Condemned Forever to Becoming and Never to Being?¹ **The Weise Commission and German Military Isomorphism**

Despite several post-Cold War reforms which have promised far-reaching change, the Bundeswehr faces a set of deficits in force structures, capabilities, doctrines and military adaptation, which leave it in danger of slipping permanently behind its European partners. The study examines the extent to which reforms proposed by the Commission on Structural Reform of the Bundeswehr will remedy these deficiencies. It finds that the proposals of the Commission include several important measures which will accelerate German convergence with the reforms of its European partners. However, the Commission fails to address several fundamental problems which impair the Bundeswehr's capacity to adapt to ongoing operations. The article critically engages with the existing theoretical literature on German defence policy and highlights the utility of Neoclassical Realism in explaining the process and outcome of German defence reform. The study also points to the urgent requirement for further comparative scholarship on post-Cold War European military adaptation and civil-military relations in defence planning.

Since the end of the Cold War the *Bundeswehr* has been in a process of almost constant reform. Past reforms have promised 'fundamental renewal'² and a 'strictly deployment-orientated posture'³. Yet these reforms have delivered only incremental change and in 2011 the *Bundeswehr* suffers from a set of deficits which leave it in danger of slipping permanently behind its European partners. These deficiencies have serious implications for the *Bundeswehr*'s interoperability with allies and Germany's capacity to 'burden-share' within the Atlantic Alliance and Common Security and Defence Policy. As recent scholarship has demonstrated, the difficulties faced by the *Bundeswehr* in operations in northern Afghanistan⁴ and the lack of participation of the *Bundeswehr* in the more volatile south of Afghanistan are not only a consequence of a lack of willingness among Germany's political elite to sanction higher-intensity operations. They also derive from the problems encountered by the *Bundeswehr* in participating in operations which can vary quickly in intensity across the conflict spectrum.⁵

This article focuses on the recommendations of the Commission on Structural Reform of the *Bundeswehr*⁶ and reforms planned by former Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg (2009-2011), which have been billed as the most far-reaching structural reforms to the *Bundeswehr* since the end of the Cold War.⁷ The study examines the extent to which these proposed reforms will remedy the deficits faced by the *Bundeswehr* in 2010. It asks whether these reforms represent a *Bundeswehr* that is about to take a significant step toward convergence

¹ The title borrows from Karl Scheffler's quotation that 'Berlin is a city condemned forever to becoming and never to being'.

² 'The Bundeswehr Advancing Steadily into the 21st Century: Cornerstones of a Fundamental Renewal', BMVg, June 2000.

³ White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the *Bundeswehr*, 2006, BMVg, pt. 3.8, page 65.

⁴ On German performance in operations of rapidly-varying intensity, see Janne-Haaland Matlary, *European Union Security Dynamics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009), p.151. On Afghanistan, see T. Noetzel and B. Schreer, 'All the Way? The Evolution of German Military Power', *International Affairs* 84/2 (2008) pp.211-21. On the impact of capability deficits on performance in Afghanistan, see 'Bundeswehr in Afghanistan bedingt Einsatzbereit', *Welt Online*, 6 April 2010 <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article7074557/Bundeswehr-in-Afghanistan-bedingt-einsatzbereit.html>, retrieved 2 December 2010. On doctrinal deficiencies see 'Das ist Naiv Gewesen', *Zeit Online*, 31 July 2009, <http://www.zeit.de/2009/32/Kujat-Interview>, retrieved 2 December 2010.

⁵ T. Dyson, 'Managing Convergence: German Military Doctrine and Capabilities in the 21st Century', *Defence Studies*, 11/2 (2011).

⁶ Chaired by Frank-Juergen Weise, the Commission on the Structural Reform of the *Bundeswehr* was established by the Cabinet in April 2010 to develop proposals for streamlining the *Bundeswehr*'s command and administrative structures and delivered its report in October 2010. It will, henceforth, be referred to as the 'Weise Commission'.

⁷ S-C. Brune et al, 'Restructuring Europe's Armed Forces in Times of Austerity', *SWP Working Paper*, November 2010, p.11.

with the British and French armed forces, or a military that is ‘condemned forever to becoming and never to being’.

The study begins by outlining the core premises of the two main theoretical approaches to German defence reform: Strategic Culture and Neorealism. The article proceeds by examining the outcome of post-Cold War German defence reforms which are disaggregated into four categories: force structures, capabilities, doctrine and finally, the institutional structures determining the capacity of the military to adapt force structures, capabilities and doctrines to ongoing operations. The article then assesses the significance of the recommendations of current reform plans for the *Bundeswehr*’s ability to remedy its deficiencies. It finds that while the proposals of the Weiser Commission include several important measures which will accelerate convergence with the reforms of its European partners, it fails to address several fundamental problems which impair the *Bundeswehr*’s capacity to adapt to ongoing operations. The penultimate section of the article takes stock of the implications of the empirical analysis for the explanatory power of Cultural and Neorealist approaches to German defence reform. It finds that although Neorealism enjoys substantial analytical leverage in capturing the process and outcome of German defence reform, it is unable to account for the slow speed with which the *Bundeswehr* is converging with the reforms of its European partners. Hence the section demonstrates the utility of Neoclassical Realism in explain the timing of the *Bundeswehr*’s convergence with the dictates of the international security environment. The article concludes by focusing on the avenues for future empirical and theoretical research on German and European defence reform.

Competing Approaches to the Sources of German Military Change: Strategic Culture versus International Structure

The theoretical literature on post-Cold War German defence reform is dominated by cultural approaches. These approaches argue that German strategic culture - rooted in the moral and military defeat of WW2 and characterised by anti-militarism and a reflexive commitment to multilateralism - is an important determinant German defence policy.⁸ The concept of strategic culture emphasises the role played by cognitive paradigms within societies and the key institutions of defence and security policy-making in ‘predisposing societies in general and political elites in particular to certain actions and policies over others’.⁹ It is important to note that the concept of strategic culture does not posit that policy outcomes will always fully mirror German strategic culture. Instead, strategic culture acts to reduce the number of policy responses which are deemed appropriate.¹⁰

However, the literature on German strategic culture is divided between scholars who view culture as the central independent variable explaining policy outcomes and scholars who perceive culture as an intervening variable between the pressures of the international system and domestic policy response.¹¹ On the one hand, Berger, Duffield and Maull argue that strategic culture forms an intervening variable that mediates, but ultimately succumbs to, pressures from the international security environment.¹² As Dalgaard-Nielsen notes of these authors: ‘The

⁸ Thomas Berger, *Cultures of Anti-Militarism* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1988); Kerry Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force: The Evolution of German Security Policy 1989-2003* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), p.16.

⁹ John Duffield, *World Power Forsaken* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p.27

¹⁰ Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, p.27; Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, pp.15-18.

¹¹ For a comprehensive discussion of the origins of the concept of strategic culture and of theoretical contestation within the approach, see A. Johnston, ‘Thinking About Strategic Culture’, *International Security* 19, no.4 (1995), pp.32-64.

¹² Thomas Berger, ‘Norms, Identity and National Security in Germany and Japan’, in Peter Katzenstein (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); p.328; Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, pp.786-90; Hans Maull, ‘Germany’s Foreign Policy post-Kosovo: Still A

changes that actually occurred in German security policy over the 1990s are thus conceived of as the result of reluctant and reactive adaptation to appease the new international expectations directed at Germany'.¹³ On the other hand, Dalgaard-Nielsen and Longhurst¹⁴ emphasise the independent impact of German strategic culture in determining the outcome of German defence reform.¹⁵ Dalgaard-Nielsen and Longhurst posit that Germany strategic culture led to the persistence of territorial defence as the core objective of German security policy until 2003, to the maintenance of conscription and continues to produce a defence policy that is characterised by a preference for multilateral solutions and the use of civilian rather than military instruments.¹⁶ As Dalgaard-Nielsen notes, while external pressure is an important variable, culture forms the central variable: 'the end-point of change would be a foreign and security policy that brings external pressure into balance with the stable and fundamental beliefs that make up the core of a country's security policy culture'.¹⁷

According to Dalgaard-Nielsen and Longhurst, when policy change occurs, it is not so much the result of pressure from the international system, but derives predominantly from 'within security culture itself'.¹⁸ Drawing on Giddens's 'Theory of Structuration', they argue that change is dependent upon the ability of actors within the political executive to create culture through the control of discourse. Through the use of discursive tools these actors are able to 'rise above the culture they are embedded in and actively manipulate it'.¹⁹ Dalgaard-Nielsen emphasises the role of political entrepreneurs in manipulating culture by altering 'central' 'operational' and 'peripheral' beliefs.²⁰ Longhurst also emphasises the importance of 'strategic cultural agents' within the political-military elite in re-shaping culture.²¹ In short, defence policy choices are contingent, not so much on objective pressure from the international system, but on the subjective values, norms and beliefs of national strategic culture and upon the role of individual agency in introducing dynamism to culture.²² The position adopted by Dalgaard-Nielsen and Longhurst is therefore close to the arguments of the Copenhagen School on securitization, which argues that speech acts have the ability to cause, change and found new structures of significance in social relations.²³

Neorealism forms the dominant competing approach, but has received relatively little attention within the literature.²⁴ Neorealism argues that in a competitive 'self-help' international system, where military power forms a crucial dimension of relative power, states are compelled

Civilian Power?' in Sebastian Harnisch and Hans Maull, *Germany as a Civilian Power: The Foreign Policy of the Berlin Republic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), pp.119-20.

