

Alleingang

German Red-Green Foreign and Security Policy

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Abbreviations

AICGS	American Institute for Contemporary German Studies
AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
BND	Bundesnachrichtendienst, German Intelligence Service
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CDU	Christian Democratic Union
CSU	Christian Social Union
ERRF	European Rapid Reaction Force
EU	European Union
FDP	Free Democratic Party
GATT	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDR	German Democratic Republic
IFOR	Implementation Force
ISAF	International Security Assistance Force
MEADS	Medium Extended Air Defence System
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NRF	NATO Reaction Force
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PDS	Party of Democratic Socialism
RRF	Rapid Reaction Force
SPD	German Social Democratic Party
UN	United Nations
UNOSOM	UN Operation in Somalia
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organisation



Chapter 1

Introduction

„Nicht alles anders, aber vieles besser machen“ – “not everything differently, but many things better” was Schröder’s slogan when campaigning against Kohl in 1998. It reassured voters at home as well as the international audience that his government would not initiate any radical shifts. Yet, at the same time, he portrayed himself and his team as belonging to a new generation ready to provide a fresh input, a new start. After sixteen years of Kohl’s leadership, this was a convincing argument.

Exactly what the new start would amount to remained unclear. Nothing in his statements, speeches or interviews in the lead-up to the 1998 election indicated that any radical deviation was in the offing. Germany would remain a loyal member of the EU and NATO; close relations would be maintained with the country’s traditional allies and with the newfound partners in the East: Russia and Poland.

Over the course of the years, the tone and contents changed. Schröder became more concerned with German interests, asserting at one point that he would apply a strategy based on what he called “der deutsche Weg” – the German road.¹ German foreign and security policy would be based on German priorities; they would be decided in Berlin and nowhere else, the Chancellor pledged. In the past, leading

1 „Die SPD im Wahlkampf auf einem ‘deutschen Weg’“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 February 2002.

politicians and chancellors had carefully avoided setting up “German priorities” or “interests” as a contrast to those held by the country’s allies. That would all too easily provoke accusations of nationalism. Since the founding of the Federal Republic in 1948, German foreign policy had been characterised by the most extensive multilateralism possible.² German views and priorities had, as a rule, been furthered in close co-operation with others. That strategy was now rejected; the country’s foreign and security policy changed.

This study will delineate and explain this change. Key factors are Red-Green perceptions of Germany’s role in the international community and how German history and political culture were interpreted to justify one kind of solution when confronted with conflicts like ethnic cleansing in the Balkans or the war against Saddam Hussein. Together, these justifications and interpretations also had a great impact on the choice of partners. This aspect will also be discussed.

Seven years of Red-Green rule was sufficiently long to blur the memory of Germany’s foreign and security policy before Schröder was elected. A brief comparison of the starting point with the end-state may illustrate how momentuous the change was: paycheck politics was abandoned in favour of the growing deployment of Bundeswehr soldiers abroad, the traditionally close links with the US were replaced with a stronger emphasis on the EU, Russia increased in importance at the expense of the countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Whereas Germany in the past had carefully tuned its initiatives with its allies in Europe or across the Atlantic, under the Red-Green government such considerations mattered less. *Alleingang* – going-it-alone – came to characterise much of German foreign and security policy.

2 See „Ein Charakteristikum der deutschen Außenpolitik in der Nachkriegszeit war ihr ausgeprägter Multilateralismus.“ Helga Haftendorn, „Gulliver in der Mitte Europas“, in *Deutschlands neue Außenpolitik*, vol. 1, eds. Karl Kaiser, Hanns W. Maul (München: Oldenbourg, 1997), p. 129–152, 139.

The new role sought by Schröder also affected NATO and the EU profoundly. Whereas Germany had always been a loyal partner, it was now openly questioning the outlook and role of both. This caused consternation, not least abroad. Once seen against the background of the government's perception of Germany's role and interests, there is less reason for surprise.

This study will not be limited solely to the diplomatic interplay between Germany and the rest; instead it will provide an account of the Red-Green government's justifications for the choices made; why so many of these changes enjoyed broad popular support and were met with only limited political opposition. Doing that, it will be possible to gauge the new international role Schröder and his government carved out for Germany.

Finally, this study is part of a renewed interest in German foreign and security policy. German researchers have been especially keen to test out the changes implemented after unification theoretically. This concerns for instance the debate on whether Germany should still be classified as a civilian power?³ A civilian power bases its security policy on a broad understanding of why conflicts emerge, and will attempt to quell them by applying instruments ranging from peacekeeping and economic aid to assistance in institution building. Negotiations between warring parties are regarded as the key, and to some proponents, they are the only solution to conflicts.

The civilian power concept remains a key to German self-perception. For that reason it is included in this study. The debate, on whether the concept as such should be modified or not, is not.

3 See Henning Tewes, „Das Zivilmachtkonzept in der Theorie der internationalen Beziehungen. Anmerkungen zu Knut Kirste und Hanns Maull“, *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen*, no. 2 (1997): 347–359.; Sebastian Harnisch and Hanns Maull eds., *Germany as a Civilian Power. The foreign policy of the Berlin Republic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2001); Volker Rittberger ed., *German foreign policy since unification. Theories and case studies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2001).

From Kohl to Schröder

Both before the 1998 election, as well as during the seven years of Red-Green government, a set of basic political tenets were either explicitly formulated as part of the coalition agreement or in speeches and interviews. A common denominator to all was if not youth, then at least a fresh start. Schröder had emphasised that he represented a new generation. He enjoyed what has been called “the grace of a late birth”: he belonged to a generation untainted by any personal involvement in the Third Reich.

The outgoing Chancellor Helmut Kohl was different. He was born in 1930, fourteen years before Schröder. He remembered the end of the war, the collapse of the Third Reich and the arduous reconstruction following. Schröder’s formative years were spent in the 60s, an altogether different period. Schröder and his team were not burdened by the memories of the war or the allied occupation. One member of his government, Interior Minister Otto Schily had defended members of the terrorist Baader-Meinhof gang in court and his Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer, had taken part in the street fights of that decade. Although Schröder always underlined the US role in the liberation of the country from the Nazi regime, this was not part of his personal story. The bonds of loyalty to the US meant less to him than to his predecessors. At the same time, Schröder was the first chancellor openly to emphasise German interests.⁴ This left Germany’s neighbours and allies bewildered – did this mean a reduced German commitment to NATO and the EU?

The answer was slow in coming. The fresh input into German politics Schröder had promised in 1998 was taken to mean a stronger emphasis on the environment, global poverty and disarmament. Germany was now developing further into a “civilian power” in which conflicts were to be resolved through means other than military ones.⁵ In general, however,

4 Gerhard Schröder, „Verlässlichkeit in den internationalen Beziehungen“, speech given at the official opening of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, 2 September 1999, *Bulletin der Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung*, no. 55, 20 September 1999.

Schröder's attention was mainly devoted to domestic issues; foreign policy remained more of a "compulsory exercise" during his first years in power.⁶

Foreign policy gained prominence during the 2002 election. The reason was above all domestic. His reforms had failed to generate new employment opportunities. This threatened to bring down the coalition. His no to German participation in the war against Iraq changed public moods in his favour. And Schröder discovered that foreign policy could be used to rally support. One journalist remarked that politically dangerous questions on domestic issues would be rendered harmless with detailed accounts of how he had succeeded in foreign policy.⁷ In 2005, a repeat performance was attempted when he tried to use the possibility of a US military attack on Iran as a campaign issue.⁸

Red-Green imbalance

The reader may by now have concluded that Schröder was alone in formulating German foreign policy. According to the Basic Law, this was a key part of his responsibilities. At the outset in 1998, Schröder's showed scant interest in foreign issues. His attention remained fixed on domestic problems. His foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, representing the Greens, was the one launching plans and visions and this was not just because he represented a party in which visions had long played a stronger role than the concern for compromises and practical solutions. Compared with Schröder, Fischer presented ideas. The most famous of these was the speech he held at the Humboldt University in 2000 in which he outlined his vision for a federalised EU with a stronger role for the union's organs in Brussels.⁹

5 See Henning Tewes, „Das Zivilmachtkonzept in der Theorie ...“

6 Christian Hacke, „Die Außenpolitik der Regierung Schröder/Fischer: Zwischenbilanz und Perspektiven“, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (2 December 2002): 7–15.

7 Matthias Geyer and Dirk Kurbjuweit, „Langer Anlauf, kurzer Sprung“, *Der Spiegel*, no. 30 (19 July 2004): 20–41.

8 Günter Bannas, „Noch ein letztes Spiel“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, net edition, 15 September 2005 (online 25 October 2005).

Gradually, focus shifted from foreign minister to chancellor. The main reason was the political agenda. In the relationship with the EU, the most pressing concern was money, not integration. Here, nothing could be achieved unless the relationship with France, a beneficiary of EU generosity, was redrawn. Conducting negotiations on foreign minister level with Paris was unthinkable. In the negotiations, Schröder would have to front the German side; anything else would have been an insult to the French. Assuming the leading role in bilateral negotiations, whether with France, the US or with Russia, was a task that Schröder seized with gusto. Fronting press conferences, giving interviews – with a frequency higher than any other German chancellor, made him into a far more visible person than his foreign minister. One may claim that this only conforms to a common European pattern in which the heads of governments play a more prominent role than their foreign ministers even when dealing with foreign policy. Yet there is an element of staging here as well that should not be overlooked. Not for nothing did Gregor Schöllgen, a historian with close links to the SPD, call his book on the Red-Green government *The Appearance – Germany's return to the international scene*.¹⁰ Schröder's is not only a man with a penchant for cigars and tailored suits, but as chancellor he also proved to be a good communicator. As the Americans would say, Schröder televised well. The focus was on Schröder and this study will be no exception.

Schröder's growing dominance in foreign issues meant that it became increasingly difficult to see what the Green impact was. The Green caucus in parliament supported the government loyally. A scattering of the old fundamentalists, labelled "Fundis" to distinguish them from the realist majority

9 Joschka Fischer, „Vom Staatenverbund zur Föderation – Gedanken über die Finalität der europäischen Integration“, speech given at the Humboldt University, Berlin, 12 May 2000. Formally the speech was made by Joschka Fischer as a private citizen, i.e. not in his capacity as minister. Nonetheless, the speech is accessible on the Foreign Ministry homepage.

10 Gregor Schöllgen, *Der Auftritt – Deutschlands Rückkehr auf die Weltbühne* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2003).

called “Realos” would voice their criticism. They would figure prominently in the media, but their influence on the government’s foreign policy was difficult to detect. This includes Green core issues like human rights and armaments exports. For instance, during his frequent meetings with President Putin, judging from official communiqués and press reports, human rights never figured prominently on the agenda. Fischer tried to create a different profile. On official visits to Russia, he met with representatives from human rights groups. Yet, since the relationship with Moscow so clearly was part of the chancellery’s responsibility and Fischer’s visits to Russia few, his efforts did not suffice to balance Schröder’s emphasis on economic and political co-operation.

At one point, Green loyalty cracked. When Schröder declared that he wanted the EU’s embargo on weapons exports to China removed, he was met with open opposition from Green MPs. The foreign minister also clearly indicated that he did not see eye to eye with the chancellor on this issue. Schröder refused to yield, declaring that the Basic Law granted him the responsibility for foreign policy and that consequently he could ask the EU to change its policy without paying heed to the Greens or parliament. To some observers, this was yet another indication of Schröder’s presidential style.¹¹

The abrasiveness of Schröder was to some extent mitigated by Fischer’s efforts to find compromises. During the Iraq crisis, when Schröder had defined a position that excluded any dialogue with the Bush Administration, Fischer continued to search for a compromise solution with his US counterpart.

Foreign perceptions

The success of any foreign policy initiative depends on how it is received in the countries affected. Depending on the case, the number of countries will vary. Some represent a constant

11 Günter Bannoas, „Schröders Präsidialstil“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, net edition, 8 February 2005; Christian Hacke draws a more distant parallel in his critique entitled „Neudeutscher Wilheminismus“, *Internationale Politik* (August 2005): 65–61.

variable for German foreign and security politics. The US played a particular role as victor and liberator in 1945. The political system installed had a strong American imprint. The US was also a model for the consumerism and popular culture characterising post-war Western Germany. The Soviet threat provided the essential glue that kept this relationship together. At times, German priorities would clash head-on with US policies. Security interests, especially issues pertaining to European security, did not always overlap. Yet, the US provided the essential guarantee Germany depended on. Once this guarantee lost validity, the relationship changed.

Security policy, in the hardcore, military meaning of the word, had never been the constituent element in the relationship with France. German chancellors have traditionally let France play the pre-eminent role although Germany was the industrial and economic leading power. With France, the country could press for changes in the Union. Alone, it would be all too easy to accuse the government in Bonn of lacking consideration for its European neighbours. German political leaders were particularly sensitive to all accusations of "Alleingang" – that the country was "going it alone". That is also why the relationship with France had certain limitations: it was never to be directed against the interests of smaller EU members and never interfere with US-German security relations. As will be shown, the Red-Green government rescinded such limitations.

One of the countries affected by this change was Poland. Ever since Chancellor Brandt's "Ostpolitik" – eastern policy – from the late 1960s, the relationship with Poland had played an important role in Germany's attempt to normalise political relations with its neighbours. At the time, normalisation meant the launching of contacts and co-operation between Germany and the countries in Eastern and Central Europe that had been subjected to Nazi occupation. When Chancellor Schröder invoked the concept, the meaning was different. To him, normalisation meant that Germany had come of age, and was no different from other European democracies.¹² But above all, it meant that Germany should not be prepared to

shoulder the responsibilities of other Western states. It could no longer resort to the chequebook when conflicts emerged, but would have to be willing to send off troops on missions abroad. This would increase the country's international standing, and with it Germany's influence on international politics.

Domestic constraints

Economic

Traditionally, the German economy has provided enough resources for German foreign policy to finance expensive compromises within the EU. This option was severely curtailed as a result of the economic crisis emerging in the course of the 1990s after Unification had been achieved in 1990. The integration of the former German Democratic Republic turned out to defy all cost estimates. Industry closed, unemployment grew not only in the new Bundesländer but on the territory of the old Federal Republic as well.

When Schröder assumed office, his one declared target was to have the German contribution to the EU reduced. But this was not for him to decide unilaterally. It required the approval of the EU, and France in particular which benefited greatly from EU grants. President Chirac convinced Schröder that any change in the Union budget could only be undertaken with great care and over an extended period of time. In the end, the German contribution was not reduced. Instead the budget deficit increased so much that Germany failed to meet the requirements stipulated in the Stability Pact. These requirements had been set to guarantee the stability of the euro, and they had largely been defined by the German

12 Gerhard Schröder, „Regierungserklärung des Bundeskanzlers vor dem Deutschen Bundestag vom 10. November 1998“, *Bulletin der Bundesregierung*, no. 74 (11 November 1998): 902; „Eine offene Republik“ – Gespräch mit Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder“, *Die Zeit*, 4 Februar 1999.

Bundesbank. Germany's failure was a clear sign that the country was no longer the economic engine of the Union. The country's economic problems had become a Union matter.

The economic problems impacted the Union in another, perhaps less discernible way. Under Schröder, Germany's economic policy assumed a more protectionist turn. The German labour market was practically closed to migrants from the new EU members. The EU Commission's initiative to open up for free trade in services inside the Union was rejected. In addition, brash attacks on international investors contributed to a turn away from the country's traditional strategy of promoting free trade internationally and economic integration inside the EU.

These measures did not reduce the budget deficit. To achieve that, cuts were required. The defence budget became a prime target. The Bundeswehr was forced to postpone, reduce or cancel procurement projects. As a result, the ability to keep pace with the country's key allies both in Europe and across the Atlantic was affected.

Political

The Red-Green government's foreign and security policy rested on a comfortable parliamentary majority. The Conservative block and the Free Democrats would criticise certain aspects, but this was not the policy field within which the government was contested most vehemently. The government's weak point was economic and social reform. Here the situation was quite the opposite. Government proposals were met with harsh criticism both inside and outside parliament. The parliamentary upper house, the Bundesrat, rejected many of the government's decisions. With the Bundesrat turning more conservative after 1998 as a result of regional elections, this happened at a growing rate. After North Rhine-Westphalia voted conservative in May 2005, the government's ability to gain support in the Bundesrat was even less than before. Schröder managed to convince his own party to pass a vote of no confidence to pave the way for early elections.

Method and sources

The question posed to delineate and explain the changes in German foreign and security policy under Schröder is admittedly a wide one. Selecting only a limited number of countries and paying more attention to the EU and NATO instead of the UN, WTO or the OSCE may mean that important aspects are overlooked. Nevertheless, focus is directed to those countries and organisations that have a strong bearing on German foreign and security policy.

Before the bilateral relationships are explored, Red-Green security policy is presented. Focus is divided between domestic factors and the international setting. Under the former, the reinterpretation of the Basic Law, opening up for foreign deployments as well as the defence reforms facilitating them, is outlined. The most radical change in the international setting was the US-declared war on terror. The German response is analysed. In the concluding chapter, the scope for change under the new coalition government is gauged.

The method applied is fairly straightforward. Official declarations, the inauguration speeches as well as the special addresses made by the chancellor to the Bundestag, speeches by the foreign minister, interviews and articles have all been primary sources. Schröder, fortunately, is a man of words. In his efforts to change the direction of German foreign relations, the themes selected when justifying his actions remained remarkably persistent. One may conclude that since the changes undertaken were so radical, the need for explanation and justification was correspondingly large. A small comparison might elucidate this: both Kohl and Schröder were pressured by NATO, the UN and the US to contribute soldiers to peace missions abroad. Kohl tried to avert this by referring to Germany's militaristic past, and only when subjected to persistent allied pressure did he deliberate with his cabinet on

what measures to take.¹³ Schröder took the issues into the open, and faced opposition head-on. This strategy was rewarded with growing support.

If opposition was less vocal on the political scene, it reappeared in the press. The most notable criticism of Red-Green foreign policy was to be found on the pages of *Die Welt*. Although anti-government views could be found in other conservative newspapers like *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Welt* consistently debated the government's line on France and the US.¹⁴ Left-wing criticism would be voiced in parliament by the same few Green MPs as well as by a scattering of members belonging to the PDS, the renamed East German Communist party. They would often ask the government for exact information, statistics, cost estimates, never requested by the government parties nor the Conservative block. Their questions, and above all the answers received have been indispensable sources of information.

With opposition reduced in Parliament, much of the debate continued on the net. The German peace movement, and especially the homepage of the *Arbeitsgruppe Friedensforschung* – (Workgroup for Peace Research) at the University of Kassel, would often present alternative views and data conflicting with those proffered by the government. However, only rarely did the mass of information collected on these net pages have any noticeable impact on political discourse.

13 On this, see Jeffrey S. Lantis, *Strategic Dilemmas and the Evolution of German Foreign Policy since Unification* (Westport: Praeger, 2002).

14 A survey made of the German press at the time of the Iraq war confirms this conclusion, see Michael Carlin, „Ein paar Satellitenbilder“, *Message*, no. 2 (2003).

Chapter 2

Redrawing security policy

Prior to the 1998 election, the SPD and the Greens signed a coalition agreement covering foreign and security policy.¹⁵ The title, "German foreign policy is a policy of Peace", left no one in doubt that this government would stress peaceful solutions to international conflicts. This was nothing new. What did happen under the Red-Green government was that Germany, for the first time, committed troops to international operations outside the country. In this chapter, the development leading up to the government's decision to break with the past in this field will be outlined.

Bundeswehr deployments abroad did not come cheaply. They required new and expensive equipment. This triggered a discussion on costs and defence planning that will be outlined here as well.

Schröder's Munich speech

Bundeswehr's deployments enhanced Germany's international role. This had been Schröder's intention, but it also meant that the Red-Green government's security policy priorities had a strong impact on the country's allies, the EU

15 *Deutsche Außenpolitik ist Friedenspolitik, Lageanalyse und Empfehlungen zur Friedens- und Sicherheitspolitik der Bundesregierung auf der Grundlage der Koalitionsvereinbarung zwischen der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands und Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, 20 October 1998* (Hamburg: Institut für Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik an der Universität Hamburg, 1999).

and NATO. How was made abundantly clear in Chancellor Schröder's speech at the security conference in Munich in February 2005.

The conference is a meeting place for senior politicians and military leaders from NATO as well as other countries. Discussion is free, but rarely front page material. Schröder's speech was an exception.¹⁶ NATO was no longer the central arena where transatlantic partners met to consult and coordinate their policies, Schröder concluded. When prominent members decided to go it alone, the Alliance was sapped of meaning. Nobody was in doubt that the chief culprit was the US; the decision to go to war against both Afghanistan and Iraq had been taken without prior consultation with the rest of NATO. The Alliance had to be revived, Schröder continued. If not, it would soon lose relevance.

Reactions focused above all on timing. After months of diplomatic footwork to improve relations with the US, the speech seemed bent on reversing developments. Some observers also saw the speech as yet another example of Schröder's leadership style where all-important decisions are taken by him alone.¹⁷ Key members of the German delegation had not been briefed on the speech. They were utterly unprepared when foreign attendants started to question what the intentions were. The Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence had been reduced to playing the role of attendants. They were not the only ones left unaware; the French delegation and the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, were also taken by surprise. NATO's General Secretary Jaap de Hoop Scheffer and the US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld protested against what they saw as an exaggerated diagnosis. Both were eager to calm transatlantic tensions, Schröder's warning was as unwelcome as it was unexpected.

16 Due to illness, Defence Minister Peter Struck delivered the speech.

17 See Josef Joffe, „Das Kanzleramt muss noch üben“, *Die Zeit*, 17 February 2005.

Schröder proposed a way out of the dead end; the US and the governments of the EU should jointly discuss the way ahead. This would have excluded those NATO countries outside the EU (Canada, Norway, Iceland, Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria); it would also have caused problems for the non-aligned EU countries (Sweden, Finland, Austria and Eire). Unworkable, it nonetheless underlined the importance Schröder attributed to the EU as a security player.

The Union's ability to assume such a role depends in no small way on Germany. During the Cold War, the country functioned as a broker between continental Europe and the US within NATO. In the course of 1990, this changed. The collapse of the Warsaw Pact meant that Germany was no longer a front line state in need of US protection against a massive onslaught from the east. With the enemy gone, the German armed forces no longer required a large number of men or heavy arms. Security policy had to change. The question was how.

The answer emerged gradually as Germany was called upon to participate in UN and NATO missions abroad. From a modest start in the early 1990s, a growing number of German soldiers were sent on missions abroad reaching close to 7,000 by 2005. Some of these were involved in combat operations in Afghanistan. This was a radical change from just a decade earlier when the government had had to emphasise the humanitarian and peacekeeping aspect of any deployment, no matter how limited, to gain parliamentary approval.

The culture of reticence that had marked the German attitude to applying military force to targets other than self-defence lost clout. Other European countries went through the same transformation. Nevertheless, politically Germany had the furthest to go. This process will be discussed here for two reasons. Firstly, because it will reveal how the major German political parties perceived their country's international role. Secondly, political perceptions had a direct bearing on the reforms of the armed forces, the Bundeswehr. The Red-Green government initiated a set of reforms designed to reduce the number of men while at the same time preparing those

remaining for operations abroad. This meant a farewell to the concept of territorial defence, a reason for many conservative politicians to object loudly. More importantly, it meant more German soldiers not only on peace missions but also as part of combat operations. This development would fit Schröder's emphasis on Germany as a responsible partner. Germany has, since 1989, changed from being an importer to an exporter of security. Although basically supported by the conservative block, agreement ends as soon as the different reform concepts were discussed.

The Bundeswehr abroad

Under the Red-Green government, an increasing number of German soldiers served abroad. In 2005 the Bundeswehr was present in Afghanistan, in the Balkans, in the waters off the Horn of Africa and in Georgia. Whereas the first deployment of Bundeswehr soldiers involved around 150 medical officers sent on a purely humanitarian mission to Cambodia in 1992, recent deployments have been radically different with soldiers involved in combat operations.

This change was not a smooth transition towards a more pronounced international role. Rather it was the result of political debates where external pressure for greater German participation clashed with a widespread reluctance to any form of armed solution to conflicts, let alone letting German soldiers be part of this solution. This reluctance is reflected in the Basic Law. The Republic's armed forces were to be used for defensive purposes only.¹⁸ This was taken to mean that contributions to UN peacekeeping missions were ruled out. As a form of compensation, Germany became a major financial contributor to the UN.

After 1989, this did not seem to change. One reason might well have been the widespread belief that security threats had changed away from being primarily of a military nature.¹⁹

18 *Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Artikel 87A (Berliner Beauftragten für Datenschutz und Informationsfreiheit [online 24 October 2005]).

NATO seemed irrelevant when faced with the prospects of ecological disasters like Chernobyl, or a possible influx of immigrants escaping political and economic chaos in Eastern Europe. If peace was broken, the UN was posed to intervene and restore it. With the Cold War over the block confrontations that had left the Security Council impotent seemed a thing of the past. The best example that era for the UN happened in 1991 when it authorised a coalition of forces to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait. At the time, Germany refrained from sending any units to participate, resorting instead to what was scornfully labelled “checkbook diplomacy”.

Kohl and Bundeswehr deployments

Paying was not a tenable long-term strategy. If Germany was to achieve a stronger international role – and this was both the wish of chancellor Kohl and the country’s largest ally, the US – troop deployments to crisis areas could not be avoided.

The Gulf War had hardly ended before this was put to the test in Somalia. After civil war broke out at the end of the 1980s, mass famine spread. In 1992, the UN managed to broker a tentative peace agreement between the warring clans and agreed to deploy 4,200 peacekeepers to monitor the cease-fire and deliver food. US diplomats strongly urged the German government to contribute to what became known as UNOSOM (UN Operation in Somalia). Initial German response was limited to letting Luftwaffe transport planes undertake food deliveries. This was not enough to reduce international, especially US requests for a more substantial German role, especially in the form of troops. In December 1992, the Chancellor announced that a battalion of 1,600 men, mainly medical personnel, communication specialists and engineers would be deployed.

This was a risky step to take; political consensus was far from certain. Both the Social Democrats and the Free Democrats required a constitutional amendment before they

19 See Richard Smoke, *Perceptions of Security* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996).

would agree. Although attitudes in the population seemed to swing in Kohl's direction, nothing like broad, grassroots pressure favouring deployment existed. The internal debate in the SPD would be decisive. Hans-Ulrich Klose, then head of the SPD parliamentary group stated that the party was opposed to any kind of engagement in Somalia without a constitutional amendment. His concern was that the distinction between peacekeeping and peacemaking, the latter involving the application of force, was increasingly difficult to draw. The risk of Bundeswehr soldiers getting involved in combat was great. That did not deter the foreign policy spokesman of the party, Norbert Gausel, from recommending that the SPD should support Bundeswehr deployments in humanitarian operations without waiting for a constitutional amendment. Gerhard Schröder, at the time prime minister of Lower Saxony, assumed a middle position. Peacekeeping should be part of the Bundeswehr's tasks, but he believed that Germany was not ready for this yet. Schröder claimed that Germany would first have to solve its internal problems before contemplating interventions abroad.²⁰

Opposition from the Free Democrats and the SPD could not be overlooked. The government started negotiations with the two parties over a constitutional amendment. At the same time, preparations were undertaken for the deployment of troops to Somalia. The FDP decided to support Kohl's decision to send the troops, the fact that negotiations had started was sufficient grounds for giving up its former opposition. FDP member and Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel was a strong advocate in favour of German participation in UNOSOM.

The German mission in Somalia started off well, reports were published over the warm welcome the troops received and the successful reconstruction of a local hospital. This blissful state did not last. In other parts of the country, bloody clashes between feuding clans broke out. The UN mandate given for the troops was open-ended, the limits of UN

20 „Bonn will in dieser Woche über den Somalia-Einsatz entscheiden“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, net-edition, 19 April 1993.

responsibility for peace were not specified. When street battles in Mogadishu resulted in almost twenty UN soldiers killed and more than 70 wounded, President Clinton declared that US soldiers would soon be pulled out.

The SPD immediately demanded that the German soldiers should follow suit. The government was split with the chancellor in favour of remaining in Somalia. Defence Minister Volker Rühle supported him. With the deteriorating conditions in Somalia, pressure increased for a swift pullout. In the end the chancellor agreed. Political evaluations of the mission varied between the SPD Party Leader Günter Verheugen decrying the whole thing as a "failure" and Defence Minister Rühle who, when welcoming the troops home said:

Everything we did in Somalia was for humanitarian good. Your operation in Somalia was an investment in humanity, and also in the future of the Bundeswehr. Germany has proven its capabilities to be a responsible member of broader society. We are prepared for growing responsibilities in the world.²¹

The breakdown of the UN mission to Somalia showed that peacekeeping operations were not without costs, and secondly that developments could easily run out of control and end in fighting. If German soldiers were to participate in such operations in the future, the constitutional basis had to be clarified.

This became urgent as a result of the outbreak of hostilities in Yugoslavia. When Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence in late June 1991, Germany was the first Western country to recognise them. Soon after, fighting broke out between Serb and Croat forces. Before long, the conflict spread to Bosnia. This compelled the international community to act. In April 1992, a United Nations peacekeeping force, UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force), was deployed to monitor the cease-fire agreement between Serbia and Croatia. The same month, Serb units started attacking

21 *Welt am Sonntag*, 17 October 1993. Author's translation.

Muslim villages and towns in Bosnia. Soon the Bosnian capital Sarajevo was surrounded and subjected to heavy bombardments. Both the United Nations and NATO were discussing how hostilities could be ended. The first step was the introduction in mid-July 1992 of allied maritime patrols in the Adriatic to prevent armaments from reaching the warring parties. The NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner asked Germany to participate with naval vessels. At the same time, the United Nations Secretary General Boutros-Ghali requested German logistical support for UNPROFOR and indicated that he would soon be asking for regular Bundeswehr troops to prevent the spread of violence.

Chancellor Kohl wanted Germany to participate. He had the support of the conservative parties. Foreign Minister Kinkel reiterated the FDP line that the constitutionality had to be settled before any deployment could be undertaken. The SPD supported that position stating that the Constitutional Court would have to assess whether a deployment would breach the Basic Law. The Greens were confronted with a painful dilemma. The strong, pacifist views characterising the its members, were put to the test when confronted with information on starvation camps and ethnic cleansing reported daily in the media. Photos and descriptions had an eerie resemblance to Nazi extermination policies. At the same time, German involvement in the Balkans invoked painful memories of German wartime occupation. Kohl faced an additional problem in that the population clearly did not support any German involvement in the war. In a poll conducted by the newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 65 per cent replied that they opposed German participation in a joint European effort to enforce a ceasefire.²²

In the Bundestag, the Free Democrats were in a swing position. After internal debates, Kinkel announced in mid-July 1992 that he supported the Conservative standpoint. Soon after, the cabinet announced that German vessels would be sent to the Adriatic. This sudden turnaround infuriated the

22 „Bundestag billigt Adria Einsatz der Marine“, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23 July 1992.

opposition. It refused to accept that a mere cabinet decision should suffice. A week later, a special Bundestag session was convened at the instigation of the SPD. During the debate, Foreign Minister Kinkel argued that the country should “stop behaving like an impotent dwarf in world politics.”²³ The SPD countered that the government was moving too swiftly without any form of debate. At the end of the day, the decision to send the vessels and deploy troops was supported by the government block. Whereas the Somalia mission had been justified on the grounds that it was purely humanitarian, this time soldiers were sent to a potential combat zone.

Developments in Bosnia went from bad to worse. In October 1992, the United Nations authorised NATO to enforce a no-fly zone over Bosnia. NATO decided to use AWACS airplanes (Airborne Warning and Control Systems). With German officers making up almost a third of the crew on the planes, this posed a challenge to the government.

The government’s conservative members declared that the government would not withdraw the German officers from the planes. Although Foreign Minister Kinkel agreed, his party did not. Protests were even louder from the SPD and the Greens. Together they asked the Constitutional Court to assess whether the Bundeswehr could be deployed outside the country.

Constitutional turning point

In April 1993, the Constitutional Court ruled in favour of the government’s positions; German officers could remain. This was the third time the Court had deliberated on the deployment of German soldiers. In mid-1992, SPD MPs had questioned German participation in the NATO-WEU embargo in the Adriatic; later the same year, SPD had challenged Bundeswehr deployment to Somalia. Both times the government had been vindicated.

23 Klaus Kinkel, „Regierungserklärung abgegeben von Außenminister Kinkel“, *Bulletin der Bundesregierung*, no. 83 (23 July 1992): 805–808.

In April 1994, the Constitutional Court started its considerations of out-of-area deployment. As part of the formal hearings, both the government and the opposition were asked to present their views. The chancellor and the foreign minister argued that the Basic Law's Article 24 did not prohibit deployments that were part of a system of collective security, i.e. NATO and the UN. Foreign Minister Kinkel argued that deployment would finally terminate Germany's role of spectator to international events. Representatives from the SPD and the Greens argued against, claiming that this meant a militarisation of German foreign policy specifically forbidden in the Basic Law. In July 1994, the Court reached its verdict. It declared that Bundeswehr soldiers could participate in operations outside NATO's area when these operations were "associated with membership of such a system of collective security".²⁴ The Court did not try to distinguish between peacekeeping and other forms of military operations, stating instead that Bundeswehr soldiers could be sent on missions that might involve combat provided the government had received a simple parliamentary majority in support.

Towards the end of the same year, NATO asked Germany to contribute Tornado fighter planes to operations in the Balkans. Tornados had radar suppression equipment and could therefore be used for reconnaissance flights; the planes were also aptly suited for low-level attacks against Serb installations. The government reacted with unease, claiming that since the request had only been made informally, a formal decision by the government would be out of order. Soon after, a formal request was sent from NATO. This time it could not be ignored.

Despite the Constitutional Court's verdict, Kohl was reluctant. He cited historical reasons for why Germany should only commit a few troops. Moreover, he underlined that the first German military operation after the end of the Cold War

24 The verdict is presented and commented upon in detail in *Einsätze der Bundeswehr im Ausland* (Berlin: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 2000).

could not be carried out unless backed by a broad parliamentary consensus. Kohl tried both to buy time and to bridge the opposition within the government. One faction, with Defence Minister R uhe as its advocate, wanted the Tornados deployed. That would be one way of avoiding a NATO invasion with ground troops. Historical reasons would make that a far more difficult decision to make for the government. Foreign Minister Kinkel belonged to the other camp, working hard against the government deploying the Tornados. The opposition was also split. Rudolf Scharping, the SPD Chairman was in favour of deploying the Tornados. For this, he was severely criticised by the party's Deputy Chairman Oskar Lafontaine.

