

1.4.1 GERMAN MILITARY AND PEACEKEEPING ARTICLES

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Letter From Europe

IN GERMANY, FEW VOICE THE W WORD

By Judy Dempsey
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BERLIN — With just seven weeks to go before Germany's federal elections, one of the most controversial issues that has haunted Chancellor Angela Merkel's government — Afghanistan — is no issue in this campaign.

Even though opinion polls consistently show that a majority of Germans are against the war in Afghanistan, neither Mrs. Merkel's conservative Christian Democrats nor her coalition partners, the Social Democrats, have explained to the electorate why more than 4,000 German soldiers must remain there.

The German government has held no hearings on Afghanistan since Germany first sent troops there seven years ago. "Neither the foreign affairs committee nor the defense committee of the Parliament have ever held a hearing bringing in outside experts," said Winfried Nachtwei, a Greens legislator and a leading security expert. "I repeatedly proposed that we hold one, but the coalition would not agree," said Mr. Nachtwei, who has visited Afghanistan many times.

Neither the German government nor politicians use the word "war" to describe what is happening in Afghanistan, even though over the past few months German troops in the northern region of Kunduz, where the Taliban has recently taken root, have come under frequent fire from insurgents. The German word "Gefallen," used to describe a soldier killed in battle, was used publicly this year for the first time since World War II — and not without controversy. Thirty-five German soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan, far fewer than U.S., British and Canadian fatalities. Nevertheless, the sight of military funerals has unsettled German society.

Defense Minister Franz Josef Jung recently said on German public television that there was no war in Afghanistan. "If you are in a war, you don't build schools, you don't take care of the water and energy supply, you don't build kindergartens and hospitals and you don't train the military and the police," he said, naming some of the projects on which German troops are working.

German soldiers in Afghanistan have a different view. Reinhold Robbe, the German Parliament's military commissioner, said the soldiers

perceive themselves "as being in warlike situations. And I can completely understand that. I'm not a big fan of semantic exercises."

Mr. Nachtwei said he could understand why the German government does not want to use the word "war." After Hitler plunged Nazi Germany into World War II, Germans have been brought up to oppose any kind of militarism. But some politicians, notably the former Greens leader and foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, have said that Germany cannot remain pacifist if it wants a greater influence in international security affairs.

Then there are the legal implications about using the word: Waging a war would not be compatible with the United Nations mandate under which NATO troops in the International Security Assistance Force serve. "The mandate is about bringing security and not about fighting," Mr. Nachtwei said.

This is despite the separate U.S. strategy, or "surge" against the Taliban in the south of Afghanistan, which is supported by NATO but has little to do with the original terms of the U.N. mandate.

Above all, Germans do not see the conflict in Afghanistan as a war in the classic interpretation of one country fighting another. "It is an asymmetric conflict in which using the word 'war' makes little sense," said a German Foreign Ministry official who spoke on condition of anonymity, adding that using the word would provide legitimacy to the Taliban.

The failure to hold hearings is a different matter. Elke Hoff, a foreign affairs expert with the opposition Free Democrats, has criticized the government for not explaining its strategy on Afghanistan. Yet Ms. Hoff shies away from the idea of holding hearings. "Maybe if the situation escalated in Kunduz, a hearing might be needed," she said, acknowledging that by then it might be too late.

Charles Grant, director of the independent Center for European Reform in London, said that if the German government did hold hearings, it would be confronted with evidence that would upset its view of the world.

“Germans have this pacifist world view whereby most problems can be solved through dialogue, aid, compromise and not by force,” Mr. Grant said. Yet Germany’s attempts to train the Afghan police force ended in failure because of lack of funds, personnel and adequate planning. “There would be evidence in a hearing that development and civilian aid alone will not defeat the Taliban. Force would be necessary too. It is this idea of force that the Germans do not want to deal with or hear about,” he added.

The upshot is that because involvement in Afghanistan is so unpopular among Germans, the government knows it would win no points in holding a hearing or making this military mission an issue in the campaign. The war in Iraq was a big issue in the U.S. presidential election last year. It was also one of the reasons why Tony Blair, the former British prime minister, fell out of popular favor.

Yes those governments that have borne the brunt of the fighting, especially in the south of Afghanistan, have held comprehensive hearings about what is taking place there. This is despite the ever-growing unpopularity across Europe and Canada of the conflict in Afghanistan.

The foreign and defense committees of the U.S., British, Canadian, Danish and Dutch governments have carried out many hearings, gathering evidence from military experts, nongovernmental organizations and journalists.

Only last week, the Foreign Affairs Select Committee of the British House of Commons published a report on Britain’s role in Afghanistan that criticized the unwillingness of some NATO allies to do more, as well as the lack of coordination by the European Union.

“Afghanistan is extremely crucial,” said Gisela Stuart, a Labour Party legislator and member of the committee. “In a way, I am very, very surprised that the German government has yet to hold a hearing. On the other hand, Afghanistan is such a poisoned chalice it would prove a real test for Berlin if it were to hold such a hearing because everything would come out,” she added.

But surely Germany’s soldiers, who are risking their lives halfway around the world, as well as the Afghan people who are so often caught up in the fighting, deserve such a hearing?

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MACLEANS

Germany Gets Tough

IN A BREAK WITH THE POSTWAR PAST, GERMAN TROOPS STEP INTO COMBAT

By Katie Engelhart

August 27, 2009

It's the "war" that no one calls by name. Instead, the German government refers to its "stabilization mission" in northern Afghanistan. And the more than 4,000 German soldiers stationed there, precluded from using the word "attack," will be careful only to speak of the "use of appropriate force." Still, this guarded language—dubbed "an aggravating semantic farce" by a leading German newspaper—is not enough to hide a simple fact: the mission that officials are too abashed to call a war is starting to look like just that.

The German government is officially rewriting its rules of engagement in Afghanistan—allowing Bundeswehr forces to adopt a more offensive combat role. "The major change," explains Christian Leuprecht, associate professor at the Royal Military College of Canada, "is that Germans no longer have to wait to be fired upon before they can fight back." Until recently, German forces in Afghanistan could not operate offensively. They could not take pre-emptive measures to prevent assaults, or even pursue fleeing rebels. Effectively, they had to wait until they came under attack. Another change addresses verbal warnings that German troops had to issue before firing on enemies. "United Nations—stop, or I will fire" was the official call: to be used first in English, then Pashtu, and then Dari. Now, those rules have been changed to let soldiers return fire—and give warnings later.

