 2009), 124.

predecessors. The first reason was the “Afghanistan Shock.” Shortly before the election took place, the Kunduz airstrike, where a Bundeswehr soldier ordered to drop bombs on two tankers which killed over 100 civilians, led to a public outcry in Germany. The German public became increasingly more critical regarding the operation in Afghanistan and reports of the Taliban coming back to the region where the Bundeswehr was present showed that the German forces appeared to not be able to fulfil their task. Whereas in 2008 three out of four German citizens rather approved of the mission in Afghanistan, in May 2010 two out of three rather disapproved.¹⁵⁹ Moreover, an increasing number of returning soldiers complained about the lack of preparation and training for combat mentally as well as physically, and inadequate equipment.¹⁶⁰ Secondly, the Bundeswehr had reached its limits. While violence escalated in Afghanistan and the forces were not sufficiently prepared for this, it simultaneously was present in several other missions, such as in Sudan or Kongo. Struck’s reforms, although aiming at the right direction, proved not to be sufficient for this increase in demand.¹⁶¹ Or rather, proved to not have been implementable. The New York Times cited Guttenberg saying that the “level of ambition could not be reached”, that is, the plan to have 14,000 soldiers in a pool of 70,000 well-trained soldiers ready to be deployed, was not reached. Moreover, the administration was said to be too slow in instructing and organising missions, which increased with the number of simultaneous deployments.¹⁶² Thirdly, in 2009 the *Schuldenbremse* [debt brake] was introduced into the German basic law and the Bundeswehr was requested to save € 8.3bn until 2014.¹⁶³

As set out in the coalition agreement, in April 2010 a new commission led by Frank-Jürgen Weise (“Weise Commission”), president of the German Federal Agency for Employment, was set up to find solutions for a new Bundeswehr structure. The small size of the commission allowed for a result-oriented group rather than a debate-oriented one. Additionally, in June 2010, Inspector General Volker Wieker was requested to draft guidelines on how the Bundeswehr could be structured to meet the budget requirements. These guidelines formed the framework for the Weise Commission.¹⁶⁴ The report by Inspector General Wieker argued for a professional army with smaller personnel strength.

¹⁵⁹ Von Bredow, *Kleine Schritte*, 398-399.

¹⁶⁰ Judy Dempsey, “A Mission to Modernize Germany’s Armed Forces,” *The New York Times*, 18 August 2010, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/19/world/europe/19iht-letter.html>.

¹⁶¹ Von Krause, 325.

¹⁶² Judy Dempsey, “A Mission to Modernize Germany’s Armed Forces.”

¹⁶³ Von Krause, 347.

¹⁶⁴ Von Bredow, *Kleine Schritte*, 401.

The Bundeswehr needed to be able to cover a broad range of challenges from high intensive combat, stabilisation or observation to trainings missions. Autonomous operations had lost in importance, it was therefore more important to focus on interoperability and rapid reaction.¹⁶⁵ Consequently, to fulfil these tasks, 10,000 soldiers instead of 7,000 should be ready for deployment.¹⁶⁶ The structure implemented by Struck which divided the forces in response and stabilisation forces was considered inefficient for the new tasks of the Bundeswehr because the stabilisation forces had been needed for a longer period of time than planned, which made the clear-cut division between response and stabilisation forces not possible.¹⁶⁷ Regarding the financing, the Wieker report stated that the Bundeswehr too would face consequences stemming from the financial crisis, but nevertheless several gaps in equipment would need to be closed quickly. One possibility to do so would be an even greater European cooperation.¹⁶⁸ The number of conscripts could be reduced because the time of reconstitution had increased. Therefore, conscription would be only maintained for recruitment purposes, rather than security reasons.¹⁶⁹ The report then offered five different models with the aim to reduce the number of soldiers by 40,000 while increasing the operational capability. All models envisaged a personnel strength between 156,000 and 210,000, some relying on conscription. However, none of the models would fulfil all fiscal consolidation requirements, although some were very close, whereas others would be far away from the target.¹⁷⁰

The Weise Commission presented its recommendations in October 2010 and focused on improving the conditions for deployment by building on suggestions already made by the Weizsäcker Commission.¹⁷¹ It argued for suspending conscription and that it should be possible to at least double the number of soldiers deployable from 7,000 to 14,000-15,000, while reducing the overall size of the forces to 180,000, including a reduction in civil posts from 75,000 to 50,000. Not only the Bundeswehr but also the Ministry of Defence would need to be re-structured and reduced, approximately from

¹⁶⁵ BMVg, *Bericht des Generalinspektors der Bundeswehr zum Prüfauftrag aus der Kabinettsklausur vom 07. June 2010*, 12.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 33-42.

¹⁷¹ Strukturkommission der Bundeswehr, *Bericht der Strukturkommission: Vom Einsatz her denken – Konzentration, Flexibilität, Effizienz* (Berlin: October 2010), 22.

over 3,000 posts to under 1,500.¹⁷² The Inspector General would become the Chief of Defence and leadership structures would be streamlined. Gaps in procurement and development were to be closed and a new procurement agency would be established.¹⁷³ The commission did not offer a financing plan, but instead noted that “the realisation of these plans will cost money in the short-term but save money in the medium- and long-term.”¹⁷⁴

After years of disagreement, the cabinet decided on 15 December 2010 to suspend conscription from 1 July 2011 onwards and to reduce the size of the forces to 185,000.¹⁷⁵ But before Guttenberg could continue with his reform plans, he resigned in March 2011 due to the plagiarism scandal regarding his doctoral dissertation and Thomas de Maizière became new Minister of Defence. He confirmed to hold on to the reforms started by Guttenberg, but first wanted to assess the situation properly. He criticised Guttenberg’s plans because the financial framework did not cover the proposed plans.¹⁷⁶ Consequently, he adjusted the plans and in May 2011 published new VPR. Overall, the language of the VPR were not entirely new but were a symbolic manifestation of the new role of the Bundeswehr in a direction started under Struck and which was mirrored in the title “secure national interests – take on international responsibility – shape security together.” The tasks of the Bundeswehr included the previously established broad range such as territorial defence, international conflict prevention and crisis management as well as fighting against terrorism however, with a much greater focus on Germany’s interests. For example, the VPR included a statement that the consequences of missions have to be considered more carefully, as well as the consequences of not participating in a mission. The interests of the alliance would not be ‘absolute’ anymore but could be scrutinised, which represents also a growing self-confidence of Germany.¹⁷⁷ With the VPR, de Maizière started the *Neuaustrichtung* [reorientation], which was manifested in the “*Eckpunkte*” [keypoints] published shortly after the VPR.

The personnel strength was, as already planned by Guttenberg, reduced to 185,000, including 55,000 civilian posts. Since conscription was suspended, a voluntary

¹⁷² Ibid., 10, 24.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 11.

