

Germany in Afghanistan:  
The German Domestic Dispute on Military Deployment Overseas

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FACULTY COMMITTEE:

Committee Chair : Dr. Christian Davis

Committee Members/ Readers:

Dr. Steven Guerrier

Dr. Michael Gubser

## Table of Contents

List of Tables.....	iii
Abstract.....	iv
I. Introduction.....	1
II. The Rise of German Anti-Militarism.....	14
III. Foreign Policy Development in Post-World War II Germany.....	42
IV. Afghanistan: German Domestic Dispute over Troop Deployment.....	62
V. German anti-Americanism and the Iraq War.....	93
VI. Conclusion.....	113
Bibliography.....	119

## List of Tables

Table 1.....	21
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## Abstract

This thesis provides a study of the deployment of the German Bundeswehr to Afghanistan and highlights the clash between two conflicting visions of German foreign policy by explaining the different policies supported or opposed by an outspoken segment of the German public and German leaders since the Second World War in regards to the use of military force. While maintaining a focus on German military deployment to Afghanistan, this thesis consists of an analysis of German parliamentary debate, editorials, public opinion polls, speeches and other sources to determine arguments used by German government leaders to try and overcome strong anti-war taboos and shift public opinion in favor of NATO and United Nations sanctioned peacekeeping missions abroad.

The thesis utilizes German parliamentary archives, as well as a variety of digital newspaper and magazine archives. A substantial amount of German historical documents have been digitized and made available online. Public opinion was determined through a mix of public opinion polls from sources like *Der Spiegel*, through public statements by peace activists, videos of peace protests, and articles and opinion pieces in newspapers and magazines like *Der Spiegel*, *Die Zeit*, and *Berliner Zeitung*. Accounts on the Afghanistan conflict by German soldiers influenced public opinion about whether or not Germany should be deployed in Afghanistan. Speeches by Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer are important since Fischer and Schroeder were the two driving forces in Germany's involvement in Afghanistan. A large percentage of German parliamentary debates since 1949 have been digitized and made available online. These debates opened a window to government level discussions and how public opinion was being addressed.

This thesis concludes that the German government's attempts at gaining public support for the war in Afghanistan were not very successful. Although the arguments implemented by the government were not wholly ineffective and managed to maintain a high enough level of support for the first few years of the war to justify a continued troop presence, an ongoing drop in support led to eventual withdrawal. The three main themes employed in support of the war-- supporting Germany's allies, atoning for Germany's past mistakes, and the need for humanitarian aid--fell on increasingly deaf ears in Germany.

## Introduction

“National Socialism can justly lay claim to Prussiandom. All over Germany, wherever we National Socialists stand, we are Prussians. The idea we carry is Prussian. The symbols for which we fight are filled with the spirit of Prussia, and the objectives we hope to achieve are a renewed form of the ideals for which Frederick William I, the Great Frederick and Bismarck once strove.”<sup>1</sup>In a speech in 1932, Josef Goebbels highlighted a connection between Prussian and Imperial German militarism and Nazism to establish a sense of continuity between the Nazi present and the Prussian past to create a sense of historical legitimacy for Nazi actions. After Otto von Bismarck’s wars of German unification, the military had come to occupy a special place in German society. Hitler stated that the “German Empire owed its very existence to the resplendent heroism and death defying courage of its soldiers...” and that “with marvelous sharpness that not material qualities, but ideal virtues alone make possible the formation of a state.”<sup>2</sup>Military strength had long been viewed as the foundation of Germany and German ideals, and as the main tool in enforcing domestic and foreign policies.

Within a short six year span, German views on the use of military drastically altered. As the Second World War ended, the weight of German public opinion shifted from a mentality of war to one of peace. During World War II, many Germans became disillusioned with war and the role of the military in foreign policy. Later decades saw the German military become synonymous with race war, genocide, the targeting of civilians, the murder of children, and other horrendous atrocities. Peace movements

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<sup>1</sup> Quote from Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947*, (Belknap Press, 2008), 658.

<sup>2</sup> Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Houghton Mifflin Company, 1998), trans. Ralph Manheim, 139.

emerged across postwar Germany and attempted to prevent any use of the military outside of German borders by the German government. A conflict of interest and ideals arose between large and varied sections of the German public and the Adenauer administration. The former wanted to prevent any reoccurrence of military involvement in foreign affairs, and the latter believed that Germany's interests abroad were best served by establishing a strong German presence in the world and by allying with NATO against the Soviet Union.