Only after the FDP had changed its view on deployment, did the government decide to commit the fighter planes. This was hardly based on the broad consensus Kohl had wanted. The lack of a common understanding of what the proper German response to the Balkan crisis should be was made painfully clear the following year when the possible deployment of German troops was once again put on the agenda.

In early spring 1995, Serb forces were on the advance in Bosnia. Muslim and Croat units seemed destined for complete defeat. At the same time, reports of Serb atrocities, particularly in Srebrenica, were published in the West. The same forces did not refrain from deploying UN peacekeepers as human shields. Against this background, UN and NATO started to plan for the deployment of NATO's Rapid Reaction Force (RRF), a multinational unit that could be deployed at short notice.

Some critics believed that sending off RRF for peacekeeping ran the risk of repeating the Mogadishu disaster. The soldiers would become involved in regular combat operations, and forces would have to be withdrawn because the original mandate did not correspond to the changes in the environment. This view was quite widespread on the German left and within the FDP, but by no means only there or only in Germany.²⁵

Within the SPD, Rudolf Scharping was in favour of German participation; Karsten Voigt, the SPD Foreign Policy Spokesman declared that he saw at least two problems. One was the obvious division within the government between the conservatives and the FDP foreign minister preventing the government from acting forcefully on these issues. Secondly, his party would support peacekeeping, but was against German involvement in combat operations. That division would be difficult, if not impossible to uphold, with Voigt more or less implying that the Bundeswehr should not participate in the RRF about to be assembled.

The infighting in the FDP and the SPD paled when compared to the radical new thoughts proposed by Joschka Fischer, a member of the Greens' leadership. The traditional party line had been that Bundeswehr could only be deployed for purely humanitarian reasons, all other options were automatically ruled out. In an internal memo, Fischer suggested that Germany should play a more active role in humanitarian and peace support operations in the Balkans. This did not sway the rest of the party leadership. Instead of coming out in support of the RRF proposal, the Greens called for strong German support for humanitarian aid to the Balkans and nothing beyond that.

In the end, the government decided to ask the Bundestag for its support for German participation in the RRF amounting to 1,500 Bundeswehr soldiers. In the proposal, the government underlined that very strict limits would be imposed on the German contingent. A repetition of Somalia was to be avoided at all costs. In the end, the government received votes from the opposition as well, including three votes from the Greens, giving it a comfortable majority of 386 in favour and 258 voting against.

Although the RRF plan was never carried out in full, German Tornados as well as transport aircraft were deployed to the NATO airbase in Piacenza in Italy. Most flights were for reconnaissance purposes, but on 1 September 1995,

25 Lord Owens, the EU mediator in the Balkans resigned because, in his opinion, the West had left its proclaimed impartiality in the conflict.

Tornados attacked Bosnian Serb artillery positions. This was the first time German soldiers had been engaged in combat since the end of the Second World War.

Towards the end of 1995, the Dayton Peace Plan was negotiated. German participation in the NATO Implementation Force was taken more or less for granted by the government, but in the opposition the issue was not so clear-cut. The legislation opening up for German participation contained a reference not only to self-defence acceptable to most, but to combat situations as well. In the end, only a minority of the SPD MPs voted no. The Greens were divided more evenly. Joschka Fischer had argued in favour of IFOR participation, but other prominent leaders like Jürgen Trittin and Michael Ströbele adhered to the traditional party line.

Missions abroad meant breaking a barrier, not only for the politicians and the electorate, but also for the officers. At a meeting of officers in May 1992, the military head of the armed forces, General Inspector Klaus Naumann, stated that the soldiers should be prepared for deployment outside the country, and that one should not try to hide the fact that “ultimately, the soldier is a fighter”, something which distinguished the soldier from all other professions.²⁶ The officers did not automatically welcome Naumann’s view. In a survey conducted by the Bundeswehr Institute for Social Research the following year, it was clear that the prospect of missions abroad was not welcomed by all.²⁷ Some found it incompatible with the defensive character of the Bundeswehr.

Red-Green deployments

During the election campaign in 1998, foreign policy issues were never a rallying point. Although some left-wing members of the SPD and a large section of the Greens’ electorate were against German participation in IFOR, the party leadership

26 See Bernhard Fleckenstein „50 Jahre Bundeswehr“, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 21 (2005): 5-14.

27 Dieter S. Lutz, ed., *Deutsche Soldaten weltweit? Blauhelme, Eingreiftruppen, „out of area“ – Der Streit um unsere sicherheitspolitische Zukunft* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowolt, 1993).

managed to rein them in. This was not to become a divisive issue when government power finally seemed to be at hand. To dissipate any fears among the country's allies over what the election results would mean, Joschka Fischer had stated that there would be "no Green Party foreign policy, but rather only German foreign policy".²⁸ The new government coalition had agreed on a foreign and security policy programme underlining the two parties' pledge to peace.²⁹ When bearing in mind that it had been drawn up at a time when German soldiers were deployed in the Balkans, it is surprisingly void of any concrete suggestions.

Soon after the new government had taken office, regular Serb army units as well as paramilitaries started military operations against the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo. After a brief lull created by an OSCE monitored peace agreement, warring broke out again in late 1998. By the end of that year, more than 200,000 Kosovars had been driven out of their homes. In January 1999, NATO intelligence concluded that Serb forces were preparing for a massive encircling operation that would expel the entire Kosovar population out of the region. For the government, the possibility of an increased influx of refugees loomed large.

Three weeks after the election in September 1998, Parliament agreed with a large majority that military action was the most adequate response and that the Bundeswehr should participate. What was surprising was the lack of debate, not only in Parliament but also in society at large. When past actions had been contemplated, Kohl's government had had to take the widespread reluctance against Bundeswehr deployment into account. This time, German participation in a concerted NATO action against the Serb forces rested on widespread support. The fact that Bundeswehr soldiers this time might be involved in offensive military actions and not just respond when attacked, did not seem to matter. In an interview with *Der Spiegel*, Defence

28 Quoted in Jochen Buchsteiner, „Risiko Sonnenblume“, *Die Zeit*, net edition, no. 41, 1998.

29 *Deutsche Außenpolitik ist Friedenspolitik...*

Minister Scharping was questioned whether it disturbed him being the first German defence minister ordering an attack on a sovereign state since the Second World War. His reply was that no other option was possible.³⁰ The contrast to the debates earlier in the same decade could hardly have been stronger.

Scharping's colleague, Joschka Fischer, was also in favour of German participation. However, his party was less supportive. Pacifist and anti-NATO sentiments were widespread. Almost repeating Scharping's words, Fischer declared in a parliamentary debate that failed negotiations with Milosevic had depleted the possibilities for a peaceful settlement.³¹ Serb atrocities were targeted against the civilian population, and these acts constituted a threat to the entire Balkan region and therefore to Europe, he added. Within the party, the Defence Spokeswomen Angelika Beer openly expressed her reservations. She feared that allied air strikes would fail and that NATO would be forced to deploy ground troops with an endless war of attrition as the result.

NATO actions forced the Belgrade government into capitulation. From the summer of 1999, the NATO-lead Kosovo Force (KFOR) assumed control over the region in cooperation with the UN Interim Administration (UNMIK). In July 2000, KFOR consisted of 38,000 men and women, of these 4,600 were German. Although the total number was reduced in the following years, the German contribution remained substantial.

In the summer of 2001, troubles spread from Kosovo to Macedonia where Albanian paramilitaries tried to assume control over ethnically Albanian areas. The Macedonian president requested assistance from NATO. In August, 3,500 NATO soldiers were deployed to Macedonia, mainly to supervise the disarmament of the paramilitaries. Up to 500 came from the Bundeswehr.³² At the end of March 2003, this

30 Olaf Ihlau and Sigesmund von Ilsemann, „Geduld und Zähigkeit“, *Der Spiegel*, 25 January 1999.

31 Joschka Fischer, „Rede in der Debatte zu Kosovo und EU-Sondergipfel“, 26 March 1999. (Auswärtiges Amt [online 25 October 2005]).

operation was transferred from NATO to EU command and given the name Concordia. The German government presented this as an important sign that the EU was ready to assume a security role; taking over from NATO was seen as an indication that the two organisations, if not equal, were not far from it.

Defence reforms

Defence reforms refer to two separate issues: the acquisition of the equipment necessary to undertake deployments abroad and institutional changes aimed at facilitating decision making. Without either, Germany would not be able to react quickly to emerging threats and crisis outside the republic's borders.

The need to facilitate decision-making procedures was seen by some as an attempt to increase military power at the expense of political supervision.³³ When the decision was made to establish the Bundeswehr in 1955, the political leaders were determined that it should be different from its predecessors. The armed forces were placed firmly under political control. A general staff enjoying a degree of autonomy in military matters comparable to what existed in other Western countries was ruled out. In 1959, Parliament appointed an ombudsman, the Wehrbeauftragte, to monitor the Bundeswehr. Not without reason has the Bundeswehr been called a parliamentary army. The armed forces are linked to society through conscription; the pronounced ideal has been an army of "civilians in uniform". Originally, their only task was to defend the republic. Since this could not be done alone, the Bundeswehr was deeply integrated with the forces of other NATO countries, especially the US whose military presence in Germany remained strong throughout the Cold War. In 1989, this amounted to approx. 150,000 US men and women.³⁴

32 Ibid.

33 See the home page of the *Arbeitsgruppe Friedensforschung* at the University of Kassel for key arguments and contributions, (University of Kassel [online 17 November 2005]).

The German armed forces more than matched this number. Just after the end of the Cold War, 447,000 men, of these almost 202,000 conscripts, served.³⁵ Defence loomed large on the budget consuming 3.2 per cent of GDP in 1985.³⁶ This share was reduced towards the end of the decade, falling to just under 2 per cent by 1991. With the end of block confrontation, continued large transfers to the armed forces found little political support. In Germany, like in the rest of NATO, questions were asked about the future of the alliance. Some wanted to see it go the same way as the Warsaw Pact; less extreme were the proponents of some sort of pan-European security arrangement, possibly affiliated with the UN.

NATO enlargement

The plans for an alternative security set-up were effectively brought to an end by the growing number of Central and Eastern European countries wanting to join the Alliance. Gradually, the US Clinton Administration came to favour the idea of NATO enlargement as well.

The idea of enlargement was not widely, let alone enthusiastically supported in Germany. When Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel stated that enlargement would be a lengthy process, he did not only express the view of his own Free Democrats, but also that held by many within the SPD and the conservative parties. Without backing from the conservatives or the SPD, enlargement could turn out to be a divisive issue. Defence Minister Volker R  he was a vocal advocate of accepting the Central and Eastern Europeans into the alliance, Chancellor Kohl less so. His attention was focused on Russia, and how enlargement might affect the newly found, close relationship between Berlin and Moscow. At one point, he censured R  he for his campaigning.³⁷ Within the conservative parties some argued that the end of the Cold

34 *The Military Balance 1992-1993*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies (London: Brassey's, 1992): 26.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 44.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 218.

War represented a great opportunity for the EU to assume a stronger security role. The pledge made at the Union's Maastricht Conference in 1992 for an independent European defence capacity could now be implemented. NATO enlargement would only detract attention. Karl Lamers, a longtime CDU member of the defence committee in parliament, held this position.

His views were also shared by SPD politicians like Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul, member of the party's leadership at the time.³⁸ Others, like Egon Bahr, Willy Brandt's advisor on relations with the GDR and later Minister for Economic Co-Operation in Helmut Schmidt's government, argued against enlargement because it would mean Germany remaining under US tutelage. Then there were groupings that had been consistently critical of both NATO and the US and therefore reacted instinctively against enlargement. In a minority in the SPD, these views dominated the Greens.

The debate dragged on. At a time when most other NATO countries regarded the matter as closed, German attention was fixed on what the possible impact of enlargement would be on the country's relationship with Russia.

A treadmill of reforms

One observer has remarked that the debate on defence reforms in Germany has lacked a sense of urgency.³⁹ Although the need for reform of the armed forces had been recognised by all the major political parties after the end of the Cold War, as soon as the questions over how, when or at what price emerged, agreement ended. Defence budgets were reduced, not only through the annual state budgets passed by Parliament, but also ad hoc to even out unplanned expenditures in other sectors. The economic weight of

37 Weronika Kostyrko, "Niemcy zdyscyplinowani", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 10 January 1994.

38 Wiczorek-Zeul was Minister of Economic Co-operation and Development from 1998 to 2005.

39 See Mary Elise Sarotte, *German Military Reform and European Security*, Adelphi Paper no. 340 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2001), p. 16-17.

German unification gradually made itself felt. At the same time, the Bundeswehr had to integrate the remnants of the East German armed forces, a process more costly than expected. As a result, procurement projects and the upgrading of existing material were repeatedly postponed.

The conservative Minister of Defence, Volker Rühle, presented the first comprehensive reform in autumn 1992. In peacetime, volume was to be reduced from 447,000 to 340,000 men and women in uniform. Plans were made for the establishment of crisis reaction units separate from the main defence forces. In order to be deployable, these units required new equipment. In the defence budget, there were no means available for this. The plan was that a reduction in manpower would enable a transfer of money from the payroll to procurement. This did not happen; reductions progressed far slower than expected, and procurement went to a virtual standstill. This did not prevent the German government from supporting plans for an enhanced European military capacity capable of undertaking operations on its own. Much public attention at the time was focused on the question of EU access to NATO capacities, and whether the US should have access to say no. Gradually, it became clear that the EU would have to build its own capacities – what the German contribution might be remained unknown. The budget certainly left no room for new purchases.

By the time Rühle left office in 1998, his reform proposal had lost relevance. 340,000 men in uniform was far above the level any defence expert deemed necessary, and it was also beyond what the defence budget could support. When Scharping was made Defence Minister in 1998, he was promised extra means to implement the reforms agreed. The Finance Minister making these promises was Oskar Lafontaine. He only lasted half a year before resigning. The new Minister, Hans Eichel, promptly withdrew the money. This was done with the Chancellor's support. As a result, Scharping's relationship with Schröder was damaged.

Nevertheless, under Scharping's leadership, an effort was made to identify what capacities the Bundeswehr needed to adapt to the new crisis spectre.⁴⁰ Shortfalls in command and control functions and intelligence gathering were identified, but these paled compared to the damning comments on the lack of transport capacities. The Bundeswehr would have to rely on the transport capacities of other nations, especially the Americans. In times of an emergency, these capacities were in short supply, and the Bundeswehr could not automatically expect its needs to be met first. This could mean that already committed units would not be able to make it to a crisis area at an agreed time. The report mentioned the staggering sum needed to remedy these problems, but did not seem to harbour much hope that the means could be found: "... provisions have been made neither for the procurement of new capacities nor for a comprehensive modernisation of the crisis reaction forces."⁴¹

In 1999, the government appointed a commission, headed by the former president and CDU politician Richard von Weizsäcker to draw up a reform proposal. Appointing Weizsäcker was an important gesture towards the conservative opposition. It would be easier for the government to ask parliament for extra funding if the reforms suggested could not be accused of being tailored to social democratic or green priorities.

The Weizsäcker Commission set out by stating that for the first time in history, Germany was no longer surrounded by enemies but enjoyed amicable relations with all its neighbours. The Commission also underlined the need for the Bundeswehr to be able to participate in international operations alongside its allies. The defence of German territory was regarded as secondary. For that reason, a recommendation was made that

40 *Bestandsaufnahme. Die Bundeswehr and der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert* (Bonn: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 1999), p. 54.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 168.

the number of men be cut to 240,000. A natural conclusion would have been to dismantle conscription, but only 6 of the 19 members were in favour of doing that.

"The reform of the century"

The Commission's report was soon overshadowed by the government's own analysis of the problems entitled *Ein Bundeswehr für die Zukunft*, – "armed forces for the future" – published in June 2000. As in the Weizsäcker Report, the security changes that had taken place during the 1990s were underlined; but this time the conclusion drawn was more radical. The Bundeswehr had to be geared in its entirety for missions abroad. This meant above all that the number of men and women in uniform was to be cut back to a level of approximately 252,000. Of these, 150,000 were to be earmarked for deployment purposes (Einsatzkräfte), the rest were to form part of what was referred to as the basic defence units (militärische Grundorganisation). Of the deployment forces, 80,000 were to be deployable at short notice. That would make a large-scale operation involving up to 50,000 soldiers possible for a period of up to one year. Alternatively, it would make it possible to engage in two middle-scale operations with up to 10,000 soldiers in each.

At a cabinet meeting on 14 June 2000, Chancellor Schröder referred to the report as paving the way for "the Bundeswehr reform of the century".⁴² But Scharping was not the man to carry it through. His standing both in the Bundeswehr and in the government fell short of what was needed to obtain both the acceptance of the minister of finance for more funding and the majority of Bundeswehr officers on the need for a radical makeover. This only became possible after Scharping was replaced with Peter Struck the same year.

Struck had never dealt with military affairs or security policy. He was met with scepticism within the armed forces, some believing that he would be little more than an interim figurehead. In fact, Struck had a far better relationship with

42 Bernhard Fleckenstein discusses this identity crisis in „50 Jahre Bundeswehr“: 14.

the chancellor than his predecessor had enjoyed. Moreover, Schröder clearly wanted to push the reform issue forward. The conclusions drawn from German participation in SFOR (Stabilisation Force) and KFOR (Kosovo Force) were hardly uplifting. Although both missions involved rather limited German contingencies, the Bundeswehr's resources had been stretched to the limits. The men's time of service was lengthened from four to six months, as replacements could not be found in sufficient numbers. In the official report drawn up in 2002, the failure to ensure the necessary sustainability of the troops was openly admitted.⁴³ The impact on troop morale was, according to the report, noticeably negative. This was not only because two parallel operations had exhausted the resources available; rather it was clear that the Bundeswehr was insufficiently trained for crisis management operations and that units lacked the necessary equipment as well. This impaired the units' ability to operate together with troops from other countries.

When justifying the reforms, Struck stated that threats had to be encountered where they emerged, even if this was far away from Germany.⁴⁴ Most famously, he stated that Germany's security was also defended at the feet of the Hindukush. This was not an unintended lapse, Struck repeated it several times to make clear that security was no longer a question of whether Germany was surrounded by friendly neighbours or not. Threats could emerge far away, and the Bundeswehr had to be capable of meeting them. To achieve that, he presented the government's reform plan in January 2004. The number of men was to be cut by 40,000 from 285,000 till 245,000, and civilian employees was to be reduced by 10,000 to a final level of 75,000. With reduced manpower, the need for garrisons and training camps would fall as well.

43 *Bundeswehr 2002. Sachstand und Perspektiven* (Berlin: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 2002), p. 29.

44 *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien für den Geschäftsbereich des Bundesministers der Verteidigung* (Berlin: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung 2003), §6, p. 3.

The new Bundeswehr will be divided in three, with 35,000 earmarked for high intensity operations, stabilisation forces 70,000 and finally support forces counting 137,000 men; this number included the approx. 40,000 undergoing basic training at all times. This training was to target international operations. The aim was to enable the Bundeswehr to have 14,000 men deployed abroad, or the double of the 2005 number. Provided that the reform is implemented as planned, impact will be felt from 2007/2008. Establishing the three different categories would according to the reform plan be completed in 2010. Until then, 10,000 would represent the maximum amount of soldiers the Bundeswehr can allocate to international missions. This is ominously close to the current level of 7000 on duty abroad in 2005, a level the Minister openly admitted was extremely difficult to maintain.⁴⁵

This was seized upon by conservative politicians. Christian Schmidt, CSU Defence Spokesman in parliament, pointed to the fact that the same men have already been committed to both NATO's Rapid Reaction Force and EU operations.⁴⁶ It is not unthinkable that both organisations will ask for German contributions at the same time. How those requests will be met, remains an open question, not only for Germany one might add.

Conservatives have also criticised the sharp division between the 35,000 and the much larger stabilisation forces. The former are the elite, and they will receive the best equipment available. This, together with exercises abroad, make them the most expensive soldiers in the Bundeswehr. The much larger contingency of units to be used for stabilisation, cannot hope to be similarly treated. Yet, the division between stabilisation operations and high intensity

45 Peter Struck, „Deutschland und die Weiterentwicklung der Europäischen Sicherheits- und Verteidigungspolitik“, speech by Defence Minister Peter Struck for the WEU Parliamentary Assembly, Paris 3 June 2004 (Bundersministerium der Verteidigung [online 25 October 2005]).

46 Hans-Jürgen Leersch, „Struck fehlen Soldaten für schnelle Nato-Eingreiftruppe“, *Die Welt*, 12 September 2005.

conflicts may not always be possible to draw. In that case, the stabilisation force may suddenly be faced with a scenario for which it is ill prepared and ill equipped.

Yet, on the whole, the Conservatives supported the government over the need for a profound defence reform and provided the necessary backing when votes were cast. Opposition from the conservative block was more or less predictably focused on the budget. The reforms required extra funding, and conservative members of the parliamentary defence committee would regularly decry the government for not providing the necessary means. Yet the conservative leadership was well aware that this was not an issue that would attract electoral support. At a time of financial hardship for the state coffers and with more than ten per cent unemployed, increasing the defence budget was not a top priority, either for the government or the opposition.

Whereas the Conservatives attacked aspects of the reforms, the Greens' starting point was altogether different. Their view of the defence sector has always been tainted by their strongly pacifist stance. NATO's decision in 1979 to locate new nuclear missiles in Germany was a key factor behind the establishment of the Greens the same year. Traditionally, the party has been in favour of withdrawing Germany from NATO. With the Red-Green coalition this changed. The SPD would not accept any tinkering with Germany's alliance membership, and during the coalition negotiations in 1998, NATO was not on the agenda.⁴⁷ In the 2002 party programme, unilateral German withdrawal was rejected. That does not mean that the transformation was a quiet process leading to an end result shared by all. The decisions to support NATO's intervention in Kosovo in 1999 and in Afghanistan two years later led to a division within the party. It also weakened the traditionally strong links between the Greens and the German peace movement. Prior to the parliamentary elections in 2005, the speaker of the umbrella organisation

47 Hans-Christian Ströbele quoted in Ulrike Schüler, „Wie sich die Zeiten ändern... Die Linke und die Nato – ein schwieriges Verhältnis“, *Das Parlament*, no. 21 (2005).

Friedensratschlag ("Peace Advice"), Peter Strutynski advised the members not to vote for a Red-Green government.⁴⁸ Instead, votes should be cast for those who opposed sending the Bundeswehr abroad. Although he refrained from making any explicit recommendation, his recommendation narrows the choice down to the PDS.

The Greens launched their own concept for defence reform in May 2000.⁴⁹ Instead of conscription, 200,000 volunteers should make up the armed forces. They should only be deployed on the basis of an OSCE or UN mandate. NATO was not mentioned. The defence budget was to receive less money, and within the budget more should be allotted to civilian conflict management. None of these proposals had any impact on the reform debate whatsoever. First of all, the wording was conspicuously unclear; it is difficult to understand exactly what is meant by the "peace political challenges of the 21 century".⁵⁰ A side effect, probably unintended, was that Green MPs would have to decide from case to case whenever the contents of the Bundeswehr reforms were debated in Parliament.

Conscription

One issue where the government and the conservative opposition clashed was conscription. Struck's reform stipulated that the Bundeswehr would only enrol 55,000 men. 30,000 were to serve for nine months, whereas 25,000 would be offered the possibility of a further 12 months. According to Struck's reforms, reaching 55,000 would be a gradual development. Yet, in this case, developments moved quicker; in 2005 the intake of new conscripts reached 55,000.⁵¹ This meant that only 13 per cent of all the men coming of age

48 „Friedensbewegung gegen Wiederwahl von Rot-Grün“, *Die Welt*, 6 September 2005.

49 „Das Konzept der Grünen zur Bundeswehrreform“, Presseerklärung der Bundestagsfraktion (Berlin: Bundestag, 16 May 2000).

50 Ibid.

51 „Übergang zur Freiwilligenarmee zügig fortsetzen. Ein Beitrag zur Diskussion um die Rest-Wehrpflicht“, *Positionspapier* (Berlin: Bundestagsfraktion Bündnis 90 – Die Grünen, 8 November 2004).

completed their military service. The FDP and the Greens used this as their key argument for dismantling conscription altogether. Here, they have been supported by the SPD youth organisation and as well as by sections within the SPD. The transformation of the Bundeswehr has been used as another factor; sending off conscripts to the feet of the Hindukush or anywhere else for that matter, would be politically impossible.

Struck was well aware of that. Conscripts would, according to General Inspector Schneiderhahn, the military head of the Bundeswehr, be trained to take up "important support functions in Germany".⁵² The Bundeswehr would sift out the most promising recruits from the annual intake and offer them a career in the armed forces. In this way, the idealised image of an army consisting of "citizen in uniform" would be retained, albeit in a limited version.

The conservative opposition attacked Struck over the reduced number of conscripts. His argument that since there was no longer any need for territorial defence forces, a large number of conscripts was no longer required, was rejected. The conservatives wanted to retain a territorial army, albeit limited, but sufficient to assist the police in case of a terrorist attack.⁵³ The SPD Minister of the Interior, Otto Schily, warned against this proposal claiming that it amounted to a "militarisation of society".⁵⁴ The FDP also warned against muddying the division between the armed forces and the police.

The debate on conscription did not end with Struck's initiative. Yet it might be interposed that many European countries have implemented procedures that resemble it. Some, like France, have abolished conscription altogether. But Germany is a case apart; here conscription has produced

52 Wolfgang Schneiderhan, „Sicherheit geht uns alle an: Zukunftsmodell Wehrpflicht“ (Opening address at the Wehrpflichttagung des Beirates Innere Führung in Berlin, 25 May 2004).

53 Karl Lamers, Wolfgang Schäuble and Rupert Stolz, „Zukunftskonzept Sicherheit“, *Positionspapier*, spring 2002 (Dr. Wolfgang Schäuble [online 25 October 2005]).

54 „Schily: Terror und Islam nicht gleichsetzen“, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 3 August 2005.

thousands of low-paid young men willing to do menial labour in the health sector. In 2004, 95,000 men were employed in hospitals, nursing homes and kindergartens for nine months on low monthly pay.⁵⁵ How their jobs can be filled without draining the social budget has also been included in the debate on conscription.

In the coalition agreement between the Greens and the SPD, it was agreed that conscription should be revised by 2006. Schröder's decision to call for new elections already in September 2005 meant that no final decision was reached on the future of conscription. The new government appointed afterwards vowed to retain conscription.

Responding faster

All the different reforms proposals launched since the end of the Cold War have identified the long reaction time before soldiers are deployed as a problem. Unless cut, the Bundeswehr would find it difficult to react forcefully against a sudden threat. Whereas upgrading in the past could often be reduced to "optimising duelling superiority" of the soldiers, according to General Inspector Schneiderhahn, current transformation means a complete rethink of warfare to take progress, especially in communications technology, into account.⁵⁶ It is now possible to connect units and soldiers in the field with command centres located far away, as well as with sensory equipment that can automatically trigger an armed response. A real-time picture of the situation in the battlefield is thus readily accessible to all.

The ability to react quickly to an emerging crisis was therefore not only a question of training and equipment. Cohesion between the defence branches had to be strengthened; and the relationship between the General

55 Data from Bundesamt für Zivildienst (Bundesamt für den Zivildienst [online 25 October 2005]).

56 Wolfgang Schneiderhan, „Vortrag des Generalinspektors der Bundeswehr, General Wolfgang Schneiderhan vor dem Bundesverband der Deutschen Industrie e.V. 18 November 2003“ (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung [online 25 October 2005]).

Inspector and the political leadership in the Ministry of Defence had to be changed as well. The Blankenese Decree from 1970 had charged the General Inspector with military planning within the ministry as well as the function as the government's chief military advisor. His ability to promote cohesion between the different branches of the armed forces did, however, remain limited.

This need was not as pronounced during the Cold War as it is today. Conflict scenarios then envisaged naval sea and air operations involving planes, vessels and army units from the two parties moving according to strategic principles more or less known to both sides. Today, the enemy is harder to identify, and his way of waging war is only gradually becoming apparent. In this conflict, the ability of the entire armed forces to act jointly is a necessity. To achieve that, the mandate of the general inspector had to be revised.

In 2005, Minister Struck did that. In what has become known as the Berlin Decree – ‘Berliner Erlass’ – the powers of the general inspector of the Bundeswehr over the different branches were enhanced.⁵⁷ The inspector's office was transferred from Bonn to Berlin. Struck's Decree has given the general inspector the responsibility for all defence-related ministerial work.⁵⁸ What Struck achieved was a shortening of the chain of communications. That may diminish one of the perennial complaints that German decision-making in times of crisis is too time-consuming. The danger is that closer links between the political leadership and the armed forces may obscure areas of responsibility.

57 10.32 Grundsätze für Aufgabenzuordnung, Organisation und Verfahren im Bereich der militärischen Spitzengliederung (Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung [online 25 October 2005]). The Erlass had been expected three years earlier. One reason for the delay is the opposition from the then General Inspector Harald Kujat and the generally poor relationship between Minister Scharping and the Bundeswehr. Kujat was closely connected with Scharping's defence reforms.

58 10.32 Grundsätze für Aufgabenzuordnung..., Section 2.1.2.

Increasing the powers of the general inspector was an important break with the past, although a break accompanied by only a few comments in the media or by politicians.⁵⁹ One might add, not even from the Greens. If in opposition, they would certainly have decried the reforms as they could be interpreted as increasing military power at the expense of political control.

They would probably also have found another element in the reforms hard to digest; in late 2004, Parliament passed a law facilitating the deployment of German troops abroad.⁶⁰ A distinction was drawn between humanitarian operations requiring parliamentary approval beforehand, and low intensity operations. The latter category was defined as involving only a limited number of soldiers, how many were not specified in any detail, and the conflict must not be part of a larger war. If these criteria are met, the law permits the chancellor to make the decision on deployment himself. Parliament must be informed, but unless a party faction demands the deployment be subjected to a plenary discussion within seven days, the decision will stand. Should the conflict increase in intensity, or involve rescue operations of distressed civilians, parliament can give its approval to continued deployment. If that is not done, the troops will have to be withdrawn. The law does not change parliament's access to stopping any deployment by revoking its sanction.

Affordable modernisation?

In an analysis of German defence policy published in 2000, the question was posed whether the country had become a free rider.⁶¹ Although the size of the German defence budget

59 This even applies to the homepage of Peace Studies at the University of Kassel where all changes in security and defence policies are carefully monitored.

60 *Parlamentsbeteiligungsgesetz*, full name: *Gesetz über die parlamentarische Beteiligung bei der Entscheidung über den Einsatz bewaffneter Streitkräfte im Ausland*, enacted 18.3.2005. (Rechtliches [online 25 October 2005]).

61 François Heisbourg, „Trittbrettfahrer? Keine europäische Verteidigung ohne Deutschland“, *Internationale Politik*, no. 4 (2000): 35–42.

was large, ranking third behind Britain and France in Europe, its share of BNP had remained at a standstill at a time when the two others grew.⁶² However, since German BNP actually decreased over the same period, this standstill hid a drop in real terms. From 2000 to 2004, the budget was reduced by 4.3 per cent; in the same time span the British grew by almost 16 percent and the French by 5.4 per cent.⁶³ Another striking difference concerns how the budget is disposed. While the two other countries invest more than 12 per cent into research and development, Germany sets aside only half that.⁶⁴ The share allocated for new equipment was somewhat higher, but still far lower than in France and Britain.

The gap undermined the ambitions of increasing the Bundeswehr's ability to undertake more and longer missions abroad. The French and British budget increases had come as a reply to increased foreign deployments.⁶⁵ In Germany, this burden had to be covered from within the budget; extra funding was not allocated. Annual deployment costs increased, reaching more than €1.5 billion by 2004.⁶⁶ This was a sizeable portion of a defence budget that hovered around €24 billion. Yet, neither the conservative parties nor the Red-Green coalition wanted to cut back on foreign engagements to free means for reforms. In fact, the only ones to request a clear bill on what sending the Bundeswehr abroad costs, were MPs from the PDS.

According to Struck's plan, the defence budget would increase by €1 billion from 2007 when the reforms would start to have an impact. Provided this share is not devoured by foreign mission, it will give the reforms a comparative

62 Burkhard Schmitt, *Defence Expenditure* (Paris: European Union Institute of Security Studies, February 2005).

63 The numbers are based on the military expenditure of each country in constant (2003) US\$, Source: SIPRI, 2005.

64 Schmitt, *Defence Expenditure*...

65 British engagement in Iraq were covered by funding allocated in addition to the ordinary defence budgets.

66 Gesine Löttsch, „Gesine Löttsch befragt die Bundesregierung zur Zahl der Bundeswehrsoldaten im Ausland und Kosten der Auslandseinsätze der Bundeswehr“, Berlin: Bundestag, 11 July 2005 (Gesine Löttsch [online 25 October 2005]).

advantage compared to previous attempts. As mentioned earlier, Scharping had been promised fresh funding when he drew up his reforms only to see this scrapped after the finance minister was replaced. When the Weizsäcker Commission presented its plan for a leaner Bundeswehr, it recommended a reduction in terms of manpower, at the same time the need for a budget increase was underlined. What happened was quite the opposite.

Arguably, Struck's reforms were based on a clearer concept: missions abroad involving sharp operations in close co-operation with key allies. His reforms profited from lessons learned. Previous foreign deployments had all shown that the Bundeswehr lacked crucial capacities. A case in point occurred when Germany was asked to take over the leadership of the UN International Security Assistance Force in Kabul in 2002; this meant increasing the level from 1,200 to 2,000. The extras would perform key functions in logistics, communication as well as managing the strategically important airport in Bagram close to Kabul. Finding the experts that could fulfil these roles proved to be quite a challenge, only matched by the problems of finding the necessary transport capacity to get them there, – not to mention lift them out should a severe crisis emerge.⁶⁷

Struck's reform contained a detailed attempt to solve these bottlenecks, listing what capacities were needed to assure the deployability and sustainability of troops abroad. However, even if the necessary funding should be forthcoming, procurement would not start before 2007, and then only gradually. Yet, procurement as well as training require money, and above all predictable money. If the defence budget is suddenly cut to cover holes in other parts of the state budget, the entire reform process has to be reconsidered each time to choose which projects can be postponed if not scrapped altogether. If the credibility of the reform process suffers, the standing of the political leadership will also fall. Maintaining the necessary level of support to pursue whatever is left of the

67 Heidi Reisinger, "Note to Gerhard: This Is Getting Embarrassing", *Washington Post*, 24 November 2002.

original reforms may be close to impossible. Part of the explanation why Scharping's standing within the armed forces hit rock bottom lies here.

