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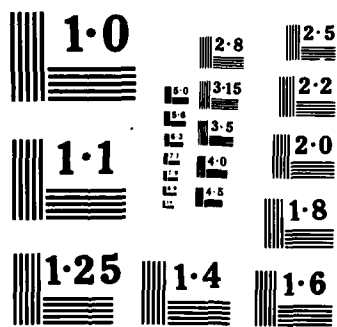
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PUBLIC OPINION AND SECURITY POLICY IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF
GERMANY: ELITE AND MASS OPINION IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Peter Schmidt

September 1984

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PREFACE

This study is the result of efforts undertaken during the first part of a 10-months visit at Rand. It is an attempt to elaborate some principal trends in public opinion on security policy in the Federal Republic of Germany within its international context. The purpose is to give some idea of the "political climate" within which security policy in Germany has to work today.

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SUMMARY

Recent years showed a remarkable shift in the perception of the Federal Republic of Germany within important allied countries. Whereas the old fear of "militarism" and "authoritarianism" almost totally disappeared in the 1970s, "neutralism" and "pacifism" are now at stake. The typical "critical view" of West Germany's standpoint on important security issues can be described as follows:

1. The traditional threat perception has unrealistically diminished.
2. Perhaps the Germans still accept deterrence, but their preparedness for real warfighting, as one precondition for deterrence, is very weak. They tend to replace deterrence and defense by a policy of detente.
3. The close relationship with the United States is in danger and there is a tendency to conform more and more to Soviet ideas and policies.

This study examines these views in analyzing public opinion polls, security elite polls, and a recent general elite poll in West Germany; takes a look at the trends in the 1970s; and compares important results with opinions in principal allied countries. The results can be summarized in four areas: (1) threat perception, (2) attitudes toward deterrence/defense, (3) view of detente, and (4) view of the Alliance, especially the assessment of the relationship with the United States.

Threat Perception

There is still a perception of a threat from the communist side. It even increased in the 1970s, but was stable in the second half of that decade. The differences between West Germany and important allies, especially the United States, are a matter of scale and character. In quantitative terms threat perception is not as great in West Germany as in other important allied countries. The basic view of the threat is more political; Germany feels more threatened by a possible spillover of

a conflict from the Third World and the oil supply countries, but the differences are not very great. It is rather probable, however, that this kind of threat perception influences the view of the priorities in security policy with certain different results in comparison with important allies.

Deterrence/Defense

There is some fear in Germany--as in other countries--that a nuclear war will break out in the near future. Nevertheless, the Germans do not take the pacifist path, although there is a rather large group that seems to prefer pacifism. The majority of the general public and the security elite believes in deterrence and is prepared to "fight for freedom." But deterrence is not as highly estimated as in other NATO countries. Deterrence from the German point of view is defensive; the Germans do not want to cause unnecessary conflicts by military means. Therefore, they prefer military balance more than military strength or superiority. In the view of the German public the credibility of the current military strategy obviously depends on its ability to avoid nuclear war.

Detente

There is no doubt that West Germany is more detente-minded than other allies. But the other western countries are very close when we examine the opinions of the security elites concerning specific detente policies. France, often blamed for being *the* weak point in the Alliance, seems to be the real hardliner in NATO at the elite level. For example, it is the French security elite that puts more emphasis on such issues as not pursuing detente independently of the military balance, not seeing trade as an instrument to support detente, and looking at military strength as an important factor in international relations. Considering this, it cannot be expected that a closer relationship between Germany and France--seen by some scholars as a partial substitute to the German-American relations--will occur without problems.

The Alliance

The German view of the United States is characterized by a strong demand for a close relationship in security matters. Nevertheless, two negative tendencies reinforce one another. On the one side the credibility of the United States in foreign policy matters seems to be declining; on the other side the Soviet Union has been quite successful in improving its positive (peace) image, especially in the context of the INF negotiations.

Conclusions

There is a danger that the current criticism will become a constant and growing attendant of the Alliance. One has to remember, however, that the Alliance has never had a "golden age" in a realistic view. There was always some criticism from different and changing groups and countries. The leaders in the Alliance must be led by realistic expectations. The Alliance can only suffer from a policy that expects a totally shared and detailed overall strategy. That is not the way to a perfect solution. In this case an old saying seems true: Often less is more. Or, as Neustadt said in his study about the difficulties in bringing two political machines in the Alliance in step, "What remains? Simplicity."

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I. INTRODUCTION

"Millions of Germans marching and demonstrating against new weaponry? How can that be? Only yesterday, it seems, they were trampling the earth in their brown shirts and brutal boots, singing dark songs that called for blood. From Frederick the Great to Bismarck to the Kaiser to Hitler, some lucid intervals aside, they seemed to move along on iron rails. When the Allies marched into Germany in 1945, one of their first orders of business was the effort--many thought it hopeless--to "demilitarize" the soul of their vanquished foe."¹

This dramatic statement of an American scholar concerning the recent changes in Germany expresses doubts many have arising from Germany's foreign and security policy. Some are afraid of West German pacifist tendencies and the supposed consequences for the security of the Western democracies. Others believe that there must be something behind the curtain--a dramatic change in policy to reunite with East Germany and forge an opening to the East? That is probably the main question in France.² In the United States nobody would be surprised to read something like this: "At a time when the German situation is in flux, Americans have a special reason to appreciate Mitterand's France as a solid anchor of the West."³ That is a new interpretation of the American view of the Alliance. In regard to the history of NATO and the troublemaking role of France in it, it sounds rather strange.

¹Kellen, Konrad, "The New Germans," *New York Times Magazine*, August 5, 1984, p. 18.

²A good insight into such French "feelings" was given at a Colloquium of the French-German Institute in December 1983 (see Becker, 1983, p. 2; Nonnenmacher, 1983, p. 6). In 1962 Walter Lippmann wrote: "The hard line France takes about Berlin and the Soviet Union is founded...on a basic French national determination not to have to live with a large united Germany. At bottom the hard policy is directed not against the Russians but against those Germans who want to make an opening to the East." (p. 32).

³"An unexpected anchor," *Los Angeles Times*, March 21, 1984, Part II, p. 6. For an overview of the American criticism see Schweigler, 1984, pp. 1-5.

All doubts and criticisms focus on whether the Germans still accept the fundamentals of NATO--the perception of a military threat from the Soviet Union, a close relationship between West Germany and the United States, and a strategy of deterrence, traditionally strongly supported in the Federal Republic.⁴ The typical "critical views" of West Germany's standpoint on these three issues can be described as follows:

- The traditional threat perception has unrealistically diminished.
- Perhaps the Germans still accept deterrence, but their preparedness for real warfighting, as one precondition for deterrence, is very weak. They tend to replace deterrence and defense by a policy of detente.
- The close relationship with the United States is in danger and there is a tendency to conform more and more to Soviet ideas and policies.

The following analysis is about the public view of all these fundamental questions and criticisms as reflected in poll data. The central question will be whether the critical view, mentioned above, can be confirmed by the results of public opinion polls. In examining public opinion, this study will distinguish among the general public, the national security elite, and the general elite. The German data will be compared with the public views of important allied countries.

In using polls to describe and explain security policy, one has to take into account that this method gives only a partial insight into the nature of policy and has pitfalls.

1. There is a difference between polls and policy. One reason is that the policy of a government involves many issues. Poll data describes only the political milieu within which policy

⁴For the consensus based on these essentials in Germany see for the mid-1960s Deutsch et al., 1967; for the mid-1970s see Schoessler and Weede, 1978.

occurs. In a democracy there is always a more or less close connection between public opinion and policy. Each democratic government, however, has to combine issues and a line of policy in its own way, and this flexibility is a necessity for each responsible government. Polls cannot replace the election process with its open discussion about several issues, giving each side a chance for action and reaction. If one takes a comparative perspective, one has to face the problem that polls influence politics differently in each country.⁵

2. Most people are not interested in foreign policy.⁶ The answers are therefore of different weight. Some have insight and a distinct opinion, others know little or nothing about an issue and have therefore only a day-to-day opinion; and there are certainly some with meager knowledge but definite opinions. The consequence is a danger in polling opinions that can change very quickly.⁷ During 1983, for example, polls in Germany showed opposition of about 70 percent against the possible deployment of American missiles in Germany. But a poll of the German Defense Ministry had much better results: 58 percent voted in favor of the possible deployment. The difference is most likely due to the specific interpretation of the issue transmitted with the wording of the question.⁸ When it is

⁵Public opinion polls in West Germany get a great deal of attention during the debate about security policy, because at the elite level it is seen as important to take public opinion into account: a broad spectrum of people have to accept the government's military policy (for example, ex-chancellor Helmut Schmidt, Social Democratic Party, and Kurt Biedenkopf, the chief of the Christian Democratic Party in Nordrhein-Westfalen. For the latter see the interview in *Der Spiegel*, "Das Vertrauen ist bruechig geworden," Dec. 19, 1983, pp. 28-34).

⁶Nevertheless, the Germans seem to be much more interested than citizens of other democratic countries (see Merkl, 1980, pp. 160-161).

⁷See Robinson and Meadow, 1982, p.21-22.

⁸See Hagstotz, 1983, p. 15-17. The question was: "The West has to remain strong enough towards the Soviet Union. Therefore it is necessary to station modern atomic weapons in West Europe, when the Soviet Union does not take down their new medium-range weapons." The rather positive response is probably due to two things: (1) The "defensive appeal" ("has to remain strong enough"); (2) it is not mentioned that the United States would deploy these missiles.