¹⁷⁴ Strukturkommission der Bundeswehr, *Bericht der Strukturkommission: Vom Einsatz her denken – Konzentration, Flexibilität, Effizienz* (Berlin: October 2010), 3.

¹⁷⁵ Von Krause, 330.

¹⁷⁶ Judy Dempsey, “Germany Plans Deep Cuts to Its Armed Forces,” *New York Times*, 18 May 2011, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/19/world/europe/19iht-germany19.html>.

¹⁷⁷ Von Krause, 333.

military service for up to 15,000 soldiers was introduced. The Ministry of Defence was restructured and freed from inefficient parallel structures and reduced to 2,000 civilian posts. The number of departments within the ministry was to be reduced from 17 to nine.¹⁷⁸ The inspector general's position was to be strengthened and he would become head of the *Einsatzführungskommando* from April 2012 onwards, planning and executing all deployments as Chief of Defence, that is the top military adviser to the government.¹⁷⁹ Moreover, all procurement projects were to be assessed.¹⁸⁰ All necessary capabilities needed for the entire range of tasks had to be available. The division into response, stabilisation and support forces was to be dissolved. With these guidelines, de Maizière followed the recommendations by the Inspector General Wieker report from June 2010 and the Weise Commission relatively closely.¹⁸¹ The plans were to be fully implemented by 2017.¹⁸²

The *Neuausrichtung* was overdue however, also criticised by many. Due to its massive reduction in personnel and equipment but an increase in tasks, it followed the principle of 'breadth before depth,' which in the long-run could create many difficulties and the Bundeswehr could reach its limits faster. Moreover, given the severe budget cuts, de Maizière's plans had been criticised as trying to square the circle and could therefore only lead to the same disappointing results as previous reform efforts.¹⁸³ Von Krause concluded that de Maizière's *Neuausrichtung* has shown that after years of the transformation process, German politicians were able to clearly formulate the tasks and interests, that is the output but they still failed to adequately reflect this in the respective input.¹⁸⁴ Another point of criticism was the lack of flexibility provided for in de Maizière's plans. Given the strict budget limitations, the Bundeswehr would not be able to adapt quickly if the security environment demanded it.¹⁸⁵ A major problem of the *Neuausrichtung* was the lack of priority it had received by the government. Domestically, dealing with the Euro crisis and the debate regarding nuclear power in the aftermath of the nuclear catastrophe of Fukushima was considered more important and "monopolised

¹⁷⁸ Judy Dempsey, "Germany Plans Deep Cuts to Its Armed Forces."

¹⁷⁹ BMVg, *Die Neuausrichtung der Bundeswehr. Nationale Interessen wahren – Internationale Verantwortung übernehmen – Sicherheit gemeinsam gestalten* (Berlin: March 2013), 31.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁸¹ Von Krause, 348.

¹⁸² BMVg, *Neuausrichtung*, 17.

¹⁸³ Von Krause, 336, 348.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 337.

¹⁸⁵ Patrick Keller, "Die Strategische Neuausrichtung der Bundeswehr," *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Analysen & Argumente* no. 92 (Juni 2011): 5.

[Chancellor Merkel's] time, leaving little time even for fundamental issues like the war in Afghanistan or the Arab revolutions."¹⁸⁶

Despite criticism, the *Neuausrichtung* was widely praised. However, only few years later international developments would again reveal the shortcomings of this round of reforms and induce de Maizière's successor Ursula von der Leyen to reverse his reforms again.

5.4 Summary

The time after reunification is the starting point of the emerging discrepancy between commitments and capacity. The change in security environment required an adaptation of the Bundeswehr. This requirement was reinforced by international partners, who urged Germany to participate in the Gulf War, which was the first step towards the direction of greater commitments in international security. Moreover, the New Strategic Concept of NATO required Germany to make changes in its force structure, whilst ensuring greater mobility and flexibility. Lastly, the Petersberg tasks, although they did not lead to any specific commitments at the time, also indicated greater commitment in the future. However, domestically, the lack of consensus in the parliament and coalition regarding the question of out-of-area deployment and more fundamental questions of whether Germany needs an army at all prevented an adaptation of the forces that could keep up with the rapid pace of the development on the international level. While it became apparent that Germany had to increase its international commitments, domestically, the controversy about the Stoltenberg Paper, which was considered too radical, and the subsequent attempts to soften the language resulted in no tangible improvements. Moreover, the clear prioritisation of other policy areas and the consequential budget cuts led to great planning and financing uncertainty which further hindered the appropriate implementation of any attempts to adapt the Bundeswehr to the growing demands accordingly. Therefore, whilst the new conceptual guidelines from July 1994 did adapt the forces however, they only reduced the size while maintaining a large number of conscripts. This did not lead to greater efficiency as initially hoped, but ultimately reduced the capacity instead. The additional budget cuts further marked a decrease in capabilities.

¹⁸⁶ Judy Dempsey, "A Fine Time for Germany to Speak Up," *New York Times*, 9 May 2011, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/10/world/europe/10iht-letter10.html>.

The period from 1994-1998 showed on the one hand, that the direction of the Bundeswehr was much more certain than previously, but on the other hand, it was still marked by great domestic dissent and caution. International commitments were raised to a new level with German participation in Bosnia and the increasing integration of German forces in multinational corps. Defence Minister R  he tried to adapt to these changes by implementing the conceptual guidelines from July 1994, but the process was very slow and was envisaged to only be concluded by 1999. Further attempts were made to decrease the discrepancy such as with the establishment of the *F  hrungszentrum* and the KSK. However, the *F  hrungszentrum*, although a small improvement in leadership structures, constituted due to the well-established mistrust in the military only a weak compromise. The establishment of the KSK was controversial and highly contested domestically with the Greens advocating for their dissolution. This open and enormous opposition created great difficulties to properly plan these special forces and delayed their establishment.

The new red-green coalition did not consider security and defence a priority, which is why the first two years were used to draft extensive reports on the state and potential reforms for the Bundeswehr. While the reports were drafted, the pressure to adapt the Bundeswehr rose once more with the participation in the Kosovo War, the NATO DCI and Helsinki Headline Goals. Although the Weizs  cker recommendations raised hopes internationally that Germany could significantly decrease its deficits in the Bundeswehr, the proposal was not supported by domestic consensus: Defence Minister Scharping drafted his own report and ordered an additional report by Inspector General von Kirchbach. Moreover, the opposition regarded the proposals by the Weizs  cker Commission as “too radical,” because it would among others decrease the number of conscripts down to 30,000 and raise the operational forces to 140,000. However, the final reform plans proved to be a weaker compromise and thus less “radical.” Scharping’s plans were already considered to not be sufficient enough to close the discrepancy but they would have at least been a step in the right direction, if the implementation would have worked. But his plans were based on need and not on available financial resources and particularly given the lack of sense of urgency by the government regarding the reform, they could simply not be financed. Hence, the domestic consensus was not given to firstly make the reform plans sufficient to close the gaps, but secondly not even to implement the softened compromise. The 9/11 attacks created this ‘sense of urgency’ and revealed the great need to execute the reform plans.