I intend to demonstrate how Germany's participation in the invasion of Afghanistan highlights the clash between two conflicting visions of German foreign policy by explaining the different policies supported or opposed by an outspoken segment of the German public and German leaders since the Second World War in regards to the use of military force. While maintaining my focus on German military deployment in Afghanistan, I will analyze German parliamentary debate, editorials, public opinion polls, speeches and other sources to determine arguments used by German government leaders to try and overcome strong anti-war taboos and shift public opinion in favor of NATO and UN sanctioned peacekeeping missions abroad..

The end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union pushed the newly reunited Germany into new and unfamiliar territory. The breakup of the Soviet Union, the unification with East Germany, and the end of Cold War hostilities meant that German borders were suddenly free of enemies and Germany was being asked by its allies, like the United States, to help police the world and establish peace through military shows of force. German leaders wanted to take a larger role in international politics, but a majority of the German public remained opposed to using military force outside of Germany.

The reluctance among a large segment of the German public to support military missions abroad was partially overcome by the atrocities committed in Yugoslavia during the 1990s, and grudging support was given for German military missions designed to bring peace in the Yugoslavian conflict. A new era for German foreign policy dawned as Germany started to become more broadly involved in international peacekeeping missions through NATO and the United Nations. A repetitive cycle of conflict between public opinion and foreign policy leaders began to develop as German leaders sought to overcome decades old taboos and shift public opinion in favor of military missions while working to establish Germany's place in the new post-Cold War world order. Few events highlight this conflict better than Germany's involvement in Afghanistan. When terrorist attacks demolished the World Trade Center in New York, many countries, including Germany, pledged their support to the United States. Germany sent troops into Afghanistan in 2001 to aid the American war effort and the German deployment initially enjoyed support from a majority of the German public. Most Germans were supportive of America's initial right to be in Afghanistan, because of the terrorist attacks on September 11, and thought that the German army was deploying to hand out humanitarian aid and rebuild Afghanistan.

Shortly after invading Afghanistan, the German presence in Afghanistan began to be questioned and vigorously protested in Germany. German leaders, like Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, were forced to defend their actions and provide explanations with the goal of garnering support for continued German involvement in Afghanistan. They immediately drew on explanations and arguments which had begun to develop during the Yugoslavia Crisis in the nineties. One



such argument was the importance of providing humanitarian aid to oppressed people in Afghanistan. A second argument pointed out that Germany needed to support its allies, like the United States, instead of standing alone like during the world wars. “Never alone” referred to the German commitment to seeking an international consensus and no longer focusing solely on German national interest.<sup>3</sup> The third major argument suggested that Germany’s war guilt for the atrocities committed during World War II should continue to drive foreign policy decisions.

These arguments were designed to appeal to German collective memory and guilt. This paper will look to identify the German public’s rejection of Germany’s foreign policy in regards to military involvement in Afghanistan and demonstrate how Afghanistan showcases Germany’s current dilemma as it tries to come to terms with its military past and its current place in the world. The Iraq War in 2003 will be discussed as well to show how German protest against deployment in Afghanistan led to a strong outcry against continued war in the Middle East.

Afghanistan served as a breaking point for German military expansion. The crisis in Yugoslavia was the event that convinced Germans to send their troops out into Europe again, but Afghanistan was the first time since World War II that German openly protested the deployment of their own military. The genocide in Yugoslavia gave the German government a strong argument for humanitarian aid and many German peace activists were so shocked by the events in Yugoslavia that they did not protest, but the invasion of Afghanistan provided a weaker pretext that struggled to overcome German

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<sup>3</sup> “Never alone” signifies Germany’s firm embedding in the community of Western democracies. The slogan indicates that Germany no longer aimed to focus solely on national self-interest, but instead looked to cooperate with a larger international community to accomplish unified goals.

anti-war taboos. German criticisms of Afghanistan set the stage for further and larger demonstrations against the war in Iraq. However, the war in Afghanistan and the subsequent protest against Iraq did demonstrate that many Germans were willing to commit troops to the fight against international terrorism, but not for revenge or to aid an ally seeking to expand their influence in the Middle East.