¹³ Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p.11.

¹⁴ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, pp.7-8.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.7.

¹⁶ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement* pp.153-55; Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*.

¹⁷ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement* p. 144.

¹⁸ Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, p.11.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.12.

²⁰ Central beliefs are 'abstract beliefs and basic assumptions about the international system. . . rarely questioned and stable'; operational beliefs relate to the 'efficacy of different policy instruments and strategies'; peripheral beliefs are 'more transient and concern concrete issues and objects'. Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace-Enforcement*, p. 13. Longhurst terms the three layers of beliefs of which strategic culture are composed 'foundational elements,' 'security policy standpoints,' and 'regulatory practices'. Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, p.17.

²¹ Longhurst, *Germany and the Use of Force*, p.21.

²² *Ibid*.

²³ T. Balzaq, 'The Three Faces of Securitization: Political Agency, Audience and Context', *European Journal of International Relations* 11/2 (2005), pp.171-205; H. Sritzel, 'Towards a Theory of Securitization: Copenhagen and Beyond', 13/3 (2007), pp.357-83.

²⁴ Realist accounts of post-Cold War German defence policy are limited to the Neoclassical Realist analyses. See: Dyson, *Managing Convergence*; Tom Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

to maximise the effectiveness of their military instruments in dealing with conflict scenarios which are likely to arise over the short-medium term.²⁵ Neorealism posits that three outcomes are possible in defence reform. The first outcome is military innovation: ‘the discovery of new knowledge, invention of new practises or their recombination in new forms’.²⁶ Military innovation is, however, associated with a high-level of risk, as should a state pursue faulty innovation (that often involves significant financial and intellectual investment) it may lead to a dramatic loss of relative power.

Defence reform may also be guided by emulation: the adoption of ‘best-practice’ in military affairs. While Waltz argues that states are predisposed to emulate the military reforms of the dominant power in the international system²⁷, states are also keenly attuned to the successes and failures of the forces structures, doctrines and capabilities of other states in the international system. Hence states emulate not only on the basis of aggregate capabilities, but also on the basis of proven success in conflict (military ‘best-practice’), thereby minimising the risk and cost of emulation.²⁸ The final possible outcome is policy inertia, whereby a state retains increasingly defunct military structures, capabilities and doctrines and suffers a loss in relative power. Neorealism expects that states of comparable material power, geographical location and size (such as the West European Great Powers) are subject to similar levels of ‘external vulnerability’ and will exhibit isomorphic policy responses in military policy, leading to convergence in force structures, doctrines and military capability procurement.²⁹

In summary, Neorealism and the Culturalist approach to defence reform adopted by Dalgaard-Nielsen and Longhurst differ in two main ways: on the level of analysis that should take priority and on the roles played by material and ideational variables. While Neorealism locates causal weight in variables at the systemic level, Dalgaard-Nielsen and Longhurst argue that policy is determined by domestic-level variables. Secondly, Neorealism posits that policy is determined by an objective reality rooted in the structural imperatives of the balance of power that will inevitably lead to military convergence among states of similar material power, size and geographical position. However, Dalgaard-Nielsen and Longhurst argue that defence policy is dependent upon culturally-subjective interpretations of appropriate policy responses and that military convergence should not necessarily be expected.

The following analysis will test these two approaches. It will demonstrate that rather than acting according to the dictates of the subjective beliefs of strategic culture, German defence reform is gradually beginning to mirror objective military ‘best-practice’ and is converging with the reforms of Britain and France. The article will highlight how the experiences of conflict in Afghanistan and pressure to conform to military ‘best-practice’ have fostered a modest acceleration of military isomorphism through several of the Weise Commission’s proposals. These proposals will improve the *Bundeswehr*’s capacity to adapt force structures, doctrines and capabilities to the changing operational environment.

The *Bundeswehr* in Comparative Perspective: Delayed and Reactive Reform

During the post-Cold War era, German defence reforms have increasingly embodied a partial and selective emulation of the force structures, doctrines and capabilities associated with the US-led Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA). The RMA is composed of three core features. Firstly, the development of expeditionary forces characterised by joint command structures.³⁰ Secondly, a shift from weapons platforms to knowledge-empowered networked forces capable

²⁵ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA, Addison Wesley, 1979), p.127

²⁶ Joao Resende-Santos, *Neorealism, the State and the Modern Mass Army* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), p. 72.

²⁷ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p.127.

²⁸ Military ‘best-practice’ is identified through the observation of the experiences of other states and through a state’s own operational experiences. Resende-Santos, *Neorealism the State and the Modern Mass Army*, p.58-61.

²⁹ Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, pp.95-106.

³⁰ K. Reynolds, ‘Building the Future Force’, *Contemporary Security Policy* 27/3 (2006), p.458.

of exercising agility and precision in the application of attritional force (Network-Centric Warfare (NCW)).³¹ Effects Based Operations (EBO) has taken centre-stage in conceptual development on NCW and formed, until 2006, the third key feature of US transformation.³² EBO involve the use of networked activities and the mobilisation of all sources of national power (political, economic, military and diplomatic) to achieve first-, second- and third-order strategic effects against near-peer competitors.³³ While the RMA remains important, there has, since 2006 been a much stronger focus on the concepts and capabilities necessary to conduct complex land operations ‘amongst the people’. Key changes include doctrinal development, notably the 2006 US Army/Marines Counterinsurgency (COIN) Doctrine Field Manual that emphasises the centrality of a population-focused approach to operations and institution building.³⁴ EBO were also stripped from US Joint Doctrine in 2008. Furthermore, the 2009 US defence budget cancelled several RMA programmes in favour of capabilities more suitable for irregular conflict.³⁵

German emulation of the RMA has involved three main features. Firstly, improving the jointness³⁶ of the *Bundeswehr* and its deployability and interoperability with Alliance partners through reforms to command structures. Secondly, a shift away from the procurement of platform-based weapon systems to investment in Command, Control, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C2ISR) capabilities in support of networked operations and investment in the capabilities required to project power within and outside of Europe’s geopolitical neighbourhood. The final pillar of German reform has involved doctrinal development that has focused on the development of thinking on the networking of forces and the implications of C2ISR capabilities for Command and Control. Germany has also made progress on doctrinal development around the Effects Based Approach to Operations (EBAO) and on Stabilisation/COIN doctrine. In this regard German defence reforms represent a case of convergence with those of its closest European partners, the British and French, whose reforms have also been characterised by a similar selective emulation of the RMA.³⁷

However, German emulation of the RMA and its convergence with the reforms of the other European Great Powers has been painfully slow. It was only in 2003 with the release of the Defence Policy Guidelines (VPR) that Germany abandoned territorial defence in favour of expeditionary crisis-management as the core objective of defence policy.³⁸ Such a delay in reform to the objectives of German defence policy was particularly remarkable when one considers that the formal shift from territorial defence to a focus on expeditionary crisis-management was taken by the French in their defence reforms of 1994 and by the British in the Strategic Defence Review (SDR) of 1997/98.³⁹ The temporal delay in reform to the core objectives of German defence policy has had important implications for the *Bundeswehr*’s ability to undertake expeditionary operations on the scale and intensity of its European partners and has led to a delayed emulation of the RMA compared to Britain and France, as the following section will highlight.

Deficits in Force Structures

³¹ E. Dahl, ‘NCW and the Death of Operational Art’, *Defence Studies* 2/1 (2002), p.5.

³² T. Farrell, ‘The Dynamics of British Military Transformation’, *International Affairs* 84/4 (2008), p.779

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ B Hauser, ‘The Cultural Revolution in COIN’, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30/1 (2006), p.167.

³⁵ ‘Military Budget Reflects a Shift in Strategy’, *New York Times*, 6 April 2009. See: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/07/us/politics/07defense.html?pagewanted=1&_r=2&hp, retrieved 30 November 2010.

