

TRENDS IN GERMAN DEFENSE POLICY:
THE DEFENSE POLICY GUIDELINES AND THE CENTRALIZATION
OF OPERATIONAL CONTROL

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June 14, 1994

19981231 085

THIS QUALITY ASSURED

AQ I 99-03-0437

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This work was prepared in association with
The Royal Institute of International Affairs
Chatham House
10 St James's Square
London, SW1Y 4LE

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The author would like to express his sincere appreciation to the following individuals for their insightful comments on earlier drafts of this paper: Professor Sir Laurence W. Martin, Professor Trevor Taylor, LTC William T. Johnsen, Dr Wolfgang Schlör, Dr Beatrice Heuser, and Herr Jürgen Schwarz. Ms Emma Matanle, of the International Security Programme of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, provided key support throughout the development of this work. The Strategic Outreach Initiative of the U.S. Army War College provided financial support to this endeavor. Professor Donald Abenheim and LTC Jack Hoschouer provided encouragement and considerable assistance. Numerous BMVg officials and serving Bundeswehr officers, who the author interviewed over the years, provided essential information.

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Introduction

Like most of its NATO allies, the Federal Republic of Germany has undertaken a massive restructuring of its armed forces.¹ The end of the Cold War, the need for unified Germany to assume responsibility for its security, and the current economic recession have made German defense planning extremely difficult. Bonn is also under pressure to reorient the Bundeswehr (Federal Armed Forces) from a defense force organized to deter war in the Central Region to one with deployment capabilities similar to those of other comparable powers. However, countervailing domestic and external political pressures have impeded this reorganizing effort.

Internally, even a clear political consensus regarding the use of the Bundeswehr has yet to emerge in Bonn. German participation in peace operations and international humanitarian missions has yet to gain wide political support, let alone participating in military campaigns in support of national interests outside of the immediate defense of German territory.²

Notwithstanding defense planning efforts undertaken to date by the current Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union/Free Democratic Party coalition government, the resolution of this debate is essential before definitive planning can be undertaken. In the sagacious words of Clay Clemens,

The major consistency in German political life for at least three decades has been the tendency of all the mainstream parties to shape policy together in an incremental, consensus-building process.³

Thus, until the time when an all party accord is reached in Bonn, Germany's defense structure will remain provisional.

Externally, the rest of Europe continues to cast a wary eye over this new iteration of "ein Deutschland." As the largest member of the European Union and possessing an enormous economic potential, the Federal Republic may increasingly come to dominate European affairs. Moreover, if Bonn were to maintain the Bundeswehr at a peacetime ceiling of 370,000, as referred to in Article 3 of the "Two Plus Four" Treaty, Germany would be likely to possess the largest standing military force in Western Europe. In view of recent history, it will be some years before other European countries are fully comfortable with a united Germany. Indeed, in Germany itself, anxiety over "normalizing" defense structures has resulted in charges by some that the current coalition government is militarizing German foreign policy.⁴

Given these numerous factors influencing German defense policy formulation, coherent defense planning has become all but

impossible. While this situation is not unique, it is particularly important for Germany because of its significance in the regional balance of power. Moreover, Germany's allies also expect Bonn to be able to participate to a greater degree in military operations outside of the Central Region. However, in spite of this planning uncertainty, there have been little-noticed developments in two key areas which presage the ruling coalition's and defense bureaucracy's reoriented concept of the Bundeswehr: the publication of the *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien*--VPR (Defense Policy Guidelines) in November 1992;⁵ and efforts on the part of the Bundesministerium der Verteidigung--BMVg (Federal Ministry of Defense) to establish, for the first time, a centralized operational control structure. While perhaps inconspicuous, the VPR and operational control restructuring will fundamentally affect the future planning of the Bundeswehr and how its deployments in less-than-war operations will be commanded. Yet neither this document nor this restructuring should cause undue concern. As will be argued in this paper, German national strategy, force planning and operational control structures will remain firmly tied to NATO and the emerging European defense identity.

Defense Policy

Planning Confusion That the Bundeswehr is in upheaval is an understatement.⁶ The initial planning confusion following unification in October 1990 was expected to be remedied in December 1992 with the release of *Bundeswehrplanung 94* (Federal Armed Forces Planning Document). It was anticipated that this key planning document would provide defense planners with stable financial and structural assumptions.⁷ This expectation was shattered in February 1993 when Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl suggested at the annual Wehrkunde conference in Munich that financial restrictions would necessitate a smaller Bundeswehr than was announced in December (i.e., 370,000).⁸

Since Kohl's remarks, defense planning has become all but meaningless, at least for the medium term.⁹ Probably what has complicated planning most has been the lack of consistent financial guidance. Although the budget has diminished from DM 52.13 billion in 1992 to DM 50.80 billion in 1993, this does not fully explain the depth of the problem facing defense planners.¹⁰

First, recent decisions by the government further to reduce public expenditures (in the case of defense, an additional DM 1.25 billion reduction, which has resulted in a DM 47.50 billion budget for 1994) have greatly complicated efforts on the part of the BMVg to program needed new capabilities for the Bundeswehr.¹¹

For instance, the Bundeswehr deployment to Somalia demonstrated the army, in particular, requires substantial upgrading of its combat service support capabilities if it is to participate in these types of operations in future.¹² Second, the BMVg must also expend ever diminishing resources for requirements associated with unification. The costs incurred by the immediate

requirement to clean up, upgrade and close eastern military facilities, quite apart from disposing of the immense munition holdings of the Nationale Volksarmee (East German Army), have come out of the defense budget, and largely at the expense of operational readiness.¹³ As a result of these problems, the well-respected defense correspondent Lothar Rühl can state incontrovertibly that the current Bundeswehr exists only as a transitional structure.¹⁴

Moreover, difficult decisions related to the Bundeswehr's force structure have been deferred because of the 1994 elections. For instance, the Federal Defense Minister, Volker Rühle, argued until December 1993¹⁵ that the Bundeswehr would not fall below 370,000. Because of the existing financial environment, however, maintaining a force structure at this figure has long been assumed to be extremely unlikely.¹⁶ Yet for Rühle not to argue for 370,000 would have raised the politically sensitive issues of conscription and of which military bases will be closed.¹⁷ As a result of these developments, longer-term planning will only start after the Bundestag (Lower House) elections have been held in October 1994. Since in the past it has taken approximately one year to develop a new *Bundeswehrplanung*, one can expect to see drafts of the 1997 edition by late 1995.