German participation in Afghanistan created new impetus for reforms and a new definition of security, namely that national security is defended outside of national territory. After the failure of properly implementing Scharping's reform plans, with the new VPR Struck created a new structure of the forces, which aimed at increasing their efficiency and operational capability. With the new stationing concept, he closed and restructured inefficient bases and thus could save money which was re-used for procurement projects. Although Struck's plans to decrease the discrepancy were ambitious, the financial constraints once again significantly delayed or prevented the implementation and important procurement projects were very slow in realisation. While the attacks of 9/11 have increased the 'sense of urgency' and Struck's plans were welcomed by all parties as a step in the right direction, it was not seen as urgent enough to increase the budget accordingly. Moreover, at this time, the participation in Afghanistan was not yet considered a new reality of the Bundeswehr as it was rather successful at the beginning and thus it appeared as if the Bundeswehr was capable of fulfilling its task. The Afghanistan "shock" would only come later.

Defence Minister Jung continued to implement Struck's reform plans as part of the transformation of the forces to increase Germany's capacity to meet its international commitments accordingly. This shows that there was broad domestic consensus for implementing Struck's plans to decrease the discrepancy. However, from 2006 onwards, the situation in Afghanistan significantly worsened and escalated into a war, for which the Bundeswehr was not prepared. Once more, the demand on the Bundeswehr was exponentially increased, while Struck's plans that were still in the process of being implemented, were still trying to catch up with previous conditions. But the escalation in Afghanistan created a new reality that could not be met with Struck's plans and thus further increased the discrepancy. There had been domestic consensus for Struck's efforts but the security reality was once again one step ahead. At the same time, the financial crisis required all attention and resources and pushed for a decrease in military capacity although the situation in Afghanistan worsened.

The experiences in Afghanistan changed the thinking regarding security policy and the Bundeswehr. The previous lack of urgency to adequately reform the Bundeswehr, rather than slowly adapting it appeared now to be given. The party programmes and coalition agreement reflected this urgency in a new intensity, by referring for example to the growing risks of deployments on the one hand, but also to the responsibility towards the Afghan people on the other hand. All parties, except the Left Party, agreed on the

necessity to reform the Bundeswehr in order to equip it better for a mission such as the one in Afghanistan. Moreover, the newly introduced debt brake in the light of the financial crisis made an economisation and reduction of the forces highly urgent. This domestic consensus is mirrored in the rapid speed in which Defence Minister Guttenberg and subsequently de Maizière pursued reforms. International partners, Greens and FDP had advocated for a suspension of conscription for years, and now finally it was suspended. The VPR of 2011 were a manifestation of the new direction of the Bundeswehr with a broad range of tasks and the principle of ‘breadth before depth.’ Internationally, the reform plans by Guttenberg and de Maizière were expected to be “signalling one of the biggest shake-ups in decades for the German military”¹⁸⁷ and were widely praised as being “a sensible plan that links reduced spending with modernising reforms that will let it contribute more troops to NATO operations.” Although it was also commented that given the current challenges for NATO, “even more would be better. But this is a strong start.”¹⁸⁸

However, although consensus was finally reached to clearly define the output of reform efforts and to follow recommendations that had previously been considered as “too radical,” such as suspending conscription, there was still no consensus to provide the necessary input for the reform plans. Consequently, also de Maizière’s plans were criticised as trying to “square the circle.” Moreover, the ambitions of the plans required continuity because implementation could require several years and outlast his term. However, only few years later Ursula von der Leyen would already announce another round of ground-breaking reforms.

5.5 Interim Conclusion

Why have previous reform efforts led to an increase rather than a decrease in the discrepancy between Germany’s growing political and military commitments and its military capacity?

At first, there was no domestic consensus regarding the overall direction of the Bundeswehr after German reunification. That is, there was no domestic consensus to formulate a clear output and therefore also the input was not adequate. After thirty years of slow adaptation, which proved to be more a process of catching up one step behind the

¹⁸⁷ Judy Dempsey, “Germany Plans Deep Cuts to Its Armed Forces.”

¹⁸⁸ New York Times, “Germany’s Responsible Military Reform,” 30 December 2010, p. 28, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2010/12/30/opinion/30thu2.html>.

reality of the demands of the changing security environment, the domestic consensus was reached in 2011 to formulate a clear and precise goal, that is output, of the reform efforts. But there was still no domestic consensus on the input, that is on as to how to achieve and most notably on how to fund this reform goal. Over the years, the reform efforts by for instance Scharping and Struck have shown that either the ambitions of the reforms were unrealistically high, which one could observe in the fact that Struck's plans of increasing the number of deployable forces have not properly been realised, or simply have not been of priority to the government. This research hypothesised that the reform efforts failed due to a lack of domestic consensus. Reaching domestic consensus might have been a challenge in the first ten to fifteen years, where the majority of politicians were still largely sceptical about the Bundeswehr becoming an interventionist army and taking on tasks beyond territorial defence. However, this has not been the case for several years now. At least since Afghanistan, these tasks have become the reality, and all parties, except the Left Party, acknowledged Germany's responsibility in international security. Consequently, all parties advocated for better equipment, better training and preparation to preclude a repetition of the negative experiences of Afghanistan.

The main problem however, appears to have been the lack of priority and urgency which led to inadequate funding. It further resulted in an attitude of letting the reforms slide until the next event occurred that served as a reminder that the shape of the forces was still not as wished. It appears that each round of reforms was warmly praised and welcomed both domestically and internationally. When Struck announced his plans, they were applauded as a historical step. Guttenberg reforms were regarded as groundbreaking. And yet, over the years the actual output was disillusioning: plans were not properly realised and implemented, funding was cut, procurement projects delayed. The reason is not difficult to find. Domestic issues were seen with greater importance and the Bundeswehr somehow managed to fulfil its tasks by improvising. Although the experiences in Afghanistan pushed for far-reaching reforms, the pressure did not persist and therefore the Ministry of Defence was not sufficiently supported in its reform plans. For the reforms to be successful in the long-run, it requires more attention from the top. But in order to gain this level of attention, the threat perception has not been great enough.

The reforms were always compatible with the international system, even right after reunification. In most of the cases it was international developments that pushed for the reforms, such as new requirements by NATO or EU, or the experiences of

Bundeswehr participation in multinational missions. All rounds of reforms had been welcomed but were also always considered to be insufficient, given Germany's economic weight. This is ultimately another main problem of the reform process: the reform efforts had mainly been reactive to correct a deficit rather than pro-active to achieve a specific goal.