³⁶ Jointness refers to the principle of inter-service cooperation in the conduct and planning of operations, capability procurement, doctrinal development and concept development and experimentation (CD&E).

³⁷ On the European Great Powers’ selective emulation of the RMA see Tom Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.28-60.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.122-13.

³⁹ B. Irondelle, ‘Civil-Military Relations and the End of Conscription in France’, *Security Studies* 12/3 (2003), p.162; C. McInnes, ‘Labour’s Strategic Defence Review’, *International Affairs* 74/4 (1998), pp.833-36.

The shift toward jointness and interoperability in command structures took place at a relatively early stage in the post-Cold War era in the UK. In 1996 the UK established the Permanent Joint Headquarters that draws together intelligence, logistics, planning and operational staffs and contains a rapidly-deployable in-theatre joint HQ. These changes were codified by the 1997/98 SDR that placed jointness and interoperability at the heart of force planning.⁴⁰ Similarly, French command structures were reconfigured according to the principle of modularity following the 1996 structural reforms.⁴¹ However, the principles of jointness and interoperability have only taken centre-stage in German defence reform since the turn of the century, particularly following the 2003 VPR. An important step toward jointness was taken in 2001 with the establishment of the Operations Command in Potsdam that is responsible for coordinating all overseas deployments and through the initiation of the Response Forces Operations Command that provides a deployable force headquarters. The 2006 Defence White Paper (DWP) also created of a 35,000-strong rapid-reaction force designed for the higher-intensity ‘initial-entry’ stages of operations and a 75,000-strong stabilisation force, designed for low-medium intensity stabilisation/post-conflict reconstruction operations.⁴² These forces were intended to deliver the capacity to field 14,000 expeditionary combat troops.⁴³

However, significant problems remain in German force structures. While the development of joint forces is an important step forward, the separation between forces suitable for high and low-medium intensity conflict does not reflect contemporary Stabilisation/COIN operations, in which land forces require the capability to deal with conflict that can vary in intensity at short notice. Furthermore, while the French abolished conscription in 1996, 55,000 basic and extended-service conscripts currently serve in the German military for a period of six months.⁴⁴ Not only are basic-service conscripts unavailable for deployment, but they also tie up valuable personnel and resources in training and accommodation, undermining the *Bundeswehr*’s deployability and the pace of its transformation.⁴⁵ Furthermore, although the 2006 DWP outlined the intention of developing the capacity to deploy 14,000 troops abroad (from a total force of 245,000) in support of complex crisis-management operations, the 8,300 troops currently deployed abroad have left the *Bundeswehr* operating at the limits of its capability.⁴⁶

In contrast, the planning assumptions of the UK’s 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) outline the intention to generate (from 154,000 troops) a one-off intervention force of 30,000.⁴⁷ Alternatively, the SDSR envisages the capability to simultaneously undertake an enduring (more than six months) stabilisation operation of 6,500, a non-enduring (less than six months) complex intervention of up to 2,000 personnel and a non-enduring simple intervention of up to 1,000 troops.⁴⁸ French defence planning assumptions outline the capacity (from 225,000 troops) to simultaneously deploy up to 30,000 troops in a major expeditionary operation within a period of six months and for up to one year, in addition to a 5,000 strong reserve on permanent operational alert.⁴⁹

Deficits in Military Capabilities

⁴⁰ McInnes, ‘Labour’s Strategic Defence Review’, p.837.

⁴¹ G. Bloch, ‘French Military Reform: Lessons for America’s Army?’ *Parameters: US Army War College Quarterly* 30/2 (2000), p.36.

⁴² White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr’, BMVg, 2006, pt.3.9, p.69.

⁴³ *Ibid.* pt.3.8, p.67.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* pt. 7.2, p.116.

⁴⁵ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defence and Security*, p.64.

⁴⁶ Brune et al, ‘The German Armed Forces and the Financial Crisis’, p.2.

⁴⁷ ‘Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The SDSR’, HMSO, 2010, pt. 2.15, p.19.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ ‘The French White Paper on National Security’, Odilie Jacob, 2008, p.11.

The 2003 VPR set several key priorities in capability procurement, notably command and control, intelligence collection and reconnaissance, strategic and tactical mobility, effective engagement, support and sustainability, and survivability and protection.⁵⁰ Germany has made some progress in these areas, including the Infantryman of the Future system that will equip frontline infantry units with state-of-the-art equipment designed to improve lethality, survivability, mobility and command and control capabilities.⁵¹ Other key acquisitions include 53 Airbus A-400M transport aircraft which will enhance strategic mobility and the strengthening of tactical mobility through the acquisition of 134 NH-90 transport helicopters and modernisation of 40 CH-53 transport helicopters. Effective engagement is being addressed through the acquisition of 80 Tiger multi-role combat support helicopters and PUMA infantry fighting vehicles.⁵² Since the late 1990s there has also been significant investment in C2ISR capabilities, including the procurement of joint, networkable radio equipment and other tactical communications capabilities as well as a joint intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance network.⁵³

Despite these investments, Germany lies behind its European partners in the procurement of capabilities in support of networking. While UK forces attained an initial network-enabled capability in 2007, Germany will not reach a comparable stage until 2013.⁵⁴ Germany's expeditionary capabilities are also undermined by time delays and budget over-runs associated with key procurement programmes in support of tactical and strategic airlift, including the NH-90 helicopters and A-400M transport aircraft. Of the 80 Tiger helicopters ordered by the Army (which were planned for service in 1992) only 10 have been delivered, beginning in 2006. The Eurofighter has also suffered significant delays since the project's inception in 1979 and cost over-runs have left Germany struggling to finance the purchase of the final 37 of its 177 Eurofighters.⁵⁵

Delays in procurement are compounded by the commitment to ensuring maximum performance from capabilities, rather than pursuing the cheaper and quicker option of sacrificing 10-20 percent of performance.⁵⁶ The German Defence Ministry (BMVg) has, more recently, been considering implementing a 'spiral development model' to allow the formal consideration of introducing a capability at less than 100 percent of its potential from an early stage of project development.⁵⁷ The introduction of this model will, however, have little immediate impact on ongoing programmes. Moreover, Germany remains committed to several defence capability procurement programmes which have more relevance to Cold War conflict scenarios. Such projects include the 2005/06 acquisition of eight P3-C Orion anti-submarine warfare aircraft and the procurement of two U-212 submarines in 2005-06. Seen in the context of Germany's low defence spending in comparison to Britain and France, whose higher-level of spending allows them to hedge against a broader range of less-likely future conflict scenarios, such as classic major combat operations, these projects are an expensive luxury.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the 2007 ordering of four F-125-Class expeditionary frigates is excessive, considering that their utility is questionable given the likelihood of land-based expeditionary crisis-management operations characterising short-medium term conflict scenarios.⁵⁹

⁵⁰ 'Defence Policy Guidelines', BMVg, 2003, pt. 15, section 2.

⁵¹ Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, p.53.

⁵² H. Matzken, 'German Army Stabilisation Forces' *Doctrine* 12 (2007), pp.71-4.

⁵³ Dyson, 'Managing Convergence'.

⁵⁴ Interviews, BMVg, Bonn, 12 October 2009.

⁵⁵ 'Bundeswehr Reviews its Entire Structure', *Defence News*, 20 September, 2010.

⁵⁶ Brune et al, 'The German Armed Forces and the Financial Crisis', SWP Comments, May 2010, p.3.

⁵⁷ Interview, BMVg, Berlin, 24 November 2009.

⁵⁸ In 2008 British defence spending totalled \$60,499 billion; French defence spending totalled \$66,180 billion, while German defence spending was \$46,241 billion. 'Financial and Economic Data Relating to NATO Defence', NATO Public Diplomacy Division, February 2009. On German capability acquisition see: Dyson, 'Managing Convergence'.

⁵⁹ 'Bundeswehr Reviews its Entire Structure', *Defence News*, 20 September 2010, p.18.