The VPR Given this rapidly changing planning environment, it is difficult to predict how the Bundeswehr will look in even a few years' time. As a guide to defining the aim of the overall concept of military defense for a period of 15 years,¹⁸ the VPR were prepared by the Planungsstab (Planning Staff) of the BMVg and endorsed by Federal Defense Minister Rühle in November 1992. Perhaps most revealing about the importance of this document is that its publication predated the recent release of the government's Defense White Book, which (not surprisingly) closely follows the VPR.¹⁹ The new VPR are the first guidelines to be issued since 1979 and, significantly, they are unclassified.²⁰ These guidelines are important because they address unified German security and define national interests in the post-Cold War world. Moreover, in the German defense planning system, the VPR constitutes the primary document for all subsequent planning. Thus, from the VPR, the *Militärpolitische Zielsetzung* (Military Policy Objective), the *Bundeswehr Konzeption*²¹ (Federal Armed Forces Concept) and, finally, *Bundeswehrplanung* are eventually developed. As such, the VPR establish a binding basis for future Bundeswehr planning and force development.²²

The fact that the VPR are little known outside Germany can be explained by the lack of a complete official, or even unofficial, translation into English.²³ Perhaps the relative obscurity of the VPR inside Germany is due in large part to a decision by Rühle to avoid publicizing them widely after what happened to his unfortunate predecessor, Dr Gerhard Stoltenberg. When Stoltenberg attempted to obtain government support for a draft version of new guidelines in February 1992,²⁴ the paper was

leaked to the press. Its explicitness concerning the future military missions of the Bundeswehr *outside* the NATO area provoked a storm of protest in the press.²⁵ While these protests were arguably unjustified, they provide an example of how Germans are only slowly becoming comfortable about thinking of their country as one with *global* interests. Consequently, the VPR have been softened in tone, but not significantly in terms of content. What follows is a précis of the more salient aspects of the document, and an analysis of the principal points.

Defining National Interests In keeping with the earlier Stoltenberg draft document, the guidelines acknowledge the importance of existing integrated defense arrangements and outline the Federal Republic's *national* interests and objectives. According to the VPR, German defense policy will be guided by the following vital security interests:

- 1) The protection of Germany and its citizens from outside dangers and political blackmail;
- 2) The prevention, containment, and termination of crises and conflicts which are likely to affect Germany's integrity and stability;
- 3) Maintaining alliance ties to the nuclear and naval powers within NATO, because Germany, as a non-nuclear and continental power with global interests, cannot act alone;
- 4) Deepening and widening of the European integration process, including the development of a European defense identity;
- 5) "Partnership among equals" between Europe and US/Canada, as expressed in North America's sharing of European interests and a significant US military presence in Europe;
- 6) Consolidation and expansion in effective global and regional security structures among complementary organizations;
- 7) Advancing the democratization process and economic and social advancement in Europe and globally;
- 8) Maintenance of free-world trade and access to markets and raw materials throughout the world within the framework of an equitable world economic order;
- 9) Continuation of a stability-oriented arms control policy process in and for Europe; and,
- 10) Influencing international institutions and processes in the interests of Germany on the basis of its national economic power, its military contribution, and, above all, its credibility as a stable, functioning democracy.²⁶

Note that these national interests are not unique to the Federal Republic. What makes them unusual for Germans is to hear "national" interests so clearly (indeed, painstakingly) defined. As a state whose international position has been defined since its birth in 1949 strictly in the context of the Western Alliance, Germany experiences such official statements as a novelty. Perhaps most important from an external perspective is the recognition in the VPR of the Federal Republic's political and military limitations, and the continued need for NATO and greater European integration. This acknowledgment of the importance of remaining in NATO and increasing the depth of European integration underscores another important political factor: only through such associations can German national power continue to be accepted as legitimate by its European neighbors.

Risks and Threats The VPR next address the issue of future challenges to German security. The guidelines recognize that there are four areas of risk against which the Federal Republic must prudently plan:

- 1) Continuing uncertainties regarding democratic processes in a Russia which remains a nuclear, military and naval power;
- 2) Domestic and regional European conflicts which might escalate (e.g., a Yugoslav-type civil war);
- 3) The military potential of states lining Europe's periphery (i.e., North Africa and the Middle East); and,
- 4) Attacks on German citizens abroad.²⁷

To prepare for these risks, traditional and non-traditional approaches are needed. As to the latter, the guidelines argue that the European Union must take a more active role in promoting political stability and economic growth. To enable this to occur, the European integration process must continue to widen (i.e., increase in membership) and deepen (i.e., become more comprehensive in its activities). At the same time, to underwrite the continued security and stability of Europe, the transatlantic relationship remains crucial. However, for this relationship to stand the test of time, it must evolve into a more equal association.

In spite of this definition of new risks and challenges to German security, the VPR assess Germany's overall security environment as relatively favorable. To quote defense correspondent Lothar Rühl once again, "For the first time since the Eighteenth Century, Germany is no longer exposed to a direct military threat involving an offensive war in Europe."²⁸ On the basis of these positive developments, the VPR assume that future military planning can be premised upon a one-year period of warning. The important implications of this assumption for the

operational readiness of the Bundeswehr will be dealt with below.²⁹

Defense Policy Principles Five principles are established to guide the formulation of defense policy in the post-Cold War era:

1) A broad security concept will serve as the basis for policy, requiring close cooperation among all political sectors;

2) "Common security" is adopted with its ensuing regional, supra-regional and global interdependence;

3) There is an acceptance of "stability orientation," which recognizes the importance of non-military aspects of security;

4) Cooperation with allies (viz. NATO and the WEU) will remain fundamental to the resolution of future security challenges; and,

5) Collective defense, within multinational structures, is still essential in order to forestall the renationalization of defense policies in Europe.³⁰

From these principles one can conclude that NATO remains the basis for the Federal Republic's security. At the same time, the principles intimate the need further to develop the European Pillar of the Alliance, in the form of the Western European Union. The guidelines acknowledge the growing importance that other international organizations (including the United Nations and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) will play in the security area.³¹

Force Structure Guidance The guidelines state that the Bundeswehr will be structured to protect national interests, within the overall force structure guidelines established by NATO's new strategy for future missions, i.e., rapid reaction, main defense and augmentation. The VPR also acknowledge significant limits to planning. In a financial sense, the VPR explicitly state that future monies will be largely programmed for:

1) Capabilities to support rapid reaction forces;

2) Training to support these new missions; and,

3) Improving the substandard living, training and service conditions in the new eastern Länder.³²

Planning itself will also be limited to, and influenced by:

1) The Two-Plus-Four-Treaty, which refers to Bonn's declaration that the Bundeswehr is to be reduced to 370,000

during peacetime, of which there is a sub-limit of 345,000 for the army (Heer) and air force (Luftwaffe);

2) Political guidance as to the length of military service and the amount of financial resources made available to defense; and,

3) Commitments to collective defense and collective security to which the Federal Republic of Germany has agreed.³³

VPR: An Assessment As stated, the VPR establish the basis for the future orientation and structure of the Bundeswehr. The implications of this document are that the Bundeswehr will be restructured primarily for crisis management at the expense of funding the standing main defense forces, and that a centralized operational control structure will be created to command these forces.³⁴ As a number of potential problems and issues relate to the structural planning of the Bundeswehr, they will be dealt with individually to avoid confusion.

From an Alliance perspective, it is difficult to find significant fault with the stated principles and structural plans outlined in the guidelines. They implement the NATO force structure concept and recognize that an integrative approach to German security remains a *sine qua non*. While the structural issues are in line with Alliance guidelines, a related issue, readiness, is troublesome. Because the VPR assumed a one-year period of warning of a developing threat, the main defense forces will probably be kept at a one-year operational readiness level. Of course, there is a distinct difference between "warning" and "mobilization" time and there are no assurances that future political leaders will act appropriately to meet Alliance commitments. Although it is true that reaction forces will receive priority in finances, the result could produce a significant gap in the ability of the government to support/augment reaction forces, once deployed, should the need arise. This lack of depth in force structure is a growing problem in the Central Region as standing forces are reduced. This development has resulted in an Alliance effort to control unilateral force reductions.³⁵ Yet, given the prevailing regional security environment and Bonn's determination not to be in a position where it is incapable of responding militarily to events outside the Central Region, the concentration of scarce resources in rapid reaction formations is inevitable.

This situation is not without potential domestic political ramifications. By making rapid reaction the priority for financial resources, at the expense of main defense formations, it is difficult to see how the concept "eine Bundeswehr" can continue. A perhaps unintended implication of the VPR is that the largely reserve Field Army will become a very different force from the standing reaction forces. One can expect long-serving professionals and financial resources to be funnelled to reaction

forces. Conversely, the Field Army will be largely made up of conscripts, provided with aging equipment suited for conventional warfare in the Central Region, while being partially manned and maintained at low-readiness levels. While this is not an issue of concern in many other Alliance countries, it is a very sensitive political matter in the Federal Republic, where the Bundeswehr has been structured with a large (and in principle, politically aware) conscript cohort to guard against the emergence of a professional military which could become a "state within a state."

VPR: Criticisms Despite their relative obscurity, the VPR have not completely escaped public criticism. A regular critic of the BMVg, RADM Elmar Schmähling (Ret), claimed in *Der Spiegel* that generals were making policy and that the guidelines were developed without public scrutiny and with no formal approval from the government.³⁶ Moreover, Wolfram Wette and Susanne Peters have argued that the VPR and other developments are leading to a militarization of German foreign policy.³⁷ Both of these pronouncements are inaccurate: the former because Rühle approved the VPR in his legal capacity as Federal Minister of Defense;³⁸ the latter because the concepts articulated in the VPR mirror the Alliance's New Strategic Concept, which, of course, the government has approved.

Leaving aside the question of whether any government in Bonn would deploy forces outside Germany for whatever mission, it is difficult to see where fault can be found in the *structural* principles of the guidelines. The threat analysis and assumptions employed in the VPR are similar to those of the opposition Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD).³⁹ Thus, should the SPD assume power following fall 1994 general elections, the current version of the VPR should not suffer major revisions. Indeed, the SPD has limited its criticism of the government's defense structural planning to the projected size of Bundeswehr rapid reaction forces.⁴⁰

Finally, even assuming there will be sufficient financial resources to implement the VPR, which is not at all certain,⁴¹ there has yet to emerge a political consensus to support operations for the employment of these envisaged military capabilities. This indicates the larger issue of what type of Bundeswehr unified Germany will eventually create. Both Rühle and the Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr (Chief of Staff of the Federal Armed Forces), General Klaus Naumann, fully understand that the Bundeswehr must be restructured. If it is not, then Bonn opens itself to the charge that it is not a serious Alliance partner. Furthermore, from a domestic political and financial perspective, it is equally foolhardy to keep a Cold War force structure that is no longer relevant to contemporary security conditions.

The course set by Rühle and Naumann, however, is not without

its potential for failure. By appearing to pre-empt the domestic political debate, Rühle and Naumann run the risk, should political dissent to the plans develop, of discrediting their program in the eyes of the already skeptical political opposition.⁴² Yet not to continue their restructuring program will leave the Bundeswehr ill-prepared to react to future security challenges. Only time will tell whether framing these new Bundeswehr missions in the context of NATO and European responsibilities will stand the test of a future government which includes the SPD.

Centralizing Operational Control

In her seminal analysis of the BMVg, Catherine Kelleher wrote that the Federal Republic had probably the "least to offer in terms of lessons that can be generalized for the organization of a central defense establishment," largely because it was specifically organized with the aim of not providing operational control over its standing national forces.⁴³ Germany does not have the command and control arrangements needed to undertake joint operations on any scale. This unusual condition persists because of the anxieties of a suspicious German population about the historical tendency toward a militaristic culture in German armies and because of the apprehensions of Germany's NATO allies. The consensus between German politicians and Western officials in 1954 was that there would be never again be a "Generalstab" (General Staff). Consequently, the Bundeswehr was structured so that wartime operational control would not be exercised by a German Central Staff, but through NATO command structures.

As a result, the Führungsstab der Streitkräfte--Fü S ("Joint" or "Central Staff" of the Armed Forces)--does not have the capability of exercising operational control over all Bundeswehr services and individual units. Thus, at the crux of the operational control deficiency in the BMVg and the Bundeswehr lies the sensitive issue of German civil-military relations. And, as a consequence, any effort to reorganize operational control structures will be a sensitive political matter, and subject to uninformed and emotional charges.