The second part of the research therefore investigates whether the current reforms takes place in a different environment. After domestic consensus has been reached regarding the outcome of the reforms, the question is whether domestic consensus has been reached in regard to how this outcome can be achieved?

6. Current Reforms: Reversal in Trends

6.1 Domestic Consensus in Parliamentary Elections 2013

The chapter starts with the analysis of the election programmes and coalition agreement to provide a better understanding of the *status quo* before the new round of reforms had been announced. The CDU praised the success of the *Neuausrichtung* and committed to its finalisation until 2017.¹⁸⁹ For the first time, the election programme included the topic of cyber security and the need to protect critical infrastructure.¹⁹⁰ Being in the governing coalition, also the FDP applauded the *Neuausrichtung* and advocated for greater representation of the Bundeswehr in the public.¹⁹¹ The SPD, too, mentioned cybercrime for the first time in an electoral programme.¹⁹² It further demanded a greater focus on peace-building and civil crisis prevention and advocated for stronger defence cooperation in Europe, which would lead to a European army in the long-run.¹⁹³ The Greens considered further reduction of the Bundeswehr that could save billions and although welcoming the end of conscription, also stated that the reform plans did not go far enough, as the Bundeswehr needed to contribute more to fiscal consolidation.¹⁹⁴ The programme was therefore very similar to the programme of the previous parliamentary election. The Left Party restated its demands to stop the transformation of the

¹⁸⁹ CDU/CSU, *Gemeinsam erfolgreich für Deutschland* (Berlin: 2013), 75.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁹¹ FDP, *Bürgerprogramm 2013. Damit Deutschland stark bleibt. Nur mit uns* (Berlin: 2013), 92.

¹⁹² SPD, *Das Wir Entscheidet* (Berlin: 2013), 97.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, 109.

¹⁹⁴ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zeit für den Grünen Wandel. Teilhaben. Einmischen. Zukunft Schaffen* (Berlin: 2013), 309.

Bundeswehr towards an interventionist party.¹⁹⁵ For the first time, the new party AfD took part in the parliamentary election however, the electoral programme did not include any references to security policy.¹⁹⁶

The election resulted in a grand coalition of CDU/CSU/SPD under Chancellor Merkel and the coalition agreement contained an entire chapter on the *Neuausrichtung*. The coalition aimed at continuing with the transformation and by the end of 2014 it would assess this transformation and make adjustments if required. It focused on several topics such as increasing the attractiveness of the service, which became more urgent given that the Bundeswehr was now a professional army,¹⁹⁷ enhancing the dialogue between civil society and the military, improving the procurement procedure, and preparing for future deployments.¹⁹⁸ Also cyber security became a topic in the coalition agreement but it did not include any reference to preparing a new White Paper, which would be published in 2016.

6.2 Increase in Urgency and a New Debate¹⁹⁹

The previous analysis has revealed that in recent years, consensus on the output of reforming the Bundeswehr had in principle been reached, that is, a majority among the parties has emerged that shared a more or less common vision of the future Bundeswehr. But despite this consensus, the *how* of this transformation and the actual implementation was still undecided and ineffective, because such transformation would require more attention and more funding. More pressure on policy-makers would have been needed to fully go through with the reform plans. The Afghanistan shock was overshadowed by the financial crisis and by the nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima and in general it appeared as if the Bundeswehr, despite all reports regarding deficits, somehow managed to operate.

At the Munich Security Conference in January and February 2014, the Foreign and Defence Ministers as well as the Federal President of Germany respectively

¹⁹⁵ Die Linke, *100% Sozial. Wahlprogramm der Partei DIE LINKE zur Bundestagswahl 2013* (Dresden: 2013), 53.

¹⁹⁶ Focus Online, "Das Wahlprogramm der Alternative für Deutschland," 10 July 2013, last accessed 13 June 2019, https://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/bundestagswahl-2013/bundestagswahl-2013-das-wahlprogramm-der-alternative-fuer-deutschland_aid_1039346.html.

¹⁹⁷ CDU/CSU/SPD, *Deutschlands Zukunft gestalten. Koalitionsvertrag zwischen CDU, CSU und SPD*. 18th Legislative Period, 176.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁹⁹ Parts of this chapter have also been discussed in my seminar paper "Germany's Role in International Security: A Change in German Security Policy?" submitted at the Diplomatic Academy Vienna for the seminar "Advanced Topics in International Relations— A Geo-Political Perspective" with Prof. Arthur Rachwald, July 2018, academic year 2017/2018.

proclaimed the “Munich Consensus,” promulgating that Germany would be ready to assume greater responsibility in international security. In particular in the aftermath of Germany’s isolation after its abstention in the Libya vote of 2011, this was an important step. Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier noted at the Munich Security Conference in 2014 that “a culture of restraint must not become a culture of staying out.”²⁰⁰ However, the notion of Germany’s international responsibility was nothing really new. As the previous analysis of election programmes has revealed, this notion has been present since the end of the Cold War, although it had never induced a public debate. But shortly after the Munich Security Conference this notion gained momentum when the Russian Federation annexed Crimea in March 2014. The German Ambassador to the North Atlantic Council, Martin Erdmann, described this turning point by saying:

Then, it was as if the escalation of the crisis in Ukraine, Russia’s March 2014 annexation of Crimea, and Russia’s steering of separatist activities in eastern Ukraine flipped a switch on the way Germans thought about security and defence policy.²⁰¹

The Russian aggression and subsequent annexation of Crimea was a threat to the international rules-based order, an order on which Germany and its economy depends on. Moreover, it brought back the threat to territorial sovereignty in Europe. Whilst the recent *Neuausrichtung* aimed at equipping the Bundeswehr for a broader range of tasks and focused primarily on out-of-area crisis intervention, the Russian aggression in Eastern Ukraine as well as the following sabre-rattling on NATO’s eastern flank brought back the focus on collective defence in Europe. With this refocus on power politics and change in threat perception, the demands on Germany to engage in international security have grown as have accusations of Europe and particular Germany would free-ride on U.S. security guarantees.

In September 2014, heads of states and governments of NATO members came together at the Wales Summit to discuss Russia’s aggression in Ukraine but also threats coming from the Middle East and North Africa. At the summit, NATO set up assurance and deterrence measures at NATO’s eastern flank by enhancing the responsiveness of the NRF. It further created the Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), “a new Allied joint force that will be able to deploy within a few days to respond to challenges that

²⁰⁰ Auswärtiges Amt, “Rede von Außenminister Steinmeier anlässlich der 50. Münchner Sicherheitskonferenz,” 1 February 2014, last accessed 29 April 2019, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/140201-bm-muesiko/259554>.