Deficits in Doctrine

German doctrinal development also lags behind that of its European partners. British and French thinking on EBO has undergone significant development since 2003. Both countries have converged around the 'Effects Based Approach to Operations' (EBAO) that recognises that it is not the nature of operations themselves which have changed, but the approach to operations.⁶⁰ British and French EBAO emphasises the importance of delivering both kinetic and non-kinetic effects and has been firmly located within the Comprehensive Approach that seeks to integrate other governmental departments, international organisations and actors from civil society into campaign planning and execution. As British and French thinking on EBAO already recognised some of the pitfalls associated with EBO (not least its emphasis on kinetic effects and highly-centralised command structures) the decline of EBO has not had such far-reaching implications for these states. EBO's decline has led to a focus on the looser notion of 'effects-based thinking' that shuns the more deterministic dimensions of EBAO, by retaining its utility in targeting closed systems and networks and provide a language of effects to assist in campaign planning and execution.⁶¹

In contrast, the *Bundeswehr's* conceptual development on EBAO did not take off until 2006 and lags behind that of the UK and France. Thinking on EBAO is differentiated within the *Bundeswehr*. While the Air Force champions a more traditional understanding of EBO⁶², the Army is receptive only to the looser concept of 'effects-based thinking'.⁶³ Furthermore, Germany is awaiting NATO guidance on the implications of the decline of EBO for doctrinal development.⁶⁴ German thinking about the implications of networked capabilities for military doctrine is hampered by the slow pace of C2ISR capability procurement. Hence Germany is currently engaging with the implications of new C2 capabilities for command structures and joint multinational operations through a series of military exercises; a process that took place several years previously in Britain and France.⁶⁵

Finally, Germany also suffers from significant doctrinal deficits in Stabilisation and COIN. UK and French military doctrine exhibits a strong level of dynamism and delivers a detailed account of how to undertake Stabilisation and COIN operations.⁶⁶ By 1997 British and French army doctrine recognised the tendency for expeditionary crisis-management operations to be characterised by conflict of rapidly-varying intensity.⁶⁷ However, until its revision in 2007 German Army doctrine (*Truppenfuehrung von Landstreitkraeften*) separated fighting, peace-support and humanitarian aid as distinct conflict categories.⁶⁸ German doctrine was updated in 2005 to include Guidelines for Operations against Irregular Forces, but it failed to properly integrate the kinetic and non-kinetic dimensions of military operations.⁶⁹ Hence the *Bundeswehr* lacks a comprehensive COIN doctrine suitable for the kind of operations the *Bundeswehr* has encountered in the north of Afghanistan. However an explicit COIN doctrine is now under

⁶⁰ On British EBAO, see T. Farrell, 'The Dynamics of British Military Transformation', *International Affairs* 84/4 (2008), pp.790-98; On French EBAO, see Tom Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010), pp.41-7 and S. Rynning, 'Transformation and Counter-Transformation in the French Army', paper presented at the ISA Conference, San Francisco, March 26-29, 2008.

⁶¹ Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, p.204-5.

⁶² Konzeptionelle Grundvorstellung der Luftwaffe zum EBAO', BMVg, 13 May 2007.

⁶³ Interview, Leadership Academy, Hamburg, 22 October, 2009.

⁶⁴ Interviews, Transformation Centre, Strausberg, 26 November 2009.

⁶⁵ Interview, BMVg, Bonn, 12 October, 2009; interview, BMVg, Bonn, 19 October, 2009.

⁶⁶ On British and French Stabilisation/COIN doctrine, see Thomas Rid and Thomas Keaney (eds), *Understanding Counterinsurgency* (London: Routledge, 2010); see also Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, pp.34-7; 44-7.

⁶⁷ Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, pp.34-7; 44-7.

⁶⁸ Interview, Leadership Academy, Hamburg, 22 October, 2009.

⁶⁹ 'Einsatzkonzept Operationen gegen Irregulaere Kraefte', BMVg, 2005.

development.⁷⁰ Furthermore, German rules of engagement under ISAF and pre-deployment training have increasingly focused on a more robust approach and the effective integration of kinetic and non-kinetic effects.⁷¹ In summary, German doctrinal development is highly-reactive to developments in NATO and displays a strong degree of inertia.

Deficits in Military Adaptability

The *Bundeswehr* also suffers from deficits which impair its ability to identify military ‘best-practice’ from its own operational experiences and from the experiences of other states. As a consequence the *Bundeswehr* has encountered difficulties in adapting force structures, doctrine and capabilities to the changing operational environment in Afghanistan.

The process of ‘bottom-up’ military adaptation has been hampered by the delay in developing a formalised process of lesson evaluation and implementation following military operations (the so-called ‘lessons-learned process’). The British and French adopted a digitised lessons-learned system in the late 1990s. Yet it was only in 2004 that Germany established an IT system in support of lessons-learned (*InfoSysEEBw*) at the *Bundeswehr* Operations Command.⁷² The Operations Command acts as a ‘service agnostic’ institution coordinating lesson identification and implementation, deciding which service should take the lead on the analysis of an issue and, through *InfoSysEEBw*, checking follow-up.⁷³ The 2008 creation of the Operational Staff and its section for Operational Assessment has also played an important role in enhancing the *Bundeswehr*’s capacity to adapt doctrine and capabilities to the operational environment by allowing the military to more fully exploit the potential of *InfoSysEEBw*.⁷⁴ The work of the Operational Staff has been supplemented by the *Bundeswehr*’s Institute of Social Sciences that, on behalf of the Operational Staff, prepares questionnaires for commanders to be completed before, during and after deployment and that also organises workshops for commanders returning from operation.⁷⁵ The 2004 establishment of the *Bundeswehr* Transformation Centre (BTC) as a ‘think tank’ on issues of force structures, doctrine, military capabilities and concept development and experimentation (CD&E) has also bolstered the *Bundeswehr*’s capacity to identify military ‘best-practice’.

Nevertheless, several fundamental problems remain in the German process of doctrinal development and capability acquisition, which undermine the *Bundeswehr*’s ability to identify and implement lessons from operational experience and from the observation Alliance partners’ experiences. Firstly, despite the prominent role of the Leadership Academy’s Working Group on Joint and Combined Operations, Germany lacks a central body like the UK’s DCDC and France’s Centre for Concept Development, Doctrine and Experimentation (CICDE) that can take a lead role in the development of joint military doctrine.⁷⁶ The implementation of doctrinal change involve a complex process of consultation that reduces the *Bundeswehr*’s ability to decisively respond to challenges in the operational environment and slows the speed with which changes are integrated into pre-deployment training.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the identification of lessons-learned in the comprehensive approach has been undermined by poor communication between the Foreign Office (a key partner in ISAF Provincial Reconstruction Teams) and BMVg following operations. However, proposals are currently under consideration to formalise Foreign

⁷⁰ Interview, Leadership Academy, Hamburg, 22 October, 2009; Timo Noetzel and Benjamin Schreer, ‘Missing Links: The Evolution of German Counterinsurgency in Afghanistan’, *RUSI Journal* 154/1 (2009) pp.16-22.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² Interview, BMVg, Berlin, 10 November 2009.

⁷³ Interview, BMVg, Berlin, 10 November 2009; interviews, BTC, Strausberg, 26 November 2009.

⁷⁴ Interview, BMVg, Berlin, 10 November 2009.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ Interview, Leadership Academy, Hamburg, 22 October, 2009.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Office briefings to the BMVg to help the military ensure that doctrine fully supports cross-government cooperation.⁷⁸

Secondly, in contrast to the UK and France, where the military is permitted a significant level of autonomy in doctrinal development and implementation, German military doctrine is subject to strong civilian control.⁷⁹ The *Bundestag* enjoys constitutionally-mandated powers over operational issues, including rules of engagement, command and control and risk-assessment.⁸⁰ In contrast, the oversight powers of the UK Parliament extend only to the approval of a mission's mandate and the right to visit troops on deployment, while the French National Assembly enjoys the right to vote on troop deployments, but only four months after the initiation of an operation.⁸¹ The high-level of *Bundestag* control has been matched by a close preoccupation of the core executive and civilian leadership of the BMVg with doctrinal development and tactical and operational issues.⁸² Strong civilian control not only complicates the process of doctrinal development, but also allows party-political concerns to cloud decision-making on doctrine at the tactical and operational levels, fostering a significant degree of doctrinal stagnation.⁸³ This stagnation has been evident in the development of an explicit German COIN doctrine that has proved a particularly sensitive political issue.⁸⁴

Thirdly, German military doctrine remains classified and doctrinal development is surrounded by a culture of secrecy. Not only does classification make doctrine unavailable to Reservists, but it also places limitations on the extent to which the military is able to call upon expertise from academia and civil society.⁸⁵ Furthermore, despite the steps taken by the BTC to foster a more open environment to doctrinal and conceptual development within the *Bundeswehr*, it has been less successful in engaging with external actors.⁸⁶

The final major impediment to adaptability lies in deficits in the process of defence capability acquisition. Like the UK and France, Germany has introduced an 'Urgent Operational Requirements' (UOR) scheme allows the acquisition of equipment for ongoing operations. The scheme allows the Services to procure equipment 'off the shelf' that costs less than €5 Million and must be deployed within 12 months.⁸⁷ The scheme has, for example, allowed the military to lease Heron 1 long-range endurance Unmanned Aerial Vehicles from Israel and acquire Reccelight tactical reconnaissance pods and groundwork stations for its Tornados.⁸⁸ Yet German troops continue to suffer from deficits in key areas such as force protection, for example only 70 percent of German vehicles in Afghanistan enjoy mine protection (Brune, 2010: 3) Indeed, the German UOR scheme is much more limited than that of the UK.⁸⁹ Financed by Treasury contingency funding, UK UORs are not subject to budgetary restrictions.⁹⁰ The scheme has enabled investment in Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance and in particular, in force protection, financing, for example, an outlay of £250 Million on 400 new Ridgeback and Mastiff fighting vehicles.⁹¹

⁷⁸ Interview, BMVg, Berlin, 16 November 2010.