The Constitution and Command and Control Because misunderstanding surrounds the very concepts of "national command" and "operational control," let alone as they relate to Germany, there is a need for the definition of nomenclature and an analysis of legal parameters. First, there is no question in the Federal Republic, as in any democratic country, that ultimate "national command" over armed forces is exercised by the senior political leadership and delegated to military officials within constitutional bounds. Second, "operational control" is the authority invested in military commanders to direct military operations for the achievement of political objectives. The Grundgesetz (Basic Law, or constitution of the Federal Republic) establishes this principle so as to ensure civil control over the military. Indeed, so strongly did the Germans who framed the

Grundgesetz feel about the need to limit the independence of future politicians and military leaders that they included a provision (Article 26) defining the disturbance of peaceful relations between states and wars of aggression as criminal acts.

Given the fact that the basis for civil-military relations in Germany is explicitly stated in the Grundgesetz, an understanding of its relevant provisions is essential. Article 65(a) invests the power of national command (Befehls- und Kommandogewalt) in the Federal Minister of Defense. Article 115 defines how a "state of defense" is to be enacted by the Bundestag and Bundesrat (Upper House), and establishes the legal parameters for the defense of the Federal Republic. Article 115(b) stipulates that upon the declaration of a state of defense, national command of the Bundeswehr is transferred from the Federal Minister of Defense to the Federal Chancellor. <T>As regards operational control of the Bundeswehr, the Grundgesetz is rather vague. Article 24 states that the Federal Republic may enter into a system of collective security and transfer sovereign powers to intergovernmental institutions (e.g., to participate in the NATO integrated command structure). This particular article is often cited by some informed commentators⁴⁴ and some in the SPD⁴⁵ to claim that the creation of a national centralized operational control capability is constitutionally proscribed. This position is not entirely correct. Nowhere does the Grundgesetz proscribe the creation of a national military operational control structure. Where there are constitutional proscriptions on military structures, they refer to the civilian oversight of military organizations. Often overlooked is Article 87(b) which states that, in effect, the BMVg shall be a civilian ministry, thereby ensuring civil control over the military.

The Need for Change These constitutional provisions establishing the parameters for national command and operational control are actually neither onerous nor unusual. Civilian control over the military in a democracy presupposes national command being invested with civilian authorities, whereas responsibility for the operational control of forces is delegated to military authorities, with requisite political oversight. In the case of the Federal Republic prior to unification in 1989, the Bundeswehr was established almost exclusively for the purpose of the defense of German territory and could be employed only in wartime. In such a situation, following the declaration of a state of defense, operational control over the Bundeswehr, with some exceptions (e.g., the Territorial Army), would be transferred to NATO commanders who would implement their respective General Defense Plans for the defense of Alliance territory.⁴⁶

For the purpose of the defense of Germany, this wartime operational control arrangement was, and arguably remains, adequate. Since it remains a key assumption that NATO is essential to German security, there is no pressing military

requirement to create a centralized *wartime* national operational control structure. However, as regards any military operations short of declared war, the BMVg is singularly ill-structured to exercise operational control. This was made patently clear, for instance, during the conduct of Bundeswehr humanitarian relief operations carried out in Iran, Iraq and Turkey in spring 1991.⁴⁷

According to one German press report, during this deployment of 500 Bundeswehr personnel, the command channels of the commanding officer, Major General Georg Bernhardt, had to be routed through 23 offices in the BMVg and other ministries. Even within the BMVg there was confusion. For instance, FÜ S III 6 (political-military affairs) was responsible for operations in Turkey and Iran, while FÜ L III 3 (operational matters of the Air Force Staff) was in charge of Luftwaffe missions in Iraq, within the framework of the United Nations.⁴⁸ As the VPR envisage restructuring the Bundeswehr to undertake these types of operations, national operational control structures need to be expanded, clarified and centralized. Hence, from the previous situation where the Bundeswehr was structured almost exclusively for wartime operations, the BMVg must now have the capability to exercise operational control within what the VPR terms Frieden, Krise und Krieg (peace, crisis and war).⁴⁹

Impediments to Change To remedy the lack of an adequate centralized operational control structure, two major organizational and political challenges need to be overcome. First, and probably most important, is the need to effect change in the sensitive area of the nexus between the civilian national command authority and senior military officials invested with responsibility for exercising overall operational control. In other words, the relationship between the Federal Minister of Defense and the Generalinspekteur der Bundeswehr needs to be changed. Second, and closely related, the existing operational control structures of the three services, as well as the operational control responsibilities exercised by the three service Inspekteure (Chiefs of Staff), also require alteration.

The Generalinspekteur is the senior military advisor to the Federal Minister of Defense and the Federal Chancellor and is a non-voting member of the Cabinet's Bundessicherheitsrat (Federal Security Council). Until 1993, he had neither national command nor even operational control authority over Bundeswehr forces. However, he did have the independent right of inspecting all units of the Bundeswehr. Thus, his position was largely confined to advising the government on military matters, particularly in the important area of force planning. Additionally, he chairs the Militärische Führungsrat (Federal Armed Forces Defense Council), where he exercises "executive authority." This consists of the Stellvertreter des Generalinspekteurs der Bundeswehr (Deputy Chief of Staff of the Federal Armed Forces) and the three service Inspekteure.⁵⁰

Peacetime operational control over Bundeswehr forces was

previously invested in the service Inspekteure. Until 1993, the three Inspekteure reported directly to the Federal Minister of Defense. They continue to be responsible for the operational readiness of, and exercise discipline over, their individual services.⁵¹ Interestingly, for many years following the establishment of the Bundeswehr, the issue of exactly who (military or civilian) was ultimately responsible for the discipline and operational readiness of the armed forces went unresolved. It was only settled on March 21, 1970, following the promulgation of the important Blankeneser Erlass (ministerial decree) by the then Federal Minister of Defense, Helmut Schmidt, who acted solely upon his own authority. The decree established "the formal specification of interacting responsibilities of the political and military leadership in ministerial and governmental affairs."⁵² In effect, this ruling established the pre-eminence of the Inspekteure in the areas of exercising discipline and ensuring the combat readiness of their services.

Finding a solution to this civil-military and organizational problem has not been a simple task. First, the BMVg itself must be reorganized to enable it to support a centralized operational control capacity. The Federal Minister currently has approximately nine difficult options from which to choose. Overriding most considerations is the objective R uhe has established to reduce the ministry from its current unwieldy 5,000 military and civilian personnel to a more manageable 2,000.⁵³ While it is relatively simple to reduce military offices and personnel by transfers to organizations outside the BMVg, effecting redundancies of civil servants is an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task in the Federal Republic, given its labor laws.