- Approximately 60 percent hold the opinion that the Soviet Union is not an aggressive but an *offensive* power, which means that the USSR sees its military power as a political instrument to change the correlation of forces in order to expand its influence more indirectly.
- Only slightly over 10 percent see the USSR in a *defensive* position.⁸

In the case of "threat perception," it is possible to compare the opinion of the general elite and the security elite in the Federal Republic. One question concerning this variable was posed in both the Fuehrungsschicht and the SIPLA study with basically the same results.⁹

- The USSR is above all interested in the continuance of its empire and the maintenance of its East-European pawns. It is primarily defensive and thinks in terms of maintaining stability (security elite = 15.1 percent; general elite = 18 percent).
- The USSR aims only at the domination of Europe and is therefore offensive both in the political and military field toward West Europe (security elite = 1 percent; general elite = 0.7 percent).
- Besides its offensive security policy the USSR takes advantage of all opportunities to expand its influence (security elite = 51.9 percent; general elite = 65 percent).
- The USSR aims at global hegemony in the long term (security elite = 32 percent; general elite = 17 percent).¹⁰

⁸These variables were constructed from several questions concerning the view of the Soviet Union (see Schmidt and Jung, 1983, pp. 37-38). It can be supposed that these results are therefore of a rather high validity.

⁹See Schoessler and Jung, 1982, p. 68 and Wildenmann et al., 1982, pp. 74-75.

¹⁰The sector "party elites" reveals differences between the CDU/CSU and the SPD that mirror the current political situation quite clearly with regard to threat perception. Both parties prefer the third answer (CDU/CSU = 59.2 percent; SPD = 54.2 percent). In both party elites, an offensive view of the Soviet Union dominates, but the SPD has a very

Table 1

PRIMARY THREATS

Question 4: What do you perceive as the *primary* threats to your nation's security today and in the next 5-10 years, if any? Please identify up to three and number them in order of importance ("1" most important, "2" second-most important, "3" third-most important).

threats: today

first-most important

(Selection)

	FRG ^a	F	GB	NL	US
Soviet expansionism	18	36	16	19	23
The confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union	25	7	21 ^a	19	22
Destabilizing effects due to development of new weapons systems (e.g. provoke arms races, encourage a first strike, etc.)	22	0	17	18	16

SOURCE: Siegmann, 1983, p. 4.

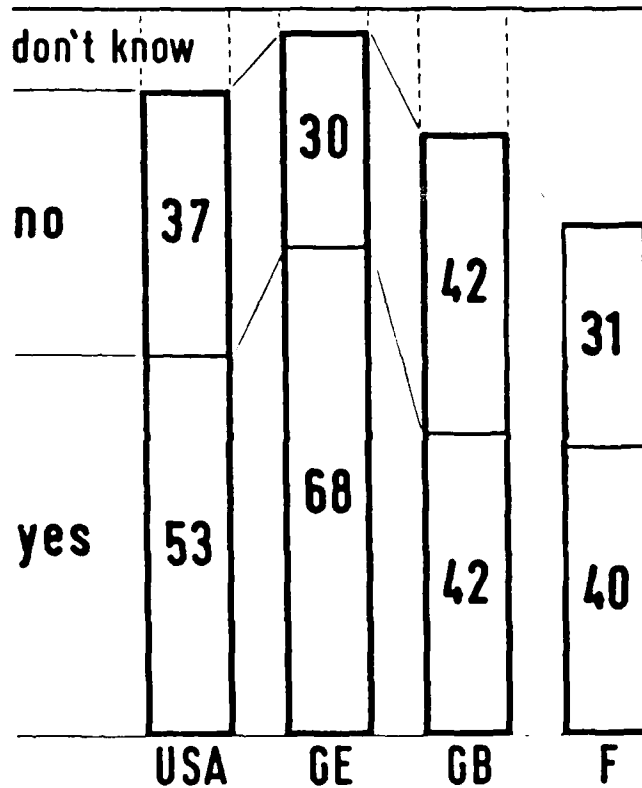
^aWeighted along party lines

The SIPLA study shows the character of threat perception among the German security elite in distinguishing among aggressive, offensive, and defensive images of the Soviet Union. The results are:

- Less than 30 percent believe that the Soviet Union is *aggressive*--prepared to fight a war to expand its influence.

COUNTRY COMPARISON

QUESTION : Are the western democracies capable at present
of stopping an expansion of Soviet influence ?



SOURCE: Institut für Geopolitik, Paris. Sample
Inquiry by EMNID, April/May 1983.

Fig. 5 - Western Capability to Stop Soviet Influence

Federal Republic only 39 percent hold this opinion. The optimistic German standpoint goes along with a rather positive view of western political efficiency and the ability to cope with the Soviet Union. The Germans believe to a higher degree than people in other NATO states that the western democracies are capable of stopping an expansion of Soviet influence (see Fig. 5). For example:

- In the Federal Republic, 68 percent prefer this answer,
- In the United States, only 53 percent.

Nevertheless, the difference is not too great. From a comparative view one can say that there is only a tendency in Germany to see oneself detached from the international situation; it is not a dominant attitude. This more moderate view of the threat is shared by the general public with the national security elite when we look at several dimensions of the threat. The Science Center Berlin Mail Survey of spring 1983 confirms that there are some differences between the Federal Republic and the United States, but they are not striking (see Table 1).

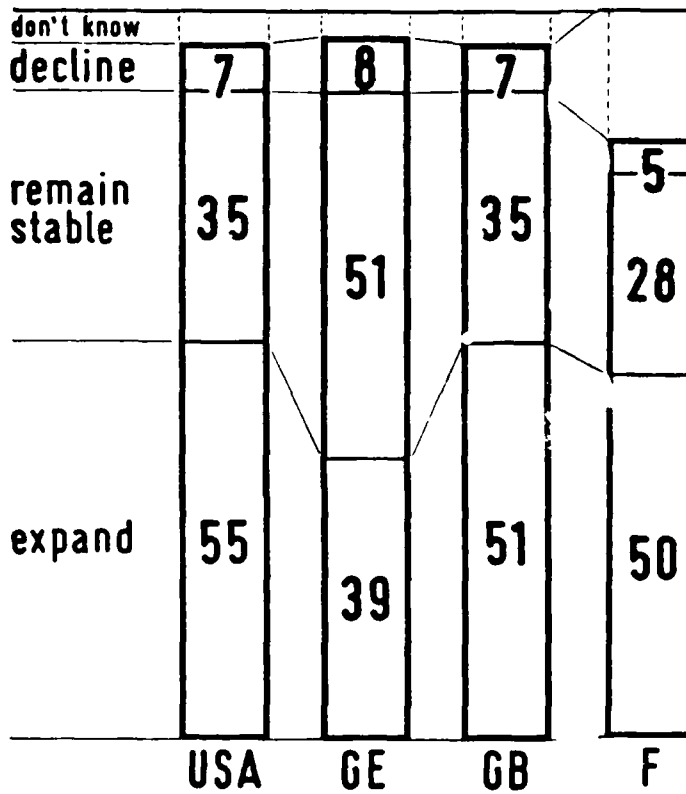
In comparison with the United States the national security elite of West Germany:

- Puts less emphasis on Soviet expansionism,
- Stresses the dangers caused by the confrontation of the United States and the USSR, and
- Is a little more critical toward the possible destabilization effects of modern weapon systems.

It is remarkable that the differences between the German and the French security elite are greater than between the German and the American elite members.

COUNTRY COMPARISON

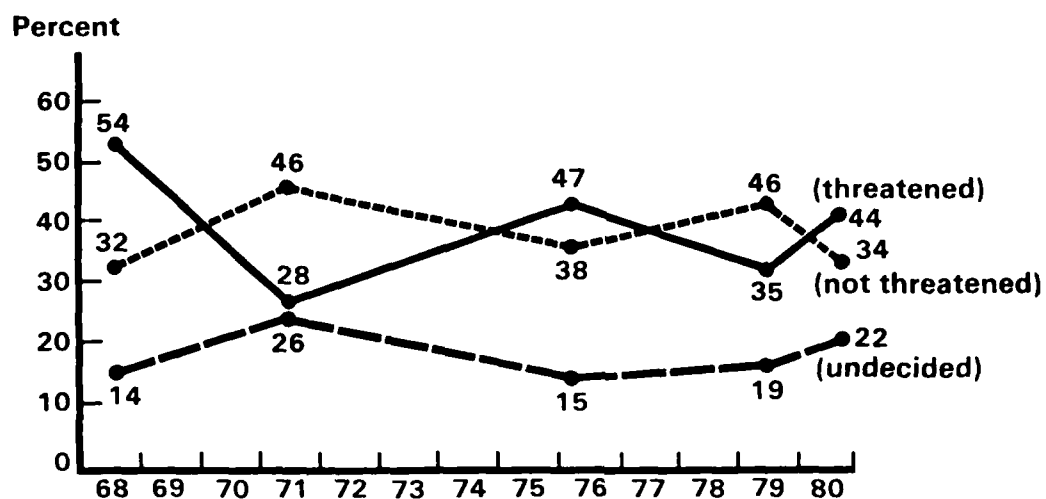
QUESTION : Is the Soviet influence in the world tending to expand, decline or remain stable at the present time ?



SOURCE: Institut für Geopolitik, Paris. Sample Inquiry by EMNID, April/May 1983.

Fig. 4 - Trend of Soviet Influence

Do you have the feeling that we are threatened by Russia or not?



SOURCE: Noelle-Neumann, 1981, p. 430.