For Struck, the lack of predictability became an Achilles heel. Both in 2004 and 2005, the budget was reduced by €250 million to lower the budget deficit.⁶⁸ Understandable, but this was exactly the kind of sudden reduction that undermined planning and endangered the reforms. The defence budget has been described as the "government's quarry"; there is always some money to be found.⁶⁹ Whereas the state budget is passed by parliament as a law, and therefore binding, the defence budget is not and may be resorted to whenever a budgetary crisis emerge.

Future cutbacks?

Only from 2007 is a slight increase foreseen with the defence budget consuming a total of €24.7 billion.⁷⁰ Equally important perhaps is the fact that the 2004 reform plainly states that capacities and equipment not needed for the Bundeswehr' new profile will be closed down. According to ministry estimates, this will free up to €26 billion until 2012.⁷¹ Reducing the number of men serving will, on paper, free a further €500 million. Together with the extra funding starting from 2007, this would be used for the procurement of new equipment.

Whether this will be enough is a topic that has triggered acrimonious debates in parliament and the media. The number of projects for new equipment is large. If it had not been for the fact that several have already been cut or

68 Martin Agüera, „Kampf um die Euros im ‚Steinbruch der Bundesregierung‘“, *Das Parlament*, no. 1 (2005) ([online 25 October 2005]).

69 Ibid.

70 *Der Verteidigungshaushalt 2005* (Berlin, 2005) (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung [online 25 October 2005]); and *Bundeshaushalt 2005, Einzelplaniübersicht* (Berlin, 2005) (Bundesfinanzministerium [online 25 October 2005]).

71 Peter Struck, „Wegmarken für den neuen Kurs“, press conference of the Defence Minister Peter Struck, Ministry of Defence, Berlin, 13 January 2004 (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung [online 25 October 2005]).

postponed, it would have been close to endless. Yet, this has mainly affected smaller projects, and the impact on the budget has been marginal. When all the main procurement projects are summed up; the final sum is, according to one defence analyst, well in excess of €47 billion.⁷² This sum covers all procurement projects, even cases where Germany has only committed itself to participate in the preparatory phase.⁷³ The final bill may therefore be somewhat lower. Moreover, the sum will be divided up over a number of years depending on the project in question. Though that may sugar the pill somewhat, it is difficult to see how the Bundeswehr can cover the costs without exceeding budget limits.

Multinationality

Germany participates in several large-scale armaments projects. Among the costliest is a new air defence system, called MEADS where the German share is calculated to be around €886 million.⁷⁴ Germany has also ordered new Eurofighter planes, priced at approximately €15.4 billion.⁷⁵ In response to a desperate shortage of airlift capacity, Germany has ordered 60 Airbus A400M planes. This is a reduction from an original order of 73 planes, a reduction made necessary because Parliament refused to provide more than €5 billion.⁷⁶ As a result, the unit costs of each plane increased. This was hardly endearing to the other countries participating, but they could do little more than voice their objections.⁷⁷

72 Sascha Lange, *Neue Bundeswehr auf altem Sockel. Wege aus dem Dilemma* (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, Januar 2005).

73 This includes for instance MEADS where Germany has so far not made any final commitments on procurement.

74 MEADS = Medium Extended Air Defence System. The cost estimate, based on figures made available by the Ministry of defence can be found in *Bundestagsfraktion der Grünen zur MEADS-Entscheidung* (Berlin: Bundestag, 21 April 2005) (University of Kassel [online 25 October 2005]).

75 *Eurofighter/Kosten* (Berlin: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 17 June 2004) (Bundeswehr [online 25 October 2005]).

76 For a discussion of the tug-of-war surrounding Airbus costs, see Hans-Jürgen Leersch, „Zukunft von Eurofighter und Tornado ungewiß“, *Die Welt*, 18 June 2005; Lange, *Neue Bundeswehr...*

Airbus, as well as the other two projects mentioned, are multinational. They exemplify how a cluster of countries agrees to pool their resources to achieve what would be beyond the reach of one. None of the countries involved could have developed an air defence system, a fighter or transport plane on their own. Dwindling manpower, limited budgets combined with spiralling equipment costs are the main factors. It should be underlined though, that these factors are European. In the United States, defence budgets have increased considerably, not least after the terror attacks.

Yet, the budget gap is older than 9-11. In fact, all through the Cold War, US administrations claimed that they carried more than their fair share of the common defence burden and that the European allies were involved in burden shedding. The Europeans had failed to upgrade their military capabilities and the resulting transatlantic gap imperilled combined US-European operations.

That these were not merely empty words became evident during NATO's actions in the Balkans during the 1990s. European impotence compared with US might was made blatantly clear. This was to be a clarion call for a more co-ordinated strategy on capacities: what was required if the transatlantic gap was to be closed, and who should be entrusted with the task of doing it?

As a response, NATO first drew up a Defence Capabilities Initiative at the Washington Summit in 1999, listing which capacities were required to mend the gap. Three years later in Prague, the Alliance composed a far more specified inventory of which defence systems should be prioritised in the years ahead, and the countries that were to play the leading role in the process. Germany was asked to head the group developing strategic airlift. It also holds this function in the EU's work to develop an autonomous military capacity. As with the case of NATO, multinationality is a common denominator to the Union's efforts.

77 For a survey of French trepidation, see Jean Guisnel, "M le maudit? L'Airbus kaki cloué au sol", *Le Point*, 18 October 2002.

Multinationality ties the countries together. As such it is a powerful expression of political unity. The Franco-German Brigade established in 1989, and the Multinational Corps Northeast dating from 1998 originally including Denmark and Poland in addition to Germany both symbolize how historical animosities have been overcome. Yet this is not a strategy without pitfalls. Since the efficiency of a multinational unit depends on each country fulfilling its obligations either in the form of men or equipment, failure to deliver undermines the efficiency of the unit. In the case of Germany, this was highlighted in the run-up to the Iraq crisis when German crew had to be withdrawn from AWACS surveillance planes used over Iraq. Finding replacements was not difficult. The consequences would have been more drastic if Germany had been the sole supplier of the skills or equipment demanded. If so, AWACS planes would have been grounded. Such scenarios cannot be ruled out. In fact, NATO's strategy whereby a single country is given a key role in the development of a niche capacity, means that this will occur with increasing frequency.

This is the problematic side of multinationality. Whereas it may compensate for national shortcomings and insufficient resources, vulnerability also increases. Defence policy and planning suddenly become a concern not just for Germany but for its partner countries as well. Any decision taken by the German ministry of defence, and in particular the German minister of finance has an immediate bearing on their own plans. If Germany defaults, they may be asked to shoulder a larger burden. This happened when Struck decided to cut the number of Airbus planes ordered.⁷⁸ This is hardly a welcome turn of events for countries involved in multinational projects with Germany; more cases will damage its credibility as a partner. The need to keep pace with the country's allies is therefore not only an issue that can be narrowed down to different levels of technical interoperability.

78 The development of armaments policy in Europe – reply to the annual report of the Council, Assembly of the Western European Union, Document A/1840 (Brussels: Western European Union, 3 December 2003).

In 2003, the head of the EU Council of Ministers' Section for Foreign and Political-Military Relations said the German defence budget was too miserly when confronted with the current security threats, "I get the impression" he added, "that Germany fails to take this issue seriously".⁷⁹

EU versus NATO

Germany's failure to keep pace with its European allies has dire consequences for the EU's efforts to build a defence capacity that can be called on to act independently for any longer period of time. This threatened what the Red-Green government defined as the key European integration project.⁸⁰ One effect of German, but not solely German underfunding, has been postponements of when EU forces could be declared fully operational. The Union was not alone; NATO has also been affected by insufficient spending. Both organisations are in the middle of a military transformation process where the emphasis is put on rapid reaction to any emerging crisis. It was the Red-Green government's ambition that Germany should participate strongly in both.

This double commitment gave rise to criticism and apprehension; criticism against what was perceived as an underfunded overcommitment that would only undermine the country's credibility as an ally; and apprehension that this development would end up undermining NATO. Madeleine Albright, Clinton's Secretary of State (1997–2001) fuelled this perception. In 1998, she warned against what became known as the three Ds: decoupling from NATO, discrimination of European NATO countries not members of the EU and doubling of capacities.⁸¹ Albright rightly reasoned that the

79 Interview with Robert Cooper in „Auf Deutschland kommt eine enorme Aufgabe zu“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 May 2003.

80 „ESVP: Schlüsselprojekt der europäischen Einigung“, in *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien*, 21. Mai 2003 (Bundesministerium der Verteidigung [online 25 October 2005]).

81 "Press Conference by US Secretary of State Albright", North Atlantic Council Ministerial Meeting, Brussels, 8 December 1998 (NATO [online 25 October 2005]).

European countries did not have sufficient manpower to commit troops both to NATO and the EU. That it would be unwise to spend the defence budgets on equipment that had already been earmarked for NATO troops was a point Albright was not alone in making.

Germany's solution, like most other European countries, has been to report the same units to both NATO and the EU. At the same time, some duplication has taken place. This includes projects like A400M, which clearly duplicates US stocks, but which nonetheless will enhance the deployability of European forces. This time Washington did not object. The Bush Administration has been far more positively disposed towards the EU's defence efforts than its predecessor. This change was best expressed in President Bush's highly significant visit to EU headquarters in February 2005. He declared that the US would like a strong Europe as a partner. This was quite a change from the Albright/Clinton line where any attempt to establish EU military capacities that could be launched independently from NATO was opposed. Nevertheless, US criticism over European spending has continued, especially when the equipment chosen has to be produced in Europe instead of being bought off the shelf in the US. Compared with the Clinton Administration, however, the European argument that enhanced European defence capacities are an asset to NATO, even if they are earmarked for the EU, no longer falls on deaf ears.

The EU's Rapid Reaction Force (ERRF) is the cornerstone in the Union's military pillar. The EU's decision to establish the force was taken in 2000. The Kosovo crisis had laid bare the Union's impotence when faced with an armed conflict threatening European stability. The ERRF will, when fully operational, enable the Union to deploy forces that can contain a conflict. According to the plans, 60,000 ground troops and 100,000 support troops will make up the force. The Franco-German Brigade established in 1988 will form the backbone. Although original discussions and analyses seemed to point to Europe and the continent's vicinity as the most likely deployment area, this has changed. EU forces were sent

to Congo in 2003. The following year, the Franco-German Brigade formed part of ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) in Kabul, Afghanistan. The EU's targets, as presented in Helsinki in 1999, were perceived as being directed against conflicts at the lower end of the intensity spectrum.⁸²

The bottleneck for the ERF has long been equipment. To avoid unnecessary duplication, an agreement was reached with NATO in 1996 giving the Force access to NATO assets and command structures when confronted with a crisis NATO did not want to get involved in. Germany played an active role in the mediation of this agreement. The French leadership, however, resented it. Not without justification, it claimed that this meant the US had been given the right to veto whether the EU should be given access or not.

Six years later, plans for NATO's Response Force (NRF) were launched at the NATO Summit in late 2002. The force should be capable of meeting the new threats emerging from terrorism and rogue states. With the support of all the member countries, it was decided that the Force should be operational by October 2004, meaning that it should be deployable within five days and capable of sustaining high intensity combat for up to a month. The deadline was later extended by two years.

In 2002, 5,000 Bundeswehr soldiers were earmarked for the NRF, in addition to military hardware ranging from frigates to Tornado fighter planes. They have to be ready for deployment at short notice. A further 10000 have to be kept ready for exchange in order to insure the German contingency's sustainability.⁸³

The number of Bundeswehr soldiers trained and equipped for deployments abroad is limited. The same men and women have therefore been committed to both the EU and NATO. Other NATO and EU countries have been compelled to do the same. This doublehatting could rapidly turn into a problem if

82 See Kori Schake, "Do European Union Defense Initiatives Threaten NATO?", *Strategic Forum*, no. 184 (August 2001).

83 *Grundzüge der Konzeption der Bundeswehr* (Berlin: Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 2004), p. 24-25.

deployment scenarios for both forces coincide. Who will be given priority remains open. NATO's Response Force (NRF) and the Union's Rapid Reaction Force are not identical. NATO's variant is essentially a strike force to be used for high-intensity combat operations outside Europe. The Rapid Reaction Force on the other hand will be tailored for peace and stability operations in Europe, or less clearly but not to be ruled out, in the vicinity of Europe. Thus, to a certain extent one may claim that the forces are complementary, and not in conflict with each other. Concerning capacities, the equality between the EU and NATO that Schröder desired is far off. The reason being that whereas NATO can rely on US military power, the EU cannot.

The EU Security Strategy

In late 2003, the EU members agreed on a document outlining the Union's foreign and security policy entitled *A Secure Europe In A Better World*. This was the revised version of a draft that Solana had presented half a year earlier. The draft had been criticised by representatives of the German left and peace movement. Their main concern was the similarities between the document and the US *National Security Strategy* published the previous year.⁸⁴

On this, they were right. There are considerable overlaps between the two strategies, similarities the final version has retained from the draft. Threat perceptions are identical: the spread of weapons of mass destruction, failed states and terrorism rank high in both. But when it comes to how the threats should be reduced, the two part. Whereas the US strategy lists democracy and free market forces as prime tools, the EU strategy is much more vague.

A cardinal difference is the role military force plays in the two documents. The US doctrine is far more explicit on the circumstances justifying the use of weapons, including pre-emptive strikes. The problem for some German critics was

84 For a sober comparison, see Felix Sebastian Berenskoetter, "Mapping the Mind Gap: A Comparison of US and European Security Strategies", *Security Dialogue*, no. 1 (2005): 71-92.

that the EU did not entirely rule out this option either. Military means is “one of the instruments for crisis management and prevention at our disposal”.⁸⁵ The same paragraph ends by underlining the need to develop a strategic culture “that fosters early, rapid and when necessary, robust intervention.” Yet, it contained nothing as to when arms should be used, and some felt that the difference between the EU’s early intervention and US pre-emption was difficult to draw.⁸⁶

The main difference between the EU document and any security strategy, let alone the US one, is the failure to identify what the EU can do with specific problems like international terrorism, failed states or the spread of weapons of mass destruction, or what it can do in a specific region. The strategy contains numerous admonitions about what the EU should – would – could. All add to the vagueness of the text.⁸⁷ Javier Solana, the Union’s High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, has solicited the member countries for their views on what a common foreign and security policy should contain, and in particular to what extent they were willing to transfer power over these issues to the EU. On this, views differ sharply.⁸⁸ These differences curtailed the Union’s ability to come up with a cohesive response to the US’ way of waging war on terror.

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- 85 *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy* (Brussels: Council of the European Union, 12 December 2003), p. 12.
- 86 See the Bundestag Debate on the EU Constitution, 24 February 2005, especially the contribution by Marianne Tritz (the Greens) and Gesine Lötsch (PDS) in Plenarprotokoll 15/160, Stenografischer Bericht, 160. Sitzung, 24 February 2005 (Deutscher Bundestag [online 25 October 2005]); Jürgen Huffschmied, „Sackgasse EU-Verfassung“, *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, no. 7 (2004): 775–778.
- 87 For a succinct analysis of the Strategy, see Hanns Maull, “Europe and the new balance of global order”, *International Affairs*, no. 4 (2005): 775–799.
- 88 Javier Solana, “Speech delivered at the Institut d’Etudes Politiques, Paris, 18 April 2005”, *Homepage of Javier Solana* (Council of the European Union [online 25 October 2005]).

The war on terror

All through the Iraq crisis, Schröder pointed out the basic differences between US and German views on the United Nations, international law, and the war on terror. After relations between the two leaders had improved sufficiently to enable direct political talks, a joint statement was issued in which common values were underlined: "The foundations of German and American relations remains our shared commitment to the values of freedom, democracy, and the rule of law, and to economic opportunity and prosperity through free and open markets."⁸⁹ This is not very different from what Schröder declared to be the chief aim in the war on terror, namely to "win people for freedom, peace and the open society".⁹⁰ The wording is close to what President Bush declared to be his goal on the first page of the *National Security Strategy*: "We will extend the peace by encouraging open and free societies on every continent." Schröder wanted to encourage a wide span of contacts, social, cultural and economic in order to "soften up the regimes from the bottom upwards".⁹¹ Similar visions can be found in Bush's Security Strategy. The difference was how the two leaders believe these values should be spread and strengthened. The German government's emphasis on dialogue meant including regimes and political groupings the Bush Administration would be inclined to view as opponents beyond the reach of argument.⁹²

89 "The German-American Alliance for the 21st Century", Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder February 27, 2004, (U.S. Diplomatic Mission to Germany [online 8 December 2005]).

90 Schröder, Gerhard: "Address by Gerhard Schroeder Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany at the Fifty-eighth Session of the United Nations General Assembly" (New York, 24 September 2003) (United Nations [online 8 December 2005]).

91 „Berlin sieht keine neue Dissonanzen mit USA wegen Iran“, *Die Welt*, 20 January 2005.

92 See Harald Müller, *Supermacht in der Sackgasse? Die Weltordnung nach dem 11. September* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2003), p. 167–169.

This became evident in the two countries' approaches to the Iranian regime's nuclear programme. If Iran develops an atomic bomb, the fragile balance in the Middle East will be a thing of the past, as other countries will struggle to update their arsenals to include similar weapons. Whereas Germany, France and Britain tried to deter the Iranian authorities from developing a bomb through peaceful means, the Bush Administration was far more threatening in its rhetoric.⁹³ The European strategy was based on the belief that dialogue would enhance the position of liberal political forces in the country, as opposed to the reactionary clergy. The US side questioned whether there was any significant difference between the clergy and the more liberal political leadership in the development of nuclear weapons. Secretary Rice stated that the Administration supported the European strategy, whilst letting it be known that a US military option had not been ruled out.

The different strategies towards Iran originated in opposing perceptions of how terrorism should be tackled. This difference was evident immediately after 9-11. President Bush as well as other members of his administration repeatedly referred to the attacks as constituting an act of war. The attacks were not seen as a response to particular aspects of US policy in the Middle East or elsewhere, but as targeting Americans' ideal and values. The old approach where terrorism was regarded as a "manageable evil" best treated as a law-enforcement problem would no longer suffice.⁹⁴ Although the 2002 *Security Strategy* underlined that the roots of terror are multifaceted and that eradicating them necessitates the use of a wide range of means, military means was at the forefront.

93 The exception might be the Iranian decision to postpone the introduction of stoning as punishment for marital infidelity in 2003. This came after the EU and Iran had signed a trade agreement.

94 "Deputy Secretary Paul Wolfowitz interview with Sam Tannenhaus", *Vanity Fair*, May 2003.

Terror was interpreted differently by the government in Berlin. When Chancellor Schröder addressed the UN General Assembly in September 2003, his recipe was "...to address the root causes of terrorism and insecurity".⁹⁵ That would require a long-term, comprehensive strategy. It would also require the strengthening of international law and law enforcement mechanisms. The German Chancellor did not only have the UN in mind, but he attributed particular importance to the International Criminal Court, well aware of the fact that this was one institution on which the US administration held the opposite view. Schröder wanted an "end to lawlessness", a term that was interpreted as being directed as much at the USA as at countries supporting terrorism. The best way to achieve this, according to the Chancellor, was to strengthen the United Nations. Although Schröder, not unlike most other politicians, refrained from making any specific recommendations on how this should be achieved, he made it clear that he would support any development that would enable the UN to interfere militarily in conflicts and crises more swiftly than today. The UN remained, in the German government's view, the only organisation that could authorise military action against an aggressor.

Pre-emption

Whereas the Red-Green government invariably referred to the United Nations as a determining source of international law, US views of the organisation have been more disparaging.⁹⁶ The equality enjoyed by all states, whether democratic or dictatorial, is seen as undermining the organisation's legitimacy. Cumbersome decision-making procedures

95 Gerhard, Schröder, "Address by Gerhard Schroder Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany at the Fifty-eighth Session of the United Nations General Assembly" (New York, 24 September 2003) (United Nations [online 8 December 2005]).

96 For a discussion of differing views of legitimacy, see „Die Krise ist noch nicht beendet – Wie können Amerika und Europe zueinander finden?“, *Die Welt*, 24 February 2004.

combined with the ever-present threat of a veto in the Security Council mean that it would be foolhardy to await its decision if national security is under threat.

This was the main argument presented in the US *Security Strategy* as a justification for pre-emptive attacks.⁹⁷ Weapons of mass destruction in the hands of hostile regimes or terrorist groups pose a threat that must be obliterated, if necessary through a military strike. It is indefensible for the US to wait until the threat represents an immediate danger before launching an attack. That was possible when an attack involved amassing troops and equipment, a process difficult to hide from foreign intelligence. Israel's Arab neighbours accused Israel of military aggression after the Six-Day War in 1967 and wanted to have the Israeli attack declared an act of aggression by the Security Council. Both the Security Council and the General Assembly repudiated this position. The Arab military build-up had left no one in doubt that an attack on Israel was imminent. Israel argued that the pre-emptive attacks had constituted an act of self-defence, and this position was supported by the Security Council.

Preventive attacks are not covered by self-defence. The argument presented by the Bush Administration in the *Security Strategy* as well as by several US international law experts, was that the distinction between pre-emptive and preventive was no longer possible to draw.⁹⁸ The United States cannot risk waiting until the "threats are fully formed" before attacking.⁹⁹ It goes without saying that neither can it

97 *The National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington D.C.: The White House, 2002).

98 For a survey of the US debate, see Michael J. Glennon, "Military Action Against Terrorists under International Law: The Fog of Law: Self-Defence, Inherence and Incoherence in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter", *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* (spring 2002); Ruth Wedgwood, "Strike at Saddam Now", *National Law Journal*, editorial (28 October 2002); Walter B. Slocombe, "Preemptive military action and the legitimate use of force: An American Perspective", paper delivered at the CEPS/IISS European Security Forum, Brussels, 13 January 2003, (CEPS/IISS European Security Forum [online 25 October 2003]).

99 *The National Security Strategy ...: Presidential preamble.*

await the authorization of the Security Council before taking action. The German government insisted on maintaining this line, although it should be underlined that it refrained from emphasising this division. The official argument instead focused on the need to maintain the authority of the UN and respect for international law.

It should be added that the conservative opposition was loath to address whether the distinction between pre-emption and preventive attacks could be upheld in the war against terror. One reason is probably that anyone questioning the government's line would all too easily have been castigated as a proponent of military aggression and be accused of being subservient to US policies. It might also be seen as undermining the German bid for a permanent seat on the Security Council.

The only time a change in the view on pre-emption was openly contemplated was in the Free Democratic Party (FDP). Prior to its party convention in Cologne in May 2005, the party's foreign policy committee issued a draft drawing up a new foreign policy for Germany. The FDP had its designs on the foreign ministry should the parliamentary elections in 2006 lead to a change of government, and the paper was met with considerable interest. It argued that the UN Charter's article 51, opening up for self-defence when attacked, should be modernised. Preventive measures against the new type of threats coming from terrorist groups and regimes should be permitted in cases in which the Security Council was unable to reach a conclusion opening up for a UN-mandate.

The difference between this proposal and the US administration's policy was hard to spot. Not surprisingly, it triggered widespread criticism from the rank-and-file and was soon withdrawn. But in its wake, the party's honorary chairman and former minister of economy, Otto Graf Lambsdorff, criticised the decision. He pointed to the fact that Germany had, when deciding to intervene in Kosovo, done exactly what the draft had envisioned.¹⁰⁰

100 „Lambsdorff will militärische Präventivschläge auch ohne Billigung der UNO“, *Die Welt*, 4 May 2005.

Although many German politicians, especially on the right wing of the political spectrum, most likely shared Lambsdorff's view, no statement either way can be found from the leadership of the CSU or the CDU. The Red-Green government took the opposite position. In the coalition agreement from 1998, the power to decide over military means is vested in the United Nations.¹⁰¹ The only exception is self-defence, a concept that according to the UN conclusion on the Six-Day War also covers pre-emption. And this is the point where the problems occurred. When Fischer declared that Donald Rumsfeld's arguments and proof presented at the 2003 Munich Security Conference did not convince him, he refuted that the US was exposed to any imminent threat that could justify a military attack, let alone German participation.

The US strategy in the lead-up to the attack on Iraq was not only to obtain the backing of the UN, but also the active participation of as many countries as possible. Unilateral military actions can be undertaken by the US – not only do they have the necessary equipment but also the political will to do so if deemed necessary. Germany lacks both. Clearly, having allies is preferable. Whereas a single country is more easily accused of imperialist motives, a coalition of countries is less susceptible to similar allegations. In addition, costs both in terms of human losses and money spent will be divided between several allies and not be borne by one state alone. "Multinational if possible, unilateral if necessary" was coined by Madeleine Albright, but remained valid under Bush. Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld said in 2002: "...you have to let the mission determine the coalition, and you don't let the coalition determine the mission."¹⁰² During the Senate hearing following her nomination as Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice said "When judging a course of action, I will never forget that the true yardstick of its worth is whether it is effective."¹⁰³ This is less abrasive than Rumsfeld's dictum,

101 *Deutsche Außenpolitik ist Friedenspolitik...*

102 "Excerpt: Rumsfeld Says U.S. Must 'Expect the Unexpected'", EPF411 02/21/2002, 22 February 2002, *American Information Web* (American Cultural Center Resource Service [online 25 October 2005]).

but basically the same thing. The US preponderance for unilateral action is not only based on a differing perception of how a problem should be solved, but is also shaped by recent experiences in multinational warfare. US co-operation with the Europeans during the Balkan wars in the 1990s was hampered by transatlantic differences in military hardware. Cooperation also suffered from political interference from all the members in the coalition. This was poignantly underlined in General Wesley Clark's recollections of NATO's Operation Allied Force:

I talked to everybody. I talked to diplomats, NATO political leaders, national political leaders, and national chiefs of defence. There was a constant round of telephone calls, pushing and shoving and bargaining and cajoling, trying to raise the threshold for NATO attacks.¹⁰⁴

From a US perspective, the costs of having an unwilling ally as a member of a coalition may therefore easily appear prohibitive.

Conclusion: the missing debate

When the Red-Green government assumed power, the self-perception was that Germany was a prime example of a civilian power, in the sense that the country would resort to means other than military pressure, let alone intervention, to solve a crisis. As such, it was believed that the country was a model that would stand to gain from the post-Cold War climate when negotiations and co-operation gained hold.¹⁰⁵ The decision to deploy the Bundeswehr abroad meant that this

103 Roger Cohen, "Bush's Smiles Meet Some Frowns in Europe", *New York Times*, 22 January 2005.

104 Wesley Clark, interview by PBS, *Frontline - War in Europe* (PBS [online 5 January 2004]); for an analysis of the problematic relationship between politicians and commanders, see Derek S. Reveron, "Coalition Warfare: The Commander's Role", *Defense and Security Analysis*, no. 2 (2002): 107-21; and Roger H. Palin, *Multinational Military Forces: Problems and Prospects*, Adelphi Paper no. 294 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1995).

image lost some of its allure. Pacifist groupings especially, as well as politicians and intellectuals, would ask whether this meant that Germany was now just like any other European power?¹⁰⁶

In Germany, the belief in civilian methods, diplomatic pressure combined with possible economic sanctions and political isolation prevails strongly. When confronted with the West's failure to block the Iranian regime's production of enriched uranium, Chancellor Schröder warned the US against a military solution.¹⁰⁷ The Conservative opposition was marginally more explicit, Angela Merkel cautioned against increasing transatlantic tensions, but stated in general that she agreed with the chancellor on the need to pursue a strategy based on dialogue.

The culture of reluctance means that the German political elite avoids debating a set of hardcore security challenges. Whenever terrorism has been debated, the need for a complex approach based on dialogue as well as political and economic means has been emphasised. This is clear when it comes to issues like proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and failed states. Without discussing these issues in detail, and especially what to do once a peaceful strategy fails, other countries than Germany will set the agenda. This does not automatically mean the US, both in France and Britain is the military means included in discussions on security threats with far less inhibitions than in Germany. Germany runs the danger of being relegated to conducting what has been labelled "reactive foreign" policy.¹⁰⁸

This is not a problem that will disappear with a new chancellor with a different rhetoric. It is not unlikely that the Bundeswehr will be deployed in missions to failed states or in

105 See Gunther Hellmann, „Sag beim Abschied leise Servus! Die Zivilmacht Deutschland beginnt ein neues „Selbst“ zu behaupten“, *Politische Vierteljahresheft*, no. 3 (2002): 498–507.

106 For a survey of this debate, see Hanns Maull, „'Normalisierung' oder Auszehrung? Deutsche Außenpolitik im Wandel“, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, no. 11 (2004): 17–23.

107 Peter Dausend und Nikolaus Blome, „Schröder zieht Iran-Konflikt in den Wahlkampf“, *Die Welt*, 15 August 2005.

attack on groups in possession of WMD. With the exception of the PDS, this likelihood has not been addressed by any of the main political parties. The failure to do so may constrain the government's ability to act swiftly. When the Kohl government was forced to put deployment on the agenda in the 1990s, the political parties were largely unprepared. Only when a compromise had been achieved within the SPD and the FDP could negotiations with the government start. Current security threats require a far quicker response, but unless a debate on what the preconditions for German participation is started, any government might find it very difficult to comply with any request coming from either NATO or the UN.

108 This concept was coined by the then head of the the German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Christoph Bertram, at a discussion on German foreign policy in late 2004. For a transcript of the main points, see „Es kommt darauf an, die Welt zu interpretieren und zu verändern“ Deutschlands Rolle in der Welt / Sicht aus dem Auswärtigen Amt, Protokoll der sechsten Podiumsveranstaltung, 8.12.2004 (Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung [online 25 October 2005]).

Chapter 3

Transatlantic relations

Schröder developed friendly relations with a few foreign leaders. The most famous example was the conviviality with Chirac. This was unexpected. Just after he had been elected for the first time, most observers claimed that he seemed uninterested in moving beyond what mere political politeness required. Holding hands, like Mitterand and Kohl once did, seemed unthinkable. That changed. Chirac was invited several times to Schröder's private house in Hannover. President Putin as well as the former Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji were also Schröder's personal guests. George W. Bush was not among them.

Journalists and commentators were quick to point to an obvious clash of personalities. The German Minister of Justice compared Bush to Hitler and was only sacked when national and international press coverage developed into a political embarrassment for the Chancellor. On the US side, the Defence Secretary grouped Germany together with Cuba and Libya, while other members of the administration described the relationship with Germany as "poisoned" and then later as "unpoisoned". The forced smiles on official photos revealed that dialogue was difficult long after the two leaders had declared their intent to look ahead and restart co-operation.¹⁰⁹ The press reported that Bush did not phone

109 This was particularly evident from the photos taken when the two leaders met in New York in late September 2003.

Schröder to congratulate him on his election victory in 2002. For almost a year and half, contacts between the two leaders were frozen.

Once resumed, both sides were at pains to stress that Iraq was a past issue with no bearing on the overall state of relations. That would have been true if Iraq was a unique incident. If so, one might expect relations to move back to what they were before, when Germany was a favoured ally the US would like to have as its “partner in leadership”. A return to this blissful state is unlikely even with a conservative chancellor in Berlin. The rupture was not just a question of a lack of personal chemistry, but rather the fact that the two leaders personified opposing political perceptions and values.

As pointed out in the introduction, Schröder’s personal history mirrored the German side in this process. Born in 1944, he was too young to have been implicated in the Third Reich, and not old enough to have any memories of the US as liberators. Instead his political impressions and opinions were those of the 1968 youth protests. The fact that he represented a new generation of politicians was strongly stressed during his inauguration to the Bundestag in 1998.¹¹⁰ The bonds of loyalty to the US that had characterised German foreign policy, were no longer perceived as indispensable. The threat from the East had disappeared. Assuming positions antithetical to US policies carried fewer risks than before. During the Cold War, a statement comparable to the one made by the Chancellor in the Bundestag in late 2002: “the essential questions concerning the German nation [will] be decided in Berlin and nowhere else” would have been unthinkable.¹¹¹

But now, Schröder’s self-confident pose was welcomed by many within the Social Democratic Party who had long argued in favour of increased sovereignty over security policy.¹¹² The Greens welcomed it as well; Joschka Fischer

110 Schröder, „Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder vom 10. November 1998...“.

111 *Stenographische Berichte des Deutschen Bundestages*, 53. Sitzung, 13 September 2003.

had declared himself in favour of a “second Boston Tea Party”, just that this time it should be the Europeans liberating themselves from the US.¹¹³

Schröder’s assertiveness was new and unexpected. The relationship with the United States had been fundamental to the Federal Republic in quite another way than the links with France or Poland. US experts played an influential role in the crafting of the Federal Republic, and thus directly on the political culture. Although France has come to play an important part in German foreign policy, no discernible transfer of political ideas or models in the post-war era comparable to the influence of the US can be detected. On the contrary, the federalised, decentralised German political system is the very opposite of the French centralisation and dirigisme.

Nonetheless, to France as well as Germany’s eastern neighbour Poland, a radical change in German-US relations meant new challenges. Whereas Polish politicians regarded any such changes with apprehension, French leaders interpreted them as an opening for a stronger French role in European security. To Germany, however, this was not only a question of increased sovereignty over security issues as Schröder’s statement to the Bundestag seemed to indicate, but something far more fundamental. It was about German self-understanding and the political shape of the Federal Republic in the years ahead. Schröder’s assertion of more emphasis on German interests in foreign and security politics and the wish for full sovereignty as expressed by leading Social Democrats and Green politicians amounted to a break with the Staatsraison of the Bonn Republic. It had been based on the

112 Egon Bahr, „Ein Protektorat wird selbständig“, „Ein Protektorat wird selbständig“, *Die Zeit*, net edition no. 23, 2000. Bahr played a central role in the German Social Democrats Eastern policy during the 1970s, since then he has been functioning as an advisor on security questions to the SPD. Similar views can also be found in former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt’s *Die Selbstbehauptung Europas* (München: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2000).