This has, therefore, concentrated efforts on removing service components from the BMVg. One such proposal is bureaucratically and physically to relocate the service headquarters, i.e., Army Staff (F u H), Air Staff (F u L) and Navy Staff (F u M), and their Inspekteure to their respective operational command headquarters. It has even been suggested that the Inspekteure and operational commanders of the three services be merged into one position.⁵⁴ This is a very unpopular proposal within the services, yet it demonstrates the possible degree of change the BMVg is likely to undergo in the near future as efforts are made to turn it into a more effective bureaucracy.

Second, efforts to centralize operational control capabilities in the BMVg, or alter the responsibilities of the Generalinspekteur in this area, could result in charges that a new "Generalstab" is being created. Given the emotional character of this issue, a misunderstanding of the intentions of the BMVg could present difficulties, without proposals being judged upon their merits. Indeed, the mere terminology "Generalstab"⁵⁵ has come to have pejorative connotations to Germans.⁵⁶ To quote a leading expert on German military institutions, Donald Abenheim,

The men in their Prussian blue or field-gray uniforms with the crimson facings have earned such epithets as 'brilliant militarists,' 'the brains of armies,' 'geniuses of war,' 'criminals against peace,' 'foes of democracy,' and 'technocrats of organized violence.'⁵⁷

While it appears to be a minor semantic matter, in essence the problem of terminology only serves to complicate finding a politically acceptable solution.

Third, just as there is domestic political sensitivity surrounding this issue, so too must German defense officials be careful not to send signals to their NATO allies that Bonn is no longer interested in maintaining existing integrated military command structures. As the VPR establish, NATO remains central to German security. The integrated military command structure therefore remains essential in German eyes. Thus, as will be seen below, the efforts of the BMVg to centralize operational control capabilities are modest and fall well short of a wartime command structure, let alone a new "Generalstab."

Solution Part 1: The services As a result of these numerous political obstacles, the approach taken by the BMVg has been an incremental one, and an "interim solution" has been put in place (see Chart 1, Appendix).⁵⁸ This has been effected at the level of the services and the BMVg. The operational command headquarters of the individual services have been expanded to provide improved national operational control over Bundeswehr deployments. Both the Luftwaffe (see Chart 2, Appendix) and the Bundesmarine (Federal Navy--see Chart 3, Appendix), have long possessed service operational control headquarters of varying degrees of independence. They are currently being modestly expanded: Luftwaffenführungskommando in Köln-Wahn and Flottenkommando in Glücksburg, respectively.

Since the creation of the Bundeswehr, however, there has been no army operational command headquarters above the corps level. In wartime, it was planned that the three corps commanders would implement NATO General Defense Plans at the direction of their respective Army Group headquarters (NORTHAG and CENTAG). Given Bonn's interest in participating in less-than-war operations, an Army operational headquarters, similar to those of its sister services, is required. As a result, the Heeresführungskommando (Army Operations Command) is in the process of being established at the previous home of III Korps in Koblenz (see Chart 4, Appendix). This headquarters will consist of approximately 100 personnel and will be commanded by a three-star general.⁵⁹ It has three important tasks:

- 1) Exercise command and control over the three Army Corps, on behalf of the Chief of Staff of the Army.
- 2) Ensure operational readiness of the major combined arms

units of the Army.

3) Plan for and control the employment of army forces in national and multinational formations.⁶⁰

The creation of this headquarters will have a significant impact on the future operation of the Germany Army. For instance, as its units increasingly are deployed in multinational formations, this command will assume an important role in providing the national input into the operation of German Army divisions and brigades. Moreover, contrary to the initial planning for the headquarters as expressed in Heeresstruktur 5 (Army Structure Plan 5), the Territorial Army headquarters will not be fused to the three Army corps, but rather will fall under the responsibility of the Heeresführungskommando.⁶¹ Finally, under the Heeresführungskommando a new mobile subcommand is being established, Kommando Luftbewegliche Kräfte (Air Mobile Forces Command--KLK). The KLK headquarters is being established in Regensburg to act as a national command and represent German interests in the deployment of airmobile/airmechanized reaction forces.⁶²

All three service headquarters were activated on April 1, 1994 and assume full command authority over all German forces and territory on September 1, 1994, the day following the final withdrawal of Russian forces in eastern Germany. These service headquarters will be increasingly important as they are intended not only to improve operational control over their service formations, but also to support the exercise of national command by the Federal Minister of Defense. As such, all three are being developed to be mobile.

Given that the reorganization of the BMVg and the final redefinition of the role of the Generalinspekteur may not be resolved in the near term, the BMVg envisages employing the service headquarters to provide an operation control linkage between the BMVg and deployed Bundeswehr task forces operating outside the Central Region. To ensure an adequate degree of "jointness," liaison officers will be exchanged among the headquarters. The choice of which of the three headquarters will be used to command and control German forces will be dictated by the type of mission. Hence, the embryonic Heeresführungskommando has provided, not without some difficulties,⁶³ an operational control linkage to Bundeswehr forces, including Luftwaffe units deployed to Somalia.⁶⁴ The Flottenkommando has provided command over Bundesmarine participation in enforcing sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro in the Adriatic, and the Luftwaffenführungskommando has exercised command over Luftwaffe humanitarian flights in the former Yugoslavia.

Solution Part 2: The BMVg Leaving aside for a moment the question of the responsibilities of the Generalinspekteur, the BMVg has itself required reorganization to exercise centralized

operational control over Bundeswehr forces in cases of less-than-war. Notwithstanding the existence of three service operational commands, there remains a distinct need for a central office within the BMVg to coordinate national command responsibilities in less-than-war operations, provide options to the Federal Defense Minister and ensure that the Minister's intentions are being carried out. For reasons already recounted above, it is not feasible to create a large standing office to support the Minister.

Consequently, within the Central/Joint Staff, FÜ S IV (Organization) was directed to create a small operational staff on April 1, 1993.⁶⁵ Formally named Einsatzführung Bundeswehr (Operational Command of the Federal Armed Forces), and organizationally referred to as FÜ S IV 4, this office has become the operations center of the BMVg for less-than-war missions. Although it is very small (approximately 10 officers), a planning cell and supporting personnel taken from the Streitkräfteamt (Armed Forces Office) and the Bundesamt für Wehrverwaltung (Federal Office for Defense Administration) support the office. The fact that this support staff is located organizationally outside the BMVg reflects Rühle's directive to reduce the manning level of the ministry.