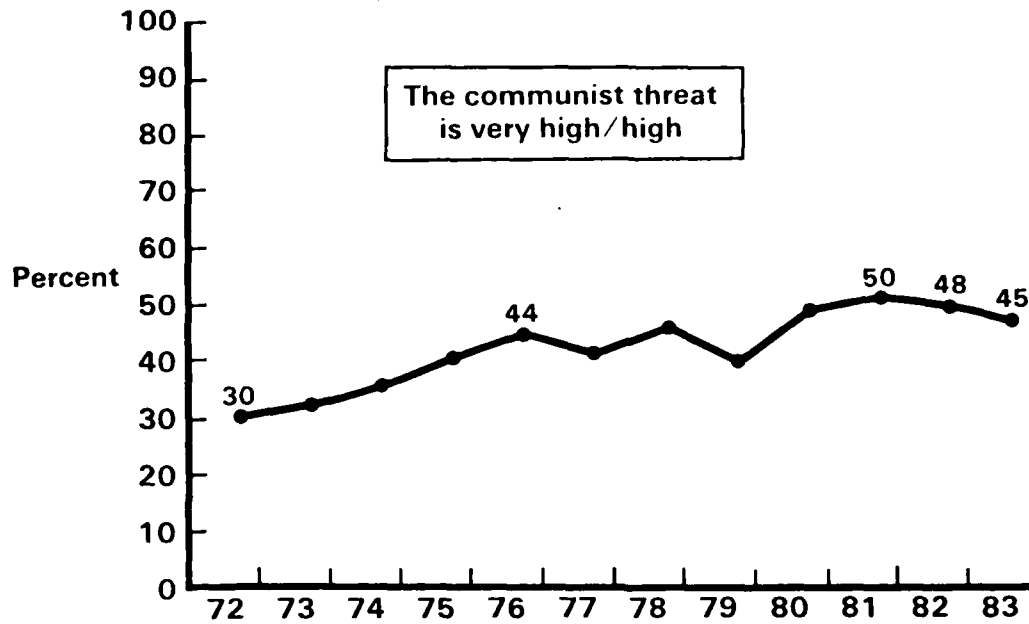
Fig. 3 - Assessment of the Threat II

Other data show that in the 1970s there was a rather balanced situation between people who believed that there was a threat and people who felt there was none (see Fig. 3). For 1980 more people believed there was a threat from the Russian side than people believed they were not threatened. Probably the increase in threat perception is because "Ostpolitik" was running out of success after having established important contracts with some Eastern countries. The fundamental political confrontation did not disappear. People who believed that there would be still more progress must have become disappointed, because it was impossible to overcome the fundamental separation of Europe.⁷

The period after 1976 is of even greater interest. In that year, former U.S. President Ford shelved the notion of "detente" because of the international activities of communism, especially in Africa. There was not a large increase in threat perception in Germany during this period. There was some increase because of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, but that was followed by a decrease. People in Germany, after having accepted the political realities in the middle of Europe, tend to understand that the international conflicts are not their own. "Ostpolitik" detached the Germans to some degree from the course of international conflicts as seen by the American government and other allies. Besides the problem of what the "objective threat" is, which we cannot discuss here, the question arises whether Germany is really an exception in this respect. The answer from poll results in several important countries is: yes, but only to some extent.

An international poll executed during spring of 1983 suggests that the German people tend to interpret the political developments of the 1970s in a positive way and to generalize their own situation and see their security problems solved to an important part by the results of *Ostpolitik* (see Fig. 4). In Germany, fewer people than in other allied states believe that the Soviet influence in the world does expand. The majority hopes that Russia's influence is stable. Most other countries have a more skeptical view, especially the United States, 55 percent of whose citizens believe that Russia does expand its influence; in the

⁷See Hassner, 1979, pp. 116-117.



SOURCE EMNID Sample Enquiry No. 2000 (members of the electorate)

Fig. 2 - Assessment of the Threat I

are no major conflicts nowadays in a concrete sense between East and West in Germany;³ in particular the current status of West Berlin is not in question.⁴ Some problems such as the automatic firing devices on the border and the amount that West German visitors must exchange per day into Eastern currency when they want to go to East Germany are not at the top of the public's attention as were, for example, the crisis in Hungary in 1956, the wall between the two Germanies in August 1961, or the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

The main conflicts have been far away: Vietnam, the several conflicts in Africa, and the invasion of Afghanistan.⁵ The military buildup of the Soviet Union is also a rather abstract matter because it is not easy to see why the Soviet Union should invade the Federal Republic. And there is also the question of whether the Soviets and the other Warsaw Pact countries are strong enough--or will become strong enough--to conclude that they can overrun West Germany with great benefits and acceptable costs.⁶

In relation to this political context, it is rather astonishing that the threat in the view of the general public (mass opinion) increased during the 1970s (see Fig. 2).

At the beginning of the 1970s--the golden age of detente--only 30 percent of the general public believed that the Communist threat was high or very high. That perception grew to 50 percent in 1981 and declined only moderately to 45 percent in 1983.

³See Hanrieder, 1980, pp. 28-30.

⁴The Soviets have not up to now taken countermeasures against the deployment of Pershing-II and cruise missiles in West Germany and not threatened the status quo in Berlin or at the traffic lines between West Berlin and the FRG.

⁵It is remarkable that the German security elite does not perceive a high threat for the next 5-10 years to the economic dependencies on oil and natural resources. But this kind of threat perception also is not very high in other European countries or the United States (see Siegmann, 1983, pp. 4 and 6).

⁶For a perhaps typical review in this respect of the military balance in Central Europe see the analysis of retired General Krause, 1984. The result is rather positive for NATO. This kind of criticism of the official assessment has lately received public attention.

II. THE THREAT PERCEPTION

The great importance of threat perception for an alliance arises from the experience that a common threat perception unifies allies, whereas different views of the threat produce problems in coordinating policies. In the case of the Alliance this question is of even greater importance, because the assumption of a general military threat from the East was the basic idea behind the foundation of NATO. When this threat perception disappears, it will be necessary to find a new legitimation for the current structures or to rebuild the whole security system. In West Germany this question is crucial, because the view of an aggressive or at least offensive Soviet Union was the basic legitimation for the German armed forces.¹

In looking at this question one has to take into account several circumstances that are more relevant for Germany than for the United States. There is some truth in the old saying: "Where you stand depends on where you sit." Each country has its own list of foreign policy problems and priorities.

In analysing the threat perception of West Germany one has to remember that during the 1970s, West Germany accepted the territorial status quo in Europe, especially the Oder-Neisse border and the division of Germany. There are still some juridical and political reservations but, roughly speaking, this is still true today.² Consequently, there

¹Trust in the Bundeswehr's peacekeeping function is still very high. No legitimation crisis of the German armed forces is therefore visible. During the 1970s trust in the Bundeswehr even increased from 69 percent in 1974 to 91 percent in 1979 and decreased only slightly to 86 percent in 1983 (EMNID Sample Enquiry No. 2000, members of the electorate).

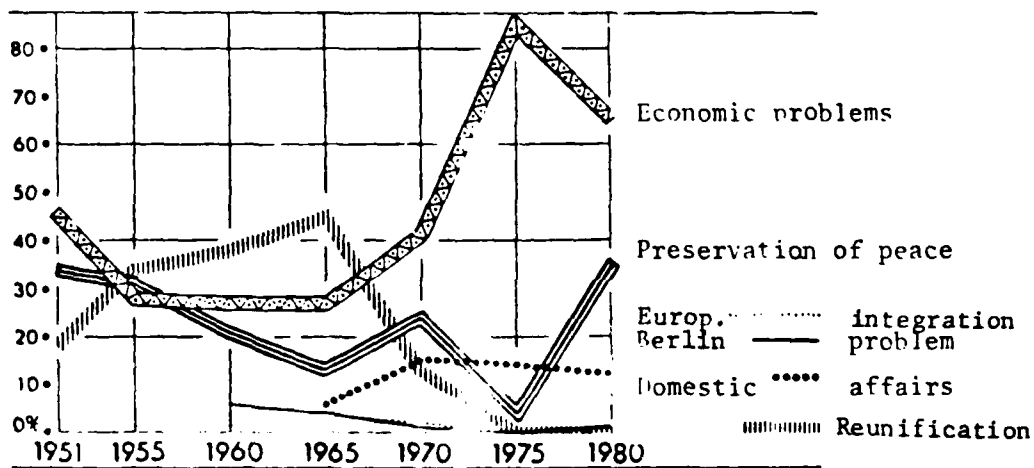
²Empirical findings even suggest that this is also true on the level of the "national consciousness" (see Schweigler, 1984, pp. 43-49). That does not mean that you cannot find positive statements toward the reunification. At the security elite level a positive view may be demonstrated by the results of the SIPLA study. Asked whether they are prepared to give up the reunification goal, 72.2 percent said "not." However, this goal is understood in a tactical sense, or is a mere hope. The close attachment to the West has a much higher priority than the reunification goal (see Figure 1 and Schweigler, 1984, pp. 47-48; for the general public see Noelle-Neumann, 1984, p. 8).

At the same time, the nature and necessary content of security policy caused difficulties within the Alliance.¹⁴ An important point in the discussion about the origins of these problems is whether the difficulties are due to differences in threat perception or can be attributed to a distinct strategy toward the threat.¹⁵ That is a rather artificial distinction, but it has some practical benefits for analytical reasons. The first and central question is, what is the nature of this threat in the German view and are there differences with important allies?

¹⁴A good view of the German standpoint is provided by the compilation of articles in Sommer, 1982. European and American viewpoints are documented in Thomson, James A. (ed.), 1982.

¹⁵See, for example, the discussions during an international conference in February 1983 documented in Platt, 1983; especially the contributions of Jacqueline Grapin-Le Goc and Gebhard Schweigler.

Question: Which, in your opinion, is the most important question we in West Germany should at present concern ourselves with?



SOURCE: Noelle-Neumann, 1981, p. 144.

Fig. 1 - Importance of Political Issues 1951-1980

3. The Science Center Berlin Mail Survey of Security Elites in Five Nations of the International Institute for Comparative Social Research in Berlin in the spring of 1983.¹¹
4. The study "Fuehrungsschicht in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1981," an investigation of the opinions and attitudes of the German elite conducted at the University of Mannheim.¹²

Preserving the peace has been a concern of German citizens since 1975 (see Fig. 1). In 1980, the issue was about as important as at the beginning of the 1950s when the high tension between East and West climaxed in the Korean war. Other issues, such as the Berlin problem or the reunification problem, lost importance. And, even the top German issue of economic prosperity decreased in importance, despite a growing unemployment rate at the end of the 1970s. These results mirror the political climate and show the high rank of the peace problem.¹³

is not random but an accidental sample. It is assumed here that the results are reasonably representative for the opinions of people who are sophisticated in security policy matters. For an overview see the analysis of Weede et al., 1983, pp. 82-95. The survey is done in pursuit of a similar survey executed in 1976. For an analysis of the data of 1976 see Schoessler and Weede, 1978. The results of the 1980/81 study are documented in Schoessler and Jung, 1982.