113 Fischer quoted in Timothy Garton Ash, “The *Real* New Europe”, *New Statesman*, 16 June 2003.

belief that German security as well as European stability could only be ensured through membership of NATO and close relations with the United States, in concert with commitments to European integration and a close relationship with France.¹¹⁴

It would, however, be a mistake to believe that the break between the US and Germany was the result of the policies of the Schröder government alone. Rather it was the outcome of a long process where the crisis over Iraq served as a catalyst.¹¹⁵ This becomes clear when turning to a US initiative launched long before Schröder's election.

Partnership in leadership

When George W. Bush visited Germany in February 2005, the city of Mainz was chosen as venue. This was the same place where his father had proposed in 1989 that the Federal Republic and the US should form a "partnership in leadership" based on close co-operation on foreign and security policy issues.

The proposal stemmed from the US Administration's high expectations for the role that Germany could play in a Europe where the Communist domination in the eastern part of the continent had started to display large cracks. Germany was uniquely situated to provide regional stability. Bush senior's plans envisioned a prominent part for a united Germany within NATO. This was also why the US strongly backed German Unification at a time when France and Britain did not.¹¹⁶

The US-German relationship had grown out of the Cold War. The US maintained large bases and a strong military presence in the Federal Republic, effectively guaranteeing German security. While the Federal Republic refrained from

114 Gunther Hellmann, „Agenda 2020. Krise und Perspektive deutscher Außenpolitik“, *Internationale Politik*, no. 9 (2003): 39–50.

115 Helga Haftendorn, „One Year After 9/11: A Critical Appraisal of German-American Relations“, The Thyssen German American Dialogue Seminar Series (Washington, AICGS, 2002).

116 See Arnulf Baring, „Unser Fundament bleiben die USA“, *Merkur*, no. 671 (March 2005): 187–194.

having nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, US nuclear weapons would be used in case of an attack. Close relations did not mean that the two would always see eye-to-eye on key issues. The best-known rupture occurred in 1979 when the largest demonstrations ever in the history of the Federal Republic were staged in Bonn. They were directed against NATO's decision to increase its holding of nuclear missiles should the Warsaw Pact continue its military build-up. These demonstrations were to be seminal in triggering both the German peace movement and the Greens.

Six years earlier, the two countries split over an issue not dissimilar from Iraq. This happened in October 1973, during the Yom Kippur War. The US used Germany as a transit country for arms deliveries to Israel. The German government had not been informed. It wanted this to stop and raised the issue behind closed doors. The US continued unperturbed, forcing the German side to go public. The US also decided to raise the alert level of its forces in Europe, a decision taken without consulting the allies. The US was accused of undermining alliance cohesion. The US ambassador to NATO at the time was Donald Rumsfeld.

Nevertheless, the Soviet threat compelled them to find compromises acceptable to both. When the Cold War ended, this strategic rationale for this relationship disappeared. The invitation to enter into a "partnership in leadership" was an attempt to give bilateral relations a new footing.

Kohl's reaction was muted. Kohl's prime concern was that NATO enlargement should not upset the relationship with France and the links with the leadership in Moscow. Entering into a special relationship with the US would have fuelled French and Russian suspicions that Germany would strive to become a central European power heavily supported by Washington. The German attitude dismayed the US side.

The first sign of a serious disagreement occurred over the Gulf War. After Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, the United Nations mandated the US to assemble a coalition force to expel the Iraqis. The US side urged the Germans to

participate, arguing that because of weapons sales to Iraq, Germany carried a direct responsibility for restoring calm in the region.

Kohl refused. Although a vast majority of the electorate agreed that the invasion was a break of international law, almost as many were opposed to any German participation in an invasion force.¹¹⁷ Gerhard Schröder, at that time Prime Minister of Lower Saxony was an outspoken opponent of sending German soldiers to the Gulf.

US pressure notwithstanding, the German government refused to budge. At a key meeting held in September between Chancellor Kohl, Foreign Secretary Genscher and Minister of Defence Stoltenberg, various options were discussed. In the end, the three concluded that the Basic Law prevented any German participation in military sanctions against Iraq including participation in a multinational force.¹¹⁸ Ironically, once the war started, public opinion turned. Live coverage of Israeli citizens huddling together wearing gas masks under Iraqi missile attacks was undoubtedly a strong factor behind this change. But by this time, the government had opted for what was labelled “checkbook diplomacy”. The US side refrained from criticising, at least publicly. Yet, in the US press, scathing comments abounded, a not untypical one was “Germany [...] was right behind us – you know how it goes, so far behind nobody could see it”.¹¹⁹

The Balkan wars made it even more difficult to find a common position. Whereas the German government had been accused of tardiness in its response to the invasion of Kuwait, it decided to recognise Slovene and Croat independence in

117 70 per cent of the public opposed German involvement, only 28 per cent supported it, data provided in „Wir haben die Faust geballt“, *Der Spiegel*, no. 36 (1990): 176–180.

118 The decision-making process is discussed in great detail in Lantis, *Strategic Dilemmas ...*, esp. ch. 2, “The Persian Gulf Crisis and Checkbook Diplomacy”, 17–54.

119 A. M. Rosenthal, “On my mind: The First Battle”, *New York Times*, 18 January 1991. For an analysis of how German politics were covered by the US press at the time see Wulf Schmiese, *Fremde Freunde, Deutschland und die USA. Zwischen Mauerfall und Golfkrieg* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000).

December 1991, ahead of everybody else. This was met with disapproval on both sides of the Atlantic. What irked Germany's allies was that this move had been taken without consulting anybody. US Foreign Secretary Warren Christopher went so far as to say that Germany now carried a special responsibility for developments in former Yugoslavia. US-German relations cooled.¹²⁰

Kohl's political position seemed weak and the prospects of the conservative parties winning the 1998 parliamentary elections slight once the election campaign started. US attention focused on his contestant Gerhard Schröder. Before the elections, he went to the US for a round of talks. As in the case of Warsaw and Paris, his American hosts were left with the impression that little would change. It had been noticed that Schröder and the SPD had supported the US bombing of targets in Sudan in August 1998.

Yet once in office, it was clear that this attitude did not extend to the US bombing of Iraqi targets. Especially the Greens expressed their disapproval of the US policy of punishing the Iraqis from the air for not having complied with UN inspections. Joschka Fischer irked his US colleague when he proposed that NATO should no longer threaten to use nuclear weapons if attacked.¹²¹ Madeleine Albright reacted sharply and Fischer refrained from raising the issue again. But this was an indication of how differently the two allies perceived military power.

The Administration in Washington was far more concerned about the possibility of chemical and biological agents getting into the hands of terrorists who could use them to arm missiles. That would make the US vulnerable to attacks. To protect against this threat, the idea of a national missile defence system was brought back on the agenda in 1998. The first time this plan had appeared was in 1983 when President Reagan launched the Strategic Defence Initiative, nicknamed

120 "Le conflit dans l'ex-Yougoslavie: Warren Christopher met en cause l'Allemagne", *Le Monde*, 19 June 1993.

121 „Wir wollen keine Soli tanzen“, *Der Spiegel*, 23 November 1998: 85–86.

Star Wars. At the time, the project had been accused of triggering a new arms race with the Soviet Union. As a result of the Soviet collapse and doubts about the project's technological viability, funding was withdrawn in 1991.

Eight years later, Congress passed the National Missile Defence Act restarting the project. This time, scientists seemed closer to solving the technological differences that had hampered development in the 80s. That would render the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty null and void. The Treaty had been signed by the US and the Soviet Union in 1972. It prohibited the construction of missile defence systems since that would only trigger efforts to construct new and costly weapons designed to penetrate such systems. In 1999, the Russians objected to the US decision not least because they lacked the financial means to build anything similar to the US system. Officially, the Russians accused the US of restarting the arms race. Fischer took the Russians' side and repeated their arguments as a justification of why the German government would go against a revision of the US plans.¹²² Schröder effectively ended the debate in February 2001 by claiming that the US project could mean lucrative contracts for German business. But this could not remove the impression that the German government and the US administration drew different conclusions from the end of the Cold War. In Germany, this meant increased security, in the US the very opposite. Fischer's opposition was based on the need for balancing the superpowers, exactly the Cold War logic, whereas in Washington perceptions were already directed towards new, asymmetric threats.

Red-Green perceptions

The US political scientist Robert Kagan published an essay in 2002 called "Power and Weakness". He claimed that the United States and Europe were fundamentally different, and

122 „Die transatlantischen Beziehungen“, Bundesminister des Auswärtigen, Joschka Fischer im Deutschen Bundestag, 15 March 2001“, *Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik*, no. 3 (Berlin: Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 2001).

that this difference could be explained by pointing to the fact that “American military strength has created a propensity to use that strength. Europe’s military weakness has produced a perfectly understandable aversion to the exercise of military power”.¹²³ This aversion certainly applies to Germany. Peace is a mantra pervading the Red-Green discourse. An early example is the two parties’ agreement from 1998 on the new government’s foreign and security platform, which was published with the heading *German Foreign Policy is a Policy of Peace*.¹²⁴

Yet, the reasons behind have little to do with military impotence but all the more with German history. This was evident when Schröder explained the government’s opposition to the war on Iraq to the Bundestag; he invoked the memories of wartime bombings and the sufferings of the civilian population underlining that this was one of the differences between the Germans and the Americans: “...especially in Europe – and most particularly in Germany, a sense of what war means for people is deeply embedded in the collective consciousness of the population.”¹²⁵

Schröder often referred to Germany as a civilian power with a civilizing mission. This was above all expressed through the active support for international organisations like the UN and the EU. Transferring sovereignty to these organisations would boost their ability to conduct peaceful conflict management. That in turn would limit the scope for unilateral military actions. In the 1998 coalition agreement, the use of force is only to be considered if the UN Security Council authorises it. In all other cases, a peaceful way out of a conflict must be sought out. Once the invasion of Iraq had started, the Chancellor expressed his dismay and admitted

123 Robert Kagan, “Power and Weakness”, *Policy Review*, online edition, no. 113, June–July 2002 (Hoover Institution, Stanford University [online 25 October 2005]).

124 *Deutsche Außenpolitik ist Friedenspolitik...*

125 Gerhard Schröder, „Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 19. März 2003” (Bundeskanzler [online 25 October 2005]).

that his government had all the time worked for a non-military solution since this was the only “reasonable way out of the impasse”.¹²⁶

Schröder’s statement was in line with post-1945 German political culture. In the construction of the Federal Republic, US advisors played a prominent role, and they were eager to root out past militarism. In this they succeeded. When commenting on the German authorities refusal to participate in the liberation of Kuwait in 1990, a commentary in *Washington Post* explained it thus: “... they face powerful political and constitutional constraints against sending military forces across their borders. As you may recall, we fought the Second World War to persuade them to adopt such constraints. They have.”¹²⁷ Once the verbal conflict with the US had calmed, both President Bush and Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld expressed that Germany’s position was understandable once the country’s pacifist political culture had been taken into account.¹²⁸

Bush and Rumsfeld were right, but only partly. When the Iraq war started, Germany had more soldiers abroad on UN and EU-led mission than ever before. And Schröder himself had been eager to dispel any impression that his government’s pledge to peaceful solutions meant that the application of military force was unthinkable. A few months after 9-11 while in New York, Schröder stated he regarded it as a “pressing matter” to state openly to the world that a united Germany had broken with the traditions of the old Bonn republic.¹²⁹ At that time, Germany had already proved that it was willing to contribute to combat missions; first in Kosovo, and later as part of Operation Enduring Freedom against the Afghan

126 Ibid.

127 “Bonn and Tokyo as Global Police”, editorial, *New York Times*, 22 October 1990.

128 Interview with President Bush, *Fox News*, 22 September 2003; “Secretary Rumsfeld Q&A Session in Munich, Germany”, news transcript, *U.S. Department of Defense Official Website*, 8 February 2003 (United States Department of Defense [online 25 October 2005]).

129 Gerhard Schröder, „Rede von Bundeskanzler Schröder beim Weltwirtschaftsforum 2002 in New York, 1 February 2002“ (Bundeskanzler [online 25 October 2005]).

Taliban regime. Both cases were political turning points. Whereas participation in Kosovo had a distinctly moral aspect, i.e. stopping ethnic cleansing, Afghanistan was less clear-cut. Schröder's argument was simply that Germany had to shoulder its part of the burden in the war against terror, if not its credibility as partner would be lost. Some Green MPs did not accept that as a sufficient reason and four voted against the government.

Participation in Kosovo and Afghanistan did not mean that Schröder and Bush perceived the use of military means in the same way. The Bush administration has made it clear through both the *National Security Strategy* passed in 2002 and in subsequent speeches that war was an instrument that might be applied to solve a conflict.¹³⁰ As in the case of Iraq, war was also a means to be used to create regional change. Stability is therefore not always a desirable state. This is the antithesis to the German view where change must be endogenously driven and cannot be imposed from the outside. When used for humanitarian purposes or on peacekeeping mission, military force is acceptable. When Schröder and Fischer decided to support NATO's intervention in the Kosovo conflict this was done to avert ethnic cleansing and restore stability. When urging the Bundestag to agree to German contributions to NATO's campaign against Serb cleansing in Kosovo, Schröder invoked Germany's responsibility to avert anything similar to what Wehrmacht soldiers had perpetrated during the Second World War.

It is not only the view on the uses of force that separated the two. During his 2005 election campaign, Schröder contrasted the US belief in the free market with the German economic system. Whereas the latter was based on partnership between the labour force and the employer, US capitalism could be summed up as a chase for profit with no attention

130 *The National Security ...*; the most important speeches were those delivered by the president to Congress September 20, 2001; The State of the Union Address from January 29, 2002; and the presidential address to the graduation class at speech at West Point June 1, 2002. Both are accessible on the official website of the White House.

paid to the workers. Schröder pledged that although his government would implement reforms, the outcome would never be “American conditions”.¹³¹

Less explicit was the linkage made between globalisation and US economic interests. The Greens and a significant proportion of the Social Democratic Party defined economic globalisation as a threat to social cohesion in Germany. Whenever German factories were closed because production was moved abroad or Polish workers undercut German wages, it was interpreted as part of a globalisation process threatening the German welfare system. What was needed, according to prominent SPD politicians, was a clear demarcation between the Anglo-Saxon form of capitalism in which employees are treated like any other commodity, and the “European form of economic philosophy” in which workers rights and societal concerns play a more prominent role.¹³² The German view, according to the then President Johannes Rau, was that the freedom of man had to be valued higher than any form of economic freedom.¹³³ According to him, free markets did not lead to political liberty; on the contrary, economic liberalism undermined social cohesion and ultimately political stability. Franz Müntefering, head of the SPD, compared foreign investors looking for profitable deals to “locusts grazing the land dry.”¹³⁴ US economic interests were identified as the driving force behind this development wreaking havoc on the German economic model.¹³⁵ This view

131 See „ZDF-Sommerinterview mit Bundeskanzler Schröder vom 12. August 2001“, (Bundeskanzler [online 25 October 2005]).

132 This division was made by Michael Müller, Deputy Head of the SPD parliamentary group, see Günther Lachmann, „Marsch nach links“, *Welt am Sonntag*, 17 April 2005.

133 Johannes Rau, “Globalization and transatlantic partnership”, speech given to The Economic Club, Detroit, 20 February 2002, *Germany Info* (German Embassy Washington D.C. [online 25 October 2005]).

134 The statement was made in an interview with *Bild am Sonntag* 17. April 2005. This was a follow-up on his attacks against international capitalism made in his speech to the SPD programme committee from 13 April 2005, for excerpts and an analysis of the debate, see Simone Maurer, „Müntefering macht Schule“, WDR, 26 April 2005 (WDR [online 25 October 2005]).

was not restricted to the SPD or the Greens; prominent conservative politicians have come out in support of Müntefering's criticism.¹³⁶

Close to all economic experts refrained from pointing their finger at the US, instead explaining the influx of Polish workers as the result of European integration and the relocation of industry as the result of failing German reforms. Anti-globalisation views have gained prominence in the political discourse. Identifying foreign investors as the problem, and linking their behaviour to US-driven globalisation detracted attention from domestic problems.

Thus, anti-Americanism embraced a multitude of complex political and cultural currents where only very few had anything to do with the US.¹³⁷ Rather America became a "canvas" for projecting widespread concerns and worries. The reason why the SPD managed to present the German economic and foreign policy model as systematically different – *Systemauseinandersetzung* – had a lot to do with President Bush; he became a politically useful contrast.

135 See Bernd Hamm, *Gesellschaft zerstören – Der neoliberale Anschlag auf Demokratie und Gerechtigkeit* (Berlin: Kai Homilius Verlag, 2004); Maria Mies, „Globalisierung führt zum Krieg“, speech held at the Easter March in Düsseldorf, 10 April 2004. The speech, as well as numerous other articles on the connection between US economic and political interests and globalisation can be found at the homepage of the Arbeitsgruppe Friedensforschung, University of Kassel.

136 Ansgar Graw, „Das Unbehagen der CDU an den kapitalistischen Schmuddelkindern“, *Die Welt*, 26 April 2005; „Der Lackmустest heißt Hartz IV“, interview with Heiner Geißler, former head of the CDU, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 28 April 2005: the CDU Prime Minister of Saxony-Anhalt Wolfgang Böhmer came out in support, see „Lob für Müntefering aus der CDU“, *Die Welt*, 3 May 2005.

137 On German anti-Americanism, see Gesine Schwan, *Antikommunismus und Antiamerikanismus in Deutschland: Kontinuität und Wandel nach 1945* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 1999); Christian Schwaabe, *Antiamerikanismus, Wandlungen eines Feindbildes* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2003).

Bush as the problem?

Bush's brazen rhetoric and the radical changes he introduced into US foreign and security policies after 9-11 certainly widened the rift between the two countries. That makes it easy to overlook how wide the gap was when he was elected for the first time.

Bill Clinton, as well as Bush's contender, Al Gore, both seemed to incorporate so many of the values professed by the German leadership. Just before leaving office, Clinton signed the Kyoto Agreement, the Mine Ban Treaty and declared his support for the International Criminal Court. Gore was seen in Germany as a continuation of Clinton's policies that were well known by the Europeans. Bush's alternative was to "narrow down" and instead adopt a more "humble foreign policy".¹³⁸

A humble foreign policy was interpreted to mean less emphasis on the many regional security organisations that were a legacy from the Cold War. NATO was only one of these commitments whose relevance was openly questioned in the US as well as in Europe. And this was not only done by traditional isolationist who would have preferred to rid the US of the "entangling alliances" Thomas Jefferson had spoken out against centuries before. Even among those advocating continued US international engagements, it was asked whether this was not all better handled through the United Nations instead of the numerous regional alliances where the US played the leading role. At the beginning of the 1990s, the UN finally seemed poised to assume the international role its founders had intended it to play. Superpower rivalries were bygone, and when Iraq invaded Kuwait the UN acted resolutely. The world seemed a safer place. President Clinton reduced the US defence budget by a third, other countries followed suit, among them Germany.

The peace dividend was short-lived. Regional conflicts that had been left simmering during the Cold War suddenly developed into bloody internecine conflicts. Somalia, Haiti

138 "Second Presidential Debate", *Online NewsHour*, 11 October 2000 (PBS [online 25 October 2005]).

and Yugoslavia were but three. With the exception of Yugoslavia where European countries contributed, in most other cases the US was called upon to provide the military muscle needed to end fighting. The US became what Madeleine Albright defined as “the indispensable superpower”. US supremacy was nothing new; this had been the state of affairs since the end of the Second World War. What was radically different now was that the US Administration no longer saw itself as the “indispensable” stabiliser in world affairs. To use one of the President’s own favourite expressions, the US was the “exceptional nation”. In the war on terrorism, this exceptionality meant that the Administration would pay less attention to multilateral commitments and international organisations constricting US scope of action.¹³⁹ Soon after the inauguration, President Bush rejected the Kyoto Global Warming Protocol, the Land Mine Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention Protocol and the International Criminal Court. The new administration also explored the possibilities of an early US withdrawal from the Balkans.

Bush’s credibility suffered from the mix-up surrounding his election in 2000. The fact that he only won after a Supreme Court verdict that was difficult to interpret on either side of the Atlantic meant that his democratic credentials were tainted from the start. It was difficult to trust a president who had been elected in a bogus manner to spread democracy around the world. This is probably part of the explanation why close to 20 per cent of the German public found it credible that George W. Bush himself had instigated the 9-11 attacks as a pretext for entering into his crusade for world domination.¹⁴⁰

Public sentiments meant that politicians had to tread carefully. It was not politically opportune to be perceived as being friendly to the Americans. When the Iraqi regime fell,

139 See James Kirfield, *Of politics and power: The deepening transatlantic divide is more about power politics than cultural trends or a perceived “values” gap* (Washington, AICGS, 2004), p. 11.

140 *Die Zeit*, 24 July 2003. East and West Germans differed, in the West 16 per cent adhered to this theory, in the East 29 per cent.

Angela Merkel was the only politician to phone the US ambassador to congratulate him. She only admitted this very reluctantly declaring that she had used a private channel that remained open “even in these days”.¹⁴¹ The German government issued its congratulation several days later.

When Bush won a second term, and this time by a clear majority, it was interpreted in most newspapers as a Christian fundamentalist backlash posing a threat to the democratic values that until then had been shared by both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁴² Leading SPD politicians would have preferred John Kerry to win. He had emphasised that he wanted to improve the relationship with the European allies. Some believed that he would carry on where Clinton had left off, not least by continuing to support the international agreements Bush had rescinded. The fact that Bush had done so knowing that Congress would not ratify any of the agreements was rarely mentioned. The comparison also overlooked that Clinton had been castigated by leading SPD politicians, Schröder included, for his bombing of Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan. Madeleine Albright, who was a far more frequent visitor to Europe than Collin Powell turned out to be, was not regarded as particularly open to dialogue. In retrospect, it is far from certain whether Kerry would have been able to patch up the relationship to any significant degree. Although his rhetoric and personality was less abrasive than that of George W. Bush, Kerry had voted in favour of the war on Iraq. He had been far more conciliatory towards the UN and had emphasised the necessity of maintaining close relations with US allies, yet at no point did he repudiate the possibility of pre-emptive strikes.

When the German government made it known that it did not intend to support the US policy on Iraq in any way, the US side reacted angrily. Yet it is difficult to find any signs that it

141 Merkel quoted in James Kitfield and Robert von Rimscha, *Shifting values and changing interests: The future of German-American relations* (Washington D.C., AICGS, 2004).

142 Heinrich Wefing, „Der Mann der Zukunft. Bush eigenes Land wird immer republikanischer“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 19 Januar 2005.

reacted with much surprise. By that time, US perceptions of German foreign and security policy had changed. The country was no longer regarded as “the best and most serious of the continental states when it came to facing hard realities and making sound strategic choices under pressure”.¹⁴³ The refusal to participate in the first Gulf War was a turning point. The German decision was widely derided as cowardly in the US press, and the fact that the allied forces of which the US contingency was the largest would face an enemy armed with German weaponry was noted.¹⁴⁴ Another move in the wrong direction was Germany’s unilateral decision in 1991 to recognise Croatian and Slovenian independence from Yugoslavia. Most US analysts perceived this as a grave mistake and one of the causes triggering the Balkan wars.¹⁴⁵ The failure of Germany and the EU to limit the crisis did not enhance either’s image in the US.

Germany’s policy within the EU has also been met with criticism in the US. This concerned in particular the development of a Common Foreign and Security Policy where main US observers underlined that insufficient attention was paid to the military hardware needed to beef up the political ambitions. The German-designed economic Stability Pact has not been met with much laudation either. When introduced, it was criticised as unnecessarily rigid.¹⁴⁶ Germany’s failure to meet the Pact’s deficit criteria for three consecutive years was seen as evidence of economic crisis.

Parallel to the increased cross-Atlantic derision and criticism, Germany had lost its strategic relevance to the US. The Cold War meant that the Federal Republic was no longer a buffer country relying on American power for its security.

143 Walter Russell Mead, *Kisses and Kicks: German-American Relations in the Age of Bush* (Washington D.C.: AICGS 2004), p. 13.

144 See Schmiese, *Fremde Freunde ...*, p. 259–266

145 See Richard Holbrooke, *To End A War* (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), p. 31–32.

146 E.g. Vyjayanthi Chari and Patrick Kehoe, “On the Need for Fiscal Constraints in a Monetary Union”, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, *Working Paper*, no. 589, 1998; Barry Eichengreen, “Saving Europe’s Automatic Stabilizers”, *National Institute Economic Review*, no. 1, 1997: 92–98.

US military presence in Europe was scaled down. Since Germany had had the largest contingency of US soldiers in Europe, this withdrawal was keenly felt. Large standing armies made no sense in the war on terror. What the US needed was partners that would participate in armed missions. The first test had been the Gulf War, and in this case Germany had failed. The second was Iraq.

Iraq

Shortly after the 9-11 attacks, Chancellor Schröder declared his unconditional solidarity with the US. Some German intellectuals differed. One was the composer Karlheinz Stockhausen who said that the events in New York amounted to a grandiose piece of art.¹⁴⁷ Stockhausen was the only one who endowed the attacks with an aesthetic value; the number of those who claimed they constituted an understandable response to US hegemony was far greater. Among them was Ludwig Vollmer, Green State Secretary at the Foreign Ministry. According to him, US-led globalisation triggered counter-reactions; terrorism was only one of these.¹⁴⁸ Schröder's unconditional solidarity was therefore not shared by all, and it acquired clear limits once the Bush administration had identified the Saddam regime as part of the terrorist threat that had to be eliminated.

In January 2002, in his first State of the Union Address after 9-11, President Bush named Iraq as part of the "axis of evil". The UN had imposed a sanction regime on the country in the mid-90s to prevent it from increasing its weapons' arsenal. Suspicions were strong that the country was circumventing the sanctions and developing WMDs and that the regime maintained links with terrorist groups. The US pressure against the country grew. In August 2002, the regime in Baghdad agreed to let UN weapons inspectors into the country to search for weapons. Already the following month, President Bush addressed the UN to present the case for war

147 *Die Zeit*, 27 September 2001.

148 *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 13 September 2001.

against Iraq. This increased the pressure on Iraq. Saddam responded by stating that he would impose no restrictions on the activities of the inspectors once they returned. For the rest of the year, a UN inspection team travelled around the country, searching sites and interviewing Iraqi scientists. In mid-February 2003, its findings were presented to the UN. The team had discovered missiles that exceeded the limits imposed by the UN as well as warheads capable of carrying chemical weapons that had been left unaccounted for by the regime. Yet it failed to present any clear conclusions that could convince the German government that an attack was justified.

The failure after the defeat of the regime to make any discoveries that could support the claims that Saddam could launch long-range missiles with biological and chemical warheads at short notice, has been presented in the German media as the final proof that Schröder was right and Bush in the wrong. However, the German Federal Intelligence Agency, the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), reached conclusions along the same lines as its US and British counterparts. The BND had concluded that Iraq possessed biological and chemical weapons, in clear contravention of the UN-imposed restrictions.¹⁴⁹ The BND believed that the no-fly zones covering most of the country meant that the Iraqi armed forces would not be able to launch any missiles armed with biological or chemical agents.¹⁵⁰ Thus, Iraq posed no "clear and present danger" to the region. Although the regime most likely had made plans for the development of nuclear weapons, the BND judged that it lacked the means and equipment to pursue them any further. However, in an

149 Actually, it had come to this conclusion twice, first in a study from 1999 entitled *Proliferation von Massenvernichtungswaffen und Trägerraketen* (Pullach: Bundesnachrichtendienst, 1999); a follow-up bearing the same title was published in 2003. Moreover, both in 2001 and 2002, the BND published situational reports (Lageanalysen) and studies on Iraqi weapons programmes.

150 Jochen Bittner, "Pullach's Saddam-Dossier", *Die Zeit*, 7 May 2003; "BND wusste von mobilen Gift-Laboren", *Der Spiegel*, 24 February 2003.

internal BND study from February 2002, it was stated that Germany would soon be within striking range of Iraqi missiles.¹⁵¹ The study was leaked to the press. When Christian Ströbele, MP for the Greens and a prominent pacifist, requested the BND come forward with all it knew about the Iraqi missile programme, the BND merely replied that it assumed "...that Germany is, for the time being, not within striking distance of Iraqi missiles".¹⁵²

Thus, the intelligence services in Germany and the US were more in concord than the politicians. Schröder's approach to Iraq was to let the UN inspections have more time to complete their task. On this he expressed the prevailing attitude in the rest of Europe. But whereas the other heads of government awaited the UN teams' conclusions before making their position on the US strategy known, Schröder acted on his own. In a televised interview in August 2002, he argued against any form of military intervention against Iraq.¹⁵³ That would only ruin the coalition against terror, he added. During the following week, his resistance to a military solution was underlined in interviews with several leading newspapers. Then, at a press conference held on 4 September, he declared that Germany would not take part in an attack on Iraq. This was repeated at an election meeting in Goslar in late January 2003, when he exclaimed: "Don't count on Germany agreeing to a resolution authorising war."

All through this, the US side had worked for political support among its allies in Europe and elsewhere. In November 2002, the Security Council passed Resolution 1441 warning "Iraq that it will face serious consequences as a result of its continued violations...". The Bush administration interpreted this to mean UN-backing for an attack should illicit weapons or weapons programmes be discovered. It worked to secure at least the political backing for this interpretation, and at best military contributions. To the

151 Michael Wolffsohn, „Der BND und Saddam's Waffen“, *Die Welt*, 7 May 2003.

152 Ibid.

153 ARD, 9 August 2002.

German leadership, the US seemed all too determined to wage war, leaving no room for negotiations or dialogue. The President's rhetoric was hardly helpful; in his speech to Congress just days after the 9-11 attacks, Bush had stated, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists".¹⁵⁴

Bush's aggressive rhetoric alienated the German audience. Here was a president who clearly had no time and even less patience for negotiations. This did not only refer to the Iraqi regime, but to his relationship with his European allies. When NATO, for the first time in history, had invoked Article 5 and thus declared that the attacks on the US were attacks on all, the Bush administration did not engage the Alliance in its planning. Instead, a strategy was drawn up in Washington and more or less presented to the Allies as a closed case. The first task was toppling the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. The country had long been a training ground for terrorists. This was initially a purely American undertaking, with the country's allies only gradually assuming a military role.

During spring 2003, name-calling and invective dominated. Walter Kolbow, Assistant Secretary of Defence, declared that Bush was "a dictator".¹⁵⁵ At the beginning of September 2003, the head of the SPD Bundestag faction, Ludwig Stiegler, said Bush behaved like a Roman emperor treating Germany as if it were a mere Provincia Germania.¹⁵⁶ At an election rally at the end of that month, the Minister of Justice, Herta Däubler-Gmelin, claimed Bush was using the Iraq crisis to detract attention from US domestic problems, a tactic recognizable to all Germans as the very one Adolf Hitler had applied.¹⁵⁷ This comparison did not fail to attract US attention. Neither did the fact that the Chancellor only reacted

154 George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People", *The Avalon Project at Yale Law School* (Yale University [online 25 October 2005]).

155 Bettina Vestring, "Regierung rügt Staatssekretär Kolbow wegen US-Schelte", *Berliner Zeitung*, 11 March 2003.

156 Alexander Richter, "Die transatlantische Eiszeit", *Tagesschau*, 24 September 2003.

157 Verbatim: "...kennen wir in unserer Geschichte zeit Adolf Nazi." Richter, "Die transatlantische...".

well after elections had been held when he made it clear that Däubler-Gmelin would not be given a seat in the new government.

When Schröder ruled out German participation, he provided a clear signal that the Americans did not need to ask. If the issue had not moved further, Germany could have resigned itself to maintaining a low profile. But Schröder was unwilling to assume that position, and at an SPD election rally on 21 January 2003, he stated that Germany would under no circumstances vote in favour of a Security Council resolution opening up for war. This time his position had a direct consequence on the American efforts to garner support in the UN. Since January Germany had held one of the temporary seats on the Security Council and was therefore in a position to vote against all US proposals. The US government gave as good as it got with Defence Secretary Rumsfeld lumping Germany together with Libya and Cuba as the only countries refusing outright to participate in any UN-mandated attack on Iraq.¹⁵⁸ Rumsfeld's provocation contained more than a grain of truth. At the time, Germany was among the very few who had ruled out any form of participation no matter what the Security Council decided. Joschka Fischer apparently did not quite adhere to this line and with Collin Powell he tried to work out multilateral options. These efforts dissipated.¹⁵⁹

When Schröder made his statement at the election meeting in Goslar, Germany was alone. France and Russia's refrained from making their position clear for a more than a week. That

158 Donald Rumsfeld, "Posture statement of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld before the 108th Congress House Armed Services Committee 5 February 2003", (United States House of Representatives/House Armed Services Committee [online 25 October 2005]).

159 See his speech at the open meeting of the United Nations Security Council on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait: Joschka Fischer, „Rede von Bundesaußenminister Fischer im Rahmen der öffentlichen Sitzung des Sicherheitsrats der Vereinten Nationen über die Situation zwischen Irak und Kuwait“, New York, 05.02.2003, (Auswärtiges Amt [online 25 October 2005]); and Joschka Fischer, „Interview von Bundesaußenminister Fischer mit der Wochenzeitung 'Die Zeit', u.a. zu Irak und zu den transatlantischen Beziehungen“, 20 February 2003, (Auswärtiges Amt [online 25 October 2005]).

Germany ran a real risk of total isolation was evident to all, and this danger was not averted until Chirac declared himself against a new UN resolution opening up for war. Ironically, he made his position known after a dinner with Schröder in Berlin at a restaurant called "The Court of Final Appeal".

The "no" to participation was not the only one. In February 2003, Turkey requested NATO assistance to increase its defence against possible Iraqi attacks. The government in Ankara wanted Patriot missiles to reinforce Turkish air defence and AWACS surveillance flights. Crew from several member countries, including Germany, man the aircrafts.

Germany, together with France and Belgium blocked all attempts to let NATO's Military Committee discuss Turkey's request. Their argument was that assistance would only increase the risk of an Iraqi attack on Turkey. Despite various efforts by the NATO Secretary General to work out a compromise that would be palatable to the three countries, deadlock remained. For the Military Committee to reach a decision, consensus is required. To avoid that, it was instead decided that Turkey's request would be discussed in the Defence Planning Committee. This was a face-saver, but it could still not dispel the conclusion that NATO was split on an issue concerning the security of one of its members. The Committee decided to assist Turkey with AWACS aircraft. Germany accepted this, but the German government declared that German crew members would be withdrawn if Turkey entered the war.¹⁶⁰ The missile request had a direct bearing on Germany. Only three European Alliance members had Patriots; Greece was close to the conflict zone but would be unwilling to assist its archenemy with arms; the Netherlands had indicated that it would contribute militarily to the attack on Iraq and would therefore need the Patriots the country possessed there. Only Germany had an updated version of the missiles. But in Berlin, the SPD parliamentary faction declared

160 „Abzug der deutschen AWACS-Besatzungen bei Kriegseintritt der Türkei“ (Berlin: Bundeskanzleramt, 22 March 2003) (Bundesregierung [online 25 October 2005]).

that it would not accept a transfer of missiles to Turkey. Schröder managed to circumvent this by transferring the missiles to the Netherlands. Officially, the Turkish government sent a request to the Dutch government for Patriots, the Dutch asked Germany for the necessary number. The German government acquiesced.