The measures might seem paltry, but they signal a meaningful shift. After the Second World War, explains Leuprecht, there was "apprehension about Germans taking too aggressive a stance" in world affairs, and the Bundeswehr was limited to defensive operations. It was only in 1994 that the military was permitted to deploy troops abroad; and even then, only in multilateral, UN-backed non-combat operations. In the context of Afghanistan, this docility resulted in a series of national "caveats": special limitations on Germany's participation in the NATO-led mission. But as these are stripped away, Germany has begun to flex some military muscle. At the end of July, officials announced that a major new offensive against the Taliban would be backed by over 300 German soldiers—their biggest operation yet in the country.

The escalation marks Germany's first military offensive since the Second World War—a benchmark that has not been overlooked. "Some are angry, while others seem almost fatalistic," the news magazine *Der Spiegel* proclaimed. "But they all agree that a psycholo-

gical threshold has been crossed." Until now, argues Markus Kaim of the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin, Germans have operated in a "post-heroic" society, where "soldierly values" and displays of military pride are scorned. There have been "no photos of people standing on the street when fallen soldiers return home," he explains. Even plans to build a memorial for dead soldiers, he says, are controversial. But that is shifting, too. Last month, Chancellor Angela Merkel gave out the country's first bravery medals since 1945—to four soldiers who fought in Afghanistan.

"Psychological threshold" aside, it's clear the changes are, in part, a result of shifting conditions on the ground. The German-patrolled north has traditionally seen less insurgent activity. But Leuprecht stresses that "the threat environment is changing." Pressure from NATO forces in the south has pushed insurgents up. And foreign fighters are trickling in. The real spark may have been the deaths of three German soldiers in June that some argue could have been prevented—if soldiers had been allowed to take offensive action first. Now, in addition to giving troops more flexibility on the ground, the changes will relieve them of what some say is a constant fear of prosecution for violating a "caveat." Already in May, charges against a German soldier who killed three Afghan civilians in 2008 when their car did not stop at a checkpoint were dropped. His lawyer says that's a signal to troops that they shouldn't be afraid to defend themselves if need be.

For all the talk of a newly aggressive Germany, about 70 per cent of Germans oppose the war. But, says Leuprecht, while headlines decry the changes, the fact remains that for years NATO allies have accused Germany of passively "shirking responsibility" in Afghanistan's less hazardous north. Ultimately, Kaim thinks that the real change comes from a better understanding of the Afghan mission. People thought we were "in Afghanistan to walk little girls to school," he says, "but that's not the UN mandate. The UN mandate is about providing security." Seven years after starting the mission, he says, politicians finally get it—although they're unlikely to start using the word "war" in place of "stabilization mission."

Engelhart, K. (2009, August 27). *Germany Gets Tough*. Retrieved from Macleans: <http://www.macleans.ca>

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT LINCOLN

*Beyond their Borders***BEYOND THEIR BORDERS: MILITARY EVOLVES TO FILL INTERVENTIONIST ROLE***By Katherine Harpster*

2007

In some Cold War scenarios, World War III would begin as hordes of Soviet tanks poured over West Germany's eastern horizon like armor-plated cockroaches, their tracks churning emerald green fields to muck in their wake. At its inception in 1955, the *Bundeswehr* – West Germany's armed forces – had the single explicit role of holding back those tanks of buying time until U.S. and other NATO units could arrive to stem the tide of T-72s.

But in 1989, everything changed. The Soviet Union collapsed, and the Iron Curtain disintegrated. When the dust settled, the *Bundeswehr* realized that it had become an army without an enemy, it out a role, without a purpose.

The West Germans created an enigma in 1955. The *Bundeswehr* has struggled throughout its history to define its role in a society that today is almost universally opposed to warfare after launching the two most catastrophic conflicts in world history. Now, because of pressure from its NATO allies and the desire to once again play a central role in the international community, Germany has decided to commit its military to missions outside the country. The *Bundeswehr*, forged in the crucible of the Cold War, faces the daunting task of transforming itself into a modern military force capable of fighting and keeping the peace in a range of foreign missions. With every step, the *Bundeswehr* must deal with the obstacles of its present – and the demons of its past – in its search for a purpose.

When the fighting finally stopped in the summer of 1945, Adolf Hitler's Third Reich and its vaunted war machine, the *Wehrmacht*, lay in ruins. Edwin Hartrich, who served as a soldier in the 44th Infantry Division in Germany and later worked as a consultant to German industrial firms, described the widespread devastation in post-war Germany in his 1980 book, *The Fourth and Richest Reich*.

"The war had reduced German cities to dusty heaps of broken stone and brick rubble, desolate facades of gutted buildings: roofless, windowless, and without floors," he wrote.

The human toll was even more devastating. More than 2 million German soldiers had died on battlefields that spanned the globe, from the deserts of North Africa to the hedgerows of northern France and the shattered streets of Stalingrad and Berlin. The Allies detained about 2.5 million soldiers in prisoner of war camps, and

another 3 million were missing in action and presumed dead. Millions of widows walked the streets dressed in black.

"The hospitals were filled with the human debris of war: the sightless, armless, legless; the scarred, burned, and mutilated soldiers, the still-living human sacrifices to Hitler's war making," Hartrich wrote.

Some historians call this time *Stunde Null*, or "zero hour." *Stunde Null* represents the crippling psychological and physical damage that prevailed in Germany at the end of the war. It also represents an abrupt shift in the way Germans viewed the military's place in society and the use of military force. The war's terrible destruction, as well as the horrific atrocities some *Wehrmacht* units committed under the Nazi regime, fostered an abhorrence of military culture that became ingrained in the German psyche.

The conquering Allies played their own part in *Stunde Null* with their program of Three Ds: demilitarization, denazification and democratization. The first of these was arguably the easiest. Little was left of the *Wehrmacht* save a few captured tanks and field guns. The rest of the army littered Europe's roads and fields with burnt-out hulks. From the beginning, however, the Allies knew Germany could not remain disarmed and neutral for long. In the early 1950s, with the Cold War beginning to heat up, Germany had to face the inevitability of rearmament.