¹¹The survey was conducted in the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and the United States. It polled 400 to 600 individuals in each country. The available data set contains 786 cases: 211 from FRG, 70 from France, 147 from Great Britain, 211 from the Netherlands, and 147 from the United States. Besides the formal elites in government, politics, and the military, opinion-makers in the media, science, the business community, trade unions, the churches, and the peace movement were included. For further information see Siegmann, 1983.

¹²The study used the "positional approach" to select 3,580 elite members in the Federal Republic in 10 sectors (politics, administration, enterprises, economic interest groups, trade unions, mass media, science, military, culture, and others). It realized 1,744 interviews. The personal interviews, based on a formal questionnaire, were conducted from March to July 1981 (see Wildenmann et al., 1982).

¹³A recent poll conducted in April and May 1984 in the great industrial states of the West indicates, however, that the issue has reached its peak. Asked what most concerns those polled, the "danger-of-war" issue declined from 28 percent in October 1983 to 14 percent in April 1984 in West Germany; in March 1983 the result was 16 percent (see "Die Angst auf dem Rueckzug. Wie die Buerger im Westen ihre Lage sehen," *Die Zeit*, June 8, 1984).

possible to influence opinions so much, just by the way the question is posed, it cannot be said that those people have a definite opinion.⁹

3. Elite polls face the problem of defining who belongs to the elite; and there is always the difficulty of defining a new elite, like that of Greens in Germany. It is not exactly known how influential the security elite is in relation to the general elite. It can be supposed that, because the security elite contains a rather high percentage of military personnel, they have a conservative bias.

Several strategies are available to eliminate some of the pitfalls. False results that may be produced by the way the question is posed may be avoided if several polls use similar questions. Another strategy is to ignore small margins. In order to avoid a possible bias of security elite studies it helps to compare the results of security elite and general elite studies. In addition, it is of special value to take a time-series perspective, for long-standing tendencies are probably of greater value than a snapshot.

I use data from the following sources:

1. Several representative public opinion polls.
2. The so-called SIPLA study, a mailed survey of the national security elite in West Germany, which was conducted in 1980/81.¹⁰

⁹From a methodological viewpoint it is not allowed to force a choice by putting a certain question in a special context. For research purposes this argument may have its merits, but in the political field it is false. Political issues are always bound to a special context, which means special assumptions connected with the issue. You cannot argue with a superficial "pure" opinion or attitude against an opinion influenced by a perhaps one-sided argumentation. In politics there is no "pure opinion."

¹⁰SIPLA stands for "Sicherheitspolitische Planungsprobleme." 620 questionnaires were returned. The sample consists of committees of security policy of the parties (CDU/CSU, SPD, F.D.P.) and the party fractions of the Bundestag; representatives of the armament industry and trade unions; journalists of the press, radio broadcasting, and television; scientists; representatives of interest groups with a security background; high ranking members of the Bundeswehr; and members of the Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Auswaertige Politik (German Society for Foreign Affairs). From a strict methodological viewpoint the sample

There is a small difference between the opinion of the security elite and that of the general elite concerning the type of Soviet "offensive objectives," but basically the difference is not great. Combining answer 3 and 4, over 80 percent in both groups believe the Soviet Union is offensive.

This kind of attitude is comparable to statements found in the new German *White Paper* of 1983, for example the following quotation concerning how to cope with the threat problem (p. 6):

The Soviet Union is trying *to gain control* over Europe by military power and political clout based on that power. The order that the Soviet Union is trying to establish in Europe is to seal off its supremacy over Eastern Europe and *open up Western Europe to Soviet influence to the greatest possible extent*, depriving it of American protection and exposing it to Soviet power. Such a state of affairs would be controlled, policed, and shaped, solely by the Soviet Union. The entire European continent would come under a hegemony, secured by the military power of the Soviet Union, where the threat of armed force would be perpetuated.

The German view of the threat can be still better illustrated when we ask about a possible scenario for a war in Europe and its reasons. Which kind of scenario most threatens Germany in the view of the security elite? Look again at the results of the SIPLA study. The question was how probable are several options of an outbreak of war. The scenarios are as follows:

- "Conventional surprise." After secret preparations the Warsaw Pact attacks the Federal Republic of Germany and thrusts through to the Atlantic coast by a big conventional breakthrough with tank armies.
- "Nuclear surprise." By a nuclear strike the USSR attacks strategic targets in the United States and Europe and thrusts through in Europe with conventional troops.

strong group favoring the first defensive view (42.5 percent) whereas this group does not exist in the CDU/CSU (= 0 percent). The second place within the Christian Democrats has the view that the Soviet Union aims at global hegemony (= 40.8 percent).

- "Preemptive conventional attack." A hard political conflict occurs between East and West in Europe. The Warsaw Pact attacks in Europe to forestall an attack from NATO.
- "Oil supply crisis." The oil supply lines of the West are interrupted. The United States intervenes in order to make the supply secure. The Soviet Union uses countermeasures in Europe. The escalation gets out of political control and leads to the outbreak of war by Soviet intervention.
- "Spillover from the Third World." In the Third World, a war of proxies escalates and draws superpower intervention. The conflict spills over to Europe.

When we put the votes for "probable" and "possible" together, most of the members of the national security elite of Germany believe that the reasons for an outbreak of war in Europe will be located outside of Europe.

The answers were distributed as follows (multiple answers were possible):

- Conventional surprise = 23 percent.
- Nuclear surprise = 19.5 percent.
- Preemptive conventional attack = 52.9 percent.
- Oil supply crisis = 79.2 percent.
- Spillover from Third World = 62.8 percent.¹¹

The German security elite does not believe in a war arising from a European conflict. The dominating opinion is that the reason for a European war will be located outside of Europe. This result conforms to the above statement about the German view of a politically rather stable situation in Europe. Most people do not see the Soviets as attacking West Europe because of a deep conflict of interest located in Europe itself. The German government can influence this kind of threat only to a very small degree. It is therefore more extraneous than the classical threat from the Soviet side.¹²

¹¹See Schoessler and Jung, 1982, pp. 164-168.

¹²Nevertheless, the German security elite apparently does not

believe that even this scenario has a high probability. When you ask what the primary threats to the nation's security are in the next 5-10 years, only 5 percent see the economic vulnerabilities of the West (such as dependence on oil and natural resources) as of the first importance (see Siegmann, 1983, p. 4).

III. DETERRENCE, DEFENSE, AND DETENTE

Two strategies define the differences between Germany and important allies in security matters: Deterrence, which means to increase the costs for a Soviet attack to an unacceptable level by military means; and detente, which can be understood as an instrument to lower the interest in an armored conflict by strengthening diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties. Germany is often blamed for putting too much emphasis on detente and neglecting deterrence and defense. That estimation is based less on an evaluation of the adequate military burden in terms of troops or money than in attitudes toward the military.¹ How do the Germans view both of these policies?

DETERRENCE/DEFENSE

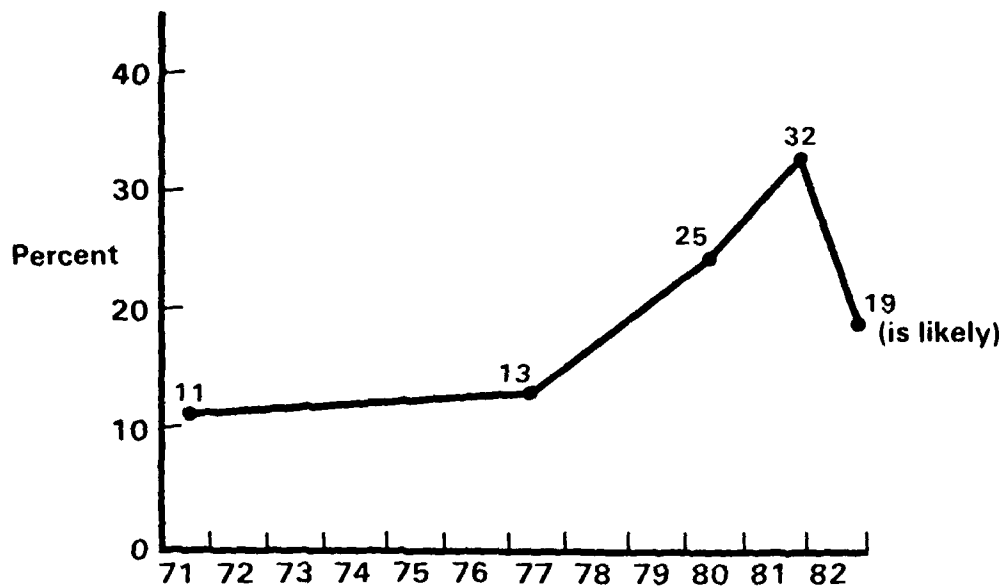
The main problem of the deterrence concept, under modern conditions, is the question of what happens when deterrence fails. Since the publication of Weizsaecker's "The Consequences and the Prevention of War"² this problem has received considerable attention in FRG's scientific debate.

This discussion has been accompanied by a belief in the likelihood of a new world war. Fig. 6 indicates that the credibility of the stabilizing effects of the deterrence system decreased at the mass opinion level in West Germany during the 1970s. Especially after 1977 with the discussion about the Enhanced Radiation Warhead, more people came to believe that a new world war is quite possible in the next few years. The decrease in this fear in 1982 shows, however, that people react to political circumstances and domestic debates and do not hold hard opinions that deterrence will fail because of inherent and structural difficulties. The more moderate tones on the American side and the beginning of the arms control talks about the medium-range

¹see Mendershausen, 1981, pp. 17-20.

²Weizsaecker et al., 1971.

IS A NEW WORLD WAR IN THE NEXT TEN YEARS LIKELY?



SOURCE: Euro-Barometer, *Die Öffentliche Meinung in der Europäischen Gemeinschaft*, No. 18, December, 1982, p.9.

Fig. 6 - Likelihood of a New World War

missiles in Europe have probably caused this development. If one takes a comparative view one can see that the fear of war is not a purely German problem (see Table 2).