When defending this decision in Parliament, Defence Minister Struck stated that since Germany had recently supplied Patriot missiles to Israel, it would have to do the same for Turkey, implying that Germany could not afford to be seen as taking sides in the Middle East.¹⁶¹ That being the case, it remains an open question why the government did not send the missiles directly to Turkey.

Alternative options?

Schröder's "no" is not difficult to explain, and it was hardly a reason for surprise. From late summer of 2002, he had repeatedly warned against a military attack on Iraq.¹⁶² His reason for opposing remained the same; disarming Iraq could be achieved through continued inspections and sanctions. The US strategy of regime change was perceived as illegal and without basis in the UN resolutions on Iraq; the US strategy would undermine international law and the UN. Moreover, Germany had no vital national interest at stake in the region sufficiently strong to justify participation.

The judgement of Schröder's choice of action varies radically. One expert on transatlantic relations concluded that the US reaction had given Germany a "well-deserved slap in the face".¹⁶³ The opposite view was that finally Germany had

161 Peter Struck, „Rede des Bundesverteidigungsminister im Deutschen Bundestag, 13 Februar 2003“, (Bundersministerium der Verteidigung [online 25 October 2005]).

162 The Bundeskanzleramt has published a list of Schröder's statements on Iraq, starting with an interview given to ARD television 9 august that year. Until the attack took place 20 March the following year, Schröder repeated his opposition no less than 31 times according to the list, *Eine Chronologie der Politik der Bundesregierung im Irak-Konflikt* (Berlin: Bundeskanzleramt, 2002) (Bundeskanzler [online 25 October 2005]).

163 Thomas Risse, „Es gibt keine Alternative! USA und EU müssen ihre Beziehungen neu justieren“, *Internationale Politik*, no. 6 (2003): 35–40.

“rediscovered itself” and that based on its courageous opposition to US policies the country was poised for a leadership role.¹⁶⁴ Not disputing that this was a turning point, most political scientists agree that the outcome was, at least temporarily, international isolation. Few of them posed the question whether he could have acted differently.¹⁶⁵ An answer depends largely on whether one agrees that Schröder had room for manoeuvre, and above all whether his choice of action would have had any effect on US policy on Iraq.

Initially, when the US war on terror had focused on Afghanistan, Germany had supported the US strategy. Gradually, this strategy changed. In the State of the Union Address held on 29 January 2002, Iraq was mentioned for the first time. Until then, the main enemy had been Osama bin Laden and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. But from early 2002, developments sped up, and it became evident that an attack on Iraq was an increasingly likely option. In a speech held at West Point in early summer 2002, President Bush mentioned for the first time that pre-emptive strikes might be used against countries posing a threat to the US and American interests. The German government did not react publicly to the speech, but in an interview held two months later Schröder made his first warning against an attack on Iraq.¹⁶⁶ The problem for Germany, as indeed for all other NATO members, was that Washington refrained from engaging the allies until the plans had been drawn up. Only then were they invited to contribute militarily.

The question whether Schröder could have been able to exert any influence over US decision-making had he been less adamantly opposed to war is easily answered. It is difficult to point to anything that could support a “yes”. That, however,

164 E.g. Schöllgen, *Der Auftritt...*

165 In fact, among the few to have posed this question are Harald A. Müller, „Das transatlantische Risiko – Deutungen des amerikanisch-europäischen Weltordnungskonflikts“, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 19 January 2004: 7–17.; and Peter Rudolf, “The Myth of the ‘German Way’: German Foreign Policy and Transatlantic Relations”, *Survival*, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 133–152.

166 This was done in an interview with ARD, 9 August 2002.

should not be taken as an attempt to exonerate Schröder and leave Bush with the entire responsibility for the negative developments in transatlantic relations.

Schröder's "no" was taken without consulting the smaller EU and NATO members and without using the organisations as forums for debate. An EU Summit was held rather late, on 17 February 2003. The joint declaration issued stated that inspections could not be continued forever, but would have to be terminated once the Security Council found it necessary.¹⁶⁷ Back in Berlin, Schröder stated that his government was against setting any form of time limit on the inspectors.¹⁶⁸ This had long been a US requirement staunchly opposed by Germany. Only a week later, Germany changed position when together with France and Russia, a joint memorandum was issued where all agreed that the inspection regime had to be subject to a clear time limit.¹⁶⁹

One may therefore conclude that Schröder could have tried to elicit the support of other countries before launching his position. His choice of words left no space for negotiation. That may have deterred some of the small countries where attitudes were far less fixed, from trying to consult with Germany.

Schröder's declaration ruling out German participation had strong foreign policy consequences, but it was clearly meant for the domestic audience where the SPD's chances of winning the election were falling. A poll conducted at the end of July 2002 revealed that whereas 75 per cent of all voters opposed German participation in an attack on Iraq, only 21 per cent were in favour.¹⁷⁰ Opposition was much stronger in the former GDR with 85 per cent against and only 13 per cent in favour, and strongest within the PDS, the successor to the East

167 "Conclusions of the European Council, 17/02/2003", *Greek Presidency's official website* (Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs [online 1 December 2005]).

168 See the entry for 17 February 2003 in *Eine Chronologie der Politik...*

169 *Memorandum von Deutschland, Frankreich und der Russischen Föderation zur Lage im Irak* (Berlin: Bundesregierung, 25 February 2003) (Bundesregierung [online 25 October 2005]).

170 *Welt am Sonntag*, 4 August 2005.

German Communist party. The crisis over Iraq was a clarion call for the party. It had long been accused of harbouring little more than nostalgia for the GDR. Setting Iraq on top of its election agenda would prove that current issues were of greater concern. The PDS seemed destined to gain more seats in the Bundestag, seats that would be taken from the SPD. Without them the government would lose its majority. Schröder's clear statement changed that. The SPD won the necessary votes and could retain government power, albeit this time with a much smaller margin.

Within Schröder's own party two MPs expressed their dissent. The strongest came from Hans-Ulrich Klose, chairman of the Bundestag Foreign Relations Committee. He claimed that Schröder had left German foreign policy in ruins.¹⁷¹ What was more surprising was that most of the conservative opposition was mute. In fact, the CSU leader Edmund Stoiber also declared himself against German participation.¹⁷² This was a new twist to the traditional political consensus on security issues, but hardly a surprising one. When polled only 26 per cent of conservative voters were in favour of German participation, with 72 per cent against.¹⁷³ Angela Merkel, the CDU leader maintained a lower profile than her Bavarian colleague. Her sympathies were on the US side.¹⁷⁴ In early February, the CDU parliamentary group had expressed its support for the US position in the negotiations with Saddam Hussein; unless the Iraqi leader complied with UN demands, he carried full responsibility for the consequences. This was close to the American wording.

171 Klose made his statements after the Munich Security Conference in 2003, his statements are quoted in extenso in Frank Hofman and Florian Meesman, „Die Blauhelminitiative“, *MDR FAKT*, 10 February 2003.

172 See „Thierse und Stoiber warnen Bush“, *Der Spiegel*, 19 September 2002.

173 *Welt am Sonntag*, 4 August 2005.

174 Hans-Jürgen Leersch, „Irak: Merkel auf Bush-Kurs, Stoiber differenziert“, 13 February 2003.

The party was out of touch not only with large sections of its own electorate, but above all with the media. When Medien Tenor, a media research institute based in Bonn, conducted a study of television coverage of the United States and the war in Iraq, it announced that it would break with tradition and not award any prizes for the best television coverage.¹⁷⁵ Nothing prize-worthy could be found; instead of information and factual commentaries, German television had only transmitted “infotainment”. The almost complete unanimity between the government’s line and the media was noted by *Message*, the German periodical devoted to journalism.¹⁷⁶ The only deviation detected was *Die Welt*.

The tone in the media changed gradually over the course of the following years, with more willingness to look critically at the Red-Green government’s arguments and the possibilities for closer co-operation with the US less taboo.¹⁷⁷

At the time of the attack, it clearly was. In February 2003, a survey found that 73 percent of Germans regarded Bush as “the greatest danger to world peace”.¹⁷⁸ Saddam Hussein only earned a small 20 per cent. An EU-wide survey conducted half-a-year later revealed that a majority of those polled identified Israel and the United States as the gravest threats to world peace. The results fitted with German political culture where the use of military power is to be abhorred, and sympathy is always to be shown to the weaker

175 „Quotenjagd statt Grundversorgung“, Medien Tenor Deutschland, *Newsletter*, 11 December 2003. In the course of 2004, Medien Tenor published a number of surveys of German media coverage of US policies. The conclusions were invariably very critical, see especially „Wenn Klischees die Wahrnehmung trüben“, Medien Tenor Deutschland, *Newsletter*, 9 January 2004.

176 Carlin, „Ein paar Satellitenbilder“.

177 A strong indicator of this change is the roundtable debate involving the foreign editors of *Die Zeit*, *Die Welt*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *die tageszeitung* on international politics arranged by the Aspen Institute, Berlin, in spring 2005, “Why not kick the bastards out of the UN”, *Special features* (Aspen Institute [online 12 December 2005]).

178 Kitfield and von Rimscha, *Shifting values ...*, p. 18.

part. Thus, the USA and Israel for that matter match the image of reckless and ruthless bullies with the Iraqi or the Palestinian people as the innocent underdogs.

International fallout

Schröder's "no" not only worsened transatlantic relations, it also led to a split within the EU. The attempts to create a Common Foreign and Security Policy for the Union, a project strongly supported by the German government, suffered a severe setback.

In most of the smaller EU countries, the governments interpreted Schröder's "no" as a threat to US engagements in European security. One outcome was the Letter of the Eight signed by political leaders from Britain, Spain, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, published in late June 2003. The contents were not controversial, merely stating that Saddam Hussein should not be permitted to violate UN resolutions. But the fact that ten of the EU's fifteen members at the time had not signed was a clear expression of the deep division within the Union on the matter, and ultimately the viability of a Common Foreign and Security Policy.¹⁷⁹ This became even more evident when the so-called Vilnius Letter was made public a week later, on 6 February 2003. It contained more outspoken support for the US policy of regime change. The Vilnius group consisted of the three Baltic republics, Slovakia, Slovenia, Croatia, Albania, Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria. The official German response to the Letter of the Eight had been welcoming; it was underlined that the recommendations did not differ from the German government's line on the issue, which was disarmament.¹⁸⁰ The Vilnius Letter was obviously far more difficult to digest; the government simply refrained

179 The non-signatories were Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Eire, Sweden, Finland, Austria, and Greece. It is not clear whether all of these had been invited to sign.

180 „Regierungssprecher Anda zur Erklärung von acht europäischen Staats- und Regierungschefs“, *Pressemitteilung*, no. 46 (30 January 2004) (Bundesregierung [online 25 October 2005]).

from making any official comment.¹⁸¹ This did not mean that the government had adopted a wait-and-see attitude so as not to deepen the split within the EU any further. Instead, Schröder together with the French President and the heads of government from Belgium and Luxembourg decided to launch an initiative with the exact opposite effect.¹⁸²

At a meeting in Belgium in late April 2003, the four leaders presented plans for enhanced defence cooperation. This included the establishment of military headquarters and a permanent planning staff. A rapid reaction force made up of soldiers from the four countries was also on the list of priorities. The four countries were to form a pioneer group of countries that would make up a European Security and Defence Union, which in turn would be a part of the EU Constitution.

At the joint press conference following the meeting, all four underlined that their initiative was by no means an exclusive club; other EU members were invited to join. Chancellor Schröder was at lengths to stress that this should not be interpreted as an anti-American move: "In NATO, we do not have too much America, we have too little Europe."¹⁸³ Taken at face value, all the priorities listed were targets that the EU had agreed on before. Within NATO, US dissatisfaction over inadequate European defence co-ordination and spending was an established fact. Still, the four did not manage to dispel the impression that this move was above all intended to create a European block against the US. Key European military powers like Britain, Italy or Spain had not been invited to the meeting.

181 Both the chancellor and the foreign minister were interviewed by media immediately after the Vilnius Letter had been published. Neither the interviewer nor the interviewee brought it up, see the interview with Schröder by Hans-Ulrich Jörges and Thomas Osterkorn, „Rücktritt wäre Flucht, dazu neige ich nicht“, *Stern*, 13 February 2003; and with Fischer made by Günter Hofmann and Matthias Naß, „Wir bleiben beim Nein“, *Die Zeit*, no. 9, 2003.

182 See Petra Pinzler, „Ranziger Beigeschmack“, *Die Zeit*, no. 18, 2003.

183 Schröder quoted in Chris Morris, „Challenges for EU defence ‘rebels’“, *BBC News*, 29 April 2004.

The timing was bad, not so much for the US as for the EU. The High Representative of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, was preparing the first EU security policy strategy ever. It was to be formally presented to the member countries only two months later. If France and Germany were perceived as going solo by other EU countries, Solana's paper risked being watered down too much to play any meaningful role.

In the days following the meeting, British, Spanish and Danish political leaders commented harshly on the meeting, claiming that it would deepen the transatlantic crisis even further. The Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini focused on the effects the meeting had on the EU in a public letter to the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*.¹⁸⁴ Instead of furthering integration on defence and security issues, the meeting had only enhanced the division every EU country should now work hard to overcome. Frattini's analysis underlined the contradictory elements in Germany's position. On the one hand, the meeting meant that Schröder's "no" received further momentum, which could easily be translated into domestic political support. At the same time it proved that Germany was not politically isolated. On the other hand, the meeting undermined EU attempts to create a cohesive Common Foreign and Security Policy.

To minimise damage, some observers believed that Germany would do its utmost to have the most contentious parts of the plans, i.e. a military planning cell, removed since this would all too easily be interpreted as a direct attempt to compete with NATO.¹⁸⁵ This did not happen. In the final communiqué issued after the meeting, none of the original plans and priorities had been deleted. Instead, an important compromise was reached in that the new planning cell and military headquarters would be located within NATO, and

184 „So geht es nicht weiter. Rom warnt vor einer Spaltung der EU“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 28 April 2003. For a survey of Spanish and Portuguese reactions, see „Kontraproduktive Viererbande“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 May 2003.

185 E.g. Pinzler, „Ranziger Beigeschmack“ ...

not outside Brussels as initially suggested. The contents had also been carefully phrased so as not to appear confrontational.¹⁸⁶

That did little to remove the impression that Germany not only opposed the US plans on Iraq, but that the government was eagerly trying to exploit this to form an alliance in opposition to the US. When Schröder made his speech ruling out any German participation, he was alone. It was his choice of allies that was disturbing. Together with France and Russia, Germany tried to found a coalition of countervailing power against the US. Leaders from all three had reiterated the need for a multipolar global system of states. Putin invited Chirac and Schröder to a summit meeting in St. Petersburg in April 2003. On that occasion, Schröder underlined that what joined them together was “a common vision of the world.”¹⁸⁷

The strong criticism against the meeting coming from Central and Eastern Europe may have dampened Schröder’s ambitions. Both there and in Germany, commentators wondered whether the three were trying to establish an anti-American axis.¹⁸⁸ The Chancellor denied this vehemently – the historical associations connected with the word were all too well known to him.¹⁸⁹ It may have been a source of embarrassment to him that the Russian press continued to use “axis” when referring to the relationship without implying any of the negative connotations.¹⁹⁰

A common vision was not enough for the establishment of any permanent structures that could carry cooperation further. The countries’ motives differed. Especially President Putin was wary of any moves that could undermine the close US-Russian relationship. The Russian campaign against

186 E.g. Pinzler, „Ranziger Beigeschmack“...

187 „Schröder: Ich bin kein Achsenschnied“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 April 2003.

188 E.g. Jacques Schuster, „Achse adieu“, *Die Welt*, 12 April 2003; Eckhart Lohse, „So eng wie lange nicht“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 12 April 2003.

189 „Schröder: Ich bin kein....“, Axis was the name given to the alliance between Germany, Italy and Japan during the Second World War.

190 See Arkadii Lubnov, „Koalitsiya protiv Bryusselya“ (Coalition against Brussels), *Vremya novostei*, 10 October 2003.

Islamic extremists was not without overlaps with the US war on terror, something both Putin and Bush were careful to underline. Schröder's strong emphasis on the legal and moral aspects of the campaign against Iraq, in particular the impact the war would have on the UN and international law as well as the fate of the civilian population, was less prominent in the French argumentation. Here focus remained overwhelmingly on the consequences of US hegemony for the world order.¹⁹¹

Some observers have claimed that Schröder's "no" was a turning point in German foreign and security policy.¹⁹² As mentioned previously, this was not the first time the bilateral relationship had been in hardship. The Soviet threat had always compelled the two to work out a viable compromise. The turning point was his eager pursuit of allies. Schröder was not satisfied with merely awaiting the turn of events; with the St. Petersburg meeting he openly challenged US leadership.

Countering new dangers

Both the Red-Green government and the Bush Administration listed international terrorism, the spread of WMDs and failing states as major threats to their countries' security. On the German side, nothing indicates that the new coalition government brought with it new threat perceptions or priorities. The question then is whether this concord also means joint action.

One example of a shared the perception of a crisis and how it should be solved was Operation Allied Force against Serb forces in Kosovo in 1999. At that time, the NATO countries managed to work out a common strategy. The problems of copying that success are much greater when there are no acute

191 See the interview with the then French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin, „Wer darf entscheiden ob eine Regime gut oder schlecht ist“, *Die Welt*, 25 February 2003. This concern is nothing new in French perceptions of the US, for an outline see Philippe Roger, *L'Ennemi américain. Généalogie de l'antiaméricanisme français* (Paris: Seuil, 2002).

192 See Christian Hacke, „Deutschland, Europa und der Irakkonflikt“, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B24-25, (2003): 8-16.

crises requiring an immediate response, but rather several trends with the potential to become severe security concerns. Iranian development of nuclear technology belongs to this category. Although this is one case where both sides of the Atlantic have agreed on a strategy based on negotiations, the US has been more aggressive in its approach to the regime in Teheran. So far, it has acquiesced to the European approach that dialogue is preferable to military confrontation.

Concerning China and Russia, Germany and the US have not seen eye to eye. Russia “appears to be slipping back towards authoritarianism”, a US intelligence report published in 2004 stated.¹⁹³ Economic growth alone would not reverse this trend, it concluded. President Bush and both Secretaries Powell and Rice publicly expressed their concerns over political developments in the country, ranging from lack of freedom for the media to the war in Chechnya.

Schröder was consistently far more upbeat on Russian developments. He berated the Western press for its failure to adopt a “more differentiated” view of the Russian handling of Chechnya, and he depicted Putin as “an unblemished democrat”.¹⁹⁴ Schröder together with other members of the SPD leadership refrained from openly criticising Putin’s policies. A few dissenting voices could be detected within the SPD, especially when Schröder refrained from criticising Russia over Chechnya, but they were in a clear minority within the party.¹⁹⁵

One reason why the Chancellor abstained from expressing any worries over Russian political developments may well be that in this relationship he is the bidder. When German-Russian relations developed under Kohl, the Soviet Union and subsequently Russia were in the grips of an economic crisis.

193 *Mapping the Global Future*, National Intelligence Council (Pittsburgh: Government Printing Office, 2004), p. 73–74.

194 Schröder made this statement during an interview on ARD television, see „Schröder: ‚Putin ist lupenreiner Demokrat‘“, *Hamburger Abendblatt*, 23 November 2004.

195 See the interview with the SPD human rights expert and MP Rudolf Binding made by Deutschlandfunk and reprinted by *Die Zeit*, „Mehr druck in der Tschetschenien-Frage“, *Die Zeit*, no. 15, 2005.

German assistance, trade and investments were desperately needed. Today, the relationship has become more balanced. Russia is, together with China, an expanding market for German industry. Using political contacts to land contracts was used to boost the Chancellor's credibility as one who took unemployment seriously. Likewise, Russia's decision to speed up repayment of old debts to the amount of €2 billion in the period 2005–2007 has been a most welcome supplement to the state coffers.¹⁹⁶

Using trade and investments as a door opener for closer political contacts is a method Schröder claimed builds on Willy Brandt's eastern policy in the 1970s. Brandt combined trade agreements and political treaties with Germany's eastern neighbours and the Soviet Union to normalise relations. Brandt's trade agreements, generous as they were, always had some strings attached aimed at improving people-to-people dialogue. This was part of his long-term strategy for democratisation. Schröder was less inclined to pursue the same line. Democracy could not, according to the Chancellor, be "enforced" from the outside.¹⁹⁷ This was the base line of his criticism against the US Iraq strategy where this was done with weapons-in-hand. It was also his answer to those accusing him of not including human rights when dealing with China.

During his visit to Beijing in late 2004, large contracts for German industry were signed. Schröder emphasised in his speeches that industrial co-operation did not mean the transfer of labour to China, but helped retain production in Germany. The status of human rights was not a prominent item on the agenda. This caused consternation, not within the SPD as much as among the Greens. This was not the first time the Greens had criticised what they regarded as too much emphasis on economic interests and too little on human rights. In 1996, Joschka Fischer used the Kohl government's China

196 „Deutsch-russische Milliardenprojekte vereinbart“, *Die Welt*, 11 April 2005.

197 Giovanni di Lorenzo and Bernd Ullrich, „Freiheit ist mehr als nur Gewerbefreiheit“, *Die Zeit*, no. 14, 2005.

policy as a argument for why the voters should vote for a Red-Green alternative: "We will never see peaceful development in China if we focus exclusively on business."¹⁹⁸ Instead, German politicians should be uncompromising in their emphasis on human rights. Concerning the consequences, "if we lose business as a result, then we lose business".¹⁹⁹

Schröder claimed that it was possible to combine the two. Both governments signed a joint programme on human rights and Chinese legal experts were sent to Germany for an introduction to Western jurisprudence. Promising signs, according to the Chancellor, that China was moving in the right direction. Europe should encourage this development, and the best way of doing that would be to revoke the embargo on the sales of arms and military technology. It had been introduced in 1989 after the Tiananmen massacre, an event Schröder has described as "an incident of the time".²⁰⁰ If the embargo was lifted, Schröder claimed, China might be more willing to sign the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.²⁰¹ If so, the authorities in Beijing would have to open up for UN monitoring. On this, Schröder was supported by President Chirac.

Since it is up to each EU country to decide whether a product is affected by the embargo or not, industrial interests have been able to enforce a very lenient export regime for technology and raw materials that may end in the Chinese weapons industry. From the EU to China the total increase is six-fold from 2001 and 2003, the latest year with available statistics.²⁰² The majority of the sales comes from France.²⁰³ But German products have found their way to the Chinese military. Diesel engines are sold freely to China despite the

198 Ralf Beste et.al. "The Big Business Chancellor", *Der Spiegel*, no. 51, 13 December 2004.

199 Ibid.

200 Ibid.

201 Daniel Dombey and Peter Spiegel, "Up in arms: why Europe is ready to defy the US and lift its weapons ban on China", *Financial Times*, 10 February 2005.

202 Daryl Lindsey, "A Transatlantic Crisis Foretold", *Der Spiegel*, 18 March 2005.

fact that their destination is Chinese Song submarines, likewise the Cologne-based Deutz firm makes engines used in Chinese tanks without being encumbered by a national license procedure. The list is long, and in addition to French and German commodities, other EU countries have also been able to exploit China's expanding defence expenditure. Defence is only one segment of the Chinese booming market. Countries that are seen as the prime movers behind a lifting of the embargo stand to earn a lot in terms of contracts in the civilian sector as well.²⁰⁴

Schröder asserted that lifting the embargo would not lead to more arms sales to China. Instead of an embargo, a common Code of Conduct on Arms Export would bind each EU member.²⁰⁵ The Code includes a paragraph prohibiting sales of arms if there is a "clear risk" that they can be used aggressively against another country or to assert a territorial claim.²⁰⁶ To many observers, China's policy against Taiwan involves exactly such a "clear risk". When the Chinese parliament passed a law in March 2005 opening up for the use of arms against Taiwan should the parliament there declare itself independent, this was widely seen as an intimidating act. The British government, which had been among those supporting an end to the embargo, though not as vociferously as France and Germany, admitted that the Chinese law would delay any moves in that direction.²⁰⁷ Schröder's reply was that his opponents should read the entire law, which according to him emphasised using peaceful means to end Taiwanese independence.²⁰⁸

203 In 2003, France granted China export licenses of €2m of bombs, torpedoes and rockets, €279,000 of chemical and biological toxic agents, tear gas and related products, €43m of military aircraft and €98m of electronic equipment for military use, Source: Dombey and Spiegel, "Up in arms...".

204 See the interview with Peter Struck, „In China hat sich sehr viel verändert“, *Die Zeit*, no. 16, 2005.

205 "EU Code of Conduct for Arms Export, 8 June 1998", *Non-proliferation and Export Control Project* (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute [online 25 October 2005]).

206 "EU Code of Conduct...", Criterion Two, Section A.

207 "EU may delay China arms move", BBC, News, 22 March 2005.

This suggestion did not check his critics. In the German parliament, they were found both among the Greens and the conservative opposition. The Greens based their views on the lack of any significant improvements in human rights in China, pointing to the oppression of ethnic groups and the large number of executions carried out.²⁰⁹ CDU and CSU members reminded the SPD of its opposition to Kohl's attempts to export armaments to China in the mid-90s, an opposition that eventually forced him to yield. Others pointed out that the chancellor's China policy undermined the EU's international standing. China's neighbouring countries had warned Brussels against ending the embargo.²¹⁰ And secondly, such a move would only increase transatlantic tensions.

In fact, Schröder's statements had already had that effect. In late January 2005, the US House of Representatives passed a resolution condemning the efforts to lift the ban.²¹¹ If that happened, the geostrategic balance in Southeastern Asia would be changed for the worse. US security guarantees to Taiwan would be difficult to uphold with a China armed with up-to-date European high-tech. To Washington, this was an ominous scenario with an immediate bearing on US strategic interests. One US expert on transatlantic relations concluded that "if Iran is bad, the ugly has to be the Chinese arms embargo".²¹² Nevertheless, Schröder refused to budge. In order not to ruin the good atmosphere both parties worked hard to create during President Bush's visit to Mainz in early 2005, the embargo was not discussed.

208 Gerhard Schröder, „Rede von Bundeskanzler Schröder vor dem Deutschen Bundestag am 14. April zum Waffenembargo gegen China, 14 April 2004“ (Bundesregierung [online 25 October 2005]).

209 „Aufforderung zum Umdenken“, *Die Zeit*, no. 14, 2005.

210 See Friedbert Pflüger, „Brückenbau im transatlantischen Verhältnis“, *Politische Meinung*, no. 425, (April 2005): 5–9; „Grüne gegen Schröder“, *Die Zeit*, 16 March 2005.

211 “Urging the European Council to continue to maintain its embargo on the sales of arms to the People’s Republic of China”, HRES 43 IH, 25 January 2005, 109th Congress (Federation of American Scientists [online 25 October 2005]). 411 representatives supported the resolution, only three voted against.

What remained an open question both to the Americans as well as to many German observers was why Schröder remained so adamant despite the considerable opposition both from his own coalition partners and the conservative opposition in Parliament. "To stick their finger in our eye when the Bush administration is certainly reaching its hand out to them is bad timing", the same US expert remarked.²¹³ To Schröder, this was obviously not the case. His efforts to revive the transatlantic relationship needed a counterbalance. The embargo fulfilled this requirement. He could not be accused of pandering to the Americans. That would calm worries in Paris that he was trying to distance Germany from the close foreign policy relationship forged between them during the Iraq conflict.

Trade and investments

The resolution passed by the US Congress contained a threat. If the EU went ahead and lifted the embargo, all technology transfer from the US to European firms would be subjected to licensing. This would effectively curtail defence-related co-operation, but dual-use items would also be affected. If so, the impact on transatlantic trade and industrial co-operation would be momentous. In this relationship, Germany plays a key role.

In 2003, Germany was the fifth most important export market, and likewise a fifth of all US imports were German made.²¹⁴ During the last decade, around one tenth of total German exports have crossed the Atlantic, making the US the

212 *An Overview of Transatlantic Relations Prior to President Bush's visit to Europe*, Hearing before the Subcommittee on Europe and Emerging Threats of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representatives, 16 February 2005 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2005). The quotation is taken from John Hulsman's statement, p. 6.

213 *An Overview of Transatlantic...*, p. 7.

214 "Fact Sheet on U.S.-German Economic Relations" (U.S. Embassy Berlin: December 2004).

second most important market after France. Concerning imports, the US ranks as number three, well ahead of other EU countries like Italy and Britain.²¹⁵

However, looking just at trade numbers is a mistake; US companies prefer to sell their services and goods through subsidiary companies in Europe rather than exporting them from the US. This trade will not show up on the foreign trade statistics.²¹⁶ Moreover, the bulk of US foreign direct investments did not go the emerging markets in Asia, but to Europe. The reason is money; investments in Europe provide a handsome return. In a survey of transatlantic economic relations, one expert concluded that half of total global earning of US companies in 2001 originated in Europe. Likewise, European investments in the USA grew, reaching 835 billion in 2000; this is almost a quarter more than US investments in Europe.

This has a sizeable impact on employment. In 2002, almost 770,000 US workers were employed by German firms, a number only surpassed by British enterprises.²¹⁷ In Germany, US-owned firms employed approximately 475,000 in 2002.²¹⁸ These investments mean that German firms gain direct access to US research and development, especially in fields like computer technology and biochemistry where US plays a leading global role. Thus, when the US Congress threatened to impose restrictions on technology exports to Europe in retaliation for EU weapons sales to China, they hit a sore spot.

Nevertheless, turnover numbers and investment flows seem to indicate that this part of the transatlantic relationship remains almost impervious to political acrimony. Economic integration is proceeding much faster between the US and Europe than between any other two continents.²¹⁹

215 "Fact Sheet..." Statistics show a slight decline since 2002, this has nothing to do with deteriorating relations but with a stronger Euro.

216 In 2000, US subsidiary companies sold a record \$2.9 trillion, this was almost three times more than export (\$1.1. trillion). Source: Quinlan, op.cit. p.

217 "Fact Sheet..."

218 This is more than twice the number for China, the chief developing economy attracting foreign investors.

As such, one might ask whether economic relations are “the glue that cements a fraying relationship?”²²⁰ Based on economic indicators alone, the answer is yes. Even during the conflict over Iraq, trade negotiations between Brussels and Washington proceeded normally probably reflecting a genuine wish from both sides to prevent an overspill from political acrimony. This was also valid for the bilateral relationship between Germany and the USA. Despite the lack of political contacts between Schröder and Bush, the US secretary for trade Robert Zoellick went to Berlin for talks.

Zoellick’s visit was an attempt by the Bush administration to display good will and maintain communication when the relations between Schröder and Bush were at low point. Yet, by this time, trade and investments were no longer neutral ground where common interests united both countries. As mentioned previously, prominent SPD members made free trade and transfer of capital into targets for harsh criticism.

Their attacks were made just before the state elections in North Rhine-Westphalia. It would be tempting to see them as merely part of an attempt to save the SPD. This attempt failed, but there is no reason to expect that the critical approach will do the same. Instead, it should be seen as part of a more comprehensive shift in SPD thinking and policy. The Red-Green government’s attitude on two separate issues supports this interpretation. One concerned the efforts to block labour migration from the new EU members, the other the Franco-German campaign against the EU’s Bolkenstein Directive.²²¹ This directive would have liberalised the internal market for services, meaning that lawyers, architects, financial advisors etc. could freely offer their services in all the member

219 Joseph P. Quinlan, *Drifting Apart or Growing Together? The Primacy of the Transatlantic Community* (John Hopkins University, Center for Transatlantic Relations, 2003).

220 This was the subtitle of a discussion paper on transatlantic trade by Johannes F. Linn, *Trends and Prospects of Transatlantic Economic Relations: The glue that cements a fraying relationship?* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2004).

221 The measures concerning the labour market are outlined in Chapter 4, in the section “Labour”.

countries. Services remain the final economic sector where national policies constitute an efficient barrier to integration. The Directive was intended as the key element in the Union's growth strategy agreed in Lisbon in 2000.

France attacked it and claimed that it would only result in unfair competition and massive unemployment. It campaigned to have the Directive withdrawn. Germany joined, although letting France play the leading role. The Red-Green government's stance represented a break with the past when the country had eagerly promoted the reduction of internal barriers to trade. As such, it was also a break with the government's pledge, made when assuming power in 1998, to work for Vertiefung - integration.²²²

Conclusion: Exit strategies?

The war on terror has driven a wedge between the two countries. Foreign policy, which traditionally had been relegated to a mere Cinderella role, became prime campaign material. The question that should be posed is which exit strategies remain open?

It must be admitted though, that since attention is directed mainly to Germany, the discussion is somewhat lopsided. Clearly, the reciprocity in the relationship means that major changes in the US have the potential to trigger changes that will lead to a renewed rapprochement. This may either be in the form of the election of a new administration with views and policies more in tandem with European preferences, or the more co-operative tone set by the president and the foreign secretary during Bush's second period will be translated into actual politics.²²³ That may mean closer integration between the Europeans and the US in the fight against security threats of concern to both. The joint approach to Iran has been

222 Schröder, „Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder vom 10. November 1998...“

223 Nikolaus Blome and Andreas Middel, „So ganz traut Berlin dem neuen Frieden mit den USA nicht“, *Die Welt*, 4 February 2005.

mentioned; another was the concerted pressure against Syria to withdraw from Lebanon where Washington and Paris worked together.