⁷⁹ H. Aust and M. Vashakmadze, 'Parliamentary Consent to the Use of German Armed Forces Abroad', *German Law Journal* 9/12 (2008): pp.2223-36; Hans Born and Heiner Haenggi, 'Governing the Use of Force under International Auspices', in *SIPRI Yearbook 2005* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), p.206.

⁸⁰ Born and Haenggi, 'Governing the Use of Force under International Auspices', p.206.

⁸¹ Aust and Vashakmadze, 'Parliamentary Consent to the Use of German Armed Forces Abroad', p.2225.

⁸² Dyson, *The Politics of German Defence and Security*, pp.66-8; Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, pp. 178-9.

⁸³ Interviews, BMVg, Bonn, 19 October 2009.

⁸⁴ Interview, Leadership Academy, Hamburg, 22 October, 2009.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Interviews, BTC, Strausberg, 26 November 2009.

⁸⁷ Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, p.184.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ Brune et al, 'The German Armed Forces and the Financial Crisis', p.3.

⁹⁰ Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, p.216.

⁹¹ See <http://www.mod.uk/DefenceInternet/FactSheets/UrgentOperationalRequirementsuor.htm>, retrieved 25 November 2010.

Furthermore, it is very difficult for the *Bundeswehr* to push through changes to the formal equipment programme following the identification of serious UORs with broader implications for ongoing procurement programmes. These difficulties derive from three key deficits in the process of capability acquisition. Firstly, poor management of the relationship between the BMVg and German and European defence industries has led to insufficient mechanisms to sanction manufacturers for late delivery. This has contributed to significant time delays and cost-over-runs in key projects, particularly cooperative projects at the European level, such as A-400M, Eurofighter and the Tiger Helicopters.⁹² Political considerations, including state investment in EADS and the negative consequences for Europe's defence industry should states cancel their orders, have undermined the capacity of European states to hold EADS to account for the late delivery of the Tiger and A-400M programmes.⁹³

Secondly, the structuring of military input to defence planning on capability acquisition also undermines the responsiveness of the acquisition programme. The key organs responsible for taking decisions on changes to the *Bundeswehr's* acquisition programme are dominated by military input. These organs include the Integrated Working Group for Capability Analysis (that is responsible for translating the broader direction on capabilities provided by the 2006 DWP and Coordination Group for Transformation into major decisions on force structures, doctrine and capability procurement) and the Military Advisory Board (that has ultimate decision-making authority on major changes to projects).⁹⁴ Furthermore, the Single Service Chiefs are not subordinated to the *Generalinspekteur*. Consequently the individual Service Chiefs can trade-off support for their key projects, thereby promoting inertia in the capability programme.⁹⁵

Finally, the performance of the German procurement programme is undermined by the weak role of the German Federal Auditing Office (BRH). While the BRH is mandated to oversee procurement, it is only able to devote a small pool of manpower to the task.⁹⁶ Furthermore, although the *Bundestag* enjoys the power to approve projects costing over €25 million, its capacity to hold the Defence Minister to account for delays and cost over-runs is limited. The culture of secrecy surrounding German defence policy is not only an impediment to doctrinal adaptation, but also undermines the ability of actors from civil society and other organs of Government to hold the *Bundeswehr* to account in the mismanagement of defence capability acquisition. There is no information available in the public realm from either the BRH or the *Bundeswehr's* Armaments Division on time-slippages and budget over-runs on major defence capability procurement programmes

However, poor civilian oversight of defence planning is not confined to Germany. The October 2009 Independent Review of Acquisition conducted by Bernard Gray points to significant deficiencies in UK procurement, concluding that the costs of programmes are on average 40 percent greater than planned and delivered 80 percent later than estimated.⁹⁷ The report emphasises the urgent need to reform the acquisition process to allow civilian actors to exert greater control over the Services' procurement plans.⁹⁸ Combined with the poor management of relations with industry, these deficits in the structuring of military input to defence planning in the UK have reduced the responsiveness of the procurement programme to ongoing operations by leaving a black hole of £36 Billion at the heart of the UK defence

⁹² Interview, BMVg, Berlin, 24 November 2009; interviews BTC, Strausberg, 26 November 2009. On the BMVg and EADS, see: 'German Army Angry over EADS Delays and Technical Glitches', *Spiegel Online*, 8 April 2009, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,640426,00.html>, retrieved 30 November 2010.

⁹³ Brune et al, 'The German Armed Forces and the Financial Crisis', pp.3-4.

⁹⁴ Dyson, 'Managing Convergence'.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Interview, BMVg, Berlin, 24 November 2009.

⁹⁷ 'Review of Acquisition for the Secretary of State for Defence', HMSO, London, 15 October, 2009, p.16.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.6.

budget.⁹⁹ Consequently, while the UK's UOR scheme has allowed improvements in force protection and ISR, Britain has found it very difficult to deliver urgently-needed Chinook helicopters in support of tactical manoeuvrability in Afghanistan (of which there are only 8-10 on deployment).¹⁰⁰ While a decision was taken in December 2009 to provide an extra 22 Chinooks funded through base closures, cuts to the Nimrod and Tornado fleets and a reduction of 7,500 civilian BMVg staff, the order was reduced to 12 by the SDSR.¹⁰¹

France, in contrast, enjoys a more efficient system of defence procurement. The French acquisition programme suffers from an average delay of only 1.5 months per year, compared to the average delay of 6 months per year in the UK and is also subject to lower cost over-runs than the UK and Germany.¹⁰² In contrast to Germany and the UK, decision making on capability acquisition is highly-centralised and streamlined. Three staff work under the direct authority of the Defence Minister on capability acquisition: the Chief of the Defence Staff, the Chief Executive of the French Armaments Agency (DGA) and the General Secretary of the Administration.¹⁰³ The French Defence Minister takes full responsibility for project delivery that is coordinated through the Ministerial Investment Board (MIB). While the Single Services are represented on the MIB, the Minister must balance the Services' competing perspectives.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, in contrast to the *Bundeswehr's* Armaments Division and UK's Defence Equipment and Support, the DGA is composed of civilian technical experts and is therefore able to provide more objective support to the Minister.¹⁰⁵ Finally, in contrast to the UK and Germany, the National Assembly enjoys strong oversight powers on the defence budget through the Military Programme Law that establishes the military budget and major capability investment projects over a six year period and the Defence Minister must provide annual reports to Parliament on the cost, timing and performance of projects.¹⁰⁶

The Weise Commission: Gradually Accelerating Convergence

In April 2010 the Weis Commission was established by German Cabinet with the remit of streamlining *Bundeswehr* command and administrative structures in advance of what has been touted as the most far-reaching reform of the *Bundeswehr* since the end of the Cold War. This reform process has been precipitated by two main pressures. Firstly, the austerity measures of the Finance Ministry that, in early 2010, set the BMVg the task of reducing its budget by €8.3 Billion between 2011-14.¹⁰⁷ Secondly, by a realisation spurred by the experiences of deployment in Afghanistan, of the need to address some of the deficits in German force structures, capabilities and doctrines identified in the first section of this article, in order to ensure the *Bundeswehr's* relevance in expeditionary operations of rapidly-varying intensity.¹⁰⁸

The Commission's report was delivered in October 2010. On 7 February 2011, the BMVg State Secretary, Walther Otremba, supported by the Working Group on the Restructuring of the *Bundeswehr*, submitted proposals for reform of BMVg command and administrative structures based closely upon the Commission's recommendations. These proposals were

⁹⁹ 'Defence Budget facing 36 Billion Black Hole Say MPs', *Guardian*, 23 March 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/mar/23/defence-spending-36-billion-blackhole>, retrieved 29 November, 2010.

¹⁰⁰ 'MoD Forced to Hire Civilian Helicopters in Afghanistan', *Independent*, 15 October 2006, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/mod-forced-to-hire-civilian-helicopters-in-afghanistan-420161.html>, retrieved 29 November 2010.

¹⁰¹ 'Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The SDSR', HMSO, 2010, p.4.

¹⁰² Review of Acquisition for the Secretary of State for Defence', p.215,

¹⁰³ Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, pp.158-59.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ 'Bundeswehr Reviews its Entire Structure', *Defense News*, 20 September 2010, p.18.