Current research and writings about Germany's re-emergence as a military force in international politics tend to leave a number of holes that require filling to gain a better understanding of the internal German debate regarding its military contributions to international conflict. Many historians, like Philip Everts and Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, fail to account for the degree to which German public opinion affected decisions made and influenced actions taken by German leaders.<sup>4</sup> In fact, any successes of German protest and peace movements since the 1950s are often downplayed by historians due to the fact that there was often no apparent direct effect on German foreign and security policy. Dalgaard-Nielsen states very strongly that she does not believe that public opinion has affected German security policy at all since so many unpopular policies have been pushed through since the end of World War Two.<sup>5</sup> While Dalgaard-Nielsen is not necessarily wrong, she and other historians miss the significance of the scramble by the German government to gain public support for actions taken. Germany's move to send troops into Afghanistan represents a moment in German history where an unpopular policy was pushed through and then followed up with a hasty attempt to overcome cultural taboos to try and shift public opinion in favor of military involvement. The

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<sup>4</sup> Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism, and Peace Enforcement* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006) and Philip Everts, *Public Opinion and the International Use of Force* (Taylor and Francis, 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Dalgaard-Nielsen, 14-15.

arguments used to shift public opinion strongly indicate that public opinion factored into government decisions, but that there were also other outside and historical pressures being placed on Germany's leaders. This paper adds to the existing historiography by showing how different interpretations of Germany's past by the German public and German leaders created two conflicting perspectives on how Germany should handle international problems. These two perspectives were highlighted by Germany sending military missions into Afghanistan in 2001 and the subsequent German internal conflict regarding Germany's security policies.

Other historians, like Alice Holmes Cooper,<sup>6</sup> focus very much on the German peace movements and tend to ignore its interactions with the government as well as the reactions by the government to these movements. Cooper does point out that while no German peace movements were hugely successful, they did serve to properly articulate the feelings of the German public towards out-of-area military involvement, caused the German parliament to consider peaceful alternatives, and created cultural norms for how Germans thought about the use of military force. However, Cooper and other peace movement historians view the successes and failures of public opinion only from the side of German peace movements and make no real move to bridge the gap between public opinion and government actions. This paper will take into account the immediate move by the government to shift public opinion in favor of Afghanistan since continued disapproval would, and probably did, affect whether the Schroeder administration remained in power. An important distinction will be that public protest successes are not

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<sup>6</sup> Alice Holmes Cooper, *Paradoxes of Peace: German Peace Movements since 1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

immediately apparent, but instead create a constituency that can influence change in other ways, like voting.

Histories concerning Germany's greater involvement in international peacekeeping missions focus on either the Yugoslavia Crisis, where Germany fought for the first time since World War Two, or Germany's refusal to participate in Iraq in 2003. German deployment and the surrounding protests and domestic debate concerning military deployment in Afghanistan are largely ignored by historians. Academic history journals, like *Res Militaris*, offer more focused insight on specifics of Germany's involvement in Afghanistan. However, they tend to focus on how Germany's military performed in Afghanistan, include discussions on whether Germany was correct in sending troops to the Middle East, or debate the changes in German security policies in regards to out-of-area deployment.. This paper will seek to take a step back and look at a bigger picture. What arguments and perspectives informed the domestic debate over military deployment? How did the government try to shift public opinion and overcome cultural taboos in regards to deployment in Afghanistan? What historical forces and interpretations of how Germany should use its military drove each side of the debate?

This paper contends that most postwar Germans have expected their foreign policy to embrace a multilateral approach to solving international problems since the 1950s. Multilateralism can be defined as multiple countries working together to solve any particular issue. Diplomacy becomes more important, the military is asked to cooperate with other organizations, and military power becomes less important to the overall solution. Instead of a strong military intervention, Germans in general expected a more

multilateralist approach from their government and military and became agitated when Germany and other countries seem to focus too unilaterally on the use of military force.

German public opinion and its conflict with German foreign policy are at the crux of this paper. Public opinion can be a difficult to measure since polls only give so much information about what people truly think. Philip Everts writes that the traditionalist view states that public opinion is irrational and therefore ignored by the government, but the revisionists write that public opinion is rational and informed and should be able to effectively influence foreign policy. Naturally, the truth falls somewhere in the middle. Few scholars will probably argue that public opinion is completely irrational and this paper also strongly believes in the influence of opinion on governmental policies. German protest movements may not often have achieved their ultimate goals, but always achieved small successes. By the time Germany deployed to Afghanistan the German government seemed to feel that public opinion cannot be ignored even if the original policy had already been pushed through. A variety of methods were employed by the author of this thesis to ascertain the effect of public opinion on the German state and its effect on foreign policy. These methods included looking at organized and disorganized groups, studying effective protests and the evolution of public opinion in Germany, utilizing published interviews with elites, and understanding the importance of public opinion by understanding the minds of important politicians and leaders.