Konrad Adenauer, who took office as West Germany's first chancellor in September 1949, was the first major political figure to push for West Germany's rearmament after the war. Adenauer, Hartrich wrote, saw rearmament "as the instrument with which to free his country from the Allied occupation rule and to obtain almost complete political and economic freedom for the fledgling Republic."

War-weary Germans resisted any plans to rearm, however, and it was only in 1954 that Germany's parliament authorized Adenauer to begin negotiations with the Allies. In October of that year, he signed the Treaty of Paris with representatives from the U.S., Britain and France, ending the Allied occupation of West Germany and recognizing it as a sovereign state. West Germany became the 15th member of NATO, and Adenauer agreed to place the country's full support behind the defense of Western Europe against the Soviet Union.

Edward Homze, a professor emeritus of modern Germany and the European military at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, studied for two years at the Free University of Berlin in the late 1950s. He spoke at length about Germany's heated debate on the military's place in society.

"When the Germans decided to build their own army, they were badly split," he said, adding that many Germans were afraid the *Bundeswehr* would become an elite, militaristic body similar to the previous army. "How are you to weed out, in the case of the Germans, this kind of authoritarianism that's so inbred in any military organization?"

When the parliament created the *Bundeswehr* in 1955, it built several key elements into the military's framework that served to weave it into the fabric of society. These measures, along with strict political control, were meant to keep the military from becoming a state within a state that could grow powerful enough to guide foreign policy as it had in the past.

The first of these elements is the concept of *Innere Führung*, or "moral leadership." *Innere Führung* states that German law and values should guide a soldier's actions while he is serving in the *Bundeswehr*. This mind-set is meant to create an environment in which German soldiers can think for themselves, thereby preventing the blind obedience to orders that led to so many atrocities during World War II.

Closely related to *Innere Führung* is the ideal of *Bürger in Uniform*. German soldiers are "citizens in uniform" who have the same legal rights and responsibilities as any other member of society.

Conscription, the final and most basic element of the framework, acts as the binding force between the armed forces and society. The universal male conscription system is meant to force participation in the military at all levels of society, again to prevent an elite military class from developing. West Germany called up its first pool of conscripts in 1956.

Col. Hans Reimer, German liaison officer to the United States Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Va., volunteered to serve in the German army in 1977 when he was 18.

"I didn't even think about anything else than joining the armed forces," he wrote in an e-mail interview with a reporter. "I was ready to die for defending my country."

Both of Reimer's grandfathers had served in the German infantry in World War I, and one later joined the air force. Reimer's father joined the army at age 15 and served in World War II. He was severely injured fighting American troops on the Western front and taken as a prisoner of war.

The term of conscription when Reimer joined was 15 months.

"In [those] days conscription was enforced by very tough laws," he said. "Everybody who was not going to serve in the armed forces had to undergo a very tough process of questioning."

Most of Reimer's friends joined the *Bundeswehr* for this reason. "Most of them," Reimer said, "served because they had to."

Most conscripts also decided to leave after their term. But Reimer stayed.

"I've always been a patriot," he said. "So I wanted to defend my country, and where could I have done this – from the perspective of a young man – better than being a member of the armed forces?"

During the past 30 years, Reimer has commanded platoons, companies and a regiment, he said. His rise through the ranks gave him a better perspective on what the army needed to do to improve. He saw problems he wanted to help solve.

"So I stayed, strived to get up the ladder, strived for positions with more and more influence and tried to contribute to fixing things as best as I could," he said.

For Reimer and every other German soldier, their mission was simple. When it laid the foundation for the German military, the German parliament was clear on a final, unequivocal point: The *Bundeswehr* was created as a defensive force only. Its purpose was to deter the Soviet Union, not to wage war.

In 1989, that purpose evaporated into thin air.

When communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, the Germans found themselves surrounded by friends. More than any other European military, the *Bundeswehr* had been geared toward fighting a static land battle against massive Soviet armored formations. The end of the Cold War prompted a new debate about the *Bundeswehr's* purpose in a new global security environment.

Maj. Alexander Bitter, an air force officer who works as a researcher for the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin, knows firsthand the difficulties the *Bundeswehr* has faced in defining its role. His dark brown eyes flashed as he described the military's internal turmoil in the early 1990s.

"We have [had] German soldiers in western Germany since 1955. They were here for saying 'stop' to the Russians," he said, jabbing his index finger against the table with a thump. "But that was it."

Reimer also remembers the changed atmosphere in the German military after 1989.

"Some didn't know what was going to happen," he said. "But most

were bound into daily business.”

The army’s first task was to integrate 88,000 soldiers from the East German National People’s Army into the *Bundeswehr*. The army’s ranks swelled to almost 530,000 but had to be reduced to about 370,000 to comply with an agreement signed in 1990 by the four occupying powers and East and West Germany.

“The National People’s Army was a force that recruited a lot of its personnel by conscription,” Reimer said. “So it was not that hard to reduce the numbers.”

Reimer said the *Bundeswehr* initially offered no real incentives, such as a bonus or an offer for another job, for soldiers to leave the armed forces.

“On the other hand there was also no obligation to stay,” he said. “If a member of the forces wanted to quit because of better chances on the private market – only East Germans – he could simply apply, and it was approved.”

In the early 1990s, some Germans believed the *Bundeswehr*’s role should be expanded to include participation in NATO and U.N. missions outside the country. However, the 1991 Gulf War illustrated that Germany was still hesitant to use force, despite pressure from its NATO allies to participate. Germany sent a handful of obsolete aircraft to Turkey and a few minesweepers to patrol the Persian Gulf after the fighting had stopped.

The Gulf War, however, did convince some Germans in the conservative Christian Democratic Union party that Germany had to do more if it wanted to retain its credibility in the international community. In the years after the Gulf War, Germany embarked on a series of small, low-profile missions in an incremental approach to military intervention. These small steps would set precedents and lay the groundwork for larger missions. Many Germans were convinced that, in the new security environment, Germany had both the means and the responsibility to take a more active role in international peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

The first real step came in 1992. For the first time since 1945, German soldiers left their native soil; they entered a land emerging from years of civil war. But still, they did not go to fight. About 140 German soldiers arrived in Cambodia in May 1992 as part of a U.N. peacekeeping mission. The Germans set up a field hospital to assist victims of the Khmer Rouge. One year later, the CDU-dominated parliament committed 1,640 troops to a U.N. peacekeeping mission in Somalia to provide food, water and protection from local warlords. In July 1992, Germany began participating in an arms embargo against Yugoslavia by providing airborne reconnaissance and control aircraft.