An even greater proportion of people in France and almost as many in the United Kingdom believe the same thing. This phenomenon seems to be much more a European than a German problem.³ A similiar situation can be found at the security elite level (see Table 3).

Table 2
CHANCES OF A WORLD WAR

Here is a sort of scale. Would you, with the help of this card, tell me how you assess the chances of a world war breaking out in the next ten years? (Scale graduated in tens from 100 = "War certain" to 0 = "no risk of war")

	War Certain or More Than 50-50 Chance	50-50 Chance	Less Than 50-50 Chance or No Risk of War
W. Germany			
July '71	10.3	11.0	71.1
Oct/Nov '77	12.1	9.3	70.4
April '80	21.9	12.9	64.7
Oct. '82	16.1	11.5	72.7
France			
July '71	10.0	13	62
Oct/Nov '77	12.4	14.2	61.4
April '80	32.4	16.2	41.8
Oct. '82	20.3	19.0	59.8
United Kingdom			
Oct/Nov '77	12.1	10	72.6
April '80	36.1	15.2	41.5
Oct. '82	15.9	12.7	65.3

SOURCE: Euro-Barometer, Die oeffentliche Meinung in der Europaeischen Gemeinschaft, No. 18, Dec. 1982, p. A 11 - A 16 (without "no reply")

³Even in the United States people are concerned about the possibility that the world will be plunged into a nuclear war. In November 1983, 59 percent of a representative sample said that they are

The question of the Science Center Berlin Mail Survey is, however, not on "world war" but on "limited war" in Europe. A larger percentage of the sample does not believe that a limited nuclear war in Europe is likely within the next 5-10 years. The differences between German elite and some important allies are not too great. There is, in this respect, no special "German symptom."

Is the rather strong belief that there will be no world war or limited nuclear war due to the fairly stable situation in Europe or to deterrence and the preparedness for defense?

Table 3

LIKELIHOOD OF A LIMITED NUCLEAR WAR IN EUROPE

In the next 5-10 years, a limited nuclear war in Europe is likely

	Strongly Agree/ Tend to Agree %	Undecided %	Strongly Disagree/ Tend to Disagree %
Federal Republic ^a	18	13	70
France	10	16	74
Great Britain	12	10	78
Netherlands	6	24	70
United States	6	10	84

SOURCE: Siegmann, 1983, p. 16.

^aThe data of the Federal Republic are weighted responses.

very concerned about that possibility (see *World Opinion Update*, January 1984, p. 13).

The polls show that the Germans have quite high confidence in deterrence. The support declined, however, from 55 percent in December 1982 to 46 percent in June 1983 (see Fig. 7).

The security elite in Germany seems to support deterrence to a greater degree than does the general public. In the SIPLA study, the question measuring this attitude was whether deterrence is an approved concept. Three kinds of views surfaced:⁴

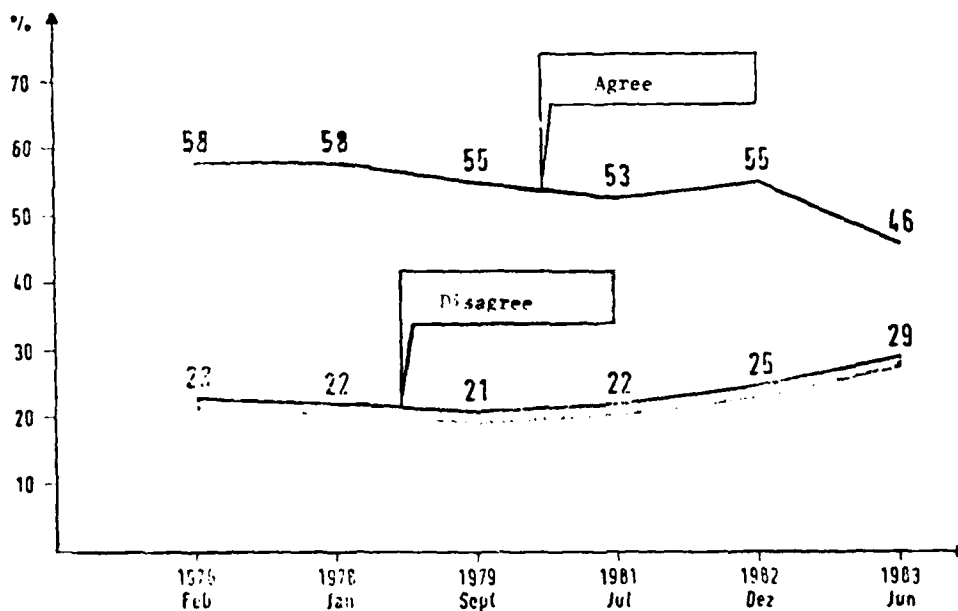
- The first group has a positive view of deterrence because it avoids war, at least in better ways than other measures do. Sixty-two percent gave this answer.
- The second group has a moderate view of deterrence--the people in this group believe that deterrence creates the preconditions for detente and at least reduces the dangers of war; 18 percent preferred this opinion.
- The evaluation of the third group is negative. They believe that deterrence should be replaced by another concept of security, at least in the long run; 20 percent of the sample belongs to this group.

One important factor--besides the political coherence of the Alliance and the states concerned--is a rather positive view of military strength. What importance has this factor in the German view? Table 4 shows that the German security elite has a rather positive view of this factor:

- 61 percent believe that military strength is very important or fairly important for national security.
- Only 37 percent hold the opinion that military strength is not at all important for national security or is not too important.

⁴See Schmidt and Jung, 1983, p. 23.

Question: If someone says an attack from the East can best be prevented by deterrence when the West is armed sufficiently, would you agree or disagree?



SOURCE: Institut fur Demoskopie, Allensbach.

Fig. 7 - View of Deterrence

Table 4

ESTIMATION OF MILITARY STRENGTH

Question: The concept of "national security" has several dimensions. Some of these are listed below. What importance do you ascribe to each of these dimensions?

Military strength

	Very Important or Fairly Important %	Not Too Important or Not at All Important %
Federal Republic	61	37
France	90	7
Great Britain	74	24
Netherlands	78	16
United States	89	10

SOURCE: Siegmann, 1983, p. 1.

A comparison between countries shows, however, that there are some differences between West Germany and important allies. Especially in comparison with France and the United States, the German security elite is less convinced that military strength is important to "national security;" there is a difference of almost 30 percent.⁵

⁵This difference is, however, probably to some degree a product of the bias in the French sample because no member of the Communist party was asked. There is also no peace group activist in the sample. Nevertheless that is not as important, because in comparison with other countries there is no influential peace movement in France.

This result is supported by the answers to the question of how important not "military strength" but "military balance" is. Table 5 indicates that the differences among the elites are not as great as in the case of "military strength."

Within West Germany and among the allies, the question elicits a higher consent on military balance than on military strength.⁶ The mass opinion in Germany holds this opinion too. In February 1981, two thirds of the people expressed the opinion that the long-term goal of the West should be a military balance between East and West; only 16 percent preferred military superiority.⁷

Table 5

ESTIMATION OF MILITARY BALANCE

Question: "Do you think that the existence of a military balance between the East and the West is important for your country's security?"

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Federal Republic ^a	69	28	4
France	96	3	1
Great Britain	79	19	2
Netherlands	83	13	4
United States	87	8	5

SOURCE: Siegmann, 1983, p. 7.

^aData of the Federal Republic are weighted along party lines.

⁶Typical in this respect is the analysis of the former chancellor Helmut Schmidt. He claims an overall strategy of the Alliance toward the Soviet Union. This strategy has in his opinion to point out that not superiority but balance is desired (see Schmidt, 1984).

⁷See "Militaerische Staerke: Gleichgewicht genuegt," *Der Spiegel*, March 2, 1982, p. 36.

That gives some insight into German thinking in relation to the usefulness of the military today. The military's function is to protect the current status and to give some freedom of action. But it is not an active instrument for policy in any respect. Therefore, in Germany, one cannot find much sympathy for the viewpoint, which grew in the United States in the last few years, that superiority in the military domain has benefits.⁸

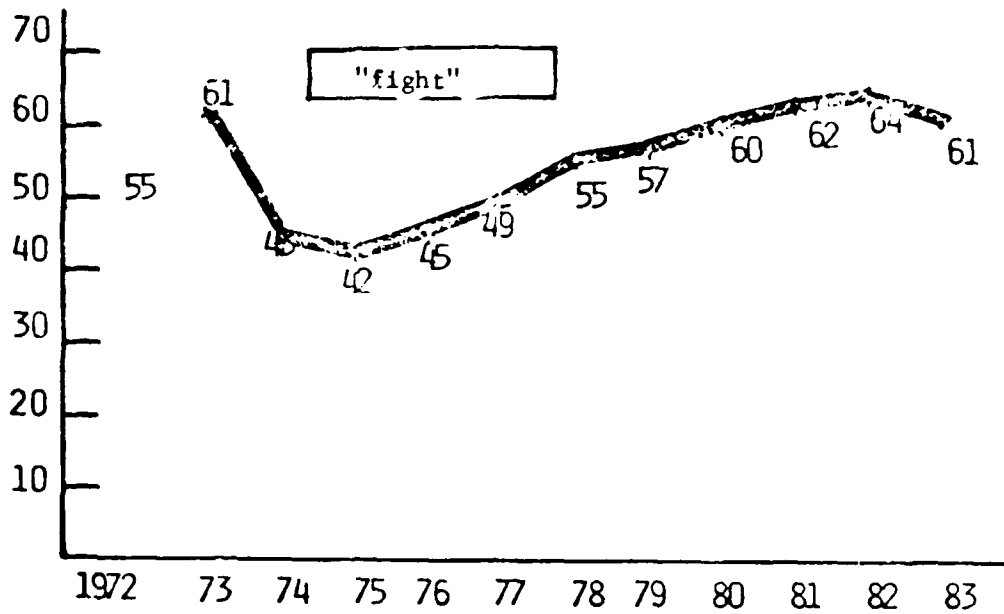
Besides an adequate military potential, deterrence has another precondition. It must be supported by some preparedness to fight. This is the basis for a more sophisticated reproach to West Germany. The argument is that the Germans accept only the deterrence side of the strategy but do not have the political and psychological preparedness for real defense. Many Americans believe that their own demilitarization policy after World War II was too successful in this respect.