²⁰¹ Martin Erdmann, “What’s up with those Germans?,” *Carnegie Europe*, 7 May 2015, last accessed 15 March 2019, <http://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/?fa=60009>.

arise, particularly at the periphery of NATO's territory." Moreover, the declaration noted that the "Allied forces maintain the adequate readiness and coherence needed to conduct NATO's full range of missions, including deterring aggression against NATO Allies and demonstrating preparedness to defend NATO territory."²⁰² At the Warsaw Summit two years later in July 2016, these measures were further extended by an enhanced forward presence in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland. Thus, since the beginning of 2017, NATO-battlegroups are present in these countries.²⁰³ Germany substantiated its claims it would take on more responsibility by taking on the role as framework nation in the VJTF and by leading the NATO battlegroup in Lithuania. Defence Minister von der Leyen justified these steps by allegedly saying to NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg that it was "payback time,"²⁰⁴ meaning that it was high time to return the solidarity Germany had received by the Alliance for decades.

The crisis in Ukraine and the subsequent measures taken by NATO, thus, triggered two changes. Firstly, it once more increased Germany's military commitments. But secondly, it also increased the urgency of action. The return of conventional warfare on European soil and the territorial threat posed by Russia created a more imminent threat than a crisis far away would have. However, as it had been the case since 1990, the international development and the increase in Germany's commitment also revealed again the deficits of the Bundeswehr, which is why the Ministry of Defence was once more forced to adapt the Bundeswehr to the changed situation accordingly.

6.3 Status quo: Critique on the Neuausrichtung

The increased participation of Germany in NATO measures brought several deficits in German capacities to light and also the media continually published reports, of which some were leaked by employees of the Ministry of Defence that "Germany was unable to assume its NATO commitments."²⁰⁵

²⁰² NATO, *Wales Summit Declaration*, 5 September 2014, last accessed 13 June 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_112964.htm.

²⁰³ NATO, *Warsaw Summit Communiqué*, 9 July 2016, last accessed 13 June 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_133169.htm.

²⁰⁴ Thomas Gutschker, "Die Deutschen an die Front!," *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 5 February 2015, last accessed 15 March 2019, <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/bundeswehr-von-der-leyen-macht-nato-versprechungen-13401853.html>.

²⁰⁵ Allers 1182-1184.

Indeed, the annual report by the Parliamentary Commissioner for the Armed Forces for 2013 and 2014 strongly criticised the *Neuausrichtung*. The main point of criticism was that because the structures were reduced, the same amount of tasks had to be managed with fewer resources. Moreover, a high degree of uncertainty regarding the future of employment and further reductions deteriorated the spirit among the forces. Investment in equipment had focused for too long on equipment for deployment, with the consequence that the equipment and infrastructure at home was often in critical shape.²⁰⁶ Given the new missions in Senegal, Mali and Turkey, the Bundeswehr once again operated at its limits.²⁰⁷ Also the 2014 report complained about overextension due to the principle of ‘breadth before depth.’²⁰⁸ Major weapon systems revealed great deficits, infrastructure continued to deteriorate and the medical service was understaffed.²⁰⁹ The report of 2015 began with the statement that although the Bundeswehr could manage all of its tasks, it would operate at its limits and the deficits would be too great. Equipment was often internally lent to where it is needed to ensure Germany could fulfil its NATO commitments.²¹⁰ The Bundeswehr operated on a high level of improvisation and overextension.²¹¹ The year 2015 was also the year with the highest international commitments: in total, the Bundeswehr took part in seventeen international missions in 2015.²¹² Thus, at this point in time the discrepancy between commitments and capacity was presumably one of the highest.

6.4 White Paper 2016²¹³

As a response to the withering reports on the status of the forces and the changing security environment, the Ministry of Defence published a new White Paper in July 2016, mirroring this development and initiating a new round of reforms. The White Paper, in contrast to previous White Papers, was drafted in an inclusive process in which over 6500

²⁰⁶ Deutscher Bundestag, *Unterrichtung durch den Wehrbeauftragten. Jahresbericht 2013*. Drucksache 18/300, 28 January 2014, 6.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

²⁰⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, *Unterrichtung durch den Wehrbeauftragten. Jahresbericht 2014*. Drucksache 18/3750, 27 January 2015, 7-8.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

²¹⁰ Deutscher Bundestag, *Unterrichtung durch den Wehrbeauftragten. Jahresbericht 2015*. Drucksache 18/7250, 26 January 2016, 5.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 7.

²¹³ Parts of this chapter have also been discussed in my seminar paper “Germany’s Role in International Security: A Change in German Security Policy?” submitted at the Diplomatic Academy Vienna for the seminar “Advanced Topics in International Relations— A Geo-Political Perspective” with Prof. Arthur Rachwald, July 2018, academic year 2017/2018.

experts, citizens and politicians could equally participate. Therefore, it can be argued to reflect a “fundamental consensus,”²¹⁴ whereas previous White Papers had been drafted by a small group within the Ministry of Defence without a public discourse. The White Paper was widely welcomed and considered a milestone. One of the greatest achievements was considered to be the change in self-perception. Jeffrey Rathke for instance noted that “Germany has emerged within Europe as a central player on virtually every issue and the 2016 White Paper embraces this (refreshingly without the usual German caveat that it did not seek such a role).”²¹⁵ And also Constanze Stelzenmüller concluded that

the Germany of earlier White Books defines itself in reference to history, norms and alliance obligations. But it also often hid its own interests (or evaded responsibility) behind these constraints. The Germany of 2016 as portrayed in this document understands its power and makes deliberate choices.²¹⁶

For the Bundeswehr, the White Paper did not focus as previous White Papers had done on the size and structure of the forces but rather on its tasks and on increasing its flexibility, agility and multifunctionality.²¹⁷

The year 2016 constituted an important year for the Bundeswehr. Next to the publication of the White Paper, which contributed significantly to a debate on German security policy and reflected the acceptance of a broad range of tasks for the Bundeswehr and a broad domestic consensus, Minister of Defence von der Leyen instigated several reform packages to reverse the effects of the *Neuausrichtung* and previous reforms that had reduced the Bundeswehr’s capacity. By this, von der Leyen started a major attempt to close the discrepancy between commitments and capacity.

6.5 Content of the *Trendwende*

The 2016 reforms announced by von der Leyen were called *Trendwende* translatable as “a reversal in trend.” Four areas are subject to this change in trend: staff, equipment,

²¹⁴ Carsten Breuer and Christoph Schwarz, “Meilenstein, kein Endpunkt,” *Internationale Politik* 5 (2016): 85.

²¹⁵ Jeffrey Rathke, “Rising Ambitions and Growing Resources Mark New German Security Strategy,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 25 July 2016, last accessed 21 April 2019, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/rising-ambitions-and-growing-resources-mark-new-german-security-strategy>.

²¹⁶ Constanze Stelzenmüller, “A newly confident and audacious Germany,” *Washington Post*, 14 July 2016, last accessed 30 April 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/germanys-new-road-map-of-responsibility/2016/07/14/af8e4676-49e7-11e6-90a8-fb84201e0645_story.html?utm_term=.4e31419a63bd.