One of the significant implications of this organizational development is that while the services have increased their ability to exercise operational control over their forces, national command over these operations is being exercised through FÜ S IV 4. This is the first time FÜ S has possessed such a capability. In effect, this new office has enhanced the power of FÜ S, at the expense of the three services and their Inspekteure.

As part of this new responsibility, FÜ S IV has the important task of coordinating the activities of the military and civilian departments of the BMVg which support military deployments short of war. A BMVg internal directive of February 1993 created the Koordinierungsstab für Einsatzaufgaben (Coordination Staff for Operational Tasks).⁶⁶ This staff falls under the direction of the departmental staff chief of FÜ S IV.⁶⁷ When directed to support a "deployment," this staff:

- 1). Prepares a chain of command;
- 2). Coordinates all BMVg activities supporting the deployment;
- 3). Develops the position of the BMVg for interaction with efforts of other ministries;
- 4). Briefs senior BMVg leadership on the results of decisions; and,
- 5). Oversees the conduct of the mission.

The directive of February 9, 1993 creating the above structures in FÜ S has also had a defining influence upon the responsibilities of the Generalinspekteur. First, within the context of less-than-war situations, the Generalinspekteur has been delegated the following new powers:

The Chief of Staff of the Federal Armed Forces assumes, on the basis of his command authority and in conjunction with the Inspekteure, responsibility for all requisite measures for the preparation, culmination and control of deployments. He also assumes, on the presentation of an appropriate decree (Erlass), the central administration of humanitarian aid-work of the Bundeswehr overseas.

Second, the Koordinierungsstab is subordinated to the Generalinspekteur. The implication of this directive is to make the Generalinspekteur the military authority for coordinating less-than-war operations, as well as making him (as opposed to the individual service Inspekteure) the key military official interface with the Federal Minister of Defense.

This is a significant development. For the first time the Generalinspekteur has been placed in the direct line of responsibility for operational control over forces between the Federal Minister of Defense and the service operational commands. This, in effect, excludes the Inspekteure from their operational control responsibilities when their services deploy units in less-than-war operations.⁶⁸ As the civilian Abteilungen (departments) continue to report administratively to their respective State Secretaries, while participating in the operation of the Koordinierungsstab, the principle of civilian control over military activities remains intact. Thus, the responsibilities of the Generalinspekteur have been significantly increased, without rupturing the delicate civil-military relationship at the level of national command.

In essence, the position of Federal Minister of Defense Rühle and the defense bureaucracy is that a modest centralized operational control organization was required. That this restructuring has been modest is primarily due to domestic political rationales. It must be understood, however, that the current structure just described is provisional. The reason for this is that any final structure will have to await the eventual reorganization of the BMVg. It remains an open issue whether the final organization of the BMVg will include an expanded joint operations directorate. However, at least in the interim, these arrangements will be limited to support only less-than-war missions.

Whether this interim structure will be sufficient for the tasks envisaged, however, is uncertain. The mere fact that great pains have been made to "invent" new nomenclature (e.g., Koordinierungsstab für Einsatzaufgaben), instead of simply using

"Generalstab," is a manifestation of the extreme domestic political sensitivity surrounding the issue. Although this may be a premature observation, one could reasonably predict in which areas efforts to validate this structure through exercises and simulations will be circumscribed for fear of causing misperceptions of its mission on the part of the media and public. Thus, whereas this interim structure might be appropriate for command and control of a Bundeswehr deployment similar to the Somalia peace support mission, commanding operations at a higher level of intensity and scope could well be beyond its capabilities. Given political realities in the Federal Republic, this is a predicament that the BMVg and Bundeswehr have no choice but to face in their efforts to ensure that government policy is efficiently executed.

Implications

This paper has argued that the Bundeswehr is in the process of undergoing a fundamental restructuring and reorientation. Owing to the planning uncertainties caused by the impending Bundestag elections and the inability on the part of the ruling coalition to provide consistent budgetary guidelines, assessing the numerical parameters of the Bundeswehr is meaningless. It is simply not possible to estimate accurately how large the peacetime strength of the Bundeswehr will be, let alone whether it will consist of conscripts to the degree that it has until now. Yet, in view of this uncertainty, and the political importance of Germany in Europe, as well as lingering anxiety over "ein Deutschland," it is essential that trends in that country's defense policy be ascertained and assessed. The VPR and operational control restructuring qualify as critical indicators of national intention.

In assessing the design and scope of this document and the reorganization effort, two general observations can be drawn. First, it is clear that the policies outlined in the VPR and operational control restructuring are evolutionary in their objectives. Germany's political and security interests and objectives are explicitly outlined in the VPR and are defined strictly within the context of the Western Alliance and European integration. Centralized national operational control structures are undergoing a painstakingly slow maturing process whose completion is nowhere in sight. If there is anything "revolutionary" in German defense policy and operational control structures, it is the lack of concern on the part of senior leaders of all political parties about the need to develop an independent power capacity, commensurate with Germany's new status. Indeed, where there is agreement on external policy between the principal political parties in the Federal Republic, it is with regard to their contentment with this state of affairs.

Second, and related to the above, given this envisaged defense policy and centralized operational control structure, it

is difficult to find merit in the argument that these developments presage a militarization of German foreign policy. To be sure, the ruling coalition has decided that it requires new capabilities to support its foreign policies, i.e., peace operations and humanitarian assistance. Nonetheless, this new vision and supporting military structures can hardly be considered as militarizing Bonn's foreign policy. Quite apart from the fact that peace support and humanitarian operations do not seem to constitute a "militarized" foreign policy, the policies outlined by the VPR and operational control planning are clearly envisaged to be *supportive* of allied/coalitional, rather than national efforts.

Yet, as the Federal Republic wishes to participate in these new military missions, a reorganized and restructured Bundeswehr is needed. In fact, what is truly needed is for the very basis of the Bundeswehr to be revisited. A conscript-based force, raised almost exclusively for the territorial defense of the Federal Republic, and lacking in key areas of combat capabilities, is no longer an appropriate structure for Bonn's security requirements. However, to effect such an enormous change in German defense structures will require a political debate of a magnitude perhaps surpassing the current controversy surrounding the use of the Bundeswehr in peace operations. Although it is never framed as such, the latter debate reflects the larger question of the need to remodel the Bundeswehr. Considering the passions in Germany surrounding this politically sensitive subject, one can be fairly certain that the debate on restructuring the Bundeswehr is some years away. But in the interim, the effort to evolve a more capable Bundeswehr will continue, "politics," of course, allowing.