¹⁰⁸ Interview, BMVg, Berlin, 23 November 2010.

intended to form the key tenets of zu Guttenberg's final reform package.¹⁰⁹ However, the reform process has temporarily stalled following the resignation of zu Guttenberg on 1 March 2011. The new Defence Minister, Thomas de Maizière, immediately relieved Otremba of his position and outlined his intention to 'thoroughly assess' zu Guttenberg's plans. The Weiser Commission's Report remains, therefore, the likeliest basis for the future reform agenda and, as a consequence, is the focus of this section.¹¹⁰

The Report addresses in particular changes to force structures, command structures and the capability procurement process and goes some way to addressing the *Bundeswehr's* deficits. It contains two key recommendations for reforms to German force structures. Crucially, the Commission proposes a reduction of the *Bundeswehr* to between 180,000 and 185,000 troops, the suspension of conscription and the introduction of a voluntary, up to 23 month, civil-service that will enable young people to undertake either community service or serve in the *Bundeswehr* (a maximum of 15,000 posts in the *Bundeswehr*).¹¹¹ A 15-month minimum service period will allow recruits to undergo the necessary training to serve on overseas missions.¹¹² By freeing-up vital funds for investment in deployability and increasing the proportion of troops available for deployment from around 15,000, the abolition of conscription is a critical step in furnishing Germany with the professional forces necessary for complex crisis-management operations.¹¹³ Secondly, in recognition of the increasing tendency of operations to vary in intensity, the Commission proposes the abolition of the separation between attack, stabilisation and support forces which it notes 'have brought no benefit in our capacity to undertake operations'.¹¹⁴ This is an important step toward the creation of a *Bundeswehr* that will be capable of conducting operations of rapidly-varying intensity.

The Commission also proposes significant reforms to command structures to reduce their complexity and enhance the efficiency of operational leadership. Firstly, the report proposes strengthening the role of the *Generalinspekteur* (General Inspector) who will now take ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the planning, preparation, leadership and follow-up of military operations.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the Commission points to the need to reduce the levels of hierarchy across all sections of the *Bundeswehr* in order to increase the transparency, simplicity and speed of decision-making processes.¹¹⁶ The Commission also suggests measures to avoid overlapping responsibilities between the Services by bringing together the civil and military sections of the Ministry on the basis of function, through a reduction of the ministry from 3,000 to 1,500 posts and moving all sections of the BMVg to Berlin, thereby reducing the number of departments in the Ministry by seven.¹¹⁷ The simplified Ministerial structures will see a *Generalinspekteur* served by eight Departments: Strategy and Planning; Deployment; Structure/Organisation/Training; Support; Personnel; Material; Budget and Accounting. In order to reduce the complexity of operational leadership, the Commission also recommends reducing

¹⁰⁹ 'Arbeitsstab zur Umsetzung der Strukturreform eingerichtet', http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg/kcxml/04_Sj9SPykssy0xPLMnMz0vM0Y_QjzKLd4k3Ng50BsmB2CZu5vqRcMGglFR9b31fj_zcVP0A_YLciHJHR0VFAO0DgDU!/delta/base64xml/L2dJQSEvUUt3QS80SVVFLZzIRF80RkJL?yw_contentURL=%2FC1256F1200608B1B%2FW28B5A53890INFODE%2Fcontent.jsp, retrieved 30 November 2010.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ 'Report of the Structural Commission of the *Bundeswehr*', Berlin, October, 2010, pt.4.2, p.28. Before his resignation, zu Guttenberg had endorsed these proposals for future force numbers. See: 'German Armed Forces Face Big Changes', *International Institute for Strategic Studies Strategic Comments*, 16/64 (2011), p.1.

¹¹² 'Report of the Structural Commission of the *Bundeswehr*', Berlin, October, 2010, pt.4.2, p.28.

¹¹³ Guttenberg had signalled his intention to endorse the plans of *Bundeswehr Generalinspekteur*, General Volker Wierer by outlining the ambition to make 10,000 troops available for deployment. See: 'German Armed Forces Face Big Changes', *International Institute for Strategic Studies Strategic Comments*, 16/64 (2011), p.1.

¹¹⁴ 'Report of the Structural Commission of the *Bundeswehr*', pt.4.3.1, p.31.

¹¹⁵ 'Report of the Structural Commission of the *Bundeswehr*', pt.4.3.1, p.31. This proposal received the explicit support of zu Guttenberg. See: 'German Armed Forces Face Big Changes', p.1

¹¹⁶ 'Report of the Structural Commission of the *Bundeswehr*', pt.4.3.1, p.31.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pt.4.3.4, p.35.

the role of the Services' leadership commands in international and national operations by further strengthening the Operations Command in Potsdam.¹¹⁸

If enacted, these reforms to command structures will not only deliver important savings, but will enhance the *Bundeswehr*'s deployability by simplifying operational leadership and reducing duplication. These changes to command structures have been welcomed by key figures within the *Bundeswehr* responsible for coordinating the 'lessons-learned' process as an important step in enhancing the implementation of lessons-learned, due to the reduction in the number of veto-points to enacting change.¹¹⁹ Proposals are also under consideration to bring together the work of the *Bundeswehr*'s Leadership Academy, *Bundeswehr* Universities in Hamburg and Munich, the Centre for Inner Leadership in Koblenz, Institute for German Military History in Potsdam and BTC to create a single Defence Academy.¹²⁰ If enacted, this restructuring will streamline the analysis and follow up of lessons-learned and the identification of 'best-practice' from observation of the experiences of Alliance partners.

However, the recommendations of the Commission on reforms to German command structures do not engage with several of the fundamental problems which beset doctrinal development. Firstly, without an organisation like the CICDE and DCDC that has the power to take a lead role on joint doctrine, these changes will deliver only partial improvements to doctrinal adaptability. The Commission is also silent on problem of excessive civilian interference in doctrinal development that has, at times, fostered inertia in doctrinal development, as evidenced by the slow development of an explicit COIN doctrine. Finally, the Commission fails to address the lack of openness to critical reflection in the *Bundeswehr* that derives from the classification of doctrine.

The Commission also makes several recommendations for changes to the process of German capability procurement. The first central proposal is the development of a defence industrial strategy that will allow the BMVg and German and European defence industries to undertake long-term planning.¹²¹ The Commission also proposes reform of the Procurement Organisation into an Agency for *Bundeswehr* Procurement and the creation of a central purchasing organisation to foster a clear delineation of responsibility in acquisition by abolishing the overlapping structures of the BMVg's Armaments Division, Federal Office of Defence Technology and Procurement and the IT Division.¹²² Furthermore, the Commission recommends an optimisation of the procurement process, including an avoidance of maximalist project specifications and the use of off-the-shelf technology wherever possible to avoid the complexities associated with new projects.¹²³

In addition, on 25 June 2010 a BMVg list of priority cuts to ongoing projects was leaked that seeks to deliver savings of €9.3 billion. These cuts include a reduction of the number of NH-90 helicopters from 122 to 80, a reduction of the Tiger Attack Helicopter from 80 to 40, a cancellation or sale on the open market of the remaining 37 Eurofighters and a reduction of the number of PUMA fighting vehicles from 400 to 280.¹²⁴ It has also been suggested that the *Bundeswehr* will sell off 13 of its A-400M planes, leaving it with 40 of the military transport aircraft.¹²⁵ While cutting the number of Eurofighters is a welcome move, the reduction of A-400M, NH-90, Tiger attack helicopters and PUMA armoured vehicles, represent significant cuts to capabilities of use to expeditionary full-spectrum land-based operations, which form the likeliest conflict scenarios for the *Bundeswehr* over the short-medium term. The Navy also faces

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pt.4.3.2, p.32.

¹¹⁹ Interview, BMVg, Berlin, 23 November, 2010.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Report of the Structural Commission of the *Bundeswehr*, Berlin, October, 2010, pt.4.4.1, p.37.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ 'Bundeswehr Reviews its Entire Structure', *Defense News*, 20 September 2010, p.18.