One might also conclude that the change of chancellor in Berlin automatically paves the way for close relations. After all, Angela Merkel had stated that once she took over, she would not “simply carry on” Schröder’s approach.²²⁴ She also expressed far greater understanding for the US policy on Iraq than not only the government, but also many within her own conservative block did. Although Merkel is vested with considerable powers to influence the contents and conduct of foreign policy, the SPD has claimed the post of foreign minister for themselves. The new man in the post, Frank-Walter Steinmeier, has worked closely with Schröder in the past years, and has at no point come forward with views deviating from those held by him. Only rarely has he expressed himself on foreign policy issues. One such occasion was in a speech given at the main foreign policy think-tank in Berlin, the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.²²⁵ In his speech, he underlined the need for a more consistent and clearer foreign policy. This comes rather close to some of the criticism that has been voiced against the Red-Green government throughout the past seven years.²²⁶

Consistency and clarity are important for a country’s partners, but they are rather slippery ideals. Steinmeier wisely refrained from filling them with anything explicit to indicate in what direction the new government will move. A brief summary of the conclusions drawn on the preceding pages will make it possible to assess the scope the new chancellor and government has.

224 Angela Merkel, „‘Ein einfaches ‘Weiter so‘ wird Europa zerstören’. Rede zur Regierungserklärung des Bundeskanzlers“, speech held in the Bundestag 16 June 2005, (CDU/CSU Fraktion [online 25 October 2005]).

225 Frank-Walter Steinmeier, „Die neuen Fragen der Außenpolitik“, *Die Zeit*, no. 41, 2005.

226 See Hans-Peter Schwarz, „Das Ende der Übertreibungen. Deutschland braucht eine Außenpolitik des Ausgleichs“, *Internationale Politik* (August 2005): 8–15.

What Iraq did was to reveal how differently the two countries interpret not only security challenges, but also how they should meet. The German leadership, backed by large sections of the population, did not trust either US motives or actions. The US side, surprised by the strong anti-American sentiments expressed by government members, could afford to pay less attention to Germany since the country's strategic relevance after the Cold War had fallen dramatically.

The emphasis on common values, the tenor of the second Bush administration's policy towards Germany, was not a recipe for success. Both leaders referred to the same political heritage of human rights and democracy. But the lessons drawn were different. For Bush, and those of his advisors inspired by neo-conservative thinking, human rights and democracy are universal values that justify the use of military means. Dictatorships or rogue states cannot claim the protection of international law if they pose a security threat to their neighbours or the United States. The vast majority of Germans concluded differently.

The problem is that once a political disagreement is turned into a moral issue, and this attitude pervaded most of the official speeches Schröder made during the Iraq crisis, there is no room for compromise. This is reciprocal; Bush also turned the war on terror into a question of values.²²⁷ At the Social Democratic Party Convention in November 2003, Schröder stated that his government's refusal to participate in the US-led coalition was "an expression of the self-assurance of a mature democracy".²²⁸ Thus, the German "no" was not only about international law and the United Nations, but also German political culture. Iraq was therefore an important means to distinguish that political culture from its one-time model, the US. Therefore, Schröder's Iraq policy was an intrinsic part of "Germany's permanent identity crisis".²²⁹

227 See Müller, „Das transatlantische Risiko...“: 16.

228 Gerhard Schröder, „Rede des SPD-Parteivorsitzenden, Bundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder, auf dem Parteitag in Bochum am 17. November 2003“ (SPD Ortsverein Schwachhausen Süd-Ost [online 25 October 2005]).

229 See Kitfield, *Of politics and power...*, p. 23.

This meant two things: one is that a change in US policy towards Germany is unlikely to make much of a difference; secondly it also means that the SPD lacks the incentives to mend the gap.

Another constriction on German abilities to restart the relationship with the US is France. Peace-making moves from Berlin were carefully monitored by Paris. If Germany had returned to its former role as the transatlantic intermediary, France would be left without its most important ally in its efforts to create a European counterweight to transatlantic power. One way of countering such moves would be for France to join German initiatives designed to improve the relationship with the US. The most glaring example concerned the German proposal to train Iraqi officers. Considering Schröder's stance on the war, this was an important conciliatory measure and as far as Schröder could go without damaging his political credibility domestically. No other European country had come up with a similar plan, and despite the German veto on sending troops, it would have given the country an important role to play in the post-war reconstruction of the country. It would also have enhanced Germany's role in the Middle East. And finally, it would be an example of Schröder's pledge made to the UN General Assembly in September 2003 that Germany would assume "greater responsibility" for peace and development in poorer countries. But a stronger profile for Germany would not be in French interests, at least not if it was achieved single-handedly. Thus, when President Chirac visited Berlin in September 2003, he stated France would join Germany in training Iraqi officers. This was a remarkable turnaround, until then France had refused to make any commitment unless the US side presented a plan for a swift transfer of power to Iraqi authorities and the withdrawal of all forces which would have to be approved by a new UN resolution. The German government had refrained from making similarly stringent demands, and had thus managed to put itself in an intermediary position between France and the US. Chirac

declared: "If the Chancellor supports this approach, France will take the same position, and will do so for the same reasons."²³⁰

230 Chirac quoted in Ralf Beste et. al., „Schröders neue Mitte“, *Der Spiegel*, 20 December 2004.

Chapter 4

Red-Green Ostpolitik

In January 1999, the front page of the Polish newspaper *Zycie* carried the following headline: “Germany is turning away from Poland.”²³¹ In the following years, German researchers concluded that the bilateral relationship moved somewhere between “Stimmungstief” – a low point – and outright crisis.²³² In the years of Red-Green rule, nothing happened that mitigated this state of affairs. On the contrary, Jerzy Makarczyk, advisor to the Polish President, stated in 2003 that the relationship was suffering from “an escalation of antipathy”.²³³

This development seemed almost contradictory. During the 1990's, NATO membership and EU enlargement were two common projects where Germany was Poland's strongest advocate. The German efforts were not without costs, French ambitions were quite the opposite, and the relationship with Russia stood to suffer if the German government was seen as pushing NATO enlargement too eagerly. Nevertheless,

231 Marek A. Cichoński, “Niemcy odwracali się od Polski” [The Germans are turning away from Poland] *Zycie*, 28 January 1999.

232 E.g. Roland Freudenstein and Hennig Tewes, „Stimmungstief zwischen Deutschland und Polen“, *Internationale Politik*, no. 2 (2000): 49–56; and Klaus Bachmann, *Das Ende der Interessengemeinschaft? Deutschland und Polen nach EU-Erweiterung und Irak-Krise Versuch einer Klärung* (Warsaw: Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych, 2003).

233 „Es gibt eine Eskalation der Antipathie“, *Die Welt*, 28 November 2003.

German-Polish relations improved drastically. When Kohl visited Warsaw, he was greeted as a close ally and popular figure.²³⁴

With Schröder, this ended. The reasons are easily identified. One was the importance allotted to France by the Red-Green government. This meant, as the newspaper headline implied, that less attention was being paid to Poland. As a result, old grievances re-emerged. As will be described here, one such issue is the claims posed by organisations representing the Germans expelled from Poland after 1945; another is the plan for a centre in Berlin on ethnic cleansing. In Poland, both are perceived as efforts to rewrite recent history.

The cooling of relations affected Poland's integration with the European Union. Germany was no longer the advisor and door opener it had once been. Within the Union, it soon became clear that Poland's priorities differed from Germany's on virtually all important EU issues ranging from agricultural support and the free movement of labour, to the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, and the Union's relations with Ukraine and Russia. Whereas Schröder's main priority for the EU was the reduction of Germany's contribution, Poland's need for economic assistance was, and still is considerable. Germany was keen to maintain the Franco-German relationship as an integrationist core that could pursue reforms ahead of the rest of the Union; Polish politicians argued that this relationship seemed like an exclusive club with membership by invitation only and therefore detrimental to integration. Germany worked for a more independent foreign policy role for the EU. Poland remained concerned that US commitments to European security should be maintained. And finally, Schröder's efforts

234 Kohl's visit to Warsaw in November 1989 marked the beginning of close co-operation, see Artur Hajnicz, *Polens Wende und Deutschlands Vereinigung. Die Öffnung zur Normalität 1989-1992* (Paderborn: Schöningh 1995), p. 42.

to create an axis between Paris, Berlin and Moscow could not but evoke painful memories in Poland of the last time Germany headed an alliance with a similar name.

To a certain extent Schröder's aspirations were matched by Polish ambitions. Polish politicians worked hard for a strong Polish position within the EU, on level with other large members like France, Britain and Great Britain. Any attempts to relegate the country to the second-tier with the Netherlands or Portugal were flatly rejected. Polish behaviour within the EU as well as NATO showed that it possessed sufficient clout to thwart German ambitions. None of the other new members harboured any ambitions of playing a leading role either regionally or within the EU. By the end of 2004, it had become obvious that neglecting Poland was costly. This forced the Red-Green government to rethink its policy on Central and Eastern Europe, and on Poland in particular.

From Kohl to Schröder

In June 1989, parliamentary elections were held in Poland. They were the first, genuinely democratic elections in any of the countries that had belonged to the Soviet sphere of control. Formally, Poland was still a part of it; the CMEA was not dissolved until 1990, the Warsaw Pact the following year. Both events were greeted in West Germany, although by that time attention was focused on events in the GDR. When the Berlin Wall fell, Kohl had been on a state visit to Poland. It was cut short to let him hurry back to Bonn.

Although unification had been a declared target formally embedded in the German constitution, the unravelling of the GDR caught the West German elite by surprise. Some, like Gerhard Schröder, were negatively disposed towards a merger of the two German states. The issue was not so much costs; at the beginning of the 1990s nobody was able to make anything resembling a realistic estimate. Instead, concerns were expressed over what role a united Germany would play in Europe. Would it mean a return to Germany as a Central European power, and *ipso facto* less committed to European integration? These fears were particularly prevalent in France.

The British government under Thatcher was also against unification, fearing that Germany would divest itself of the limitations imposed on the country through division and revert to the role of an aggressor.²³⁵ Czech and Polish political leaders also voiced similar apprehensions.

Time was short. The questions raised over Germany's future role were left unanswered as popular pressure for unification augmented in the GDR. One of the slogans carried during the Monday demonstrations in the East German cities declared that if the D-Mark did not come, the people would go and fetch it.²³⁶ Support for unification came from the two superpowers. George Bush backed it, as did the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev. Without them, the process would have been far more arduous. Unification was, as one political scientist called it, a "Glücksfall" – a lucky case.²³⁷

A main priority for Kohl was to ensure the smooth departure of Soviet soldiers stationed on the territory of the former GDR. Yet once this was put on the agenda, Polish debate started to question if this would increase their country's vulnerability. In the Warsaw Agreements signed between Poland and West Germany in 1970, the inviolability of the border had been recognised. The final *de jure* recognition was postponed until a peace treaty could be signed between Poland and a united Germany.²³⁸ Now, the time had come, but Kohl seemed reluctant to start negotiations on this point. He was seen as wavering over the border issue,

235 See Alexander von Plato, *Die Vereinigung Deutschlands – ein weltpolitisches Machtspiel* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2002), p. 423–425.

236 Or in German, „Kommt die D-Mark bleiben wir, kommt sie nicht, geh'n wir zu ihr“.

237 Helga Haftendorn, *Deutsche Außenpolitik zwischen Selbstbeschränkung und Selbstbehauptung* (Stuttgart: DVA, 2001), p. 384.

238 See Christoph Royen, „Polen: Brücke und Achillesferse“, in *Weltpolitik. Strukturen–Akteure–Perspektiven*, eds. Karl Kaiser and Hans-Peter Schwarz (Bonn: Schriftenreihe der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1987), p. 475–486.

indicating that with unification the old treaties were null and void and renegotiations would therefore have to start once German unity had been formalised.

Kohl's hesitation caused an uproar, not only in Poland but also in the rest of Europe. The Chancellor had to back down. When he met with the Polish Foreign Minister, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, in Paris in July 1990, they both agreed on the necessary steps that had been taken for Germany to formally recognise the border *de jure*.

Kohl's lack of enthusiasm did not cause any long-term damage. In the following years, senior members of his government, especially Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Minister of Defence Volker Rühle visited Poland regularly. The number of visits by senior cabinet members, civil servants and academics grew. A high point was the Polish Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski's speech to the Bundestag on the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. These visits served to keep the Polish leadership informed about German negotiations with the Soviet leadership. The traditional fear of being stuck in the middle between a powerful Germany and an imperialist Moscow diminished.

In the negotiations with Moscow, the Soviet side complained that German representatives would often refrain from making a clear commitment and instead claim that this was a matter that should be discussed and decided by the EU or NATO. The Soviet leadership might have felt that this was little more than a negotiation ploy. Without discarding that view completely, Kohl clearly wanted to multilateralise unification as much as possible. Doing that, he could show that foreign policy would not deviate from the traditional emphasis on integration and co-operation. A united Germany would remain a NATO member and the commitments to EU integration would not waver. Nevertheless, its geopolitical location and sheer economic strength meant that the country could not escape playing a leading role in Central and Eastern European politics. Kohl wanted to do that through the European Union. This earned him a high standing among

Polish politicians and experts, not least since "this acted against Germany's individual economic interests, e.g. in agricultural policy."²³⁹

Nevertheless, his multilateralist approach was far from an unmitigated success. One reason being that the EU was painfully slow to develop a political or economic framework that could abet the political and economic stability of the eastern block countries. The first efforts undertaken were the Phare (Poland and Hungary Assistance for Economic Reconstruction) in 1988, to be followed by the so-called Europe Agreements signed at the beginning of the 1990s. The former was, as the abbreviation implies, merely economic assistance designed to avert a total collapse; the second were trade agreements. These agreements had been cleverly designed to protect the EU market from agricultural, metallurgical or textile products coming from the East. These were virtually the only commodities where the countries had a comparative advantage.

Kohl's efforts were also hampered by the EU's failure to facilitate a structured dialogue. France was a creative obstructionist. President Mitterand launched one such initiative in 1991 aimed at if not preventing, then at least postponing Eastern and Central European countries' membership of the Union. After having declared in an interview that any eastern enlargement of the EU would be a long-winded process requiring decades, he proposed instead a loose, European confederation.²⁴⁰ In Central and Eastern Europe this was seen as a French attempt to postpone enlargement, or in the worst case as a permanent substitute for EU membership. Two years later, Prime Minister Eduard Balladur presented an initiative proclaimed to pave the way for the eastern enlargement of the Union. The applicant countries would only have to prove that they lived up to

239 Aleksander Korybut-Woroniecki, "Relations with the German Federal Republic", in *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 1995* (Warsaw: PISM, 1995), p. 89-93, 89.

240 See Ernst Weisenfeld, „Mitterands Europäische Konföderation. Eine Idee im Spannungsfeld der Realitäten“, *Europa-Archiv*, no. 17 (1991): 513-518.

European democratic standards, which were never defined in more explicit terms, and that they respected human rights. Only then could enlargement negotiations start. In neither case did the French leadership co-ordinate these initiatives with the German government.

In the applicant countries, this was perceived as little more than yet another preventive measure. The revolutions of 1989 had been motivated by the very ideals stipulated by Balladur, and in the years that had passed since then, the European Council and in particular the Conference for Security and Co-operation in Europe had been called in to monitor democratisation and the implementation of human rights. Balladur's plan was simply outdated when it was presented. One might assume that if the German government had been consulted, it would either have been stopped or at least strongly modified.

This did not deter Kohl, who remained committed to enlarging both the EU and NATO to include Poland. Finally, at the Copenhagen Summit in 1993, the membership criteria were spelt out and negotiations could start. This was a lengthy process marked by crises and the occasional breakdown. As will be discussed below, this had to do with the question of costs; and with the need to reform EU decision-making procedures before new members could be accepted. Kohl did not gloss over these problems, but he never implied that they were sufficiently grave to endanger Poland's membership.²⁴¹ Instead, he made Polish EU-membership into a common project. Doing that, he achieved two important targets. A bridge was built over historical grievances; and disagreements were regarded as the result of differences in economic and political developments that would eventually diminish once Poland was inside the Union.²⁴²

241 See Aleksandra Trzcieliska-Polus, "Stosunki polsko-niemieckie w aspekcie procesu integracji Polski z Unią Europejską" [Polish-German relations considered in light of Poland's integration with the European Union], in *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie w latach 1970–1995, Próba bilansu i perspektywy rozwoju* [Polish-German relations in the years 1970–1995: status and development perspectives], ed. Jerzy Holzer and Jozef Fiszer (Warszawa: PAN, 1998), p. 171–191.

Kohl's policy was predictable. Apart from the impasse over the Oder-Neiße border, which in retrospect may have been an important lesson and a turning point, his intentions were obvious. With Kohl as a guarantor for continuation, the change of capital from Bonn to Berlin did not signify any break with the traditional foreign policy of the Federal Republic.²⁴³ Schröder's assertiveness, his claim that Germany was a normal country with national interests to defend, was hard to decipher and left the Polish leadership bewildered. After 1989, contacts between the SPD and Polish politicians had not developed. Considering the pivotal role the party had played in the Ostpolitik, this was odd. One cause for tardiness was probably that the party needed time to draw up a foreign policy in response to the foreign policy changes that had taken place in Europe with the fall of the Iron Curtain.²⁴⁴ This concerned NATO enlargement in particular on which opinions within the party remained divided.

Schröder's pre-election assurances that there would be no changes in foreign policy were interpreted in the entire region to mean continued German support for EU enlargement.²⁴⁵ Nevertheless, in his first speech as Chancellor to the Bundestag, enlargement was referred to briefly and then only as part of a "Vertiefung und Erweiterung" – integration and enlargement – strategy. In the rest of the speech, emphasis was

242 Kohl's view of Poland, including his disappointments, are presented in Helmut Kohl, *Ich wollte Deutschlands Einheit* (München: Ullstein, 2000), p. 397–400.

243 Urszula Pallasz, "Relations with Germany", in *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 1996*, ed. Barbara Wizimirska (Warsaw: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1996), p. 117–124, 120.

244 See Janusz Reiter, "Relations with the Federal Republic of Germany", *Yearbook of Polish Foreign Policy 1999*, ed. Barbara Wizimirska (Warsaw: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1999), p. 113–128, 113.

245 See Monika Mazur-Rafa and Jörg Forbrig, "Polacy i Niemcy: Partnerzy czy konkurenci w Europie?" [Poles and Germans: partners or competitors in Europe?], in *Polska i Niemcy w zmieniającym się świecie* [Poland and Germany in a changing world] (Warsaw: Centrum Stosunków Międzynarodowych, 2002), p. 81–100.

firmly on the former. The distinct lack of interest was mirrored in the new Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer's focus on a continued close relationship with France. He scarcely visited the region during his first period, and mentioned it even less.

Polish EU membership

In an opinion poll conducted in 2001 on how Germans viewed the EU, almost 60 per cent stated that the Union was mainly an economic community.²⁴⁶ The impact of Polish membership would therefore tend to be viewed in this perspective, and the conclusions drawn would unavoidably be negative. Whenever Schröder repeatedly referred to the costs of enlargement eastwards, he argued safely within the confines set by popular views of the EU.

This was not new; Kohl had been concerned with the economic ramifications of Polish membership. Especially as the costs of integrating the former GDR grew, the price of Polish membership was discussed repeatedly during bilateral talks from the mid-1990s.²⁴⁷ Yet, this was done as a matter of urging the Poles to commit more strongly to economic reforms despite the frequent change of governments experienced during that decade. At no point was it implied that costs would prevent membership from being implemented.

Negotiations had largely been terminated by the time Schröder took office. Economically, Poland had become closely linked with the EU in the course of the 1990s. The political integration with the Union was gaining pace and depth. In this process Germany was in a supreme position to offer assistance. In return, Germany's influence in the region would grow.

246 Xymena Dolinska and Mateusz Falkowski, *Polska – Niemcy, Wzajemny wizerunek w okresie rozszerzania Unii Europejskiej* [Poland – Germany, imagining the other at a time of EU enlargement] (Warszawa: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2001): "Rysunek 4. Charakter Unii Europejskiej w opinii Niemców (w %)" [Table 4. German perceptions of the European Union (in percentages)], p. 39.

247 Reiter, "Relations with the Federal Republic...": 120.

At the same time, the Red-Green government had taken office declaring that the German contribution to the EU budget would have to be reduced. This meant less money available for transfers to the new members. Even Helmut Kohl had made similar statements in the past. But not only did he have to do this sotto-voce for fear of alienating France, he could not count on support from his own quarters. Although conservative politicians did speak up in favour of limiting the German contribution, they depended on the rural vote. A reduction in transfers would have meant less money returned from Brussels under the auspices of the Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).

Schröder did not have to take these interests into consideration; his constituency was solidly urban. In late 1998, he claimed that half of the money wasted in the EU came from German pockets.²⁴⁸ There was a limit to what Germany would be willing to contribute. Similar sentiments were voiced by Fisher in the Bundestag. Yet, if Germany reduced its contribution, enlargement would be difficult to implement.

This gave rise to trepidation in Poland; the *Zycie* front page already referred to was just one reflection.²⁴⁹ On the home front, Schröder's new policy carried no risks. Enlargement was not a popular topic among the German electorate. According to opinion polls, only 36 per cent were in favour.²⁵⁰ It should be added, that support was significantly higher in the Eastern parts of the country compared to the old Federal Republic. Probably, this was due to the survival of old and negative stereotypes of the Poles in the West, whereas the increased contact between the population in the East and Poles had dispelled these misconceptions.

Within the Union, German positions and attitudes carried particular weight. Although the negotiations were conducted with the EU Commission, the Commission had been

248 *dpa*, 8 December 1998.

249 Another was Aleksander Smolar, "Jak spac ze sloniem" [How to sleep with an elephant], *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17-18 October 1998.

250 *Eurobarometer*, no. 54 (2001).

mandated by the Council of Ministers where the governments had their representatives and could exert direct influence. Nothing indicates that the German government tried to postpone enlargement, but stamina was lacking. Alternative models, especially that of a looser union where countries could choose to participate in some fields only, were launched. From a Polish perspective, this was unacceptable. A looser model indicated a differentiation between core members and the rest. Poland did not want anything resembling a B-membership.

The Red-Green government was hardly in a good negotiation position. It could threaten to postpone membership unless the Polish government implemented reforms with greater determination. This happened occasionally, and it should be added that Germany was not alone on this. EU experts monitoring the implementation of union rules and regulations would repeatedly point to insufficient progress and dismal results.²⁵¹ At one point, the EU withheld parts of its financial assistance to Poland for these reasons. Only in 2001, did the conclusions drawn in the EU's annual evaluation report change towards the positive.²⁵²

The costs of enlargement

Eastern enlargement was a costly undertaking. In the debate preceding membership, Poland was usually presented as a special case of concern. Whereas the agricultural sector in the other applicant countries was somewhat larger than in most EU members, in Poland more than 18 per cent of the population depended on farming for their livelihood.²⁵³ Farms were small and poorly mechanised; despite the 18 per cent, a mere 3 per cent of GDP came from agriculture.²⁵⁴ Thus, CAP had a far greater impact on Polish economics and

251 *Comprehensive monitoring report on Poland's preparations for membership* (Brussels: The European Commission, 2003), p. 10.

252 *2001 Regular Report on Poland's Progress Towards Accession* (Brussels: Commission of the European Communities, 13 November 2001), p. 36.

253 *Poland, Agriculture and Enlargement* (Brussels: European Commission, Directorate General for Agriculture, May 2002).

254 *Ibid.*

politics than it did in say the Czech Republic where only 6 per cent were employed in agriculture. To the EU, Poland was a special challenge. Unless restrictions were introduced limiting Polish access to CAP, funding would rapidly be depleted.²⁵⁵

Eventually, a solution was found. Starting in 2004, Polish farmers could apply for subsidies, but they would be entitled to maximum 55 per cent of the top limit open to Western farmers. The EU would only fund slightly more than a third of the 55 per cent, the rest would have to be covered by the Polish state. In the years leading up to 2007, maximum funding will be increased, with the share covered by the Union going up slightly. After 2007, differences will be evened out gradually until 2013 when discriminatory regulations are to end.

Although agriculture was the main problem, it was far from the only one. Polish membership would also affect EU structural funding. This is given to regions where GDP per capita is below 75 per cent of the EU average. Funding is directed to infrastructure projects, industrial development and labour market initiatives. With CAP consuming approximately half of the EU's budget, structural funds come in second with close to a third of all expenditure.

Polish membership would mean a drop in the Union's GDP per capita on average. Fewer regions would qualify for structural aid. This would affect large parts of the former GDR. Until now, all the new Bundesländer benefit from the structural funds.²⁵⁶ Although Poland, like the other new members, is blocked from certain programmes, discrimination will end by 2007. From then on, structural funding is to be given only to the "most disadvantaged regions".²⁵⁷ It is far from certain that all the eastern Bundesländer will qualify.

255 For a detailed analysis, see Christian Weise, "How to finance Eastern Enlargement of the EU", *Discussion Paper*, no. 287 (Berlin: Deutsche Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, 2002).

256 *The European Structural Funds (2000–2006) Deutschland* (Brussels: The European Commission, Directorate General for Regional Policy, 2004).

257 *The European Structural Funds...*, p. 4.

These numbers notwithstanding, it is far from certain that Poland will represent the financial burden of the magnitude often depicted in the German press. Experience so far suggests otherwise. Of the close to €4 billion made available to Poland through Phare since the beginning of the 1990s, only half has been spent.²⁵⁸ One reason is the requirement that the Polish side comes up with at least 25 per cent co-financing. With public finances cash-strapped, many projects remain on the drawing board.²⁵⁹ By 2004, approximately €100 billion were left unused in the funds, mainly because the applicant had failed to secure co-financing.²⁶⁰ The fact that Poland will have to pay an annual membership fee of €2.4 billion should not be overlooked either. What Poland will receive in return remains unknown. In fact, in the stipulations made by the EU Commission, Poland is not expected to be receiving much more per year than it already does.²⁶¹

A German takeover?

The German debate on enlargement costs has tended to focus overwhelmingly on the burden Poland represents to Brussels, and ipso facto to the German economy. From a Polish

258 *Urząd Komitetu Integracji Europejskiej: Material informacyjny nt. wykorzystowania programu PHARE w latach 1990–2000* [The Office of the Committee for European Integration: Information material concerning usage of PHARE in the years 1990–2000], Warszawa, 16 February 2004, quoted by Marzenna Gus-Vetter, *Polsko-niemieckie pogranicze. Szanse i zagrożenia w perspektywie przystąpienia Polski do Unii Europejskiej* [Polish-German borderlands: possibilities and risks emerging from Polish membership in the European Union] (Warszawa: Instytut Spraw Publicznych, 2002), p. 350.

259 Gus-Vetter, *Polsko-niemieckie pogranicze...*, ch. 3.2. "Asymetria w zakresie dostępu do funduszy pomocowych" [Asymmetrical access to assistance funding], p. 43–45.

260 Gerhard Gnauck, "Muß Polen Deutschland dankbar sein?", *Osteuropa*, no. 5–6 (2004): 330–332, 331.

261 According to a proposal made by the then Commissioner for Regional Policy Michel Barnier in 2004, €12.8 billion was set aside for Poland by the EU for the years 2004–2006, this amounted to approximately 2 per cent of Polish BNP. For the years 2007–2013, the sum may be in the range of €70 billion. The exact sum will depend on the EU budget. Numbers are taken from Robert Soltyk, "Miliardy dla Polski", *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 19 February 2004.

perspective this appears hypocritical. German exports to Poland have risen annually ever since 1990. Although Polish exports to Germany have grown as well, Germany has reaped a hefty surplus every year.

Another source for misgivings concerns German takeovers of Polish enterprises and public utilities. When the German energy firm RWE bought the Warsaw-based electricity distributor Stoen in 2002, some members of the Polish parliament tried to present this as part of a general German takeover of the choice bits of Polish industry. This added to the popular image of a weak Poland nextdoor to an economic giant.

From the early 1990s, German investments in Poland grew. Whereas US firms had been the leaders until the late 1990s, German investors took the front position from 1999. While France and the US have focused on large-scale projects, German investments have also gone to small and medium-size enterprises. Low labour costs combined with a skilled workforce meant that labour intensive production is transferred from Germany to Poland. This was not a uniquely Polish phenomenon; other Central and East European countries experienced the same, albeit to a more limited extent. Whereas the hourly average German industrial wage in 2004 was €27, the Polish level was a mere €3.3.²⁶²

Establishing production facilities in Poland or relying on Polish firms to complete parts of the production cycle enabled German firms to retain high-cost activities like research and development at home. But it also meant that the border between the two countries seemed increasingly like the Rio Grande, with assembly line production relying on cheap labour, low energy costs and lax environmental legislation on the eastern side. If so, Poland's economy would remain comparatively underdeveloped. This was hardly in the interest of the Polish authorities, or indeed the EU, as this would make it close to impossible to wean Poland off EU financial transfers.

262 *Industrielle Arbeitskosten im internationalen Vergleich* (Köln: Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln, 2004), p. 1, 4.

From the late 1990s, this imbalance changed somewhat. A growing number of German firms are now investing in research and development activities in Poland. Failing to attract specialists like computer experts, the firms have instead transferred their jobs to Poland. This development has played an important role in the growing trade between the two countries; close to a third of all Polish exports go to Germany.²⁶³ Many of the exporting firms are German-owned, and the power in the economic relationship is solidly in German hands. Decisions on new investments, prolonging or finishing contracts, are taken by the German firms in Germany.

The migration of Polish labour to Germany together with the influx of German investments in labour and energy intensive production, has made Poland into an economic buffer zone for Germany.²⁶⁴ Adjusting the labour stock according to market changes was more easily done in Poland than in Germany where severance payments and strong trade unions form strong obstacles. For Poland, being reduced to a buffer zone meant the loss of control and influence. This perception was only reinforced by the way Germany reacted to the prospect of an open labour market.

Labour

Free movement of labour is a cornerstone of the European Union. However, for Germany, opening up the labour market to a free influx from the new members was politically difficult. The fall of the Iron Curtain had triggered a westward migration of East and Central Europeans looking for employment. Germany was the main target. More than 60 per

263 *Maly Rocznik Statystyczny Polski* [Small Polish Statistical Yearbook] (Warsaw: G6wny Urzd Statystyczny, 2004), p. 235, Table I, "Obr6ty handlu zagranicznego wedlug g6wnych partner6w" [Foreign trade turnover according to main partner countries].

264 See Claire Wallace, "The New Migration Space as a Buffer Zone?" in C. Wallace and Dariusz Stola, eds, *Patterns of Migration in Central Europe* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2001), p. 72–83.

cent of all those that crossed the former dividing line since the late 1980s, ended up in Germany.²⁶⁵ In addition came the influx of refugees from former Yugoslavia.

One of Schröder's election pledges had been to reverse growing unemployment. Receiving more job seekers would make that close to impossible. The government's concerns in this respect could not but have strong bearings on the relationship with Poland. Polish unemployment numbers were higher than the German ones, reaching more than 20 per cent in early 2004. Crossing to Germany to look for a job was an easy way out.

This was hardly a welcome scenario for the German government. To prevent this from happening, it started to lobby the EU for restrictions on the free movement of labour from the new members. In this, it was supported by Austria where a common border with three new members was taken to mean maximum exposure to labour migration. Their efforts succeeded; the EU decided that each member could unilaterally introduce legislation barring job seekers from the East. This would apply for the two first years after enlargement. If the member in question wanted to prolong these measures another three years, the EU would have to be informed. If the labour market had still not improved, national legislation could be enforced for a further two years. After that, free movement of labour must prevail. Germany was quick to act. The rest of the EU followed suit to varying degrees; the only exceptions were Sweden, Great Britain and Eire.

The German efforts were hardly endearing to its eastern neighbours. Both in Poland and the Czech Republic, observers concluded that this limitation in addition to the restrictions imposed on access to EU financing meant that their membership was hardly on a par with the Western members.²⁶⁶ The German government decided to waive the

265 Barbara Dietz, „Ost-West Migration nach Deutschland im Kontext der EU-Erweiterung“, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B5-6 (2004): 41-47, 41. This number excludes migrants of German descent claiming and German citizenship and resettling in Germany.

law for certain skilled categories Germany needed to bolster the growth of. Highly educated specialists were offered green cards. Yet, these skills were in demand at home as well and needed if the countries were to move away from energy and labour intensive production into a post-industrial economy. Despite this opening, few were attracted.

The decision to limit the free movement of labour may have been politically necessary for the Chancellor. However, there is little to indicate that without it, large numbers of people would have crossed the border. The EU appointed a commission to analyse what had happened after previous enlargement rounds when the countries where wage levels were low had been accepted.²⁶⁷ As part of its work, the commission conducted nationwide surveys in the applicant countries to gauge what sections of the labour force in the east would take advantage of open borders; and finally for how long they would stay.

The conclusion was that the impact on Western labour markets would be limited. When Spain and Portugal joined in 1986, labour migration had increased temporarily. Polls conducted in Poland and the Czech Republic proved that very few indeed were willing to cross the border to look for fixed employment. Those who replied yes were mainly youngsters who wanted a year off in the West before resuming their studies at home. The German decision was, according to the research report, quite unnecessary.

Poland retaliated by introducing the same kind of limitations on the free movement of labour against workers from all the EU countries, again with the exception of Sweden, Great Britain and Eire. This was, of course, a political act only. In other fields where Polish negotiators tried to have transitional arrangements, they failed. One concerned

266 See Vladimír Handl, "Nemecký Multilateralismus a vztahy k statum visegrádské skupiny", *Mezinárodní vztahy*, no. 1 (2003): 527; Xymena Dolinska and Mateusz Falkowski, *Polska – Niemcy. Wzajemny*

267 Tito Boeri and Herbert Brückner et.al., *The Impact of Eastern Enlargement on Employment and Labour Markets in the EU Member States. Final Report* (Berlin and Milano: The Employment and Social Affairs Directorate of the European Commission, 2000).

foreigners' access to purchasing land. Polish concerns were above all directed against Germans returning to purchase houses or ground plots that had belonged to them before 1945; as well as against Germans purchasing summerhouses on the Baltic coast. Polish negotiators could point to Denmark. At the Edinburgh Summit in 1992, the Danes managed to get a permanent exemption from the internal market; no foreigner could purchase land in Denmark. As in the case of Poland, this was based on the fear that the much richer Germans would outbid the local population when lucrative plots on the coast were up for sale. Yet compared to the Danes, the Poles knew that a permanent exemption was out of the question – what they demanded instead was a transitional restriction on the sale to foreigners. This was denied.

Quite another area where the Poles vied for a transitional measure concerned trade with Russia. With the collapse of CMEA, economic exchange with Russia had almost ceased. The only exception was oil and gas. During the 1990s, trade agreements were signed. Often they contained provisions for barter or other payment arrangements deviating from the norms prevailing in the West. For many of the enterprises involved, this was the only possibility they had to export their goods. Poles as well as Russian negotiators tried to lobby the EU for an extension of these arrangements. These efforts did not pay off.