The more liberal Social Democratic Party, however, disputed the

legality of sending German troops abroad. The “out-of-area debate” focused on two articles in the German Basic Law that stated the military could be used only for defensive purposes or within a system of collective security like the U.N.

In July 1994, the German Constitutional Court finally settled the debate by ruling that the conservatives’ incremental approach was legal, provided that any *Bundeswehr* deployment receive a majority vote from the parliament. This effectively gave the CDU consent to continue its approach and made it legal to deploy the *Bundeswehr* on a variety of missions in the future.

In March 1999, the German military launched its first combat mission. Four Tornado strike aircraft stationed at an airbase in Italy flew bombing missions against Serbian troops in Kosovo to prevent the expulsion and oppression of the Muslim population there. The mission represented a new step in Germany’s acceptance of the use of military force. Then-Chancellor Gerhard Schröder justified the NATO mission by saying that Germany had a moral obligation to lend its support and that “there was no other option open but to end the murdering in Kosovo.”

Reimer served as an adviser to the commanding officer in a brigade headquarters during the Kosovo campaign.

“I supervised the whole spectrum of tasks to be fulfilled in peacebuilding missions, like running a jail, supporting forensic research, hunting down indicted war criminals, you name it,” he said.

Reimer also helped start an Albanian-language newspaper *Days of Hope*. He said the newspaper “opened the local population’s ears to our messages.”

While the missions in Kosovo, Somalia, Yugoslavia and Cambodia helped make Germans more accustomed to the use of military force, they had revealed deep flaws within the *Bundeswehr*’s structure and way of thinking. The German military was a creature of the Cold War, and, as the 20th century came to a close, military planners saw that the structure – and the very mentality – of the *Bundeswehr* would have to adapt to modern conflicts that varied in scope and intensity.

The Bundeswehr Transformation Center is a sprawling complex of white stucco buildings and gravel driveways planted among the pine trees a few miles east of Berlin. In an ironic twist, the complex once housed the East German military command, a subtle, everyday reminder to Capt. Friedhelm Stappen of how quickly the winds can shift.

“We are quite an example of how things have changed in Germany and in the world,” said Stappen, the center’s deputy commander. “Our outlook has changed completely, and our mission – the missi-

on of the armed forces – has changed.”

The *Bundeswehr*’s new role is to act as an interventionist force that can fight small regional conflicts, combat terrorism and stop or prevent civil wars, non-state violence and ethnic conflict. The Bundeswehr Transformation Center, founded in 2004, is a German Defense Ministry think tank responsible for planning and managing the transformation process in cooperation with other defense policy groups. It is working to make the *Bundeswehr* leaner and more lethal, with each military branch working seamlessly with the others, an elusive quality called “jointness.”

In other words, its job is akin to changing a sumo wrestler into a triathlete.

Reimer said the most important change the *Bundeswehr* must make is in its mind-set.

“You may have heard the phrase that there is just one thing harder than to get a new idea into people’s minds,” he said, “and that is to get an old idea out of it.”

Bitter, the think-tank researcher, agreed and added that the *Bundeswehr* was not yet fully prepared for overseas missions.

“We have kind of a mindset from the Cold War, and we try to change the structures to be more effective,” he said. “We don’t have the strategic airlift capacity, we don’t have weapons, we don’t have light armored trucks – and we are changing that.”

Those structural changes cost money, however – lots of money. Indeed, funding has proved to be transformation’s greatest obstacle. Chronic under-funding has hamstrung the *Bundeswehr* since the mid-1990s, and the defense budget remains stagnant.

In 2003, Germany’s defense spending was about 1.5 percent of its gross domestic product, compared to about 4 percent in the United States. According to an October 2006 article in *Deutsche Welle*, Germany also spends less on its military than Norway, Holland or Finland.

A 2003 report by the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies at The Johns Hopkins University takes a close look at the *Bundeswehr*’s transformation process, including the funding problem. According to the report, more than half of the *Bundeswehr*’s budget goes to salaries and benefits for its personnel while only about 13 percent goes to new equipment. The trend extends across Europe: “European nations spend far greater proportions of their defense budgets on personnel costs than does the United States and spend only about one fourth of their budgets on research and development.”

Some critics within Germany suggest that the *Bundeswehr*’s current strategy is like trying to change a flat tire while still driving down the road. They argue that the *Bundeswehr* has taken on too many missions while trying to modernize its equipment at the same time, straining an already thin budget. Instead of investing in research and development of new weapons, it is funneling money into the maintenance of obsolete vehicles and equipment.

“Funding is always a big issue,” said Benjamin Schreer, another researcher at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs. “The baseline is that there will not be a substantial increase in money to fund for arms or defense transformation.”

A few ongoing defense programs illustrate the difficulties the *Bundeswehr* faces in modernizing its equipment. The military needs communications systems, intelligence gathering equipment and precision-guided weapons, to name a few.

Schreer, who specializes in military transformation, said the army has a particular shortage of armored fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers for use in Afghanistan – where German troops have been operating since shortly after Sept. 11, 2001 – largely because the army can’t afford new ones.

“They are mostly outdated, or they are in too few numbers to be deployed on a larger scale,” Schreer said. “So at the moment, you see in Afghanistan some interesting developments with the army getting more armor on their vehicles, but it’s a very slow process.”

Another problem area is strategic airlift capability, a vital requirement for any military that wants to reach crisis points quickly. According to the 2003 Johns Hopkins study, the U.S. has 250 heavy transport aircraft – its European allies have 11. To increase its airlift capacity, the German air force has ordered 60 Airbus A400 M heavy-lift transports, the first of which should be delivered in 2010. Until then, the *Bundeswehr* continues to lease former Russian aircraft from Ukraine.