¹²⁵ 'German Armed Forces Face Big Changes', p.3.

potential reductions in the number of frigates (from 15 to 12) through the retirement of three F122 Frigates.¹²⁶

The Commission's proposals on capability procurement, if enacted, will go some way to creating a less bureaucratic and more streamlined process of acquisition by simplifying BMVg decision-making process, focusing on off-the-shelf capabilities and clarifying the *Bundeswehr's* requirements from the German and European defence industries. They do not, however, alter some of the fundamental problems which beset the process of defence capability acquisition and reduce its responsiveness to the requirements of current missions. Firstly, unlike the Gray Review, the Commission does not explicitly recognise the negative impact of inter-service rivalry on procurement and fails to outline stronger mechanisms which will allow civilian policy makers to exert greater 'top-down' control over acquisition. Furthermore, in contrast to the high-level of civilian control exhibited by the French procurement process, the Commission also fails to strengthen the capacity of external actors, such as the *Bundestag* and BRH to hold the BMVg to account for time slippages and cost-over-runs. Moreover, while the Commission recognises the need focus on off-the-shelf solutions and acknowledges the necessity for a fundamental change in cooperation between the *Bundeswehr* and industry, it does not propose specific measures which will allow the BMVg to exert greater control over industry in the case that projects are not delivered on time and to cost. Finally, the Commission can do little to alter the broader problem of the structural political power of the German defence industry. This problem derives from the power of individual *Laender* and German defence industry which reduce the willingness of the core executive to cancel or alter major projects with implications for significant German job losses.

The appointment of de Maziere provides an excellent opportunity to address some of the weaknesses in Weise Report. However, the new Defence Minister faces two further challenges. Firstly, de Maziere must convince the Finance Ministry and colleagues in the Cabinet of the need to provide sufficient finances for the reform. Despite the savings associated with the abolition of conscription, defence planners at the BMVg estimate that a professional *Bundeswehr* of 185,000 troops will require an extra €1.5 billion per year.¹²⁷ De Maziere also faces difficult decisions about the allocation of personnel numbers to the services and will have to make tough decisions on cuts to key capability programmes.¹²⁸ It is therefore vital that de Maziere uses the first months of his appointment to develop an explicit German National Security Strategy (NSS). The reform plans of zu Guttenberg came under fire from commentators, for undertaking a process of 'strategy formulation backwards' and were strongly criticised by the Chairwoman of the *Bundestag's* Defence Committee, Susanne Kastner, for placing the 'cart before the horse'.¹²⁹ The 2006 Defence White Paper is becoming increasingly outdated as a guideline for *Bundeswehr* reform and also offers thin guidance on the prioritisation of security threats and risks. A NSS would facilitate a more rational prioritisation of defence capability investment and allocation of 'troops-to-task' by providing unequivocal guidance to the Services on the strategic direction of reform. Furthermore, a public debate on the *Bundeswehr's* role in the contemporary security environment would help establish a solid foundation of public support for *Bundeswehr* reform and assist in securing the financing and implementation of far-reaching reform.

Neoclassical Realism and the Timing of German Defence Reform: Culture as an Intervening Variable?

Germany's partial and selective emulation of the RMA provides compelling evidence that Germany is acting according to the material forces of the international system, rather than

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.* p. 2.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 2-3.

¹²⁹ 'Defence Reform in Germany', *Economist*, 24 February 2011.

subjective norms and ideas rooted in German 'security culture'. However, the slow pace of German defence reform undermines the explanatory power of Neorealism. As Waltz notes: 'The theory explains why a certain similarity of behaviour is expected from similarly situated states. The expected behaviour is similar, not identical. To explain the expected differences in national responses one would have to show how the different internal structures of states affect their policies and actions'.¹³⁰ Neoclassical Realism (NCR) has the potential to accommodate the impact of domestic variables, without sacrificing the theoretical consistency of Neorealist thought. NCR argues that while states of comparable material power, size and geographical location will exhibit military isomorphism over the long-term, they vary in their ability to extract resources from society on behalf of foreign and defence policy goals ('state power').¹³¹ Variable state power can lead to short- to medium-term divergence with the dictates of the international system.¹³² As NCR explains the temporality of changes to national foreign, defence and security policies without diluting Neorealism's premise of the independent role played by international structure, it should, as Rathburn notes, be thought of as the 'logical and necessary' extension of Neorealism.¹³³

The literature on NCR is characterised by a high-level of disagreement on the variables which should take priority in determining 'state power'. NCR scholars integrate a wide array of variables which impact upon 'state power' including cognitive factors such as nationalism, ideology and culture and do not offer a fixed position on the relative impact of domestic variables endogenous or exogenous to the military.¹³⁴ Legro and Moravcsik argue that the flexibility of NCR fosters theoretical indeterminacy: 'If any government acting on the basis of geopolitical national interest, or the aims of a particular interest group, or ideationally-induced strategies, or misperceptions is in accord with realist theory, what plausible constraints on state behaviour are excluded?'¹³⁵ Yet, as Rathburn highlights, states are 'free to die'.¹³⁶ NCR can therefore, include a focus on domestic material interests/politics as well as ideational variables, as long as the theory can prove that a state is ultimately punished for deviation from structural imperatives. In this way, NCR offers possibilities for a fruitful dialogue with cultural approaches, albeit by relegating culture to the status of an intervening variable. Hence, in their emphasis on the intervening role played by German strategic culture, the contributions of scholars such as Berger, Duffield and Maull could be accommodated within NCR.¹³⁷

However, the temporality of German defence reform can be explained through a more parsimonious NCR framework that focuses not on the intervening role of cultural variables, but on domestic material power relations which constrain the autonomy of the core executive in defence policy.¹³⁸ In particular, NCR draws our attention to the impact of the Federal system in magnifying the political fall-out of base closures, due to the power of individual *Laender*, whose capacity to act as veto-players on base closures complicates the process of force downsizing.¹³⁹ The Federal System also plays an important role in decreasing the willingness of the core executive to make far-reaching change to capability procurement, due to presence of powerful

¹³⁰ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p.123.

¹³¹ On 'state power', see Fareed Zakaria, *From Wealth to Power* (Princeton, Princeton University Press: 1998), p.8.

¹³² Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, pp.120-7.

¹³³ B. Rathburn, 'A Rose by Any Other Name: Neoclassical Realism as the Logical and Necessary Extension of Structural Realism', *Security Studies* 17/2 (2008), pp. 294-321.

¹³⁴ Norrin Ripsman et al 'Conclusion', in Stephen Lobell et al *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.287-92.

¹³⁵ J. Legro and A. Moravcsik, 'Is Anybody Still a Realist?' *International Security* 24/2 (1999), pp. 5-55.

¹³⁶ Rathburn, 'A Rose by Any Other Name', pp.310-11; J. Sterling-Folker, 'Realist Environment, Liberal Processes, and Domestic-Level Variables', *International Studies Quarterly* 41/1 (1997), p.19; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p.71.

¹³⁷ Berger, 'Norms, Identity and National Security in Germany and Japan', p.328; Duffield, *World Power Forsaken*, pp.786-90; Maull, 'Germany's Foreign Policy post-Kosovo: Still A Civilian Power?' pp.119-20.

¹³⁸ On contestation in NCR about the domestic variables which determine state power see: Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, pp.120-8.

¹³⁹ Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, p.163.

regional politicians who lobby against the cancellation of inappropriate 'platform-based' programmes which may lead to significant regional job losses.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, NCR also points to the particularly close linkages between social and budgetary policy in Germany in the form of the system of *Zivildienst* whereby 80-130,000 men per year undertake social work at a third of the cost of professionals.¹⁴¹ However, as NCR predicts, when, following deployment in Afghanistan, compelling evidence emerged of the threat to deployability posed by stasis on conscription, it was quickly dropped from the CDU/CSU party programmes.¹⁴² Finally, German public opinion is sensitive to the development of a more assertive and aggressive military doctrine and rules of engagement. However, it is a little simplistic to locate this sensitivity solely within the German security culture and the 'culture of anti-militarism' that took root during the post-war era. To do so neglects the malleability of culture that is as much a resource as it is a constraint in the mobilisation of society on behalf of defence, foreign and security policy goals.¹⁴³ As Morgenthau reminds us, ideas and ideology can act as 'false front behinds which the element of power, inherent in all politics, can be concealed'.¹⁴⁴

Drawing upon Oakshott's concept of 'character' in European politics, Hyde-Price argues that when a state is subject to particular systemic imperatives for a prolonged period of time, they create 'channels' in which political activity resides.¹⁴⁵ During the Cold War German defence and security policy was characterised anti-militarism and multilateralism.¹⁴⁶ These principles were a rational response to Germany's post-war security environment. The restrictions on German sovereignty following the Second World War placed strict limits on German freedom of action, restricting the *Bundeswehr* to the defence of German territory. Anti-militarism and the framing of German defence and security policy firmly within the UN and NATO were also an essential means with which to manage German rehabilitation into the international community and ensure regional and international support for German reunification.¹⁴⁷

By the fall of Communism, these twin imperatives had fostered 'channels' of political activity which were characterised by a significant measure of ossification. However, the post-Cold War era presented new imperatives, in particular the deployment of high-intensity expeditionary military force under shifting coalitions of the willing. As a consequence, the narratives which were used to frame German adherence to the dictates of international structure during the Cold War required significant refashioning. Yet, while the British and French unitary political systems provide substantial windows of opportunity to take unpopular decision about the overseas troop deployment and to make fundamental changes to long-standing tenets of their

¹⁴⁰ Dyson, *Managing Convergence*.