²¹⁷ BMVg, *White Paper 2016: On German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr* (Berlin: 13 July 2016), 98.

financing and infrastructure. The first *Trendwende* was already announced in May 2016 and concerns the staff. Von der Leyen argued that in the last 25 years, the personnel strength had constantly been decreased but given the development of the security environment and the increasing challenges for the forces, a rethinking of this trend was urgent. She therefore advocated for a “breathing body of personnel,” orientating itself on the actual tasks and assessing the personnel needs for each year respectively. This way the Bundeswehr would become more flexible and enhance its endurance and deployability. In total, von der Leyen announced 96 measures to achieve this aim among which was the establishment of the cyber and information domain service.²¹⁸ This flexibility was required, because as the recent developments have shown, a strict number of personnel is not possible to determine if the tasks may change very significantly and very rapidly. Since 1990, the size of the army has continuously been decreased. While at the beginning this was necessary to increase efficiency and professionalise the forces, the increase in commitments would currently require a greater number of personnel to be able to fulfil all tasks. Hence, with the *Trendwende*, the Bundeswehr for the first time since 1990 is allowed to grow in its size again but not due to a political decision, as the number often had been determined previously, but based on actual need.

Another *Trendwende* concerns the equipment. The new target is full equipment and for this the investment share of the defence budget was increased by 11% from € 5.4bn in 2016 to € 6bn in 2017.²¹⁹ The White Paper 2016 additionally announced to modernise the armament management and to enhance multinational armament cooperation.²²⁰ Closely related is the *Trendwende Infrastructure*, which aims at modernising and improving the infrastructure of the Bundeswehr, in particular the buildings and housing situation for soldiers.

In order to be able to improve these three areas, adequate financing is necessary. Therefore, the *Trendwende Financing* aims at continuously increasing the budget and to allocate the budget more efficiently. In 2014, the defence budget amounted to approximately € 32.4bn.²²¹ With the *Trendwende* starting in 2016, the parliament agreed to increase the defence budget for 2017 by € 2.7bn. And the overall financing plan in July

²¹⁸ BMVg, *Tagesbefehl der Bundesministerin* (Berlin: 10 May 2016).

²¹⁹ Deutscher Bundestag, *Unterrichtung durch den Wehrbeauftragten, Jahresbericht 2016*, Drucksache 18/10900, 24 January 2017, 22.

²²⁰ BMVg, *White Paper 2016*, 127-130.

²²¹ BMVg, “Entwicklung und Struktur des Verteidigungshaushalts,” last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.bmvg.de/de/themen/verteidigungshaushalt/entwicklung-und-struktur-des-verteidigungshaushalts>.

2016 decided that until 2020, the defence budget would be stretched to € 39bn.²²² However, this has already been further elevated. In November 2018 the Bundestag, with a majority of the coalition of SPD and CSU/CSU, agreed on a further increase of the defence budget by € 4.71bn for 2019. With this, the defence budget for 2019 will amount to € 43.23bn. This budget accounts for an increase of approximately € 860m for staff, an increase of € 3.22bn for procurement and a slight increase of approximately € 100m for housing and € 900m additional funds for construction projects.²²³ Consequently, it appears that the respective reforms are substantiated with an increasing financial support whereas previous reforms often cut the resources as part of the reforms.

6.6 Evaluation Trendwende and Outlook

Chapter five has shown how over the last 25-30 years the discrepancy between commitments and capacity has widened. Although previous reform efforts were aimed at strengthening the forces' effectiveness, overall it has primarily led to a reduction in capacity whilst the Bundeswehr took on more and more tasks and responsibilities. The main reason for not being able to close this discrepancy have at first been the lack of domestic consensus regarding the role and tasks of the Bundeswehr. If there is no common vision on what role the armed forces play within a country, it is difficult to adapt them accordingly. Once the consensus was reached regarding the output, there was still no consensus regarding the input, that is the budget to realise reform efforts effectively. The main reason for this lack of consensus was the lack of priority given to the Bundeswehr as well as the lack of urgency, because there had been no imminent threat to Germany's security. Moreover, domestic issues had been considered more important and therefore the defence budget was continuously cut. For example, the social reforms under Chancellor Schröder or the consequences of the financial crisis and energy transition under Chancellor Merkel. Have these reasons changed?

Firstly, according to the latest election programmes from 2017, the majority of the parties in the parliament support the modernisation efforts of the forces. Thus, except from the Left Party, the domestic consensus on the output is still given. However, the opinion regarding the input is not as definite. The CDU committed itself to increasing the

²²² Deutscher Bundestag, *Unterrichtung durch den Wehrbeauftragten, Jahresbericht 2018*, Drucksache 19/7200, 29 January 2019, 8.

²²³ Deutscher Bundestag, "Deutlicher Anstieg der Verteidigungsausgaben beschlossen," 21 November 2018, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2018/kw47-de-verteidigung-576946>.

defence budget towards 2% until 2024, as agreed on at the NATO Wales Summit in 2014.²²⁴ The FDP also noted in its election programme that it was committed to NATO and for this would support a further increase of the defence budget by 2024 however, it did not state a percentage goal.²²⁵ The SPD advocated for a modernisation of the forces and for this would be willing to make improvements by increasing the financing if necessary. However, it clearly stated that the SPD would refuse to “unnecessarily and unrealistically” raise the defence budget to 2%, because this would entail a doubling in the expenditure and would be out of proportion.²²⁶ The AfD supported a reformation of the forces and noted that thus changes would be indispensable. Yet, in its election programme it did not discuss the defence budget.²²⁷ However, in a parliamentary debate regarding the increase on the defence budget, the AfD criticised the government for not fulfilling its obligation to achieve the 2% (or even 1.5%) NATO guideline.²²⁸ Thus, although CDU, FDP, SPD and AfD support an increase in defence budget, the opinion regarding the amount varies significantly. The Greens also endorsed a modernisation of the forces to increase its effectiveness and also acknowledged that good equipment was required. However, according to the Greens, this could not be solved by stretching the defence budget but instead one should focus on strengthening the effectiveness of the procurement processes. Therefore, the Greens did not support an increase in the budget.²²⁹ The Left Party was strictly against any increase and considered this upward trend dangerous.²³⁰ Ultimately, the parliament may have an overall majority to lift the defence budget, and this is what has happened recently, but this has been a rather difficult task and it is no unambiguous domestic consensus. Nevertheless, the defence budget had been increased by € 4.71bn to € 43.23bn in 2019 and is envisaged to be further increased to € 45.1bn in 2020, which constitutes an increment of 4.3%. However, Defence Minister von der Leyen had requested an increase of € 5bn in order to be able to implement the *Trendwende* adequately and to be able to fulfil Germany’s commitment to reach the threshold of 1.5% of BIP by 2024 as it had promised to NATO. Although the defence budget of Germany is increasingly a subject of tensions, in particular with the US, for

²²⁴ CDU/CSU, *Für ein Deutschland, in dem wir gut und gerne leben* (Berlin: 2017), 66.