“The European A400 M is still a long way to go,” Schreer said, “so that is a severe problem when looking at operations in Afghanistan when there have already been instances in which the *Bundeswehr* was unable to fly out their troops with their own aircraft.”

Bitter, at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, described the prolonged development of the Eurofighter, the crown jewel of the air force’s modernization program. Bitter chuckled as he recalled several name changes required by delays in getting the fighter, whose development began in the 1980s.

“It was called Fighter ‘90, then it was called Eurofighter 2000, and now we call it Eurofighter because the 2000 felt so old,” he said.

Bitter said the bill for the 180 Eurofighters the air force plans to buy and for the A400 M program runs to about 20 billion Euros, or \$26 billion. The *Bundeswehr* receives nearly 23 billion Euros a year in funding, with much of that going to air force programs, a major point of contention within military circles.

"The navy is in Lebanon, the army is all over the world, the air force is nearly nowhere and gets most of the money," Bitter said. "So it will be a hard fight."

The transformation process faces obstacles not only with money and high-tech weaponry. The mindset of the soldiers themselves may be most important. Some argue that the process is paralyzed by bureaucratic infighting, a problem hardly unique to Germany.

Homze, the UNL professor, said that like many large institutions, the *Bundeswehr* has become set in its ways.

"They kind of get used to certain things, doing things in a certain way," he said. "It's hard to restructure them."

Schreer, the German Institute for International and Security Affairs analyst, said much of the resistance to transformation comes from within the leadership of the individual branches of the military.

"Particularly the army, at least until recently, had been very resistant to change," he said.

Planners say the transformation process will be mostly completed by 2010, a date Schreer considers optimistic. "I wouldn't be surprised if the deadline would be met two or three years later."

In 2001, the transformation process took a back seat to a new mission. The terrorist attacks against the U.S. on Sept. 11 led Schröder to pledge his full support to the U.S., and German troops headed for Afghanistan soon after.

But relations between the U.S. and Germany soured in 2003 as the Bush administration tried to gather support among its European allies for an invasion of Iraq. Schröder refused to support the U.S.-led coalition because he felt Germans would not allow the country to play a part in a mission that lacked international backing.

In May 2003, Peter Struck, Germany's defense minister under Schröder, revealed a new set of defense policy guidelines that would have been unimaginable a decade earlier. He said since Germany no longer faced a conventional threat, it had to protect "our security wherever it is in jeopardy." In one oft-quoted statement, Struck said Germany's defense began at the Hindu Kush, a mountain range in eastern Afghanistan.

In October 2006, the German Defense Ministry released a defense policy white paper, the first of its kind since 1994. The 133-page re-

port stated that the *Bundeswehr* would assume a greater international role and would be capable of deploying 14,000 troops on five simultaneous missions.

Times had changed.

Today, from the rugged hills of northern Afghanistan to the waters off Lebanon and the Horn of Africa, almost 10,000 German soldiers, sailors and airmen have been deployed on foreign missions.

In Afghanistan, 2,900 *Bundeswehr* soldiers are part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, which works to prevent Taliban or al-Qaida attacks on civilians. In 2004, German soldiers also helped administer the first presidential elections in the country's history. Their mission in Afghanistan, however, has strained the defense budget and raised questions about the quality of German soldiers' training. In the fall of 2006, several pictures surfaced in German newspapers of *Bundeswehr* soldiers posing with human skulls while on patrol near Kabul.

The incident is reflective of the problems the German military faces in its new role. Debates continue on the effectiveness of the transformation process and whether Germany should even send troops to places like Afghanistan, where actual combat is more likely than in previous mission areas.

The 2006 white paper also confirmed the *Bundeswehr* would keep the conscription system, which many analysts and military officials say has become obsolete.

Despite the fact that Germany's democracy has been stable for decades, many in Germany see conscription as sacrosanct, a vital safeguard against the possibility of a nationalistic, authoritarian military.

According to the 2003 Johns Hopkins policy report, conscription also "has provided a pool of low-paid workers for public service jobs by way of those draftees who choose civilian rather than military service."

Many conscripts choose to don scrubs instead of camouflage fatigues. Conscripts are allowed to opt out of military service and work instead at hospitals, assisted-living centers and other health care facilities. The *Bundeswehr* screens out many other conscripts because of health problems. Schreer admits the military is struggling to attract the kind of people it needs to fill its professional ranks and that about half of military service.

Joseph Cicmanec, a 24-year-old university student in Stuttgart, chose to take a civil service assignment instead of joining the army.

"I chose the civil service because I wanted to stay here and play soccer for my team," he wrote in an e-mail.

Cicmanec worked at a care center for the elderly where he cooked and served meals for residents, took them shopping and accompanied them on visits to the doctor.

"I was there to make their lives easier," he said.

He added that one of his friends worked for the same agency, but most of his friends joined the army, despite the negative images of the military that many Germans still have.

"Some of my friends think about the *Bundeswehr* that it is a waste of time," Cicmanec said.

When it began in 1956, conscription required each soldier to serve 12 months. Conscripts today have only nine-month service requirements, not enough time to receive effective training for modern warfare, according to the Johns Hopkins report. The report concludes that these conscripts "will be more of a nuisance than an asset."

Schreer said German soldiers go through a basic training program that is similar to those of other Western armies. After that, their specialized training depends on the type of unit they are assigned to or for which they volunteer.

"Some of them go to highly complex units," Schreer said, such as paratrooper detachments, for example. "Others are, you know – they end up as a barkeeper."

Eliminating conscription could finally ease the *Bundeswehr's* budget constraints and free up money the military now spends on personnel costs. With an all-volunteer army, like those of the United States and many of its allies, the *Bundeswehr* could be more effective in its new interventionist role.

Despite misgivings in some circles, Schreer said the number of out-of-area missions the *Bundeswehr* takes on will probably increase in the future, mainly because of Germany's desire to boost its stature within the international community, especially within the U.N. and the European Union.

"If you want to be credible and fulfill that role, of course you have to contribute more to international security," he said, "and I think we are seeing an increase in the number of international operations."

The *Bundeswehr's* story illustrates the fact that Germany views defense policy far differently from the way the United States and many of its European allies do. The Germans have rejected unilateral military action and adopted an ideal of "never on our own," a mind-set demonstrated by the German refusal to participate in the U.S. war with Iraq.