The EU voting row

The number of votes attributed to Poland in Union decision-making procedures turned out to be the cause of a protracted and increasingly bitter struggle. Polish ambitions were to be counted among the EU's large powers, on a par with France, Germany, Britain, Italy or Spain. Votes are loosely based on population and economic contribution to the common budget. With enlargement, the need to streamline decision-making had become a pressing matter. This meant that the number of votes attributed to each country was up for revision. As long as most votes were based on unanimity, as in the past, this

mattered little. But this was a notoriously time-consuming method. Instead, it had been agreed that more decisions were to be taken based on majority voting.

This had been a cardinal item on the agenda at the Union's summit in Nice in 2000. Here it was agreed that new rules would come into force from 2004. The biggest winners were Poland and Spain; they were given 27 votes each. This was only two short of the big four, Great Britain, Italy, France and Germany. This difference did not reflect the large gap in population size or economic might.

Schröder expressed his dissatisfaction and started to work for a revision of the agreements reached in Nice almost before the summit had ended. Schröder argued that Germany, as both the largest country and contributor should be accredited with more votes. Poland objected. Both countries had allies, with Spain siding with Poland, and France backing Germany. However, they played only a supporting role, and focus remained on the bilateral negotiations and bickering between Berlin and Warsaw.

Poland could not block a revision. A strong argument in favour of reform was the sheer complexity of the Nice system which stipulated that a vote was only final when it had: a) gathered 72 per cent of total votes (232 out of a total 321); and b) when it was backed by a majority of the member states; and c) when these countries represented 62 per cent of the EU population. This would make the larger members dependent on the support of middle-sized and small states if they wanted to have legislation passed. That would protect the smaller members against being overruled by the larger ones, but this also meant that the small could block legislation quite easily and thus bring the Union to a standstill. This likelihood would only increase with enlargement.

When the EU's draft constitution was presented in 2004, a far simpler procedure was proposed. Legislation only required a) the support of half the member states provided that b) these states represented at least 60 per cent of the EU's population. The first condition ensured small states would have a certain degree of influence, while the second clearly worked in favour

of larger states. At the 2003 intergovernmental conference, Poland rejected the procedure together with Spain. The two came to be known as the “awkward squad”. Poland claimed it was acting on behalf of the smaller states. If so, support was neither very strong nor very outspoken.

In Poland, public opinion and the political leadership refused to budge on the agreements reached in Nice. “Nice or death” was a slogan used by the press. The Polish government stated that it would not approve the new EU constitution unless the Nice agreements were respected. This attitude put Poland oddly out of tune with the rest of the EU where debate had started on the need to simplify voting procedures. If not, urgent legislation could all too easily be blocked.

When the parliamentary elections in Spain in 2004 resulted in a more pro-EU government willing to compromise, Poland was left alone. This was an untenable position. In the end, Poland agreed to a compromise solution proposed by Berlin. Both the number of states and the proportion of the population required were set at 55 per cent. That would not only increase the power of the smaller states, but it would prevent the three biggest countries, Germany France and Great Britain, from having the power to block decisions as their combined population is only 44 per cent of the EU.

The row revealed to Germany that Poland was a stubborn EU member. It also revealed how EU integration is perceived in the two countries. Further integration has long been a declared target for German foreign policy. In Poland, integration is hardly a target, but rather a means. Above all, it is a means to present Polish concerns to a wider audience.²⁶⁸

The St. Petersburg Dialogue

Schröder’s close relationship with the Russian president contributed to the deterioration of relations between Germany and not only Poland, but the Baltic states as well. The political leadership in the countries in-between Russia and Germany

268 See Janusz Sepiol, „Polen war immer schon Europa. Auf der Suche nach einer Integrationsdoktrin“, *Die Politische Meinung* (July 2003): 15–18.

were apprehensive that questions pertaining to central and eastern Europe were settled above their heads. The same concerns had been voiced when Kohl was Chancellor. During the negotiations over NATO enlargement, the Polish side would complain that too much had already been arranged during Kohl and Genscher's visits to Moscow.²⁶⁹ The German reply was that this ultimately served Polish interests. Instead of complaining, the Polish side should be grateful that Germany had spoken on its behalf.

The view that the Poles did not fully acknowledge the German contribution to their own security has surfaced repeatedly since, and has become entrenched in the German discourse on Poland.²⁷⁰ What the German side seems less able to accept is that any form of exclusive arrangements between Moscow and Berlin will easily provoke negative reactions in Warsaw. Schröder and Putin's initiative to launch a forum for German-Russian contacts in 2000 did exactly that.

The forum, called the St. Petersburg Dialogue, was presented by Schröder as a means of promoting Russia's integration with Europe. The relations with Germany had been progressing fast. The number of Russian scholars on exchange programmes in Germany reached approximately 5,000 in 2004.²⁷¹ Germany became Russia's largest trading partner. German investments are considerable, especially in the economically important and politically sensitive energy sector. Russia is the most important energy supplier, providing around a third of oil and gas consumed in Germany. This is set to increase with the gas pipeline crossing the Baltic seabed being constructed. When the pipeline was announced, Poland, Ukraine and the Baltic republics protested. The existing pipeline supplying them as well as Germany transits Ukrainian territory. Whenever Russia has tried in the past to shut off gas to Ukraine in response to payment failure, the Ukrainian

269 Pallasz, "Relations with Germany": 135.

270 See Gerhard Gnauck, „Muß Polen Deutschland ...“

271 Gerhard Schröder, "Russia and Germany: The Core Tenet of Cooperation", *Russia in Global Affairs*, no. 4, (October–December 2004): 76–83, 78. This is far higher than the number of US scholars in Germany.

authorities have siphoned what they needed from the volume destined for receivers further west. The new pipeline will make it possible for Russia to close off gas supplies at short notice without affecting the German market. If so, industry would grind to a standstill with disastrous economic and political consequences. What aggravated the political leaderships in these countries was that the plans had been made without informing them. From their perspective, the deal struck justified their apprehensions about the German-Russian relationship fully.

The apprehensions are not only based on the fear of being marginalized, but also on widely different assessments of the Russian President. Schröder described Putin as a “flawless democrat”.²⁷² Polish views were far less optimistic. Polish politicians, irrespective of party political colour, were less inclined to view Russian democracy as consolidated and political and economic reforms as progressing. Whereas Schröder referred to Putin’s domestic politics as being aimed at the “resurrection of Russian statehood”; the Polish side has been more inclined to view this as creeping authoritarianism. From a Polish viewpoint, Germany was far too accommodating of Russian interests. During a visit to Estonia in June 2000, Walter Kolbow, a senior German defence official, stated that Russian opposition to NATO membership for any of the Baltic countries must be overcome before any decision could be taken.²⁷³ This seemed to confirm what Polish politicians and their Baltic colleagues had long claimed, that Russia enjoyed a *de facto* veto over further enlargement. The German MoD eventually censured Kolbow, but this did little to dampen Baltic and Polish anxiety over what they interpreted as lack of German support.

Poland’s main security concern was and still is instability in the Ukraine and Belarus. The latter of the two is firmly under Russian control, with important military installations manned by Russian officers and new ones being constructed.²⁷⁴

272 „Schröder: ‚Putin ist lupenreiner Demokrat’...”

273 See Paul Goble, “Russia: Analysis from Washington – A De Facto Veto?”, Radio Free Europe, 2000 ([online 17 November 2005]).

Ukraine is different, a large country only second to Russia in size and population. Within the country, deep divisions run between those desiring closer links with the West and those striving for integration with Russia. If the latter group succeeds, Poland would once more be stuck in the middle between Germany and a Russian empire. It has therefore been a consistent aim of Polish foreign policy every since the early 1990s that the EU and NATO should pay more attention to problems in the Ukraine and support democratic forces in the country.²⁷⁵

This did not happen until December 2004 when presidential elections were held in Kiev. The opposition as well as official observers from the EU, the OSCE and the European Council declared that massive violations of the electoral law had taken place and that the results could not be trusted. Nonetheless, President Putin officially congratulated the pro-Russian candidate, Viktor Yushchenko. Soon massive demonstrations took place in Kiev and the Ukrainian President was forced to declare that an official election result could not be declared before the Supreme Court had made an investigation into the accusations.

The Ukrainian President's decision was strongly influenced by the flow of protests coming from the West. President Bush let it be known that the US was following developments closely and that its links with both Ukraine and notably Russia would be influenced by the outcome of the elections. The EU was no less clear. Barosso, President of the Commission, stated that Russian-EU relations would suffer if Moscow were found to be meddling in Ukrainian affairs. Poland took a keen interest in developments, as did its northern neighbour Lithuania. To them, it was clear that if Ukraine once more became closely related to Russia, Ukrainian sovereignty would be severely curtailed, and, more

274 See Kaare Dahl Martinsen, "The Russian Takeover of Belarus", *Journal of Comparative Strategy*, no. 5 (2002): 401-416.

275 See *Strategia bezpieczeństwa Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* [Security Strategy of the Republic of Poland] (Warsaw: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2000) especially section 3.4.2. "Stosunki dobrosąsiedzkie" [Good neighbourly relations].

importantly, Russian imperialist ambitions would be rekindled. In the international delegation appointed by the EU to negotiate a solution with the Ukrainian leadership, both President Kwasniewski and the former Lithuanian Prime Minister Brazauskas participated, in addition to the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Javier Solana.

The German leadership kept a low profile. According to the chancellor's office, the Kanzleramt, Schröder telephoned Putin twice during the Ukrainian crisis. They both agreed on the need to respect the will of the Ukrainian people. Apart from that, Germany did nothing. A Green member of the Bundestag went as far as urging that caution was necessary to avoid ruining the good relationship with Moscow.²⁷⁶

In this relationship, economics play the key role. Politically, the advantages are less clear. Initially, the St. Petersburg Dialogue was presented as an important part of Red-Green foreign policy.²⁷⁷ It was an expression of Red-Green ambitions for a more multipolar foreign policy, and thus less dependence on the US. The Polish counter strategy has been to lean more strongly towards the US on foreign and security issues. Recalling that a stronger and more cohesive European voice in European politics was a key Red-Green priority, the emphasis on the relationship with Moscow backfired.

Summing up: Unsolved issues

One issue that resurfaced in Polish-German relations concerned the German population expelled from the parts of the Reich ceded to Poland after 1945. Some joined organisations, which soon started to work for compensation for the values they had lost when the borders changed. With the end of block confrontation, the organisations started to direct their attention to the countries in the east, demanding compensation, either economically or politically in the form of

276 „Schröder soll offen mit Putin reden“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 25 November 2004.

277 Christian Meier, *Deutsch-Russische Beziehungen auf dem Prüfstand. Der Petersburger Dialog 2001–2003* (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2003).

an official excuse from the new governments. These organisations are politically closer to the conservative parties than to the social democrats. Nevertheless, during Kohl's time in office, they failed to make an impact on official policy.

After the elections in 1998, this changed. The leader of the main organisation, the Association of Expellees – Bund der Vertriebenen, the CDU politician Erika Steinbach declared that the expulsion after the war remained “a thorn in the flesh” in the bilateral relationship.²⁷⁸ To her, Poland was the culprit owing Germany an apology. Steinbach wanted the German government to block the entry of Poland into the EU unless such an apology was forthcoming.

Almost at the same time, an obscure organisation called Bund für Gesamtdeutschland – Association for the whole of Germany, sent ready-made forms to the members of the expellee organisations' members asking them to specify what they had left behind. The forms were then relayed to the local Polish authorities, asking them to surrender what had been confiscated or left. Similar efforts were pursued even more vigorously by an organisation called Preußische Treuhand. The organisation has apparently wanted to use the Jewish Claims Conference as its model, calling itself the Prussian Claims Society.²⁷⁹ The Treuhand states on its homepage and in the information material available that following the fall of communism a return to houses and farms confiscated after 1945 is now within reach.²⁸⁰

These efforts and Steinbach's statements would hardly have had an impact on official relations if it had not been for a resolution passed by the Bundestag in May 1998 stating that with the entry of Poland and the Czech Republic into the European Union “the solution of open, bilateral questions will be facilitated”. No specification was given as to which open questions Parliament had in mind, but in Warsaw as in Prague

278 Ms. Steinbach was born in 1943 in the vicinity of Gdansk where her father was stationed as part of the German occupation forces.

279 On this, see Peter Molt “Versöhnung in die Zukunft tragen”, *Die Politische Meinung* (August 2004): 5–14, 12.

280 Die Preußische Treuhand GmbH & Co. KG a. A. [online 25 October 2005].

this was interpreted as referring to the expulsion of the German population. The Polish parliament replied quickly with a counter-resolution in which the Bundestag's decision was described as "unhelpful" and replete with "menacing tendencies".²⁸¹

This was the introduction to what has been called the paper war between the two countries. It has continued on and off since 1998. The fact that Steinbach was a member of the Bundestag and well connected with the CDU leadership did not go unnoticed. The latent fears that Kohl had done so much to diminish reappeared. More important politically was the fact that the Bundestag resolution linked Polish membership in the EU with the expulsion.

Another issue originating in the Second World War is the fate of German cultural objects now in Poland. These are often mentioned alongside cultural treasures expropriated by the Soviet army and brought to Russia.²⁸² The difference between what was left behind and what amounted to robbery was rarely touched upon by the conservative German politicians that have proffered these claims.

The debate on cultural treasures has not reached the emotional intensity comparable to the question of just compensation for Poles deported to Germany to do forced labour during the War. Soon after having been elected, Schröder declared his intention to solve this question. Since this was one issue on which Kohl had failed to make any progress, Schröder was lauded in the Polish press. Attitudes changed and opinions soured when it became apparent that the German compensation scheme wanted to take the pensions paid by the Polish state and the purchasing power of the Euro into account before calculating what the German side would offer. Slave labourers coming from the West would

281 The quotations from the resolution are taken from „Alle Fraktionen im Warschauer Parlament einig. Polen attackiert Bonner Vertriebenen-Resolution“, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 4–5 July 1998.

282 „CSU: Polen soll Kulturgüter ‚schnellstens zurückgeben‘“, *Welt am Sonntag*, 14 June 1998.

receive far more, despite the fact that the Eastern workers – the Ostarbeiter – to which the Poles belonged, had been treated far worse. A compromise solution was found in 1999.

In 2000, the Association of Expellees launched plans for a Centre Against Ethnic Cleansing to be built in Berlin. The location would be in the middle of the city, close to the Brandenburg Gate, and also close to a holocaust memorial under construction. Parallel to this, the German Bundestag passed a resolution in favour of starting an all-European debate on the establishment of such a centre.²⁸³ Polish views remained highly critical of both the Bundestag's resolution and the Association's plans. The Association's claim that the fate of the German population would not be treated as anything special was not believed.²⁸⁴

Former Foreign Minister Wladyslaw Bartoszewski, an advocate of German-Polish co-operation, has been among the most prominent voices against the Centre. He claimed that it would only serve to blur the responsibility for the war that lead to the expulsions.²⁸⁵ These attempts cannot avoid having a detrimental effect on bilateral relations. This view was shared by the then Vice-President of the Polish parliament, and since 2005 the country's President, Donald Tusk. According to him "The Germans want to rid themselves of their history ... independent of party affiliation, they want to rewrite history, or preferably forget it altogether."²⁸⁶ In the end, parliament asked the government to make an assessment of the costs caused by the German occupation. This motion

283 Beschluss des Deutschen Bundestages vom 4. Juli 2002, Drucksache 14/9033 i.V.m. 14/9661.

284 Even a quick glimpse at the homepage of the planned Centre justifies Polish suspicions (Zentrum gegen vertreibungen [online 12 December 2005]).

285 This view is supported by Peter Molt, see „Versöhnung in die Zukunft ...“

286 Kai-Olaf Lang, „Pragmatische Kooperation statt strategische Partnerschaft“, *SWP-Aktuell*, no. 48 (Oktober 2004): 4; Adam Krzeminski, editor of the periodical *Polityka*, has given a survey of how the past has an impact on current relations in his article „Die schwierige deutsch-polnische Vergangenheitspolitik“, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 40–41 (2003): 3–13.

was supported by 328 of the 329 MPs. In the motion it was underlined that no German citizen would be entitled to any form of financial compensation for damages suffered as a result of the War. The resolution was also directed at the German government, asking it to state that all claims coming from German citizens were baseless.

Both governments tried to calm the waters. The Polish government expressed its understanding for the resolution and willingness to investigate how Polish citizens could be protected against claims. It appointed a commission to estimate the loss suffered as a cause of the occupation, but refrained from presenting this as a claim against Germany. Some populist politicians clearly wanted to do that. The government responded by stating that Poland had officially declared an end to these claims in 1953, a position later repeated during the Two+Four Agreement signed in the wake of German Unification. The government had by then received assurances from Schröder that Germany would not support any claims launched by German citizens.²⁸⁷ This fell short of what the Polish side had wanted. They had pressed for a formal statement that the German government would refrain from all forms of claims, and if found justifiable, compensation should be covered by the German state. Thus, German and Polish perceptions of the relationship differ. German experts will tend to talk about a crisis, as if a particular event has triggered a sudden turn for the worse. Their Polish colleagues have concluded that the low-point reached in 2004 was the outcome of a long period of deterioration. At the bottom is the Red-Green government's lack of interest in Central and Eastern Europe. The main, and from a Polish perspective, worrying exception is the relationship with Russia.

The Kohl government had been a staunch supporter of Poland's membership of NATO and the EU. Within the Red-Green government, a prevailing sentiment was that Poland

287 Gerhard Schröder, „ Bundeskanzler Schröder zum 60. Jahrestag des Warschauer Aufstandes, 1. August 2004“ (Bundeskanzler [online 25 October 2005]).

was ungrateful. This was not confined to Berlin. When Poland decided to purchase US fighter planes instead of Eurofighters the day after it had signed the accession agreement with the Union, the head of the EU Commission, Romano Prodi, could not hide his anger and commented that the Poles could not vest their future in European pockets, and their security in the US.²⁸⁸ And finally, when Poland together with other Central and East European countries voiced their support for a continued US engagement in European security affairs, President Chirac claimed they had missed a good opportunity to shut up.

In 2000, the two German foreign policy experts Roland Freudenstein and Hennig Tewes wrote an article arguing in favour of a return to a "community of interests" between the two countries.²⁸⁹ This concept had been launched by the then Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski in 1990. It was in Germany's interest that Poland was transformed into a stable democracy with a functioning market economy. To achieve this, Germany became a strong advocate of Poland's integration with the West. On this, the two countries' interests coincided. At that time, the relationship with Poland shared many of the basic features characterising Germany's relations with France.²⁹⁰ Political attention was given to clearly defined common projects; disagreements were minimised through intensive communication; and finally the value of the bilateral relationship was regarded as being beyond dispute.

Under Schröder, the energy that had been invested in many of the common projects dissipated. The Weimar Triangle was perhaps the best known; others included increased co-operation between the local authorities on both sides of the border. More serious was the lack of trust. The government in Warsaw viewed German initiatives with suspicion. This was

288 "Polish Prime Minister 'astonished' by Prodi fighter jet reproach", *EUBusiness*, 22 April 2003.

289 Freudenstein and Tewes, „Stimmungstief zwischen Deutschland...“

290 Simon Bulmer, Charlie Jeffery, William E. Paterson, „Deutschlands europäische Diplomatie: Die Entwicklung des regionalen Milieus“, in ed. Werner Weidenfeld, *Deutsche Europa-Politik. Optionen wirksamer Interessenvertretungen* (Bonn: Europa Union Verlag, 1998), p. 11–102.

partly due to the fact that there was close to zero consultation taking place between the two countries on important political issues concerning either NATO or the EU, but also because Germany's deliberate choice of France as its closest partner was perceived as contrary to Polish interests.

The alienation turned out to be politically costly to Berlin. Poland is a regional great power with extensive contacts to Lithuania and the Ukraine. The country is also an important trading partner for Germany.²⁹¹ It is also a committed EU member and can count on the support from other countries in the region when it comes to the development of a common foreign and security policy. The letter writing in the run-up to the Iraq war showed that these countries could wreak havoc on German designs.

To imbibe relations with renewed vigour, Schröder met the Polish Prime Minister Belka in September 2004. They decided that the Viadrina University in Frankfurt an der Oder is to be transformed into a tri-national Polish-German-French University.²⁹² This was an important gesture, but other initiatives will probably have a more lasting impact. One was the appointment of co-ordinators on both sides responsible for bilateral relations. This means that the relationship with Poland at least formally will be given the same basis as the relationship with France and the US.

One month later, in October 2004, the Presidiums of the Bundestag and the Sejm met and decided that the foreign policy committees from both parliaments should conduct joint sessions. Polish and German MPs are to relaunch a bi-national parliamentary committee. Whether this institutional innovation will play a meaningful role remains to be seen.

291 *Statistisches Jahrbuch 2004 für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Wiesbaden: Statistisches Bundesamt, 2005).

292 Lang, „Pragmatische Kooperation ...“: 3. The size or character of the French contribution is not clear.

Chapter 5

The end of the Affair? – The relationship with France

The relationship with France changed radically from 1998. During his first period in power, Schröder did not seem interested in pursuing anything similar to the close relationship that had prevailed when Kohl was Chancellor. Schröder had undertaken two trips in the run-up to the elections, one to Washington, the other to Warsaw. He did not go to Paris.

This was set to change. Schröder rapidly learnt that he had little chance of achieving anything within the EU unless he allied himself with France on matters of crucial interest to both of them. The realignment was best expressed when the two countries celebrated the Elysée Agreement's 30th anniversary in January 2003. The festivities were grandiose, bound to impress both participants and onlookers. President Chirac and Chancellor Schröder used the occasion to launch new initiatives leading to even closer integration. Government meetings were to be open to representatives from the other country, civil servants exchanged and foreign policy initiatives co-ordinated so that the two would increasingly behave as one in the European Union. The crowning achievement was reached in October 2003 when Chirac represented Germany as well as France at an EU meeting.

Yet, as some onlookers remarked, the Elysée celebrations had been somewhat too elaborate, and could not quite hide the fact that the relationship between the two countries showed clear signs of strain.²⁹³ One commented that although the two leaders embraced each other, at the same time they were stepping on each other's feet.²⁹⁴ The foot stepping was partly due to domestic developments; lack of economic growth has been pointed to as the main cause. Important as this undoubtedly has been, the economic crisis should not detract attention from the fact that national interests differ on a number of issues.

Initial assertiveness

Schröder stated in the 1998 election campaign that he intended to conduct a more assertive foreign policy to defend Germany's national interests. What this meant remained just as unclear to France as it did to Poland or the US. The only issue about which the Chancellor was explicit concerned EU spending. He wanted to change Germany's role as the biggest contributor to the EU.

This was not welcomed in France since French peasants were among the chief beneficiaries of EU transfers. French farmers annually received approximately a quarter of total CAP expenditures. When added up, France has on average received €2.5 billion more than it has paid in membership dues during the recent years.²⁹⁵

Official French reactions were low-key. A strong reply would have made future co-operation difficult. Germany was next in turn for the EU Council Presidency; the French leadership wanted to avoid any deterioration of bilateral relations in the ensuing months. Another factor that may have

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- 293 Sabine von Oppeln, „Das Ende einer privilegierten Beziehung?“, *Dokumente*, no. 2 (April 2003): 11–18; Henrik Uterwedde, „Eine Zukünftige Partnerschaft?“, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 20 January 2003
- 294 Medard Ritzenhofen, „Europas Duo, Frankreichs Duell“, *Dokumente*, no. 4 (2004): 7–11.
- 295 Ulrike Guérot, et al., „Deutschland, Frankreich und Europa. Perspektiven“, *DGAP-Analysen*, no. 21 (2003): 17.

dampened French reactions was how past disagreements over similar issues had been handled. The relationship had been economically imbalanced since the start of the EEC in 1957. Germany established itself as the largest contributor to the community coffers and France found itself among the main recipients. In the early years of European integration, the role of paymaster was shouldered with few complaints. Germany went through rapid economic growth, and the EEC was a means for the country's return to a European community of states.

When economic crisis spread globally at the beginning of the 1970s, German growth rates fell. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt stated that Germany could no longer be expected to finance countries where the leadership failed to initiate the necessary reforms.²⁹⁶ Although France was one of the reform laggards Schmidt had in mind, his warning did not prevent him from working closely with President Giscard d'Estaing on the creation of the European Currency Unit (ECU), a building stone for the European Monetary System (EMS) and subsequently the Euro. Co-operation was expanded and intensified after Helmut Kohl was elected Chancellor in 1983.²⁹⁷

Schröder's insistence on a reduction of the German membership dues seemed to indicate that he was willing to sacrifice the relationship. When Germany took over the EU presidency in the spring of 1998, the newly elected government invited the member countries to a summit in Berlin. CAP and the EU's financial assistance to the poorly developed regions were top items on the agenda. Together,

296 Helmut Schmidt, „Regierungserklärung von Bundeskanzler Helmut Schmidt 17. Mai 1974“ (Deutsches Historisches Museum [online 25 October 2005]).

297 On this, see Hacke, *Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland...*, p. 299.

they consumed close to 80 per cent of total expenditures.²⁹⁸ If the transfers were reduced, national contributions could be cut.

Schröder's efforts led to an open disagreement with Chirac. The French position was better argued and Chirac could easily reap the support of other countries benefiting from EU support. Neither agricultural subsidies nor other forms of economic transfers were touched. Germany had failed to coordinate its policy with other members equally interested in financial reform. This could have been achieved. In addition to Germany, Austria and Sweden had pressed for a downward revision of CAP. France was supported by Spain, Greece, Portugal and Eire.

The Nice debacle

At the Nice Summit in 2000, Berlin raised the issue again. But the debate on spending levels now competed with the need to reform EU voting procedures. They had to be changed in view of impending enlargement. Disagreements were focused on two issues: the distribution of votes among the member countries, and when to open for majority decisions instead of relying on unanimity. The German government insisted that the demographic factor now had to be taken into account. According to Schröder, Germany with 82 million inhabitants should ipso facto be entitled to more votes than France with only 59 million. France and Germany split in the ensuing debate. With the eastern enlargement of the EU, France feared that Germany could all too easily gain support there and overrule French preferences.

The outcome was confusing. Formally, equality was retained with France, Germany, Britain and Italy having the same number of votes. The agreement reached also opened up for demography to be given weight whenever majority decisions were made. But for the outcome to be valid, the

298 „Gesamthaushaltsplan der Europäischen Union für das Haushaltsjahr 2005. Übersicht in Zahlen, Brüssel-Luxemburg, Januar 2005“, *Europa – Gateway to the European Union* (European Commission [online 2 December 2005]).

majority would have to represent at least 62 per cent of the EU population. Or put in another way, countries that combined had more than 38 per cent of the votes could block any decision. Germany, which had 17 per cent of the Union population, would be able to reach this limit by entering into alliance with e.g. Britain and Italy.

During negotiations, Schröder suggested that the demographic factor should be rejected in return for an extra vote on the Council of Ministers. Chirac, who instead preferred to retain formal equality, refused this. Chirac did not only alienate himself from Germany during negotiations. Initially, he wanted to give Spain one vote more than Poland although both countries have close to the same number of inhabitants.²⁹⁹ He also tried to offer Denmark, Finland and Eire an extra vote compared to Lithuania. Only when these countries started to protest loudly and seemed to be on the verge of blocking the final outcome, did Germany offer its assistance and the summit could be brought to a conclusion. One expert on French-German relations concluded that although there had been impasses and crises previously, this was definitely the low point. Neither Chirac nor Schröder seemed interested, or indeed willing to invest any of their political clout or credibility in the bilateral relationship.³⁰⁰

A repetition was barely avoided at the Brussels Summit in late October 2002. Only hours before the formal meeting started, the two leaders declared that they had agreed on a common position on CAP expenditure. If farmers in the new member countries were given access to EU financial support on an equal footing with farmers in the West, EU coffers would be emptied. Therefore, CAP would be applied in the East only gradually from 2007. At the same time entitlement criteria would be changed in the West with fewer farmers qualifying for support. As a result, Chirac and Schröder could

299 Spain slightly more with 39.4 million compared with Poland's 38.7.

300 Christoph Neßhöver, „Deutsch-französische Beziehungen. Vier lange Jahre Lernen“, in ed. Hanns W. Maull, Sebastian Harnisch and Constantin Grund, *Deutschland im Abseits* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 2003), p. 91-106, 92.

both go home and claim victory. Chirac had defended French agriculture against drastic changes; Schröder had averted any increase in the CAP budget.

Thus, the Brussels Summit in fact achieved little more than a postponement of the reforms. And although Schröder expressed his satisfaction with the outcome, his prime concern since the election four years before remained a reduction of the German contribution to the EU budget. On this, he failed. Germany's share of 23 per cent will not be altered significantly until 2007.³⁰¹ The French contribution will be maintained at approximately 18 per cent.³⁰²

The Stability Pact

The current economic crisis has made this position difficult to uphold. State income dwindled while social spending increased steeply. To finance both the rebuilding of the former GDR and rapidly growing unemployment benefits, the budget deficit exceeded three per cent every year since 2002.³⁰³

Three per cent was the limit set by the EU Stability Pact when the Euro was introduced. It should be recalled that this limit, much like the rest of the Stability Pact, was largely devised by German Bundesbank experts to ensure that the Euro would retain the same strength as the D-Mark. French focus was more or less limited to the choice of head of the new European Central Bank. Only after a long negotiation period was a compromise reached. The German side agreed that its favourite, the Dutch Wim Duisenberg, would resign mid-period and let the French Minister of Finance Claude Trichet take over. This was hardly a good start for the Bank or the Stability Pact, but the German view at the time was that the strict deficit criteria would ensure success irrespective of

301 „Deutschland bleibt stärkster Nettozahler“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8 September 2004.

302 *Ibid.*

303 „Bund plant 22 Milliarden Euro Schulden für 2005“, *Die Welt*, 20 June 2004.

who headed the Bank.³⁰⁴ The opposite happened. French and German violations weakened the authority of the European Central Bank.

The Bank's recommendations and censures are closely read in the EU capitals, not least since a stable currency and low interest rate are necessary if economic growth is to move beyond the dismal results of the last years. Some countries, most notably Portugal, the Netherlands and Italy have been forced to undertake painful cuts in state expenditure to avoid breaking the Pact. Politicians there have seen their attempts to enforce budgetary discipline undermined by the French and German disregard for the Bank's recommendations. When France and Germany were severely criticized and threatened with fines in accordance with the procedures stipulated in the Stability Pact, the two managed to get this sanction waived. It is difficult to imagine any of the smaller EU countries having done the same.

French and German government members have argued that the Pact must be interpreted more flexibly. The Pact contains no clauses opening for a deficit in times of economic crisis. Strictly speaking, this means that investments needed to find a way out of the crisis and trigger economic growth cannot be made if they increase the state deficit. Both countries maintained that the Pact had been reduced to a technical instrument automatically issuing fines whenever limits were broken. Instead, it should be transformed into a "gouvernance economique", granting countries with structural problems the right to exceed deficit limits.³⁰⁵

The economic problems at the root of the deficits revealed how different economic policy is conceived in Germany and France. In Germany, the state is above all the regulator of the economic market with very limited state ownership of industrial enterprises. The French case is a stark contrast with

304 This pervades all three contributions from Johann Wilhelm Gaddum, Hans Tietmeyer, Helmut Kohl in Gaddum et. al., *Festakt: Fünfzig Jahre Deutsche Mark. Ansprachen in der Paulskirche zu Frankfurt am Main am 20. Juni 1998* (Frankfurt am Main: Bundesbank, 1998).

305 „Stabilitätspakt spaltet Bundesregierung“, *Die Welt*, 27 October 2004.

large enterprises directly owned by the state and yet more where the state plays a strong role as a large shareholder. That means that when a large industrial enterprise is in trouble, the governments in the two countries react differently.

How was revealed in the spring of 2004 when negotiations broke down between the German engineering giant Siemens and the French Alstom. Alstom was a semi-state owned rail construction firm on the verge of bankruptcy. A merger with Siemens would have saved it. Compared with Alstom, Siemens was undoubtedly a giant and would have been in a comfortable negotiating position. The French government was well aware of this, and to circumvent a German take-over instead provided sufficient credits to Areva, another wholly state-owned company, to enable a merger with Alstom. The EU reacted negatively, with Mario Monti, Commissioner for Competition, mustering all the power he could to prevent the French state from indirectly subsidising Alstom via Areva. He insisted that Alstom should co-operate with a foreign firm, and Siemens was among those specifically mentioned. Yet Finance Minister Sarkozy managed to gain Monti's acceptance for a four-year grace period for Alstom before any final decision on a merger is reached. This will be abundantly sufficient to allow for an economic restructuring of the firm. Four years is too long to wait and Siemens' offer has been withdrawn.

German reactions were extremely negative.³⁰⁶ The French had snubbed Siemens, already hard pressed. The French government had clearly put so much emphasis on the issue when negotiating with the EU that Monti had been forced to yield. This was far from the first time German companies had lost lucrative deals with French firms due to the intervention of firms controlled by the state.³⁰⁷ If Alstom and Areva had been private companies, criticism would hardly have been so

306 See Knut Pries, „Kanzler rüffelt Sarkozy“, Frankfurter Rundschau online, 15 July 2004 [online 15 July 2004].

307 See Ritzenhofen, „Europas Duo, Frankreichs...“: 8.

harsh, but the fact that the French government played an active role in thwarting a German bid caused astonishment.³⁰⁸

Just a fortnight before, Chirac and Schröder had pledged that industrial policies should be streamlined in order to facilitate just the kind of merger that Siemens had tried to achieve.³⁰⁹ A co-ordinated policy in this field would involve a radical change in the role of the French state as an industrial owner. This seems unlikely. French state control has been entrenched since the time of Colbert. Nicolas Sarkozy, when he was made responsible for economic policy in 2004, had his title changed into “Ministre de l’État, ministre de l’Économie, des Finances et de l’Industrie”, quite like the one held by his illustrious predecessor, Colbert.