The argument that Germany does not want to fight for freedom could easily be disproved by a public poll of 1982, which indicated that "given the horrors of war today," the Germans would fight a Soviet attack and not give in to Soviet domination. Almost 74 percent hold this opinion; only 19 percent say they are prepared to accept Soviet domination.⁹ Polls of the EMNID institute reveal the development of this opinion in the 1970s. Preparedness to fight grew from 42 percent in 1975 to 64 percent in 1982, with a slight decrease to 61 percent in 1983 (see Fig. 8).

⁸"Do you think the military strength of the United States should be superior to the Soviet Union, should be about equal in strength, or does the United States not need to be exactly as strong as the Soviet Union?" In June 1979, 42 percent of the general public in the United States called for superiority; in August 1980, 51 percent; in September 1980, 51 percent and 61 percent; in October 1980, 56 percent, and in February 1981, 52 percent (see Smith, 1983, p. 284). Another study shows that in the United States between 1974 and 1978 there was a growing tendency to stress military dimensions in foreign policy at the elite and the general public levels (see Oldendick and Bardes, 1982, pp. 374-375).

⁹See Kahn and Redepennig, 1982, p. 307. The preparedness to fight in other countries: Great Britain = 75 percent, France = 57 percent, Belgium = 49 percent, Denmark = 56 percent, Italy = 48 percent, Switzerland = 77 percent, and the United States = 83 percent.

Question: How would you react to an armed attack on the Federal Republic? Would you fight with arms; would you, even if not trained in arms for that, fight somehow and defend yourself, or would you do neither?



SOURCE: EMNID, Bielefeld, "Verteidigungsklima," 1972-1983.

Fig. 8 - Readiness to Defend the Federal Republic

A more crucial question is about nuclear war. Time series show that there is a growing concern about *nuclear war*. This concern influences people's readiness to fight. Over time, more and more Germans were prepared to live under a Communist government than to fight a nuclear war on German soil (see Fig. 9). The *acceptability of the current military strategy depends on its perceived ability to avoid nuclear war*. However, Germany is not alone in this opinion. In the United States as well, many people are not willing to risk the destruction of their country if faced with potential Russian domination. In March 1982, 32 percent of the general U.S. public held this opinion.¹⁰ That seems to be not as critical a mood as in Germany. One has, however, to see that the American question was less definite than the German one and it refers to an unrealistic scenario.

The percentage of the security elite that does not want to fight is almost as high as the percentage at the mass opinion level. The question does not refer to the personal preparedness, although those polled might understand the question in that way. Table 6 shows that 37 percent of the security elite believes that military force should never be used (38 percent of the general public would not fight). Even when we concede some bias in the sample from West Germany (the use of force is not forbidden under all thinkable circumstances with this question), the security elite group critical to the use of military force is rather large in Germany,¹¹ especially compared with other countries. There is also small support for the use of nuclear weapons in answer to a conventional attack from the Warsaw Pact side to bring the war to a quick end. This basic option of the NATO strategy of "flexible response" is accepted only by 14 percent of the German sample. The support for this options, however, is not very different from that in other countries. The only "true believers" are the French. fifty-five percent of the French security elite sample voted in favor of this idea.

¹⁰*Public Opinion*, April/May 1983, p. 29.

¹¹The German sample is not weighted along party lines. Such a procedure would probably change the results in favor of "fighting" because conservatives are not adequately represented in the sample. Even if we concede that the bias within the other samples is the opposite, the difference remains rather great.

In looking at the opinions of the national security elite we see a strong support for a close relationship with the United States (see Table 10). Regarding the statement that the security of Germany can be guaranteed only by a close alliance with the United States, 71 percent tend to agree or agree strongly; only 27 percent tend to disagree or disagree strongly.⁴ Compared with other countries, Germany's result is not the best one, but Great Britain, the old partner of the United

Table 10

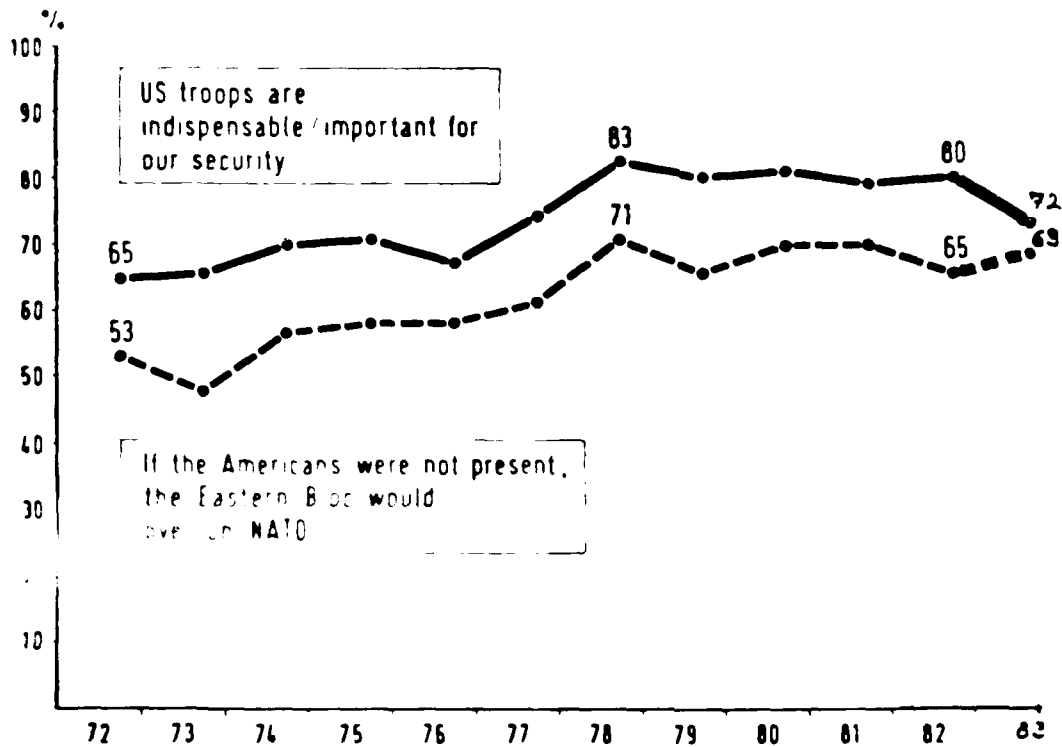
CLOSE ALLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES

"The security of the country can only be guaranteed in close alliance with the United States."

	Strongly Agree/ Tend to Agree %	Strongly Disagree/ Tend to Disagree %
Federal Republic	71	27
France	81	20
Great Britain	69	30
Netherlands	81	17
United States	84	11

SOURCE: Siegmann, 1983, p. 14

⁴In 1981/82 SIPLA asked what kind of relationship is wanted between West Germany and the United States. Almost 90 percent declared that they want a close and constant relationship in defense matters. The results are, however, not directly comparable because the SIPLA question is on "defense" and not on general "close alliance." The fact that only 53.8 percent of the SIPLA panel wished close and continuous cooperation between West Germany and the United States suggests that there is no remarkable erosion (see Schoessler and Jung, 1982, pp. 44-45). And even when one asks whether minor and middle nations should accept superpower leadership, support is 62.9 percent (see Schoessler and Weede, 1978, p.



Source: EMNID Sample Enquiry No 2000,
(members of the electorate).

Fig. 10 - Acceptance of the Presence
of US Troops in Germany

Despite the overall good feeling, sometimes there is a difference between an overall good feeling and the attitude toward important issues. As to more concrete acceptance from the Germans--knowing that foreign troops in a country cause problems--a large percentage of Germans declared that U.S. troops were indispensable for their security. Even the peace discussion in 1982 and 1983 did little to change this opinion. The positive vote decreased only from 80 percent in 1982 to 72 percent in 1983. And even more people held the opinion in 1983 than in 1982 that if the Americans were not present, the Eastern bloc would overrun NATO (see Fig. 10).

Table 9

OPINION OF AND CONFIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES
(PERCENT)

Question: What is your overall opinion of the United States? Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the United States?

	Great Britain	France	Germany	Belgium
Very favorable/ somewhat favorable	46	55	73	49
Somewhat unfavorable/ very unfavorable	44	32	24	22
Don't know	10	13	3	29

Question: In general, how much confidence do you have in the United States to deal wisely with world problems--a great deal, a fair amount, not very much, or none at all?

	Great Britain	France	Germany	Belgium
A great deal/ a fair amount	35	40	57	45
Not very much/ none at all	60	47	40	30
Don't know	5	13	3	25

SOURCE: World Opinion Update 3/1982, p. 70 (Gallup, Feb. 1982)

IV. THE ALLIANCE

From the German point of view the keystone of the Alliance is their close relationship with the United States.¹ That is not only an important point for the effectiveness of the general security and defense policy of the Alliance, it is also a crucial point for the functioning of deterrence. Deterrence within an alliance needs a rather close relationship between the small countries and the superpower. The small countries have to accept the leadership of the superpower to some degree to make deterrence effective.²

At the level of mass opinion, the Germans seem to fulfill this condition. From the German point of view, America is and will be our preferred partner. When we ask for the overall opinion of the United States, we find that about 73 percent are very favorable, or at least somewhat favorable.³ In the next figure there is no better result from other countries (see the first question in Table 9). Even when we ask how confident the people are that the United States deals wisely with world problems, the positive view prevails with 57 percent. In Great Britain, France, and Belgium the assessment is clearly worse (see the second question in Table 9).