Trade, diplomacy and developmental aid – not just military force – are also important to German defense policy. The U.S. views its

military as a tool that can be used to solve many foreign policy problems, including terrorism. The Germans see military force as a last resort.

"In the United States, or in particular in certain elements of the U.S. Army, you have this war-fighting ethos," Schreer said. "You don't have that in Germany, likely due to historical experiences after the second world war."

Today, the German soldier serves as a peacekeeper and a humanitarian, not a war-fighter. The *Bundeswehr's* current missions within the U.N. and NATO frameworks are a good fit for this philosophy, a senior German press official at the U.S. Embassy in Berlin said.

"Germany is good at the type of reconstruction mission it is now undertaking in Afghanistan because Germans are good at organizing large projects," the official said. "That's what we do well. As for the fighting part, that's not really for us."

Bitter, however, said future combat missions for the *Bundeswehr* are inevitable. NATO has already placed great pressure on Germany to send troops to the more volatile southern region of Afghanistan, where U.S. and British troops now play the largest role. German special forces units have already participated in some combat action in the south, and the parliament has approved the deployment of a number of Tornado reconnaissance aircraft to assist NATO forces there.

"They will come. There is no doubt," Bitter said, referring to future combat missions. "But it is a process that the society has to deal with. It is a very slow process, and it is a change of mindset."

Despite all the obstacles, the *Bundeswehr's* transformation into a leaner, more flexible foreign policy tool has begun. The process will last until the end of the decade and cost billions of Euros and countless headaches and heartaches for German soldiers, politicians and civilians. Germany still wrestles with memories of its dark military past, but it has learned to balance respect for those memories with responsibility in the international community. The *Bundeswehr* has found a purpose, and after decades of soul-searching, the German armed forces have finally stepped back into the sun.

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DER SPIEGEL

*Civilian Service May 2010***THE TWILIGHT OF THE CIVVIES: GERMANY TO SCALE BACK MANDATORY CIVILIAN SERVICE***By Candice Novak**May 21, 2010*

Angela Merkel's cabinet moved this week to shorten the country's obligatory military conscription from nine months down to six. But the move will also mean deep cuts to the civilian service required of conscientious objectors that, over the years, has become a vital part of the German social safety net.

Michael Sonntag may have a breathing tube taped to his throat, but he's still a real talker. Most of the people in the Berlin facility for the handicapped where he is a resident have trouble speaking or can't do so at all. But Sonntag takes up the slack, and these days he knows he is speaking on behalf of his fellow residents.

The man, in his fifties, has been thinking a lot about the news lately. The German government is pushing through legislation that would cut the length of the country's *Zivildienst*, or civilian service, in a way that could have serious consequences for the residents of the St. Elisabeth Haus. For years, young men -- and some women -- fresh out of high school have helped out at the facility as civilian service workers. The cuts in the duration of time the "Zivis," or "civvies," as they are affectionately dubbed by Germans, will inevitably mean there will be less care provided to patients like Sonntag. It will also bring additional burdens for the professional staff and deprive patients of personal friendships with the civvies they have long cherished.

"It is us who will have to live with it," says Sonntag, who has been in the care of the St. Elisabeth House, a home run by Germany's Catholic charity Caritas, in Berlin's Lichtenrade district for the past decade. During those 10 years, dozens of civvies spent the better part of a year providing Sonntag and St. Elisabeth's 47 other residents with care. Once the new rules are applied in July, though, the mandatory period will be reduced to six months.

An Expensive Tradition

The civvies make up an important part of Germany's cradle-to-grave social safety net. As recently as a decade ago, as many as 130,000 young people participated in the program -- set up as an alternative to obligatory military service for young men registered as conscientious objectors and for female volunteers -- each year, doing volunteer work for a stint of 13 months. They were posted by the government in retirement homes, hospitals and facilities for

the handicapped. But in recent years, the length of civilian service has fallen -- the last cuts made in 2004 dropped service to just nine months. The number of participants have declined too. In April, 38,000 of the 111,000 civilian service posts across the country remained vacant.

But the program is also costly for the government, with an estimated price tag of €631 million in 2010 alone. Around 85 percent of that money goes towards the civvies' pay -- a modest €10 per day -- and room and board. The government has slowly dismantled the program over the years, and the latest cuts are expected to save around €180 million.

The new legislation is part of a deal forged between Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the business-friendly Free Democratic Party (FDP). In its election campaign, the FDP had pledged to eliminate conscription altogether and switch to a purely professional and volunteer military and civilian service program, noting that only seven European countries still have mandatory armed forces service. But Merkel's conservatives want to maintain the tradition.

Ultimately, the two parties reached a compromise -- and the amount of time spent in either the military or civilian service will be reduced to six months beginning in July. The deal, agreed by Merkel's cabinet on Wednesday, also includes a provision allowing civvies to voluntarily extend their service by three to six months -- a decision the government estimates about one-third will make.

"The civilian service program has been saved," Family Minister Kristina Schröder of the CDU told SPIEGEL ONLINE. "The young men can extend their civilian service and civilian service locations will finally have the planning security they need."

But many see the decision as a weak compromise. Florian Bernschneider, the man responsible for civilian service policy in parliament for the FDP, argues the volunteer provision will result in millions in extra costs for the government, "money that could be used more sensibly elsewhere." The change still requires the approval of Germany's parliament.

Dwindling Government Support

For institutions that rely on the good, cheap labor provided by the civilian service, each cut to the program is more painful than the last. A growing number of organizations are simply withdrawing from the program.

Take the Red Cross in the central German city of Fulda. At its peak, the organization had some 50 civvies who stayed for 20 months and received professional training as paramedics, which could take up to three months to complete. After several months, civvies could be seen driving ambulances to the scenes of accidents and treating heart attack victims. It was a mutually beneficial relationship -- the emergency workers got needed help and the civvies received valuable job training and could make a career out of it if they wanted. The few civvies still working with the Red Cross in the city today are relegated to more mundane tasks like transporting patients. But even that is expensive for the charity organization: Training civvies just to be emergency helpers with simpler tasks still requires at least two months and costs the Red Cross around €2,400.

Germany's social services organizations are at a loss over how they can continue to deliver the same level of service they have up until now without the generous civvie help. Some are tolling the death bell for civilian service.