²²⁵ FDP, *Denken wir Neu. Das Programm der Freien Demokraten zur Bundestagswahl 2017: „Schauen wir nicht Länger zu.“* (Berlin: 2017), 116.

²²⁶ SPD, *Zeit für mehr Gerechtigkeit. Unser Regierungsprogramm für Deutschland* (Berlin: 2017), 105,106.

²²⁷ AfD, *Programm für Deutschland* (Berlin: 2017), 19.

²²⁸ Deutscher Bundestag, *Deutlichen Anstieg der Verteidigungsausgaben beschlossen*, 21 November 2018.

²²⁹ Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, *Zukunft wird aus Mut Gemacht. Bundestagswahlprogramm 2017* (Berlin: 2017), 87.

²³⁰ Die Linke, *Sozial. Gerecht. Frieden. Für alle. Die Zukunft, für die wir kämpfen!* (Berlin: 2017), 94- 95.

Germany the raise is significant considering its decade-long reduction in budget.²³¹ Consequently, this round of reforms is substantiated by the required financial resources. Scharping's reforms were built on an unrealistic financing plan and had to face further cuts before he could properly start to implement his plans. Struck also faced financial constraints and thus used the restructuring process to economise the forces. Guttenberg and de Maizière's efforts were largely the result of a significant budget cut. Von der Leyen's reforms however, go hand in hand with a significant increase in defence spending, whether it fulfils NATO's expectations or not. Despite the differences among the parties on the exact goal of this increase– it illustrated a trend into the right direction and therefore forms an indispensable requirement for the success of her reform efforts.

Secondly, the threat perception and sense of urgency has significantly changed in recent years. Not only due to Russian aggression, but the increase in terrorist attacks by the Islamic State and in cyber attacks have increased the urgency to modernise the forces accordingly. Moreover, since the election of US President Trump it appears that the European NATO countries need to focus greater on European defence cooperation as the US increasingly appears to become a less reliant partner in the future. Therefore, German efforts are urgent to achieve a greater European independence of the US. In addition, the uncertainty about Brexit and what this could mean for ESDP pushes Germany to increase its share of the burden. Nevertheless, although the public debate may have slightly increased in recent years, security and defence is still no issue of top priority. But the increase in budget and general support for von der Leyen's reforms among the parties suggest that, in particular if compared to previous efforts, the sense of urgency has changed. Therefore, another factor that has previously led to a greater discrepancy has changed in favour for the new round of reform. Nevertheless, the change may not be sufficient. The modernisation is considered important and perhaps more important than in recent years, but the reform efforts still do not gain as much attention as they might require.

Furthermore, a closer evaluation of the progress of the *Trendwende* is disillusioning. Despite great efforts, an increase in budget and a greater sense of urgency than in previous years, the shape of the forces has not improved, on the contrary, in some areas it has even further deteriorated, according to the annual report by the parliamentary

²³¹ Katharina Schuler, Tilman Steffen and Sören Götz, "Woran Olaf Scholz sparen will," *Die Zeit Online*, 20 March 2019, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2019-03/bundeshaushalt-haushaltsplan-2020-olaf-scholz-ruestung-entwicklung-migration>.

commissioner of the armed forces Hans-Peter Bartels. He reported that the forces are still operating at their limit and that there is still a great discrepancy between capacities and the commitments they have to fulfil.²³² Although the size of the forces has increased by 4,000 in 2018 in comparison to 2017, several areas are still understaffed. A great challenge regarding personnel is also the yearly decreasing number of applications. While in 2016, there were 58,439 applications, the number in 2018 was only 52,200.²³³ Some measures to make the service in the forces more attractive have been fruitful however, Bartels concludes that there is still great room for improvement. In the area of infrastructure improvement, he only registered very slow progress, although given the decade-long neglect this is no surprise. The greatest problem lies in the area of equipment. According to Bartels, the Bundeswehr is still far away from full equipment. For instance, the majority of submarines are defect, half of the Eurofighters and Tornados are not airworthy.²³⁴ In many cases equipment is internally lent to be able to equip soldiers adequately, which only works because the Bundeswehr greatly improvises.²³⁵ Ultimately, he concludes, the *Trendwende* has not yet arrived and the overextension of the forces maintains.

The main problem according to Bartels are the complex and lengthy procurement and repairing processes as well as the bureaucratic obstacles. Although in 2016 a new department in the Ministry of Defence had been established to decrease bureaucracy,²³⁶ the bureaucracy within the forces remains excessive. Bartels provide examples, stating that for instance the Bundeswehr's construction projects take two or three times longer than civilian projects.²³⁷ Overall, simple procedures become more complicated, personnel is used inefficiently and is assigned with unnecessary tasks. Due to this, the efforts to modernise the equipment and the infrastructure as well as to make the service more attractive can only progress very slowly. The demands and commitments continue to grow at a faster rate than the *Trendwende* progresses. Thus, although von der Leyen has better prerequisites, given the increase in money and consensus, this reform round might not be able to decrease the discrepancy between commitments and capabilities due to

²³² Deutscher Bundestag, *Unterrichtung durch den Wehrbeauftragten, Jahresbericht 2018*, Drucksache 19/7200, 29 January 2019, 5.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 17.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 40.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 11.

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

excessive bureaucracy and a failure to speed up the process of reform to a greater extent than the commitments rise.

7. Conclusion

This research has investigated the question of why during the reform process of the Bundeswehr since 1990, which aimed at adapting the Bundeswehr to its new tasks, the discrepancy between military commitments and the Bundeswehr's capacity to meet these commitments has widened instead of narrowed.

Using Hanrieder's framework of compatibility and consensus, the analysis of this transformation process has focused on whether the efforts to adapt the Bundeswehr have been internationally compatible and whether they have been subject to domestic consensus. The analysis has revealed that the efforts to reform the Bundeswehr have most certainly been compatible with the international environment, that is they had "a reasonable chance of realisation,"²³⁸ as no significant strictures would have impeded the reform objectives. Moreover, most of the reform efforts were motivated by international pressure or developments. Nevertheless it is to be noted that although every round of reforms was welcomed abroad because a modernised Bundeswehr was expected to contribute greater to international security, all efforts have also always led to disappointment among Germany's allies, as they had greater expectations. Most notably, Germany's conviction to maintain conscription was met with frustration because it was considered a major element to professionalise and thus modernise the German armed forces. Therefore, most reform efforts were often met with an attitude of "better than nothing." This however illustrates how Germany only took small measures in adapting its forces, whilst internationally its partners would have preferred for a faster and more substantive change and whilst ongoing international developments were requiring such changes.