¹The unchanged high support of NATO is shown by the SINUS poll. seventy-eight percent hold the opinion that it is a good policy for the FRG to be in NATO, 10 percent believe that it is not a good policy, 11 percent are indifferent, and 1 percent do not know. The influence of the preference for one of the German parties is in the case of the traditional parties very low (in favor of NATO are 87 percent of the CDU/CSU, 72 percent of the SPD, and 87 percent of the FDP adherents). Only in the case of people who prefer the Greens there are more people who believe to be in NATO is not a good policy for the FRG (42 percent) than people who hold the opinion it is a good policy (40 percent; 17 percent are indifferent, 1 percent do not know (see SINUS, 1983, p. 41). For the unchanged high support of NATO see also Schweigler, 1984, pp. 59-62. For the positive view of NATO in the United States see Rielly, 1983, p. 21.

²See Weede, 1975, pp. 72-77.

³"With which of these countries should we seek the closest possible cooperation?" About 80 percent voted for the United States voted in July 1983 (see Herdegen, Gerhard and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, 1984, p. 35).

sanctions. The elite of the Federal Republic is rather isolated in neglecting such a strategy almost completely. In interpreting this one must take into consideration that this opinion is not only a matter of detente policy.

The Germans have never had great confidence in the efficacy of a policy of economic sanctions.²⁰ Nevertheless, such an opinion might be caused by the thesis that economic contacts will improve relationships between East and West. The German elite apparently does not distinguish between general positive thinking about East-West trade and the acceptance of economic sanctions in special situations. However, most of our allies seem to like the idea of promoting peace by trade almost as much as the Germans do, even the security elite in the United States.

²⁰See Mueller, 1984, pp. 67-79.

"Economic Sanctions"

agree or
agree somewhat

disagree or
disagree somewhat

The West should agree on a
list of economic sanctions,
and on procedures on when
and how to apply them, to
be used against the USSR
in case of future actions
such as in Afghanistan
or Poland

Federal Republic of Germany	19 %	78
France	62	34
Netherlands	68	28
United States	72	25

"Peace by Trade"

The West should seek to
increase trade with the
East to establish a
cooperative relationship,
and thus support the
progress of detente in
the mutual interest

Federal Republic of Germany	86 %	10
France	38	49
Great Britain	80	18
Netherlands	85	11
United States	72	25

SOURCE: Siegmann, 1983, p. 10-11.

Table 8

HOW TO DEAL WITH EAST-WEST PROBLEMS

"In the following, a number of options to deal with the present problems of East-West relations are listed. Do you tend to agree, or disagree, with them?"

Selection

Results in %: unweighted

agree or disagree or
agree somewhat disagree somewhat

"Detente/Military Balance"

Detente should be pursued
independently of the
military balance

Federal Republic of Germany	66 %	34
France	30	69
Netherlands	57	40
United States	48	54

"Strategic Arms Control"

The US and the USSR should
reach an agreement on
strategic arms reductions
based on the concept of
parity

Federal Republic of Germany	96 %	3
France	73	15
Netherlands	87	10
United States	87	11

SOURCE: Siegmann, 1983, p. 8.

war." However, support of detente does not mean that there is no reliance on deterrence. Just the opposite is true. Rather we can say that the great majority of the German security elite believes in detente based on (some) deterrence as shaped by the Harmel report of 1967.¹⁷

The security elite poll of the Science Center of Berlin also confirms this interest in detente by revealing much concern for special detente policies. In this sample the support for detente seems even to be stronger.¹⁸ The results are:

- 66 percent agree or agree somewhat that detente should be pursued independently of the military balance.
- 96 percent hold the opinion that the United States and the USSR should reach an agreement on strategic arms reductions based on the concept of parity.
- Only 19 percent agree or agree somewhat on the question as to whether the West should agree on a list of economic sanctions to be used against the USSR in case of such future actions as Afghanistan or Poland.
- 86 percent believe that the West should seek to increase trade with the East to establish a cooperative relationship and thus support the progress of detente in a mutual interest.

Many people, sophisticated in German affairs, would suppose that that detente-minded view is not shared by important allies. And indeed, it is an important question whether Germany is isolated in this respect. A comparison of the results in Germany, France, the Netherlands, and United States indicates, however, that with the exception of France, other alliance partners share Germany's opinion to a more or less high degree (see Table 8).¹⁹ The one exception is the problem of economic

¹⁷See the section about "Deterrence/Defense." The Fuehrungsschicht study shows this too with a slight tendency in favor of detente. Asked for preferences among 25 political goals and the evaluation on a scale the result was that in 7 sectors the goal "preparedness for defense" was esteemed more highly than "detente." In five sectors the order was reversed.

¹⁸See Siegmann, 1983, pp. 8-11.

¹⁹The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations study also shows a surprisingly high support at the elite and the mass level for detente-related policies in the U.S. (see Rielly, 1983, pp. 14-15).

Table 7

DETENTE AFTER AFGHANISTAN

Question: "Should the Federal Republic continue the policy of detente in the future, or does it make no sense to continue this policy?"

	Party Preference			
	Total %	SPD %	CDU %	FDP %
Continue	74	89	59	85
Not Continue	17	7	28	8
Undecided	9	4	13	7

SOURCE: Noelle-Neumann, 1981, p. 466.

- Detente policy no longer corresponds to the situation in security policy (security elite = 15.9 percent; general elite = 22 percent)
- In spite of drawbacks and problems, there is no alternative to detente policy (security elite = 52.9 percent; general elite = 60 percent).¹⁶

The differences between the security and the general elite are again not great. There is only a small bias in favor of "hard views" in the security elite study. More than half in both samples see no alternative to detente. For these people there is no way back to "cold

¹⁶The party sector of the general elite study shows the differences between the two principal parties. A very large percentage of the CDU/CSU elite believes that detente was never realistic or is not yet realistic (= 92 percent) whereas in the SPD this kind of view is shared only by 0.8 percent.

DETENTE

Detente is characterized by the intention to lower interest in an armed conflict by strengthening the diplomatic, economic, and cultural ties. During the beginning of the 1970s the German *Ostpolitik*--the essential German contribution to detente--has created considerable domestic trouble between the ruling social-liberal coalition and the CDU/CSU opposition.¹² Nevertheless, there is a rather broad consensus today among the ruling coalition of CDU/CSU and F.D.P., the Social Democratic Party, which constitutes the main party in opposition, and even the Greens. Behind this consensus are many divergent ideas and intentions but on the whole the Germans want detente, and they would like to see progress in arms control according to a public opinion poll conducted in January 1980, just after the intervention of the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. It was found that 74 percent of the general public and even a majority of the CDU voters believe the Federal Republic should continue the policy of detente (see Table 7). This positive assessment did not change afterwards. In May 1981 only 6 percent fewer people voted in favor of the continuation of detente policy¹³ and in 1983, 87 percent believed that the continuation of detente is an adequate instrument to make peace secure.¹⁴

This interest in detente can also be seen at the security elite and the general elite level. The SIPLA security elite poll and the Fuehrungsschicht study asked the opinion about three statements regarding "detente policy after Afghanistan." The results were:¹⁵

- Detente policy has never corresponded to the realities in security policy (security elite = 31.2 percent; general elite = 18 percent).

¹²See Haftendorn, 1983, pp. 381-402.

¹³See Noelle-Neumann and Piel, 1983, p. 637.

¹⁴See SINUS, 1983, p. 26.

¹⁵See Schoessler and Jung, 1982, p. 6 and Wildenmann et al., 1982, pp. 73-74.

The German sample opposes all uses of nuclear weapons in Europe. Combining the third and forth possibility, only 39 percent are prepared to use nuclear weapons in answer to either a nuclear or conventional attack in Europe.

Table 6

THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE USE OF MILITARY FORCE

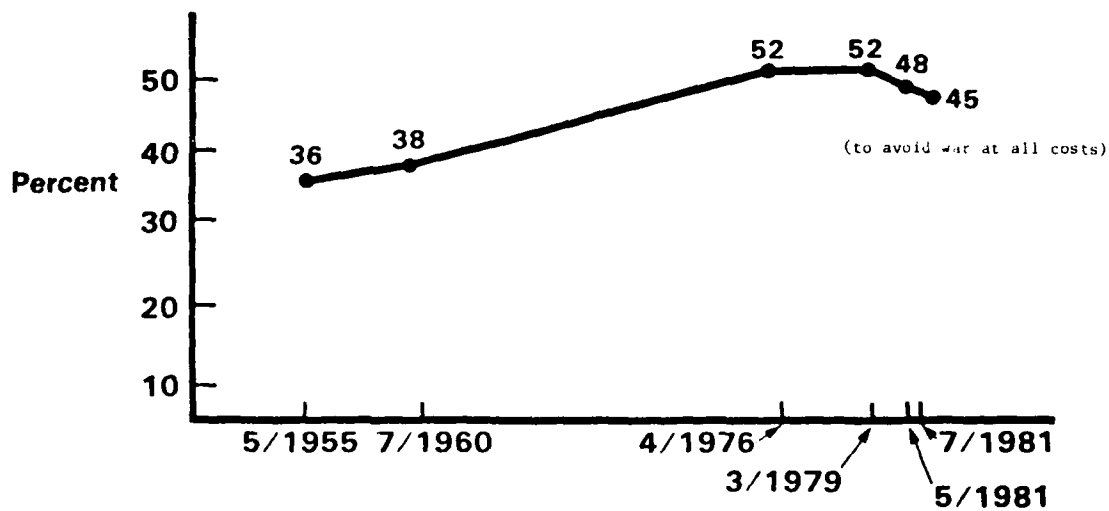
Question 15: "A number of options are often discussed in public debates on the justification of the use of military force. In the following list of statements, please pick the one which comes closest to your own opinion."

Results in % : unweighted

	FRG	F	GB	NL	US
N =	207	78	142	234	143
Military force should never be used	37	8	6	9	4
Conventional military force is justified in case of an attack, but the use of nuclear weapons can never be justified even if West Europe is attacked by nuclear weapons	18	0	31	25	14
The use of nuclear weapons by NATO is justified if West Europe is attacked from the East with nuclear weapons	25	31	44	34	50
The use of nuclear weapons by NATO is justified if West Europe is attacked from the East with conventional weapons in order to bring the war to an end quickly	14	55	13	24	22
Other possibility	7	8	8	7	10

SOURCE: Siegmann, 1983, p. 22.