¹⁴¹ During the 2000s the number of *Zivildienstleistende* varied between a high of 136,008 (2001) and 82,966 (2006). See 'Bestandzahlen der Zivildienstleistenden im Monat und im Jahresdurchschnitt', *Bundesamt fuer den Zivildienst*, 01 November, 2010. See also, Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, pp.164-65.

¹⁴² Over 90 percent of delegates at the November 2010 CDU Party Conference voted in favour of suspending conscription. See: 'CDU Verabschiedet sich von der Wehrpflicht', *Welt Online*, 15 November 2010, <http://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article10949492/CDU-verabschiedet-sich-von-der-Wehrpflicht.html>, accessed 29 November 2010. The October 2010 CSU Party Conference also voted in favour of suspending conscription. See: 'CSU Stimmt fuer Aussetzung der Wehrpflicht', *Spiegel Online*, 29 October 2010 <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,726239,00.html>, accessed 29 November 2010. Delegates at the October 2007 SPD Party Conference voted to maintain conscription, but only with volunteers. See: 'Delegierte folgen Beck bei Wehrpflicht', *Focus Online*, 27 October 2007, http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/spd-parteitag_aid_137327.html, accessed 29 November 2010. The Green Party and FDP have long opposed conscription, see Dyson, *The Politics of German Defence and Security*, p.95.

¹⁴³ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defence and Security*, pp.165-73.

¹⁴⁴ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York: Knopp, 1966), p.103.

¹⁴⁵ Adrian Hyde-Price, *European Security in the 21st Century: The Challenge of Multipolarity* (London: Routledge, 2007), pp.46-7.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Alistair Cole, *Franco-German Relations* (Harlow : Pearson, 2001) , pp.6-12; Michael Sutton, *France and the Construction of Europe 1944-2007 : The Geopolitical Imperative* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2007), p.91.

security policies, regular elections at the *Land* level complicate the process of reshaping the narratives underpinning German defence and security policy.¹⁴⁸ German policy makers were therefore forced to undertake a ‘salami-slicing’ approach to redefining the role of military power in German defence policy that involved regular, but limited changes to policy.¹⁴⁹

Within this restrictive context of low executive autonomy, German Defence Ministers attempted to manage the timing of German defence reforms.¹⁵⁰ Many figures within the BMVg, particularly those associated with the conduct and planning of military operations, opposed the *status quo* and were privately highly-dissatisfied with the tardiness of changes to German defence policy objectives, military capabilities, force structures and doctrines.¹⁵¹ However, their dynamism was dampened by the civilian leadership who sought close control of the scope and pace of military transformation.¹⁵² Promotion within the BMVg was closely tied to the willingness to support the temporal management of reform. Outspoken figures who sought to increase the pace at which the *Bundeswehr* was converging with the dictates of the operational environment were marginalised.¹⁵³ It is therefore possible to construct a compelling NCR account of the temporality of German defence reform without recourse to the role of culture as an intervening variable. Instead the complexities of policy implementation within a ‘negotiation’ democracy, have led to the temporal management of defence reform by the core executive and to slow changes to defence policy objectives, force structures, capability procurement and doctrine.¹⁵⁴

Conclusions: Military Adaptation and Civil-Military Relations in Defence Planning

While the article challenges the findings of cultural approaches to German defence reform, it also identifies a set of theoretical and empirical research questions which require further attention. The capacity of European militaries to adapt to operational environments is a vital, yet under-explored issue. Furthermore, as Farrell notes, the theoretical literature on the sources of military change fails to adequately account for the role of ‘bottom-up’ military adaptation.¹⁵⁵ This preoccupation with ‘top-down’ civilian-led military change is evident in scholarship on German defence policy that focuses on the exogenous impact of strategic culture, international structure or executive autonomy. In its focus on the independent impact of international structure and the intervening impact of executive autonomy, NCR provides a strong measure of analytical leverage in understanding the key variables exogenous to the military which determine military adaptability. There is, however, a requirement for further research on the intervening impact of variables endogenous to the military in determining the ‘organisational capabilities’¹⁵⁶ of the *Bundeswehr* and other European militaries to adapt force structures, capabilities and doctrines to operational requirements. Organisation theory in particular has the

¹⁴⁸ Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, p.165.

¹⁴⁹ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defence and Security*, pp.69-71.

¹⁵⁰ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defence and Security*, pp.188-91; Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*, pp.165-73.

¹⁵¹ Dyson, *The Politics of German Defence and Security*, p.135; Timo Noetzel, ‘Germany’, in Thomas Rid and Tom Keaney (eds.) *Understanding COIN: Doctrine, Operations and Challenges* (Abingdon: Routledge); Interviews, *Fuehrungsakademie der Bundeswehr*, Hamburg, 8 December 2010; interviews, *Bundeswehr Transformation Centre*, Strausberg, 26 November 2009.

¹⁵² Dyson, *The Politics of German Defence and Security*, pp. 189-91.

¹⁵³ Interview, *Fuehrungsakademie der Bundeswehr*, Hamburg, 22 October 2009. Dyson, *The Politics of German Defence and Security*, pp.67-8.

¹⁵⁴ For a detailed exploration of the impact of executive autonomy on British, French and German defence reforms see, Dyson, *Neoclassical Realism and Defence Reform in post-Cold War Europe*.

¹⁵⁵ T. Farrell, ‘Improving in War’, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 33/4 (2010), pp.568-73.

¹⁵⁶ The concept of organisational capability is drawn from the literature on strategic management. It emphasises the importance of the effective use of resources and competencies by a firm to attain a sustained competitive advantage. See R. Kaplan and D. Norton, ‘Measuring the Strategic Readiness of Intangible Assets’, *Harvard Business Review* 82/2 (2004), pp.52-63.

potential to deliver significant new insights into European military adaptation, but has received relatively little attention in scholarship on post-Cold War European defence reform.¹⁵⁷

The article also draws attention to the need for a stronger focus on the interrelated issue of civil-military relations¹⁵⁸ in defence planning. The appropriate balance that should be struck between ‘top-down’ civilian and ‘bottom-up’ military input to effective military adaptation is an enduring question in the study of democratic states. The principle of civilian control is paramount within democracies: militaries should advise on, but not formulate policy.¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, defence planning should not be dominated by civilians. The necessity for military autonomy, particularly in doctrinal development, is captured by Huntington. Drawing upon the insights of Clausewitz that war is an autonomous science, yet also subordinate to political purposes, Huntington noted: ‘The fact that war has its own grammar requires that the military professionals be permitted to develop their expertise at this grammar without extraneous interference’.¹⁶⁰ As the article has highlighted, tactical and operational-level decisions on German military doctrine have been subject to a particularly high-level of civilian interference that has undermined the *Bundeswehr*’s capacity to develop expertise in the ‘grammar of war’. At the same time, strategic-level questions of force structures and capability procurement have been dominated by military input and clouded by inter-service rivalry. Civil-military relations in defence planning is a vital issue in the effective generation of military power, yet there are no comparative accounts of post-Cold War European civil-military relations in defence planning.¹⁶¹ This forms a second critical avenue for future research on German and European defence reform.

¹⁵⁷ Organisation theory argues that military organisations are rational and routine bound, privilege their autonomy and stability and resist innovation in doctrine and institutional reform. The literature on organisation theory focuses on a wide-range of variables endogenous to the military in determining effective ‘bottom up’ adaptation. There is, however disagreement amongst organisation theorists on which endogenous variables should take priority. Compare, for example, the emphasis of Stulberg et al on managerial strategies of delegation and oversight and the analysis of Farrell, who points to several features of institutional design which predispose militaries to be more adaptable in conflict. See T. Farrell, ‘Improving in War’ and Adam Stulberg et al, *Managing Defense Transformation* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

¹⁵⁸ By civil-military relations the author is referring to the relationship between the core executive/parliament/civilian officials within defence ministries and military personnel.

¹⁵⁹ David Chuter, ‘Policy Formulation and Execution’, in Laura Cleary and Terri McConville (eds), *Managing Defence in a Democracy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), pp.46-7.

¹⁶⁰ Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957), p.57.

¹⁶¹ For single case studies of civil-military relations in contemporary European defence planning see S. Rynning, ‘Shaping Military Doctrine in France’, *Security Studies* 11/2 (2002), pp.85-116 and P. Cornish and A. Dorman, ‘Breaking the Mould’, *International Affairs*, 86/2 (2010), pp.395-410.