Both the German public and government felt that they had to deal with concerns over German militarism. Militarism is the belief that a country needs to maintain a strong military capability and be prepared to use it aggressively to defend or promote national interests. The military is often glorified in a militaristic system and becomes the symbol

of the state. Prior to World War Two, the German military viewed itself as the true embodiment of the German state and fought to maintain its political autonomy and place of authority within German society before being subsumed by Hitler and the Nazi party. The military failed to stand up to Hitler and even aided his rise to power before swearing oaths of allegiance to the Fuehrer. Much of the anti-militarism that swept through Germany after the defeat of Hitler was a result of Germans trying to eliminate any possibility of the military wielding the same power. Even though the German military had lost much of its autonomy during the Third Reich the military had a history of regaining power swiftly after defeats, like after the Revolution of 1848 or after World War I. The protest against Afghanistan was largely driven by the post-World War II German distaste for war, but also represented a conflict over finding the balance between judicious use of military forces while avoiding the mistakes that had been made in the past.

Public opinion was determined through a mix of public opinion polls from sources like *Der Spiegel*, through public statements by peace activists, videos of peace protests, and articles and opinion pieces in newspapers and magazines like *Der Spiegel*, *Die Zeit*, and *Berliner Zeitung*. Accounts on the Afghanistan conflict by German soldiers influenced public opinion about whether or not Germany should be deployed in Afghanistan.<sup>7</sup> Several compilations of letters by German soldiers out of Afghanistan can be found in books like *Feldpost* which was published in 2011.

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<sup>7</sup> In Germany's "Soldier Laws," German soldiers are encouraged to maintain strong opinions and remain politically involved even while overseas.

Speeches by Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer are important since Fischer and Schroeder were the two driving forces in Germany's involvement in Afghanistan. A large percentage of German parliamentary debates since 1949 have been digitized and made available online. These debates opened a window to government level discussions and how public opinion was being addressed. A poignant moment from this source is Schroeder's impassioned speech to the Bundestag for Germany to become involved in Afghanistan shortly after the September 11 attacks. Other sources include the German constitution, outside analysis of German actions by American newspapers, as well as a variety of letters and speeches.

This paper focuses on a relatively recent event and must properly ground itself in the history leading up to Germany's involvement in Afghanistan to provide a proper perspective and understanding. Therefore, the paper is broken up into several chapters. Chapter 1 will explain the origins of taboos against the use of military force. Part of that explanation includes an overview of the German military's role in determining foreign and security policy, how that helped involve Germany in the horrors of World War One and especially World War Two, and how the German mindset on military force as a political tool changed after the Second World War. Chapter 1 will continue to outline the development of the German peace movements and provide an understanding of the conflict between German peace movements and the German government regarding issues like German re-armament. This chapter will discuss policy changes that resulted from peace movement successes and helped lay the foundation for the relationship between the German government and German peace movements at the end of the Cold War. Before the end of the Cold War, the German government would not have felt as strongly

compelled to try and quickly and strongly justify any actions taken against the will of the public, but now Germany is no longer in Afghanistan and is still defending their presence in the Middle East. Continued explanations and arguments put forth by the German government indicate that German leaders feel that they need support from a majority of the German public on foreign and security policy decisions.

Chapter 2 seeks to explain why the German government would feel compelled to launch military campaigns despite public disapproval. The chapter provides a quick overview of Germany diplomacy and Germany's re-emergence as a world power and an international peacekeeping force. German foreign policy starting with Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in the 1950s established policies which led to the re-armament of Germany and firmly planted Germany within Western politics. Adenauer's policies continued to strongly influence subsequent German leaders regardless of their political leanings as Germany remained firmly entrenched in the West. This chapter will also detail the expansions of international involvement by German military forces and the development of arguments by government leaders to justify their actions. A brief discussion of Germany's refusal to fight in the First Gulf War and the initial involvement by German forces in former Yugoslavia informs the later debate over the invasion of Afghanistan. Arguments justifying the use of German military force were first strongly used, and mostly accepted, during the war in Yugoslavia. Afghanistan represents a moment the German government felt that Germany had a duty to atone for its past, support its allies, and provide humanitarian aid to the oppressed people in Afghanistan, but was then forced to strongly defend its stance against public disapproval.