No one knows what will happen, but what do you think? If we are one day faced with the choice of either letting Europe become Soviet or defending ourselves against such a fate by every means, which is more important--to defend democratic freedom, even if it means nuclear war, or to avoid war at all costs, even if it will mean living under a Communist government?



SOURCE: Institut für Demoskopie, Allensbach

Fig. 9 - Readiness to Defend West Germany
Even if it Means Nuclear War

States, who often refers to its "special relationship," is not better in this respect. In Europe the French elite--together with Netherland's elite--has the highest positive rate with 81 percent, in favor of a closer relationship with the United States. There are many other examples with the same tendency.⁵

I will turn now to the most critical issue, the confidence U.S. ability to master the current world problems.

There is much confidence in Germany about this ability at the level of mass opinion and in comparison with other countries. A closer look at the data shows, however, that something has changed over time (see Table 11). From 1981 to 1983, the percentage of people who have confidence in the United States in this respect, decreased from 62 to 43 percent, if one combines the two categories "very confident" and "fairly confident." The rate of disbelievers in that ability increased from 36 to 55 percent--a difference of almost 20 percent within 14 months. It is obvious that this has much to do with the first bellicose statements of the Reagan administration and the critical discussion in Germany about new American foreign policy.⁶ Some statements, especially those

22). The Fuehrungsschicht study shows that the general elite also highly esteems a good relationship with the United States. Asked how important 25 political goals are, in all sectors the goal "good relationship to the United States" gets high values between 6.01 and 8.81 on a scale of 10. Value "0" means "no importance," value 10 means "very important." In all sectors "good relationship to the United States" is more highly esteemed than "good relationship to the USSR."

⁵Even the young best-educated group, often blamed for neutralist tendencies, favors NATO over neutrality (only 28 percent favor neutrality in Germany). In a comparative view France (33 percent), Italy (39 percent), Netherlands (30 percent), and Norway (36 percent) have more neutralists in this group (see Adler and Wertmann, 1981, p. 10).

⁶Asked in February 1981 whether West Germany should follow the policy of the new Reagan administration, only 38 percent agreed, but 60 percent opposed and pleaded for more political distance from the new administration (see "Militaerische Staerke: Gleichgewicht genuegt. Spiegel-Umfrage ueber Washingtons neuen Kurs, Polen-Krise und Kriegsfurcht," *Der Spiegel*, March 2, 1981, p. 34). The SINUS study shows that many people do not agree with the policy of the Reagan administration. The percentage of people disagreeing with the policy of the American president increased from 31 percent, 1980 (Carter) to 43 percent, 1981 (Reagan) and 61 percent, 1983 (see SINUS, 1983, p. 21).

Table 11

CONFIDENCE IN THE UNITED STATES OVER TIME

Question: "How confident are you concerning the ability of the United States to master current world problems?"

	10/1981 %	2/1982 %	1/1983 %
Very Confident/ Fairly Confident	62	57	43
Not Very Confident	28	33	44
Not at All Confident	8	7	11

SOURCE: Kahn and Redepennig, 1982, p. 306 and
Der Spiegel, February 7, 1983, p. 90.

emphasizing the benefits of American superiority and the aggressive nature of the communist system in the Soviet Union, were in contrast to the German desire for a military *balance* and the view that the Soviets were more a political than a military threat.

Since 1980 the percentage of people who believe in the commitment of the Soviet Union to seek a reconciliation with the West increased from 16 percent in January 1980 to 45 percent in January 1983. This remarkable change occurred within three years, even though the credibility in 1980 was very low in comparison with former years, certainly because of the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (see Table 12).

The Soviet Union has been very successful in improving its "peace image" in Germany.⁷ This is especially the case in the evaluation of

⁷Peace groups particularly have very low confidence in the ability of the United States to solve current world problems and a rather high degree of confidence that the USSR is prepared for detente (see the study about two peace groups in the South of Germany, reported by Hagstotz, 1984).

Table 12

THE INTEREST OF THE RUSSIANS IN RECONCILIATION
(PERCENT)

Question: "Do you feel that the Russians are basically committed to seeking a reconciliation with the West at present or don't you think so?"

	April/ May	April	March/ April	July	Feb.	Jan.	July	Mid- Jan.
	1959	1965	1970	1974	1977	1980	1981	1983
Think so	17	23	33	29	27	16	36	45
Don't think so	57	56	46	55	60	70	48	37
No opinion/ undecided	26	21	21	16	13	14	16	18

SOURCE: Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth, The Missile Gap: The German Press and Public Opinion, *Public Opinion*, October/November 1983, p. 48.

the behavior in the negotiations about Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) in Geneva.⁸ In this respect the Soviet Union and the United States have reached almost the same status.⁹ The majority of people who believe that both superpowers have not done enough to bring the negotiations to a successful end believe that the United States and the USSR are responsible for this failure (see Table 13).¹⁰

⁸Comparing the images of both superpowers from 1980-1983 the SINUS study reveals that negative features became more and more ascribed to the United States and the Soviet Union and not only to the USSR (see SINUS, 1983, p. 15).

⁹The discussion about this question is now in vogue, especially in the SPD. For a critical assessment of the policy of this party in this respect see Maruhn and Wilke, 1983.

¹⁰Asking whether the United States or the Soviet Union negotiate seriously in Geneva, one gets similar results. 37 percent believe that both superpowers are serious negotiators, 36 percent believe that both are not serious, 11 percent hold the opinion that the USSR is not

Table 13

THE SUPERPOWERS' COMMITMENT TO ARMS CONTROL
(PERCENT)

Question: "What do you believe? Have the superpowers done enough to bring the disarmament negotiations in Geneva to a successful end or have they not?"

	Total	CDU/CSU adherents	SPD adherents	FDP adherents	adherents of the Greens
The superpowers have done enough	10	12	8	7	4
Haven't done enough	68	65	75	76	84
Impossible to say	22	23	17	17	12

"Who has not done enough? United States or Soviet Union?"

United States	6	1	10	1	12
Soviet Union	22	37	11	23	4
Both	70	60	77	76	83
Impossible to say	2	2	2	--	1

SOURCE: Angst vor den Raketen. STERN-Umfrage zu Nachrüstung und Friedensbewegung, October 20, 1983, p. 76.

Even conceding that the question was posed in a manner that must have influenced the respondents in regarding the United States and Soviet Union as equals, that remarkable result supports the argument that the Soviet Union has greatly improved its image.¹¹

serious, and 5 percent that this is the case with the United States (see SINUS, 1983, p. 44).

¹¹68 percent believe that the superpowers have not done enough, of which 70 percent hold the opinion that both are responsible for that. That means that 45.6 percent of the whole sample see the United States and Soviet Union as "equal powers" in this respect.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Poll data indicate that West Germany has a positive image of the fundamentals of current security structure. This evaluation includes, however, some important problems. The danger of a growing opinion gap exists between Germany and important other allies, especially the United States and France. This danger is less due to a very strong difference of opinion over one issue than a product of accumulated controversial ideas and policies. Therefore the debate whether the difficulties are due to a difference in threat perception or to different strategies in coping with the threat is misleading. Factors concerning all four areas of central interest are interrelated: the threat perception, the view of deterrence and defense, the estimation of detente, and the relationship between the Federal Republic and the United States. In comparing the current difficulties in the Alliance and the differences documented in our data, we get the impression that some of the problems are not rooted in very different views at the level of the security elites or the mass opinions, but more in differences among the political forces in power.¹ Nevertheless, the polls explain some of the basic differences within the Alliance. In summarizing the critical issues from the German point of view we see:

1. The emphasis is more on a political than a military view of the threat, which is critical to all tendencies to see the Alliance mainly as a military instrument.
2. The idea that the probable scenario for a war in Europe will be a spillover of conflicts from the Third World and the oil supply countries assumes confidence in the United States to act

¹The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations study reveals important differences between the policy of the Reagan administration and public opinion at the elite and mass level. Public opinion is much more moderate and detente-minded than the government and rather close to European opinions (see Rielly, 1983, pp. 35-38. See also Czempiel, 1984, pp. 57-59).

wisely in these areas. In this respect, it is dangerous that an increasing number of people have not much confidence in the United States.

3. The idea of nuclear war in Europe and any discussion about the possibility of a limited nuclear war in Europe produce problems.
4. Because the Germans have a defensive understanding of the military, all ideas pushing the military into an active role find little consent in Germany. The idea that military superiority has its benefits is one critical issue within this point.
5. Detente is highly esteemed in the Federal Republic. The main reasons might be that the German view of the threat does not exclude the possibility of success and that part of the public, regarding deterrence as a dangerous instrument, believes in the necessity of detente. The impression that detente is not taken seriously, especially in the field of arms control, produces negative reactions.
6. The most critical development is an increasing belief that the Soviet Union is looking for reconciliation with the West and a decreasing belief that the United States is acting much more responsibly than the Soviet Union.

If one takes these results for granted, the deployment of Pershing-IIs and Cruise Missiles and the special course of American foreign policy can be the starting point for increasing problems between Germany and the United States in terms of the general confidence of the German public in American foreign and security policy. There is a danger that the current criticism will become a constant and growing attendant of the Alliance. But the Alliance has never had a "golden age" in a realistic view.² There was always criticism from different and changing

²See Mendershausen, 1976, p. 20: "In terms of projections made or

groups and countries. Each member of NATO has had and still has his own view of the cost and benefits of the current security system and there is room for positive crisis management in spite of hard conflicts. NATO is still an alliance of nation states. Within this system, flexibility and some freedom of action is necessary for each of the partners. The leaders in the Alliance must be led by realistic expectations. The Alliance can only suffer from a policy that expects a totally shared and detailed overall strategy. That is not the way to a perfect solution. In this case an old saying seems true: Often less is more. Or as Neustadt said in his study about the difficulties in bringing two political machines in the Alliance in step, "What remains? Simplicity."³

visions espoused, but not in terms of realities prevailing, one can find a "golden age" of Atlantic Relations."

³Neustadt, 1970, p. 149.

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