Rainer Hub of the German Protestant Church's social services organization Diakonie, told SPIEGEL last year that plans to shorten the service period would be a "death blow" to modern German tradition. He said many organizations that currently place youths from the civilian service would stop doing so. For such a short time commitment, he said, the cost of training would be too great to make it worthwhile.

An alternative to mandatory civilian service has also grown in popularity in recent years. In 2009, some 37,000 Germans served in the so-called voluntary social year program designed for people up to the age of 27. A study commissioned by the German Family Ministry concluded that the only thing curbing growth of the program is the number of placements available -- and that the current figure could triple if sufficient slots are created. For the institutions hosting volunteers, though, the program is costlier than the government's more generously subsidized civilian service program. Institutions are expected to provide room and board, work clothing and around €150 a month in pocket money for the volunteers.

Many social institutions are also turning to other alternatives, using low-paid, part-time workers -- often the long-term unemployed or young or old workers who are part of the full-time labor force -- who are participating in government-sponsored employment schemes.

Novak, C. (2010, May 21). *The Twilight of the Civvies: Germany to Scale Back Mandatory Civilian Service*. Retrieved from Spiegel Online: <http://www.spiegel.de/international>

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GERMAN FEDERAL MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

Suspension of compulsory military

SUSPENSION OF COMPULSORY MILITARY SERVICE GIVEN THE GREEN LIGHT BY THE GERMAN BUNDESTAG

March 24, 2011

July 2011 will be a turning point in history: This is the day on which the German Bundestag has decided that compulsory military service will be officially suspended. On 24 March, the parliamentarians adopted the draft act by a large majority.

The Act Amending Military Law suspends conscription for basic military service as from 1 July and, at the same time, introduces voluntary military service. "Both are key elements on the way to realigning the Bundeswehr," said Federal Minister of Defense Thomas de Maizière in a speech in the German Bundestag.

The Minister stated that Germany needed armed forces that were modern, efficient, effective, globally respected, anchored in the alliance and financially sustainable. In addition, they had to be adequately prepared and flexible and capable of adapting to new challenges. In order to achieve this goal, Germany did not need a large number of military personnel, but a highly professional force.

No cause for rejoicing

"Our suspension of compulsory military service gives me no cause for rejoicing today. It is a necessary step, but not one that makes me happy," said de Maizière. However, he said that there was no turning back now: "Firstly, the security situation does not justify a conscript army any longer; secondly, it is not a military necessity any longer; and thirdly, comprehensive equity in conscription would not be guaranteed any longer."

Financial incentives are not everything

The Minister advocated that women in particular should be recruited for the armed forces. "Those who render voluntary military service must be better off than those who don't," the Minister went on to explain.

The best and most capable people would have to be recruited for this new voluntary service. "Those who join the Bundeswehr purely for financial reasons may be just the ones we do not want around," he emphasized.

"Soldiers must be assured that serving in the Bundeswehr is regarded as and respected for what it is: serving our society and serving our country honorably – a service they and our country are proud of."

Evaluation to take place after a year

The Minister said he was not going to be party to speculations on how many volunteers would actually join the Bundeswehr in July. "I welcome everyone who decides to enlist." At the same time, he announced that he was going to have the Act Amending Military Law evaluated with respect to its feasibility and social acceptance after a year.

The adoption of the Act Amending Military Law would abolish neither the constitutional nor the non-constitutional basis of compulsory military service as a whole. De Maizière said that this would also serve as a safeguard against potential changes in the security environment in the future.

Further decisions to be taken by June

The Minister promised that decisions as to the further implementation of the Bundeswehr reform would be taken by June. They concerned the number of military personnel, the capability profile and the Bundeswehr's rough organizational structures as well as the Ministry and the civilian defense administration.

Pauli, H. (2011, March 11). *Suspension of Compulsory Military Service Given the Green Light by the German Bundestag*. Retrieved from Federal Ministry of Defence: <http://www.bmvg.de>

THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

*Germany's Combat Revival***THE BUNDESWEHR'S RECENT OFFENSIVE IN AFGHANISTAN'S HINDU KUSH MOUNTAINS IS TOO TIMID FOR WASHINGTON, YET TOO BOLD FOR MANY IN GERMANY.***By Elizabeth Pond*

2009

Engelholm, Sweden —

Today's Germans have not yet fully reconciled their post-Hitler conscience with the use of military force for anything beyond narrow homeland defense. But Berlin has just tiptoed over another red line, in the Hindu Kush mountains.

To be sure, Germany's recent first use of heavy weapons and tank-like vehicles in a two-week offensive against insurgents will hardly satisfy the American hope for more German combat action in southern Afghanistan. Yet the new German assertiveness does augur a certain convergence. Just as Berlin is getting drawn into easing national restrictions and letting its troops engage in American-style firefights to repulse Taliban intimidation of Afghan villagers, so is the Obama administration shifting American priorities toward German-style emphasis on local civilian development.

After World War II the (West) Germans recoiled against Hitler's violent conquests and renounced possession of armed forces altogether. Only after a decade – and a fierce controversy – did they acquiesce in forming a new, democratic Army called the Bundeswehr. Legally they confined it to defense of NATO territory alone and subordinated it to the Western alliance's command.

Even after the cold war ended in 1989 and Moscow withdrew the 20 Soviet divisions surrounding Berlin a thousand miles to the east – and the United States redefined NATO's mission as global export of stability – the Germans moved gingerly. A few Bundeswehr medics joined international monitors in Cambodia in 1992; then rather more medics and soldiers went to Bosnia to set up clinics in 1994; then German troops joined the NATO-led peacekeeping forces in Kosovo after the 1999 war there.

Only after the provocation of 9/11 did Germans overcome their lingering aversion to participating in combat and send troops to an actual war zone outside the European homeland, dispatching special forces to fight alongside US troops in Afghanistan. Seven years later, the 4,300 German forces guarding the north Afghan sector constitute the third-largest foreign contingent in the country, after Britain's 9,000 and America's dominant 55,000.

Until now the Tajik northern sector has been far more peaceful than the Pashtun east and south, where US combat forces are concentrated. In their sector, the Germans could afford to focus on training Afghan troops and police on the one hand and building bridges and schools on the other (while taking fewer casualties than their American and British allies).