ENDNOTES

1. Assessing contemporary German defense policy is no easy task, given rapid changes in the security environment, policy and financial resources. For background on the immediate implications of unification on German defense structures see the excellent essay by Geoffrey Van Orden, "The Bundeswehr in Transition," *Survival*, Volume 33, No. 4, July-August 1991, pp. 352-370. For long-term implications and the effect of unified Germany on regional security, the following monograph should survive the test of time: Wolfgang F. Schlör, "German Security Policy: An Examination of the Trends in German Security Policy in a New European and Global Context," *Adelphi Paper*, No. 277, London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, June 1993.

2. For background on this contentious political debate see Kurt A. Kissinger, "Bundeswehr Deployments 'out-of-area': An Examination of the Current Debate over German Armed Forces' Participation in International Peace Operations," *Ridgway Viewpoints*, No. 93-10, Pittsburgh, University of Pittsburgh, 1993.

3. See, Clay Clemens, "A Special Kind of Superpower? Germany and the Demilitarization of Post-Cold War International Security" in, *Germany in a New Era*, ed. by Gary L. Geipel, Indianapolis, IN: Hudson Institute, 1993, p. 200.

4. See *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), July 30, 1993. Cf., the response by General Gerd Schmückle (Ret) in *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), August 6, 1993. See as well, Susanne Peters, "Germany After the End of the Cold War: Arriving at a New Staatsräson?", n.d., p. 24.

5. Der Bundesminister der Verteidigung, *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien*, Bonn, November 26, 1992.

6. Oberst i.G. Rolf Baumgärtel, "Die Bundeswehr im Umbruch," Bonn, BMVg, Planungsstab, December 23, 1992, draft m/s.

7. See *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, December 16, 1992.

8. See *The Washington Post*, February 6, 1993.

9. The BMVg has acknowledged that "reliable and future-oriented planning for the Bundeswehr [is] impossible." See, *Die Welt* (Hamburg), December 17, 1993 in, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS)-WEU-93-242*, December 20, 1993, pp. 26-27.

10. See *The Military Balance, 1993-1994*, London: The International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1993, p. 45.

11. See the interview by Michael Inacker with General Naumann in, *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), February 6, 1994.

12. See *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (München), March 8, 1994.

13. For more details on the problems associated with unification see my essay, "The 'Normalization' of the Federal Republic of Germany's Defense Structures," Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, September 1, 1992, pp. 9-11.

14. See *Die Welt* (Hamburg), February 6, 1993.

15. Rühle finally acknowledged publicly what was already well known: financial conditions will not allow the Bundeswehr to remain at 370,000 in 1994. Current planning envisages a force of 350,000. Rühle claims that this lower figure is valid until financial conditions improve. See *DDP* (Berlin), December 16, 1993 in, *FBIS-WEU-93-240*, December 16, 1993, p. 28.

16. The Bundeswehr is finding it increasingly difficult to argue for the continuation of conscription as conscientious objectors increase and sheer demographic factors work against it. Following unification and the end of the cold war, those claiming objector status have reached a record high. See *Süddeutscher Zeitung* (München), July 17-18, 1993. Even a conservative

newspaper like *Rheinischer Merkur* has questioned the wisdom of continuing the draft. See the newspaper's August 20, 1993 editorial in, *FBIS-WEU-93-180*, September 20, 1993, p. 26.

17. See *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, October 26, 1993.

18. Information provided by the BMVg.

19. For an analysis of the Defense White Book see Michael Inacker's essay in, *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), March 20, 1994.

20. Cf., *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), May 3, 1993 where the claim is made by RADM Schmähling that the VPR are "secret." This is nonsense; they are not even restricted in their distribution (i.e., VS-NUR FÜR DEN DIENSTGEBRAUCH).

21. A draft of the new concept has been leaked to the press. According to the reliable Michael Inacker, it is said to include a cut in military service from 12 to 10 months and a reduction in the size of the Bundeswehr to 320,000-340,000. See, *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), April 10, 1994.

22. See Dieter Mahnke, "Wandel im Wandel: Bundeswehr und europäische Sicherheit," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (Bonn), April 9, 1993, pp. 40-46.

23. A translated précis is available in *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), December 6, 1992, in *FBIS-WEU-92-236*, December 8, 1992, pp. 25-27.

24. See Dr Gerhard Stoltenberg, Bundesminister der Verteidigung, *Militärpolitische und militärstrategische Grundlagen und konzeptionelle Grundrichtung der Neugestaltung der Bundeswehr*, n.d.

25. See *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), January 20, 1992, pp. 33-35.

26. See *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien*, point 8, pp. 4-5.

27. *Ibid.*, points 19, 20, 21, and 22, pages 12-14.

28. *Die Welt* (Hamburg), February 6, 1993.

29. *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien*, point 19, pp. 12-13.

30. *Ibid.*, point 28, pp. 17-18.

31. *Ibid.*, points 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, pp. 19-24.

32. *Ibid.*, point 51, p. 32.

33. *Ibid.*, point 52, p. 33.