Chapter 3 starts by demonstrating how Germany threw its support behind the United States and looked to aid America in Afghanistan. Reactions by the public against the subsequent deployment of German troops and casualties are explored next. This chapter tries to show the various arguments used by the government to sway public opinion and how policy regarding Afghanistan changed or was adjusted because of anti-war feelings. Approval for the war dropped throughout period characterized in this chapter and soon Germany began contemplating withdrawal.

Chapter 4 addresses some of the overlapping years of protest against Afghanistan and Iraq. Many Germans were opposed to fighting in Afghanistan, but found themselves willing to at least partially tolerate the war as long as nothing increased German involvement and pushed Germany towards heavier fighting. The United State began looking towards a war with Iraq in 2002 and Germany's tolerance bursts. Anti-Americanism reappeared in German politics and German protests as Germans took to the streets to protest further fighting in the Middle East. Schroeder rides the anti-war feelings to re-elections as he completely changes his stance on deploying German troops overseas.

The concluding chapter synthesizes the information gathered and reiterates how German collective memory and war guilt will continue to push Germany towards a multilateral and generally peaceful foreign policy in the foreseeable future.

Post-World War Two Germany has evolved to become a very different political entity than the one that lost the war. German people have developed a reputation as peacemakers and humanitarians instead of war hungry barbarians. German responses to Afghanistan and Iraq demonstrate that war is something to be approached carefully and

that the majority of Germans have rejected German militarism and will seek to keep their government moving down a peaceful path.

### **The Rise of German Anti-Militarism**

When Germany voted to send troops over to Afghanistan in 2001 the German government was forced to defend its decision against a strongly anti-war German public. German anti-war taboos emerged regarding armed conflict and the use of the military since World War II. Germany had a long history of being a fairly militarized state, but since World War II most Germans had developed a new and more pacifistic attitude towards international conflict resolution and what it meant to be German and obey the state. No longer would Germans follow a strong and authoritarian government without asking questions and making their opinions heard.

The decades following World War 2 witnessed the evolution of the German public's interactions with the German government and set the stage for the debate concerning Germany's deployment of troops into an overseas conflict for the first time since the war.

Since Germany's unification in 1871, Germany's public moved from generally respecting and obeying the authority of Imperial Germany and having a military oriented mindset to openly protesting perceived expansions of military authority or possible foreign conflict after World War II. Isabel V. Hull argues that Prussia and Imperial Germany developed the groundwork of a military state that was inclined to pursue total solutions to military problems. Post-war German politicians, like Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, blamed Prussian militarism for the rise of Nazism. Decades of on again-off again peace movements developed and matured throughout the decades after the Second World War as Germans began to face their war guilt and developed newer philosophies regarding peace. Each protest learned something new about dealing with the government even as most peace movements were basically shunted aside. The modern domestic

debate concerning German troop deployment to Afghanistan appears to be the culminating point in the development of the relationship between the German state and public. Prussia has long been considered the wellspring of German and European militarism. Prussia had been colonized in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by the Knights of the Teutonic Order, a military order of German monks.<sup>8</sup> By the sixteenth century, the Hohenzollern family had regained control of the region, using Berlin as their base, and established a kingdom that would last until German unification in 1870. Several effective Prussian rulers strongly encouraged the creation of a professional army and proceeded to expand Prussian rule through the use of a military that was unusually well-organized and effective. By the eighteenth century, Prussia boasted the most well trained and modern army in Europe. Heavy taxes supported the military and nearly 80 percent of state revenues were budgeted to the army.<sup>9</sup>

The officer corps of the Prussian army took on an aristocratic character as the Junkers received the right to select officers.<sup>10</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century, the Prussian officer corps was becoming one of the most privileged social classes in Prussia. By 1900, the status of officers had become largely independent of the social caste with which individuals may have previously been identified. Officer training led to an increasingly similar outlook on military procedures throughout the Prussian army. The most talented officers were asked to join the Prussian General Staff for a few months and were then sent out to command soldiers in the field. The military came to occupy a place of power outside of the civilian government and brooked little interference in its affairs from

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<sup>8</sup> Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947*, (Belknap Press, 2008), 10.