But lately the Taliban have reinfiltred the north and threaten to disrupt this month's election there, too. That's why 300 German Quick Reaction Force troops recently reinforced the anti-Taliban offensive of 1,000 Afghan soldiers and policemen around Kunduz.

This new Bundeswehr posture is still too timid for Washington's taste, but too bold for many German parliamentarians and voters. Left Bundestag members and a rising 69 percent of citizens now say they want German soldiers to withdraw from Afghanistan, fast.

Yet at heart, as the new US counterinsurgency doctrine of last December stresses, US-style war fighting and German-style development are both essential. Mobile infantry sweeps can never win the war if Afghan teenagers with no future prospects constantly replace killed insurgents. And young Afghans can never imagine a peaceful future for themselves if the Taliban are not blocked from repeatedly blowing up those new schools and bridges.

Surely, transatlantic convergence is called for.

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THE NEW YORK TIMES

*As Past Recedes, Germans Reconsider the Draft**By Michael Slackman**August 30, 2010*

BERLIN — For the first time in more than half a century, Germany's political leadership appears ready to end the draft, a post World War II mandate embedded in the Constitution to prevent this nation's military from ever again developing into a state-within-a-state that could impede democracy and start war.

The idea of the draft has become an anachronism in the post-cold-war world, where security concerns have shifted, demanding smaller, professional militaries to deal with hot spots around the world and to combat terrorist threats. Most of the West long ago abandoned conscription.

But Germany's history and a deep attachment to the draft by the conservative parties have until now meant clinging to conscription, even as it became largely symbolic. Few young men served, and those who did usually served just six months. The draft was instituted in 1956 to develop an army of so-called "citizens in uniform," creating an armed force integrated with society, loyal to the civilian leadership and immune to the kind of elitist force that dominated state affairs during the years of the Weimar Republic and before.

Germans today are less constrained by their past, motivated increasingly by their own perceived self-interest. The willingness to overhaul the military has been cast as another step in the normalization of the state. In ways large and small, Germans are increasingly comfortable in their own skin, waving flags and singing national anthems, gestures once seen as nationalist taboos. "Our coming to terms with the past is nearly done," said Hajo Funke, a professor of political science at Free University in Berlin, who said he supported moving to an all-volunteer military.

The Germany that was willing to exert its economic power and resist pressure to stimulate its economy during the financial crisis is the Germany that now appears ready to freeze the draft.

"Drafting young men instead of having professional soldiers was a guarantee for a democratic army," said Rainer Arnold of the opposition Social Democrats and the ranking member on the Defense Committee of the German Bundestag, or Parliament. "But today, almost nobody fears anymore that an army consisting largely of professional soldiers would extract itself from civilian control and pursue its own interests. But it took time to arrive at this trust."

The issue of overhauling the military has been discussed for years,

but was thrust onto the front burner on Monday by the popular defense minister, Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, when he unveiled a plan to revamp the Bundeswehr, or armed forces. His plan called for reducing the force size to 163,000 from about 250,000 today, streamlining the command structure, closing military bases and freezing conscription.

He pressed his case by saying the overhaul was necessary to save money — about eight billion euros, or around \$10 billion, in three years — and to deal with changing security demands. His rationale, if not all the details of his plan, was widely supported.

But it was the concept of a draft as essential to preserving democracy that proved, for some, the hardest to let go.

"The model of a 'citizen in uniform' should be kept," wrote a conservative Christian Democrat and member of Parliament, Patricia Lips, on her blog. "Conscription is the important social link between Bundeswehr and society and it has proven that Bundeswehr is an army of democracy."

Chancellor Angela Merkel, also a Christian Democrat, appears ready to accept a political compromise on the subject, one that would preserve the legal requirement of conscription — to calm her own party members — but that would freeze the actual process. Experts said that a decision on the plan was expected by November.

"I wouldn't have thought it would be so easy for them put it away, but it looks like they will stop it," said Richard Hilmer, managing director of Infratest dimap, one of Germany's major polling firms. "It was part of German culture. There is a danger, if you have professional only, you have a separate institution less integrated with German society."

The issue of the draft is an emotional one in any nation, but it is most fraught in Germany. After World War II, it appeared that Germany would never again have a military. That changed during the cold war. West Germany was admitted to NATO in 1954, and in 1956 it instituted the draft. In 1963, West Germany passed a law allowing all conscientious objectors to perform civil service, for example working in health care facilities instead of in the military.

The Communist threat prompted most West Germans to continue to serve, but after unification, already thin public support for the

draft plummeted, said Michael Wolffsohn, a professor of modern history at the University of the Bundeswehr in Munich. "The basic fact is that Germans have not yet come to terms, for obvious reasons, that they have to fight again in a war," he said. "After all they have learned their lesson, so to speak, and they learned it correctly that using military force is basically and fundamentally wrong, given German history."

After unification, the state's commitment to the draft became increasingly symbolic. By 2002 conscripts had to serve only nine months, and then in July, the length of service was cut to six months, a period that even supporters of the draft say is so short as to render it useless.

"At present, unfortunately, the symptoms for a speedy abandonment are multiplying," said Col. Ulrich Kirsch, who heads an organization representing soldiers' interests and who supports preserving the draft. "This is certainly due to the fact that the model which is practiced at present is hardly viable after the shortening of the national service."

Indeed, some young Germans who were entering the draft induction center this week said they had no idea why the draft was instituted in the first place, and knew that it meant only giving up their time for something they were not really interested in doing.

"We are strongly in favor of an all-volunteer army," said Dennis Josten, 23, as he escorted his younger brother to the center. "It's just a waste of time."

Over the years, the size of the force was cut about in half, so that only 17 percent of those eligible were even drafted, and in recent years many more conscripts chose civil service over military service. In 2009, the most recent year for which final statistics are available, 68,304 young men went into military service, while 90,555 served in health care facilities.

Starving the system ultimately helped fuel the argument for abandoning it all together. "To have an army integrated in the society is very, very important, very important for us as Greens the same way as for Conservatives," said Winfried Nachtwei, a security expert with the opposition Green Party. "But today, conscription isn't accomplishing that. We have to get it in other ways."

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