Differing EU priorities

Although the two countries agreed on the need to reform the Stability Pact, they failed to find common ground on which to solve a less immediate issue, namely how the relationship between the EU and the member states should be defined. This is a complex matter closely connected with how decisions within the EU are to be rooted, either in decisions made by the member states’ representatives or by the members of the Parliament elected by the population. In Germany, electoral interest in the EU slipped. When a mere 45 per cent voted in 1999, it was decried as a critical low point. Five years later barely 43 per cent of the electorate cast their vote.³¹⁰ As a remedy, the Red-Green government wanted to increase the powers of the Parliament. That would boost the Union’s democratic legitimacy, make decision-making more transparent and, hopefully, increase electoral interest.

308 Gerald Braunberger, „Patriotische Manager: Wie Frankreich anders als Deutschland Unternehmenspolitik stets im nationalen Interesse betreibt“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 May 2004.

309 „Paris und Berlin wollen Industriepolitik besser abstimmen“, *Die Welt*, 13 May 2004.

310 *Endgültiges Ergebnis der Europawahl 2004* (Bundeswahlleiter [online 25 October 2005]).

France, irrespective of political leadership, has been far more eager to uphold state sovereignty than Germany. This was perhaps best illustrated in the French response to Joschka Fischer's speech at the Humboldt University in May 2000. Fischer provided a sketch of where he thought the Union should move, in his own words the Union's "finality", and how the bonds between the Union organs and the member states could be recast. Fischer urged the EU countries to transfer more foreign policy powers to Brussels to enable the Union to act more forcefully on the international stage.³¹¹ He also came out in support of what he called a "centre of gravity" – Gravitationszentrum – an integrationist core of countries willing to pursue integration ahead of the rest. This was quite similar to the French "groupe pionnier" concept, although a centre may seem less closed to outsiders than a group.³¹²

Despite the fact that the French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine shortly before had voiced opinions much along the same lines, the speech was not well received in Paris. France was on the verge of taking over the leadership of the EU. The agenda was filled with more mundane, but politically potent issues like CAP and enlargement. Including a discussion of EU power and competencies in relation to the member states would derail the upcoming Nice Summit. Thus when Chirac made his speech to the Bundestag in June 2000, his reply caused disappointment in Berlin.³¹³ He did not address the relationship between the EU and its members, nor did he provide any indication of where he felt the EU should be moving apart from the usual phrases recommending a stronger and more united EU in international affairs. When Fischer once more, this time in front of the Belgian Parliament, repeated his visions, Paris rejected his views openly.

311 Fischer, „Vom Staatenverbund zur Föderation...“

312 Groupe pionnier was launched as a concept by the French president during his speech to the Bundestag, 27 June 2000.

313 Jacques Chirac, „Unser Europa“, speech delivered at the German Deutschen Bundestag, 27 June 2000, (Bundestag [online 25 October 2005]).

The issues raised by Fischer, however, returned. This concerned in particular the need to draw up clearer lines for the policy areas that should remain the prerogative of the national parliaments. In the debate leading up to the European Convention agreed in late 2004, Chirac and Schröder issued a joint set of proposals.³¹⁴

Intended to send a message of unity, the proposals nonetheless reflected the two countries' different perception. Germany recommended strengthening the European Commission, the EU executive organ in which each member country has a commissioner. France preferred a stronger role for the Council of Ministers. The Council is made up of government members and constitutes a direct channel of influence for each EU state. Strengthening the Council would compensate for the loss of national sovereignty entailed by a more powerful Commission and an independent Parliament. Germany failed to get France's support for more majority voting on foreign and security issues, and this issue was left out.

The French referendum on the EU Constitution in 2005 was a clear expression of the prevailing scepticism. Germany represented a different picture with a much stronger degree of support for the EU. Fischer's Humboldt Speech did not arouse any substantive criticism from the conservative opposition. The Conservatives would have had a hard time construing any counterarguments not least since so much of what Fischer said was strongly reminiscent of statements made by the preceding Kohl government.

Fischer's views and recommendations were embedded in German political culture, in the federal system with a clear demarcation of institutional and political competencies. France is the contrasting case with political power centralised in Paris. French politicians and experts have viewed the EU as a power multiplier for French viewpoints. Germany has always been a loyal supporter of French integrations plans.

314 „Deutsch-französischer Beitrag zur institutionellen Architektur der Europäischen Union“, *Pressemitteilung*, no. 231 (Berlin: Presse und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung, 15 January 2003).

Prime Minister Jean Pierre Raffarin said it thus in an interview in late 2003: "If the Europe of 25 fails, what is there left for France? Just the Franco-German rapprochement."³¹⁵

The relationship with Eastern Europe

Franco-German rapprochement meant that the two confronted much of the criticism directed at their failure to keep the Stability Pact in unison. According to the Chancellor and the French Minister of Finance the budget deficit was in no small degree caused by tax dumping by the new union members.³¹⁶ These countries benefit from EU structural funds, while at the same time corporate tax rates have been reduced to attract investments. This, in addition to low wage costs, led to a relocation of industry from the West to the East. This affected labour intensive production in the West particularly hard.

The French and German leaders could do little to stop this development, apart from threatening to remove EU financial assistance. The countries targeted responded harshly. They countered by pointing out that if their economies were to reach Western levels and the need for EU support reduced, investments were a prerequisite.³¹⁷ They also questioned why only the new members were singled out for criticism; with the exception of Italy all other union members had lower corporate taxes than France and Germany.³¹⁸ This included countries like Greece, Spain and Portugal who all received considerable transfers from the EU.

315 Philip Delves Broughton, "France and Germany aim for union to challenge US", *Daily Telegraph*, 13 November 2003.

316 Martin Halusa, „Neuer Streit um den Stabilitätspakt“, *Die Welt*, 11 September 2004.

317 For a Czech response, see "Harmonizace a Sarkozy" [Harmonisation and Sarkozy], *Hospodarske noviny*, 10 September 2004; for a Polish response see Anna Slojewska, "Najpierw wspólna baza" [Above all a common basis], *Rzeczpospolita*, 11 September 2004.

318 The only exception is Italy which is wedged in between Germany and France. The numbers are taken from Alicia Martinez-Serrano and Ben Parterson, "Taxation in Europe: recent developments, European Parliament", *Economic Affairs Series*, no. 1 (2003).

The tax quarrel served to consolidate an impression in Central and Eastern Europe of Schröder's and Chirac's rapprochement as a process directed against the newcomers. This impression had gathered strength during the run-up to the attack on Iraq, and had eventually triggered the letter writing supporting US policies and a strong trans-Atlantic relationship.

Chirac's response was that the East and Central Europeans had missed a "great opportunity to shut up" and furthermore that they were "not too well behaved".³¹⁹ Any apprehensions the new EU members might have had about French attitudes were confirmed. But the lack of German criticism of Chirac's statements, open or not, came as an unpleasant surprise.³²⁰

Neither the German nor the French government made any attempts to inform or include the new eastern EU members in their plans for a "deepening" of European integration. The new members had not been briefed beforehand on German let alone French positions on important items on the EU agenda.³²¹ Likewise, problems the new members believed should be the source of concern for the whole Union have had a hard time catching the attention of Germany and France. This concerned especially developments in Belarus and Ukraine. Worsening economic and political developments there affected the new member states directly, but Poland and the Czech Republic had greater success in putting these issues on the agenda in the impotent Council of Europe than in any EU institution.

The lack of attention was mirrored in Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas' manifesto for a common European foreign policy that could function as a counter-weight to the US.³²² The Polish philosopher, Zdzisław Krasnodebski, pointed out

319 For the quotes and the Central and East European response, see Sylvaine Pasquier, "Chirac sans nuances", *L'Express*, 27 February 2003.

320 Ibid; interview with Zoltán Martinusz, Senior Advisor to the Hungarian Prime Minister, Budapest 22 November 2003.

321 interview with Zoltán Martinusz.... In the year since then I have not been able to find any examples of political consultations prior to EU meetings involving German or France on the one side and the new EU members on the other.

that the anti-hegemony proclaimed by the couple amounted to little more than hegemony towards the Central and East Europeans.³²³ Whereas the manifesto was supported by an illustrious roll call of leading Western intellectuals, not a single name from what had once been east of the Iron Curtain could be found.

Probably the best response came from the Hungarian writer, Péter Esterházy, who stated that whereas he had once been an East European, he then became Central European, and then for a few months a new European, but even before he could get accustomed to it or reject it, he was now relegated to a non-core European.³²⁴

The relationship between Germany and Central and Eastern Europe was strongly influenced by Franco-German efforts to carve out an independent defence and security role for the EU.³²⁵ In the non-aligned countries, the efforts to endow the Union with a stronger military role were not unconditionally welcomed either; the Finnish and Swedish foreign ministers published a joint article in 1998 expressing the need to maintain close relations with NATO and avoid any duplication on the side of the EU.³²⁶

Security policy reorientation

France and Germany argued that plans for a military pillar supporting the EU's foreign and security policy had already been agreed to by all EU members at repeated summits throughout the 1990s. What the two countries now were

322 Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas, „Nach dem Krieg: Die Wiedergeburt Europas“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 31 May 2003. The French version appeared on the same day in *Le Monde*.

323 Krasnodebski quoted in Marko Martin, „Unter Ethos-Exporteuren“, *Die Welt*, 30 June 2003.

324 Péter Esterházy, „Wir Störenfriede. Wie groß ist der europäische Zwerg?“, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 11 June 2003.

325 See Karl-Olaf Lang, „Störenfriede oder Ideengeber? Die neuen in der GASP“, *Osteuropa*, no. 5–6 (2004): 443–458.

326 See the joint letter by the Finnish and Swedish foreign ministers published under the heading “We want to be close to NATO”: Tarja Hallonen and Lena Hjelm-Wallén, “Vi vill vara nära NATO”, *Dagens Nyheter*, 5 December 1998.

doing was simply to form what Chirac labelled a *groupe pionnier*. A go-ahead for closer co-operation had, according to the French head of state, been given at the Nice Summit. Few agreed with him. What had been agreed in Nice was that a cluster of countries could pursue integration ahead of the rest provided that it embraced at least eight countries. The exception was military matters. Here, all the Union members will have to give their approval before a decision is valid. This is difficult to achieve, especially if plans or proposals can be interpreted as either fuelling trans-Atlantic tensions, or compromising the non-aligned status of members like Austria, Sweden, Finland and Eire. These are the main reasons why Franco-German plans had problems becoming more than mere declarations of intent. In addition, bad timing and lack of transparency worked against their initiatives.

Bad timing was one of the reasons why the French-German plan for a European Security and Defence Union fell flat when it was launched. The two leaders did this during NATO's Prague Summit in late 2002. The Union was to be given responsibility for European armaments industry. Its members would be bound by a mutual defence pledge. The Union would be based on what the two leaders claimed was "verstärkte Zusammenarbeit" – enhanced co-operation. This meant that two, or preferably more countries should be permitted to carry integration further than the rest.

The response from the rest of the Union was negative, not least due to the fact that few were ready to believe the two leaders' pledges that this would strengthen NATO's European pillar. When France had come forward with a similar proposal in 1998, reception had been far more welcoming. At that time, Britain had been the chosen partner and not Germany. British participation was perceived as a guarantee against having the French use the EU to promote their own security preferences. Yet, the St. Malo Declaration signed between Blair and Chirac in the summer of 1998 came to nothing. The British were dismayed at the lack of progress on the French side. The plans petered out. Close relations with Germany on security and defence were not only a good, but on some points better

alternative. The British had an entrenched conception of their international role, the Germans were slowly starting to define theirs and were consequently more malleable.

Nevertheless, the Union proposal in 2002 glossed over the fundamental difference in security policy outlook that had marred Franco-German co-operation on foreign and security issues ever since the Elysée Agreement had been signed in 1963. Shortly before it was signed, the German Parliament had insisted on including a preamble emphasising Germany's membership of NATO and the US role in European security. This clearly dampened French ambitions. De Gaulle famously stated that treaties were like roses and young girls; they last only as long as they last.³²⁷ If the Elysée Agreement failed to be implemented, he added, it would hardly be the first time in history.

Thus, the Agreement remained little more than a declaration of intent until the 1980s when Chancellor Helmut Schmidt and President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing referred to it as a basis for closer co-operation. But this co-operation concerned primarily economics and political contacts. Security policy did not gain priority until 1987 when Kohl and Mitterand decided to establish a Security and Defence Council. It functioned as a bilateral discussion forum, but no independent initiatives were launched that could have been interpreted as directed against NATO, let alone the US.

Jointly, the two countries decided to establish the Franco-German Brigade in 1989. The Brigade became the key unit of the Eurocorps established in 1992 with force contributions from Spain and Belgium. The Brigade and the Eurocorps came to spearhead a development towards multinational force formations that has now become prevalent in Western Europe. Countries pool their resources making it possible to purchase more expensive equipment and undertake a range of military missions that would have out of reach for one country. But in all these cases, contributions are subject to stringent political limits as to the kind of engagements that may be undertaken.

327 André Passeron, *De Gaulle parle 1962-1966* (Paris: Plon, 1966), p. 340.

Yet, Germany has harboured few reservations against deepening co-operation with France.³²⁸ How was perhaps best illustrated by the EU military mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo which ended in September 2003. German participation was limited; the French bore the brunt. And whereas French interests in the region can easily be identified, Germany has none.³²⁹

The German leadership's willingness to accept French positions at odds with German priorities remained considerable. This was evident in the wake of the French *Loi Militaire* issued in 2002 outlining the security threats facing France. Here, the possibility of nuclear pre-emptive strikes against terrorist bases was mentioned as one option available.³³⁰ One might have expected this to cause objections on the German side. The fight against nuclear weapons had a long standing within the SPD and the Green Party; when the Bush Administration had invoked pre-emption as part of its war on terror it had been strongly criticised by the German government. This time, however, the government in Berlin was silent.³³¹

The reason for German reticence on French pre-emption may well be that in this relationship Germany was the demander. While Kohl maintained close contacts with Washington, Warsaw and Moscow in addition to Paris, Schröder was left with Paris. Yet, irrespective of this rapprochement. French ideas on foreign and security policy

328 This was clearly expressed in after the bilateral summit in Schwerin in 2002. See *Propositions conjointes franco-allemandes pour la Convention européenne dans le domaine de la politique européenne de sécurité et de défense*, CONV 422/02 (Bruxelles: La convention européenne, 22 November 2002) (EUROPA [online 17 November 2005]).

329 See Thomas Scheen, „Angst vor der Nach-Intervention“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 June 2003; and Johannes Thomas, „Führungsmacht Frankreich – Ohnmacht Deutschlands“, *Die Politische Meinung* (April 2004): 16–20.

330 *Loi de Programmation Militaire 2003–2008*, Loi n° 2003-73 du 27 janvier 2003 (Paris: Ministre de la Défense, 2002) (Legifrance [online 17 November 2005]), see the chapter entitled “Les fonctions stratégiques”.

331 Michael Stürmer, „Russischer Erstschlag“, *Die Welt*, 10 September 2004.

differ from those held by Germany. The French political elite has long worked for an alternative power pole to the US with France playing a prominent role. To France, the EU has traditionally been the best means to achieve this.³³² The sceptical perceptions of French designs prevailing in the new members countries, however, makes it difficult to imagine that the Union can serve as the springboard for French ambitions. Merkel's coalition government has stated its interests in a more distinct European voice in security and defence matters, but that is hardly the same thing as working for a more pronounced French role.

Conclusion: Unsolved issues

The French line that a core must be allowed to carry integration ahead of the rest in the field of foreign and security policy has been dampened. Criticism by the countries that found themselves excluded by the French-German bloc was not without effect. In an interview from 2003, Prime Minister Raffarin declared that "the German-French alliance is important, but it is not sufficient".³³³ The need to find allies had been made all the more acute when the EU Commission was appointed in 2004. France was only offered the Commission for Transport. Germany fared somewhat better, with Günter Verheugen being named Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry. With less institutional power, relying on each other will not be enough. The problem is that in the search for allies, differences may easily be accentuated and the bilateral relationship strained further.

Nowhere was this clearer than in the case of Turkish membership of the Union. The outgoing German government supported the idea; the new coalition government apparently

332 See Elisabeth Le, "The concept of Europe in Le Monde's editorials. Tensions in the construction of a European identity", *Journal of Language and Politics*, no. 1-2 (2002): 277-322.

333 Gerald Braunberger, "Die deutsch-französische Allianz ist wichtig, aber nicht ausreichend", *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 27 October 2003; and Anne-Marie Le Gloannec, "Germany and France must work for all EU members", *Financial Times*, 19 November 2003.

will not try to counteract the membership although it is unlikely that it will be anything close to the active promoter the Red-Green cabinet was. The main obstacle may turn out to be France; President Chirac has called for a French referendum on the issue. Not only is the lack of co-ordination between the two countries on this issue in stark contrast to political pledges, but Chirac's proposal is second best to a clear no.

From a German perspective, Turkish membership will enable the EU to play a stronger role in the Middle East. But the two country's standing in the region differs sharply. Germany has carefully managed to build a good relationship with Israel. Whereas Israeli perceptions of France are extremely negative, anti-Semitic attacks in France and the traditional close relationship between Paris and Damascus are only two of the reasons. Differences notwithstanding, the two countries issued a joint declaration on the Middle East. The reason being, according to a French diplomat, that Fischer's concepts were far too similar to US plans for the region.³³⁴

Another issue on which a joint position was impossible concerned Germany's quest for a seat on the UN Security Council. When Schröder took office, the government's position was that the EU should jointly share a seat as an expression of the Union's ability to agree on foreign and security policy issues. Iraq showed that this was at best premature. Schröder changed and started to argue that Germany should have a seat of its own, even if this was at the expense of a future EU one or the current French.³³⁵

Loss of a permanent seat would have been a powerful expression of France's declining status. If so, it would only reinforce the sense of falling, coined in the title of Nicolaz Bavarez' *La France qui tombe* – Falling France, which has pervaded much of French debate.³³⁶ Bavarez was mainly pre-occupied with French industrial decline, but he also wrote

334 Laurent Zecchini, "Paris et Berlin se mettent d'accord sur un réponse au plan américain de 'Grand Moyen Orient'", *Le Monde*, 4 March 2004.

335 Katja Ridderbusch, „EU-Länder lehnen deutschen Sitz im Sicherheitsrat ab“, *Die Welt*, 10 September 2004.

about the close relationship with Germany. His conclusion was that German economic decline stifled France.³³⁷ In the discussion that followed, especially on the pages of *Le Monde*, most agreed with Bavarez pessimistic conclusions, but none seemed to value the close relationship with Germany or even contemplate the possibility that this relationship might somehow compensate for France's "fall".

The new German chancellor does not seem to put much emphasis on the bilateral relationship. Although Merkel is in favour of continued integration efforts, she has argued that Germany must above all return to its role as 'the honest broker' and represent the interests of all the members of the EU.³³⁸ Making up an integrationist core with France has not figured among her EU policy concepts. On this, her views correspond with those expressed by Nicolas Sarkozy, the French Interior Minister and contender for the presidency. He has expressed strong doubts about the continued value of a special relationship with Germany.³³⁹

This does not mean that the two countries are entering the closing stages of what started forty years ago. The opposite effect should not be discounted. Sarkozy and Merkel may find it easier to attract new allies and thus break the image of an exclusive club. Nevertheless, including more countries may not be sufficient for a revitalised relationship. What has been lacking so far is a German debate on which national priorities are best served by the close relationship with France, and when the country should look for other allies.

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- 336 Nicolaz Bavarez, *La France qui tombe* (Paris: Editions Perrin, 2003). The conclusions drawn were discussed by leading French intellectuals in a series of articles published by *Le Monde* under the heading "Comment va la France?".
- 337 Bavarez, *La France qui tombe ...*, p. 20–22.
- 338 „Blair hält Agrarsubventionen für sinnlos“, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21 Juni 2005.
- 339 "Nicolas Sarkozy: Ma méthode pour réformer la France". Interview published in the periodical *les Échos* 23 June 2004. The interview is available on the home page of the French Ministry of Economy (MINEFI [online 17 November 2005]).

An analysis of the French-German relationship issued in 2003 by the German Council on Foreign Relations and IFRI, the French Institute of International Relations, strongly urged for a resumption of the countries' role as the engine of European integration.³⁴⁰ The alternative would be ad-hoc alliances, and they could never be as permanent as the Franco-German tandem, the analysis concluded.

Yet, this recommendation fudged the issue. The fundamental problem was that the relationship was hardly one characterised by equality. Instead, it might be more proper to claim that it was based on complementarities. Adenauer needed a close relationship with France to prevent de Gaulle from going solo on security issues and to have a guarantee should the US and Russia find a solution to European security problems without consulting Germany. France needed Germany as the economic backbone to French proposals for European integration. No German political leader harboured any illusions that his country could assume leadership role in Europe. Only jointly with other countries, above all France, could Germany pursue integration further. French leaders, on the contrary, always had leadership ambitions and wanted to use the EU as a tool to further them. But with Unification, Germany was no longer just the Bonn republic, with "a small town in Germany" as its capital.³⁴¹ Berlin is something very different. Germany is now a "normal country" to quote Chancellor Schröder. This means that the balance in the partnership has changed considerably.

Furthermore, it remains an open question whether the two countries share a coherent vision of where European integration should be moving. This has been their pre-eminent leadership quality in the past. Today, the ability to play a similar role is hampered by three unsolved issues. The first concerns institutional reform. Germany's preference for a federalised system and increased democratic control of the EU is at odds with French positions. No movement from either

340 Guérot et al., „Deutschland, Frankreich und Europa....“

341 This was the title of a spy novel by John Le Carré with the sleepy provincialism of Bonn as its backdrop.

party can be detected. Schröder pleaded for a stronger European Commission and that its president should be elected by the European Parliament. Soon after he came out in favour of a joint Aznar-Blair-Chirac paper which recommended a far more intergovernmental model with a president of the European Council as leader, and that this president should be elected by the heads of state and governments.³⁴² Such wavering made the alliance between Germany and an other EU country to push for reforms close to impossible.

The second unsolved issue concerns EU finances, how much should be transferred and how EU assistance should be provided. The compromise reached at the Brussels hotel room is nothing but a postponement of the real issue.

Finally, the two countries are not in agreement on the final shape of the Union. Fischer's Humboldt Speech contained a long passage on its future size. It could not be explicitly defined, Fischer stated, but depended rather on which countries would qualify for membership. Geographical limits were irrelevant, political values mattered. Although his pledge of a transfer of foreign policy power to Brussels differed little from the line proffered by various French politicians, this was one field where the two countries differed.

France has only grudgingly accepted enlargement, starting with de Gaulle's famous no to British membership just after the Elysée Treaty had been signed. The French attitude seems to be that enlargement is a graceful gift bestowed upon the countries invited to join, Chirac's comments on the Central and Eastern Europeans' lack of manners are difficult to interpret in any other light. The German approach is that enlargement is the outcome of a historical process; much like what Willy Brandt said about German unification that what belongs together would grow together. Enlargement seen from Berlin is therefore a process that would be senseless to prevent once a country has qualified on political and economic grounds.

342 See Josef Janning, "Germany's European Policy under a 'Red-Green' Government. A Mid-Term Review", *German Foreign Policy in Dialogue*, no. 9 (2003): 16–22.

Chirac's idea of the two countries as a *groupe pionnier*, Fischer's *Gravitationszentrum*, or the more widely used concept of European core seem to have been lost. Iraq was the catalyst for this process. Rather, what the two countries have managed was to be the *avant-garde* in the trans-Atlantic split as well as in the internal European divide over the future of the EU.

Chapter 6

A Red-Green balance board

After seven years of Red-Green coalition government, it is clear that Schröder did not keep his election promise: “Nicht alles anders, aber vieles besser machen” – “not everything differently, but many things better”. In fact, most parameters that had defined German foreign and security policy since the establishment of the Federal Republic in 1949, were altered. This process has been outlined here.

As a summary, three questions will be posed. The first concerns the gap between the government’s emphasis on multilateralism and the policies adopted; the second asks whether breaking the old alliance pattern actually widened the scope for German foreign policy; and the final summarises some of the observations made in the study on the relationship between red-Green foreign policy and German political culture.

Still multilateralist?

Schröder and Fischer had repeatedly underlined that Germany remained a committed member of the EU, NATO and the UN. These organisations were regarded as the most important venues for the drafting and presentation of foreign policy initiatives, and it was in Germany’s interest that they should retain that quality. Schröder’s speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2005 was an attempt to revive NATO so that it could once more serve as a key security policy-debating

forum. Thus, at least on the declaratory level one might conclude that there was an important degree of continuity, that Schröder did not deviate from the traditional German view that the country's interests are best furthered in close co-operation with others, never alone.

However, no matter how much the leading members of the government, including the Chancellor, pledged their loyalty to these international organisations, statements pointing in the opposite direction emerged as well. The most notable was the insistence that he would base his foreign and security policy on a "German way".³⁴³ This is not necessarily a reason for criticism; other countries pursue policies based on their own national priorities. The reason why Schröder provoked criticism was initially historical, German interests were all too easily associated with past aggression. In Central and Eastern Europe, these fears did not dissipate easily and could be heard whenever German-Russian relations or German economic might were discussed. To the West, the insistence on putting national interests first came to be associated with Germany defaulting on its international commitments. The EU Stability Pact was broken years on end. EU expenditure, which was in urgent need of reform when the Red-Greens were elected in 1998, only underwent superficial changes. Together with France, Germany decided to postpone the entire issue.

The same attitude was adopted when the reform of EU institutions was put on the agenda. Germany had originally wanted greater democratic control via the popularly elected Parliament. Other countries were known to favour the same solution. Nonetheless, Germany did not try to gather support for its views, choosing instead to ally itself with France. As a result, a compromise on the division of powers between EU institutions was brokered which at best can be described as half-baked.

Germany had traditionally been the Union's engine, not only due to its sheer economic power but also because it always supported integration. This changed under Schröder.

343 „Die SPD im Wahlkampf...”

On important areas like labour and services, Germany adopted a protective policy. When looking for Red-Green imprints on the European Union, this is certainly among the most important. Since Schröder's policy deviated from the entrenched German line on the EU, this was also the most unexpected.

Under the Red-Green government, the United Nations became a focal point. The main reason was the transatlantic debate on how the organisation should respond to Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq. Schröder was eager to portray his country as a staunch supporter of the organisation. Germany is one of the largest financial contributors and has also become an important source of UN peacekeepers.

His no to any German participation in Iraq did not tally with this support for the UN. It was made before the Security Council had reached its final decision. Had the Council supported the US view, and this was not as unlikely at the time, Germany would have been isolated but the UN would have been weakened by one of its key members refusing to participate. On this point, Schröder was rescued by the turn of events.

Another, less discernible argument modifying his repeated emphasis on the UN, was the lack of any German initiatives in the UN reform debate. Whereas the other larger members had defined some priorities on how the organisation could be made more efficient and more responsive to global security issues, not least the spread of WMD, it was close to impossible to discover Germany's views. The only issue where the government had a clear priority concerned a German seat on the Security Council. When asked why, the reply would unavoidably refer to German financial contributions, what the seat should be used for was never outlined.

One organisation in which Germany's involvement grew during Red-Green rule was NATO. German soldiers were sent on NATO missions in increasing numbers. However, this commitment in men and equipment was counteracted politically by Schröder's attempts to create a counterweight to the US together with France and Russia, and within the EU

together with France, Belgium and Luxembourg. Other European countries reacted angrily; in the end the attempts only served to split the European Union.

More scope?

An important question is to what extent the scope for independent decision-making changed. With the end of the Cold War, Germany could remove what Egon Bahr referred to as the protectionist status. His description was apt – German sovereignty was limited by the protection offered by the US security guarantee provided through NATO. The German army could not be deployed outside the country, it was subjected to close parliamentary scrutiny, and decision-making procedures were characterised by many checks and balances. This reluctance was a fundamental quality of German political culture. Under Schröder, it changed as the Bundeswehr came to play an increasingly profiled role as a foreign policy tool. This gave the Chancellor scope to criticise the US. During the Gulf War, when Germany for the last time resorted to check book diplomacy, anything similar to Schröder's speech in Munich would only have lent itself to ridicule.

Schröder had an easy start, not just because of the end of block confrontation, but because Kohl had left a legacy of friendly relations with all the country's neighbours as well as the US. It is possible that Schröder chose to regard this as less of an asset and instead more of a constriction. Considerations for Polish reactions limited how far Germany could pursue close relations with Russia. As mentioned, under Kohl both Russia and Poland would at times complain that negotiations moved slowly ahead due to the German policy of informing other relevant parties and tuning its views with them so as not to cause any resentment. Likewise, Germany had to balance its relations with France with the priority given to NATO and the US on security issues. This limited the scope for action available not only to Germany, but to all its partners as well. The bonus was that these limitations created predictability. The scope for action was well known to all, and thus the

likely outcome of any negotiation process as well. Once these considerations are relegated, negotiations proceed at a faster pace. The German-Russian agreement over the Baltic Sea pipeline is only the most recent example, others have been discussed on the preceding pages.

Yet front-page successes like the pipeline, the St. Petersburg dialogue and the proposals launched on European security with France, Luxembourg and Belgium may prove to be untenable in the long run. The pipeline has widened the distance between Germany and the three Baltic republics, Poland and Ukraine. These countries, which had traditionally sought Germany's support, turned elsewhere. That many of them turned to the US on security issues can hardly have been what the Red-Green government had wanted.

A matter of identity?

The insistence on German interests was made without clearly defining what they encompassed. To a certain extent, they were only revealed gradually as foreign and security policy was formulated. The problem was, as outlined above, that this policy was not without contradictions. A clear concept was lacking, something both German political scientists and politicians pointed to as problematic. This sentiment could also be found within the government. Defence Minister Strück regretted that Bundeswehr missions abroad had not been subject to critical debate.³⁴⁴ He had done his utmost to trigger one with statements like "Germany is defended at the feet of the Hindukush" and "the whole world is the Bundeswehr's deployment area". The lack of a debate may well be the surest sign that the population accepted the radical redrawing of their country's security policy. This also meant that the population had accepted the serious modification of Germany's image as a civilian power. Although peaceful solutions were still preferred, military means to quell a conflict were no longer rejected a priori.

344 „Wir müssen uns hinter keiner Armee verstecken“, *Das Parlament*, no. 21 (2005).

To conclude that there was no debate on the country's international role would be erroneous, if not a little arrogant. Yet, much attention was devoted to how Germany's values and interests differed from those held by the US; only rarely did they move beyond this negation. Few attempts were made to narrow attention down to more sizeable topics, above all what the country's security policy should be. The failure to do so was not surprising; a security policy presupposes a definition of national interests. During the Cold War, "national interests" were hardly ever referred to by German politicians or foreign policy experts. This did of course not mean that they were bereft of any concepts of what the country's priorities should be. As Helga Haftendorn has observed, full integration in NATO, the EU and the United Nations was regarded as the best way to safeguard Germany's national interests. Germany's foreign and security policies should not cast any doubt over the country's allegiance to these organisations. The fact that Germany might have priorities that differed was rarely admitted openly.

How Schröder interpreted German national interests became clear during the Iraq crisis. What he did was to invoke German belief in the preferability of peaceful solutions as a justification for a no. That may lead us to conclude that German political culture, as it had been entrenched since 1949, was a stable parameter that Schröder could use as his reference point. However, this stability should not be exaggerated. Political culture is influenced by foreign policy, by the choices made and the way they are implemented. This reciprocal relationship will often be mutually reinforcing; for instance Germany's European identity is strengthened through participation in the EU, while at the same time it consolidates German support for a continued active membership.³⁴⁵ The role of politicians in modifying political culture should not be

345 The fact that the renunciation of the Dmark was taken virtually without any opposition, can be explained from this perspective, see Thomas Risse, Daniela Engelmann-Martin, Hans Joachim Knopf and Klaus Roscher, "To Euro or Not to Euro. The EMU and Identity Politics in the European Union", *European Journal of International Relations*, no. 2 (1999): 147-187.

overlooked either. They often have the function of gatekeepers, introducing new ideas and concepts that serve their priorities. One such case was SPD leader Franz Müntefering's accusations against international capitalism. Similar sentiments had been strong among the rank-and-file, especially the young. Until then, the SPD was an ardent supporter of free trade, but also a strong supporter of international solidarity; in other words social market economics writ large.

New leadership – new politics?

In the course of the seven years of Red-Green rule, the position of foreign policy in German politics changed. It was no longer a mere Cinderella, but had proved to be very much the winning ticket in the 2002 campaign. In 2005, attention was again firmly on domestic issues. Although Angela Merkel expressed that she wants to pay more attention to the interests of both the smaller countries in Central and Eastern Europe and the transatlantic relationship, she has not indicated that foreign and security policy will change radically under her government. Her scope for doing that would anyway be constricted by the appointment of Frank Steinmeier, one of Schröder's close associates, to the post of foreign minister.³⁴⁶

Before his appointment, Steinmeier gave a speech at the largest German foreign policy think-tank, the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik in Berlin.³⁴⁷ He stated that Germany should maintain an active foreign policy. In this, close transatlantic relations played an important role. Apart from that, the speech contained nothing that indicated new initiatives, or an attempt to define where Germany's national interests lay apart from the trite comments about the need to maintain good neighbourly relations with other countries.

Before ending, I would like to recall the recommendation made by Hans-Peter Schwarz in his seminal analysis of Federal Germany's political culture.³⁴⁸ According to him, Germany

346 See Werner. A. Perger, „Der Nachfolger“, *Die Zeit*, 13 October 2005.

347 Steinmeier, „Die neuen Fragen...“

could not expect to play a more assertive role without the country's foreign policy interests being clearly spelt out. That would endow Germany with a degree of predictability that has been lacking under the Red-Green government. And it should be added, predictability is a precondition if alliances are to be built.

In her warning that German foreign policy could not simply continue along the old beaten track, Merkel showed that she was aware of the costs of Schröder's foreign policy project.³⁴⁹ Steinmetz' speech could also be interpreted as a wish for calmer waters and more predictability.³⁵⁰ This might be a daunting task. The reason is that foreign and security policy is no longer removed from everyday politics. The reason is, as has been implied more or less openly on the preceding pages, that Schröder chose to use this area actively in his redefinition of Germany's international role. That process is far from finished, and this will be Schröder's legacy for the years to come.

348 Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Die Gezähmten Deutschen, Von der Machtbesessenheit zur Machtvergessenheit* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt) 1985. 'Klare Sprache' is the heading given to the concluding pages.

349 Merkel, „Ein einfaches 'Weiter so' wird Europa zerstören...“.

350 See for instance Thomas Speckmann, „Friedensmacht und Waffenbruder“, *Internationale Politik* (August 2005): 26–55.

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