34. *Ibid.*, points 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, pp. 29-31.
35. For an analysis of the precipitous drop in Central Region force structure and the ensuing SHAPE Force Structure Review, see William T. Johnsen and Thomas-Durell Young, *Preparing for the NATO Summit: What are the Pivotal Issues?*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, October 8, 1993, pp. 7-14.
36. See *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), May 3, 1993, pp. 24-25.
37. See *Die Zeit* (Hamburg), July 30, 1993; and, Peters, "Germany After the End of the Cold War," n.d., p. 24.
38. See Catherine McArdle Kelleher, "Defense Organization in Germany: A Twice Told Tale", in *Reorganizing America's Defense: Leadership in War and Peace*, ed. by Robert J. Art, et al., Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1985, p. 94.
39. See Florian Gerster's article in, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, April 6, 1994.
40. See *Die Welt* (Hamburg), November 19, 1993 in, *FBIS-WEU-93-223*, November 22, 1993, p. 20.
41. See *Die Welt* (Berlin), November 26, 1993; and, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, November 29, 1993 in, *FBIS-WEU-93-228*, November 30, 1993, pp. 23-24.
42. Note that as late as the recent Wiesbaden Congress, the SPD continues to reject even United Nations' sanctioned combat missions. See, *Die Welt* (Hamburg), November 19, 1993 in, *FBIS-WEU-93-223*, November 22, 1993, pp. 19-20.
43. Kelleher, p. 82.
44. See Peters, p. 11.
45. See, for example, one SPD parliamentarian's view on Article 24 and command difficulties posed by the creation of the Franco-German Brigade. Hermann Scheer, "Ein grundgesetzwidriges Vorhaben," Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst, November 20, 1987, cited in Matthew A. Weiller, "SPD Security Policy," *Survival*, Volume 30, No. 6, November-December 1988, p. 522. Note, however, that Dr Egon Bahr, with his impeccable SPD credentials, has gone on record arguing for the creation of a new "Generalstab" in order to support humanitarian and peace operations. Egon Bahr, "Ein Generalstab kein Tabu mehr", *Europäische Sicherheit*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 1992, p. 127.
46. Note, however, that it has been claimed that in the past, owing to the lack of an adequate operational department

within the BMVg, senior defense officials and Bundeswehr officers have not been well-prepared in assessing NATO war plans. See *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), August 29, 1993.

47. The Bundeswehr's deployment to the Middle East was criticized by its Ombudsman for poor planning and execution. See, *Kölner Stadt- Anzeiger*, March 13, 1992.

48. See *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), March 1, 1992.

49. See *Verteidigungspolitische Richtlinien*, point 49, p. 32.

50. See Kelleher, p. 97.

51. "The Chiefs of Staff of the Services are directly responsible also to the Minister, as the authority vested with the power of command, for the operational readiness of their force components. Thus, the Service Chiefs of Staff have dual functions: in respect of the task of the Chief of Staff, Federal Armed Forces, to develop and implement an overall concept of military defence, they are as ministerial heads of division subordinated to him in the hierarchy of the Federal Ministry of Defence. With regard to their responsibility of assuring the operational readiness of their Services, they are immediately subordinate to the Minister, without any intermediate authority in between. Accordingly, their respective staffs accomplish the functions of both a ministerial division and a Service command."

Federal Minister of Defence, *White Paper 1985: The Situation and Development of the Federal Armed Forces*, Bonn: Federal Ministry of Defence, 1985, point 376, p. 168.

52. Kelleher, p. 94.

53. One possible option may include the creation of a *Gemeinsamer Führungsstab der Streitkräfte* ("Joint Command Staff of the Armed Forces") "...to achieve tighter decision making structures of the BMVg." Exactly how this staff would be constituted and how it would differ from FÜ S remains to be explained. See, *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (München), July 2, 1993.

54. See, *ibid.*; and, *Der Spiegel* (Hamburg), August 2, 1993, p. 16.

55. Cf.: "...the working method of the Prussian-German General Staff has been adopted in the German language as an idiom. A very accurately prepared and successfully executed project is frequently rated 'general staff-like' (generalstabsmässig)." See, Christian O. E. Millotat, *Understanding the Prussian-German General Staff System*, Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 20, 1992, p. 7.

56. This, in itself, is but a manifestation of Germans' misunderstanding of their own history. Kelleher makes the

persuasive argument that German civil-military relations since 1870s are terribly misunderstood by Germans. A comparison of civil-military relations with, say France, shows that the influence of the Generalstab was not all that different from its continental counterparts. Indeed, during the Nazi era, it was the government's principal aim to ensure "civilian" control over the Wehrmacht. And it should not be forgotten that it was principally General Staff Officers in 1938 and 1944 who attempted to assassinate the dictator, Adolf Hitler. See Kelleher, pp. 85-86.

57. Donald Abenheim, "Foreword," in *Understanding the Prussian- German General Staff System*, p. vii.

58. "kleine Lösung," according to the well-informed defense correspondent Michael Inacker. See *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), August 29, 1993.

59. For general background on the Heeresführungskommando see Erhard Drews, et al., "Das neue deutsche Heer: Zielsetzung, Konzeption, und Elemente der Heeresstruktur 5," *Truppenpraxis*, Vol. 35, No. 4, July-August 1991, pp. 362-365.

60. Fü H-IV-1, *Führungsebene des deutschen Heeres* (Vortrag f. GE/US Heeresgeneralstabsgespräche, 1992), October 12, 1992.

61. See *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, December 16, 1992.

62. *Vortragskonzept*, StAL Fü H VI am 05.08.1993 in DA, Washington, Part I, point 9; Part II, point 7.

63. See *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, July 17, 1993.

64. See *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), January 10, 1993.

65. See Sts/Org 1 - Az 10-02-01 vom 9.02.1993, *Koordinierung des Einsatzes der Bundeswehr für Unterstützungsaufgaben*.

66. See *Welt am Sonntag* (Hamburg), August 28, 1993.

67. The Koordinierungsstab consists of one-star general officer representatives from Fü S staff divisions I (Personnel), II (Military Intelligence), III (Political-Military Affairs), V (Logistics), and VII (Communications/Electronics), staff departmental directors from the three service staffs (Fü H, Fü L and Fü M), the deputy director of medical services, the staff departmental heads from the civilian Abteilungen to include administration and law, armament, finance, social services, and the deputy head of the powerful Planungsstab (Planning Staff). Other section and department representatives shall be consulted as required.

68. While there has not been, as reported in the press, a reformulation of the important Blankeneser Erlass, the relationship between the Generalinspektor and the Inspektore has

been fundamentally altered *de facto* by the promulgation of this directive. See *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (München), July 2, 1993.

INTERNET DOCUMENT INFORMATION FORM

A . Report Title: Trends in German Defense Policy: The Defense Policy Guidelines and the Centralization of Operational Control

B. DATE Report Downloaded From the Internet 12/28/98

C. Report's Point of Contact: (Name, Organization, Address, Office Symbol, & Ph #): Strategic Studies Institute
U.S. Army War College
122 Forbes Ave
Carlisle, PA 17013-5244

D. Currently Applicable Classification Level: Unclassified

E. Distribution Statement A: Approved for Public Release

F. The foregoing information was compiled and provided by:
DTIC-OCA, Initials: VM_ **Preparation Date:** 12/28/98__

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