The greater obstacle for narrowing the discrepancy was the lack of domestic consensus. During the first decade, the questions regarding the constitutionality of out-of-area deployment and the general rejection to participate in international missions hindered an effective modernisation effort of the forces as the focus was on more fundamental

²³⁸ Wolfram F. Hanrieder, "Compatibility and Consensus: A Proposal for the Conceptual Linkage of External and Internal Dimensions of Foreign Policy," *The American Political Science Review* 61, no. 4 (Dec., 1967), 977.

questions. Ultimately, Germany could not maintain its position of reticence and significantly increased its commitments. With this increase in commitments, it very soon had to acknowledge the limits of its armed forces, triggering the first major attempts to substantially adapt the forces. However, the clear prioritisation of domestic issues and thus the continuous budget cuts have prevented any major changes. It appears that for several years new reform efforts were planned one after another, while none could properly be implemented. Some reform proposals were considered “too radical,” speaking too openly about Germany’s interests abroad and reducing the number of conscripts, which is widely met with scepticism due to the historical mistrust in an army that is detached from the citizens. Reflecting on Hanrieder’s assessment of domestic consensus, the analysis has demonstrated that decisions regarding the Bundeswehr are still highly influenced by historical experiences and for some politicians also by ethical restraints. Moreover, the ambivalent position of the population regarding the Bundeswehr and defence-spending makes it difficult for politicians to rely on popular support. Several surveys have shown for instance a societal approval of NATO and Germany’s role in NATO, but a rejection of increasing the budget to fulfil NATO obligations. Other surveys have demonstrated an overall approval of intervention in Afghanistan, but yet again a rejection of direct German participation. With such volatile and uncertain popular support, politicians are restricted in their action to pursue their policy objective of reforming the Bundeswehr.

After the escalation of violence in Afghanistan, the “Afghanistan-Shock,” as von Bredow put it, domestic consensus increased. The parties were agreeing more on what the tasks of the Bundeswehr were and what its role should look like. However, the lack of priority and urgency as well as the debt-brake introduced in 2009, hindered an adequate input, that is financial resources, to implement the reforms. Thus, instead of modernising the forces to increase efficiency and to narrow the gap between commitments and capacity, a reduction of capacity took place.

The return of the threat to territorial sovereignty and conventional and hybrid warfare on European soil since the Russian annexation of Crimea has pushed for more action and provided new urgency and legitimacy to reform the Bundeswehr once more. Given the changed threat perception and on top of that the increase in the threat of cyber warfare, for the first time, a round of reforms of the Bundeswehr has been accompanied by an increase in the defence budget. Previously, the reforms were a result of budget cuts or a means to decrease the budget. Therefore, in this regard, von der Leyen’s reform

efforts appear to have a greater chance to narrow the discrepancy between commitment and capacity. Most notably, the commitment to turn away from the principle of ‘breadth before depth’ is promising. However, to fully determine whether the *Trendwende* will be successful is too early to tell.

Firstly, the matter of urgency is a volatile factor and can change very quickly. Although the war in Ukraine is still on-going, the east-west sabre-rattling, the fight against the Islamic State and other major security threats are not as prominent in the news anymore, as they had been at the time when the *Trendwende* started and therefore the public pressure to act has decreased. International security has returned to be an elite-discussion in Germany. Secondly, Germany will continue to focus primarily on domestic issues. Although Germany has made enormous steps in coming to terms with its armed forces, it still has a long way ahead and in terms of attention and budget, it is unlikely that the Bundeswehr will be of top priority any time soon, if at all in the near future. This is particularly important for the budget. The next recession is expected, and the defence budget is then very likely to be reduced again. Thirdly, the consensus regarding the budget is unstable and will remain volatile. On the one hand, the continuous budget increase is already an achievement that has led to some improvements in the forces. On the other hand, it is criticised by many CDU politicians, by the parliamentary commissioner of the armed forces and especially by German allies for not being sufficient.²³⁹ However, at the same time, many citizens are against increasing the defence budget to the 2% of GDP as required by NATO— a trend in public opinion that will make it more difficult for von der Leyen to continue her advocacy for a higher budget.²⁴⁰ Lastly, the debate regarding the defence budget might be redundant if the processes within the Bundeswehr do not become more efficient and simpler. An increase in money must be used effectively however, given the latest reports by Bartels, the gaps in capacity have in some areas even increased because of the slow process, unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles and inefficient use of resources. Therefore, simply increasing the budget would also not resolve the problem of discrepancy.

²³⁹ Christian Rothenberg, “Nach Kritik an Verteidigungsetat: FDP-Vize Kubicki fordert Ausweisung von US-Botschafter Grenell,” *Handelsblatt*, 19 March 2019, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/streit-um-2-prozent-ziel-nach-kritik-an-verteidigungsetat-fdp-vize-kubicki-fordert-ausweisung-von-us-botschafter-grenell/24118518.html?ticket=ST-1913231-2ssIJaepE2t9PodYVLve-ap4>.

²⁴⁰ Thomas Vitzthum, “Mehrheit der Deutschen gegen höhere Verteidigungsausgaben,” *Welt Online*, 4 April 2019, last accessed 13 June 2019, <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article191368105/Deutschlandtrend-Deutsche-sagen-Ja-zur-Nato-aber-Nein-zu-hoeheren-Verteidigungsausgaben.html>.

Ultimately one can conclude that the reasons for the discrepancy have changed over the years. The discussion on the transformation of the Bundeswehr has shifted from more fundamental questions and a focus on the structure and tasks to more substantive changes based on the actual need to improve the capacity. Although von der Leyen faces better preconditions for her reforms than her predecessors in terms of consensus, budget and urgency, the consensus is still fragile and the priority of domestic issues over the reform process will prevail. Therefore, the most important factor to narrow the discrepancy between commitments, which are not going to be reduced in the future but are going to continue to rise, and capacity, is to focus on decreasing bureaucracy and increasing the effectiveness of the measures taken. This is why further research should be done investigating thoroughly the impact of bureaucracy, how to decrease it and how to increase the effectiveness of the many measures taken. Moreover, investigating in more depth the role of the ambiguous German public opinion and to what extent it in fact influences the decisions regarding the reform efforts would further complement the findings of this research and could contribute to closing the discrepancy of commitments and capacity in the German armed forces.

Despite the persistence of the discrepancy, the transformation of the Bundeswehr from the 1990s up until today was remarkable, given the strong obstacles it initially faced. The analysis has revealed that over the years Germany has become more at ease and confident with its armed forces, most notably observable in the volte-face of the Greens and the SPD. It may still not “demonstrate a determination to participate in military operations (...) on even terms with Paris and London,”²⁴¹ as Wagener had defined the normalisation of German foreign policy, but it follows a trend in this direction.

²⁴¹ Wagener, 79.

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