<sup>9</sup> Clark, 25-103.

<sup>10</sup> Extremely wealthy landowners. Dominated Prussian politics.

civilian sources. Under the Prussian king, Frederick the Great, Prussia was often referred to as an “army with a state attached.”<sup>11</sup> The German Empire was united under Otto von Bismarck between 1864 and 1871 and put under the authority of Prussia’s military oriented royal family.

Culturally, Germans in the empire were viewed by rest of Europe as serious, efficient, and generally obedient. The middle class of Germany had developed a fairly strong attachment to the state. Attachment to the army and the reserve officer corps was one aspect of that. The state provided clear familial and societal roles for men and women and stood for the manly virtues that the middle class held dear: seriousness, respect, and rectitude. Outside viewers commented on what seemed like complete German subservience to the state. The American criminologist Raymond Fosdick noticed that there seemed to a surprising number of *Verboten* signs in Imperial Germany to which “the law-abiding German invariably and instinctively submits.”<sup>12</sup> Heinrich Mann, strongly critiqued Imperial German society in his fictional novel, *Der Untertan*, by pointing out the self-abasement of the German middle class and also the depth of the military culture’s pervasion into civilian life. Historian David Blackbourne argues that Germans were not innately docile, but that they lived in a world of institutions that sought to discipline them. Some institutions would receive resistance, especially from the lower classes, but their capacity to shape society was considerable.<sup>13</sup>

The military was the most prominent institution shaping Imperial German society and its presence was visible everywhere: in barracks, drills, maneuvers, regimental bands,

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<sup>11</sup> Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and Practices in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 103.

<sup>12</sup> Quote from David Blackbourne, *The Long Nineteenth Century: A History of Germany, 1790-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 372.

<sup>13</sup> Blackbourne, 374.

and military parades. Blackbourne writes that gymnastic clubs and schools promoted soldierly virtues and that many schools would sing martial songs in the mornings and that an appropriate response to the questions, “What do you want to be?” was “Soldier, Sir!”<sup>14</sup> The army began to dominate foreign policy decisions, and also had a strong impact at home as German society became militarized. The symbol of this power was the uniform. Soldiers had special legal privileges and civilians were expected to step aside and allow an officer to pass on the street. Military legal privileges caused resentment among the propertied and educated, military officers displayed open contempt for anyone below them, and “undesirables,” such as Jews and Catholics, were kept out of the officer corps.<sup>15</sup>

Despite some visible resentment of the military by German civilians, the high prestige of the military cannot be doubted. The military was viewed as the architect of German unification and even had its own national holiday of Sedan Day which celebrated the defeat of Napoleon III during the Franco-Prussian War. Many middle class Germans were drawn to the army as a symbol of the nation’s resolve. Invitations to the mess were sought as badges of insider status, and the harsh, authoritarian tones of military routine seeped into civilian life. Diederich Hessling, the central character of Heinrich Mann’s book, remains the fictional embodiment of this. Hessling is unthinkingly obedient to authority and extremely dedicated to the nationalist goals of the German state, while also being domineering towards those below him in status. The reserve officer corps was the principal conduits for military values into civilian life. Members were schooled in

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<sup>14</sup> Blackbourne, 374.

<sup>15</sup> Clark, 571.

conformism and respect for military virtues. There are many examples of men who were more proud of their military rank than their civilian accomplishments.<sup>16</sup>

Soldiers were not the only men who wore uniforms in Imperial Germany. Customs officers, postal workers, state mine officials, railway men and foresters all donned military style uniforms as part of their jobs. Braiding and piping were as commonplace as titles.<sup>17</sup> This went beyond personal appearance. Former soldiers were given preference in many parts of the non-military bureaucracy through a system of military candidates for posts. Despite the fact that the ‘character’ bred in the army was a poor substitute for the specialized training increasingly required in civilian bureaucracy, former soldiers still set the tone of German officialdom in its dealings with the public. The tone was usually described as *barsch*, harsh or brusque. The police forces were strongly recruited from the military and expected to act according to their military training.<sup>18</sup>

Social militarism and the increase in German bureaucratic efficiency led liberal Franz von Roggenbach to complain that the ‘perfect state’ had reduced individuals to the ‘level of trained machines.’ The population of pre-war Germany had become used to an ordered society, centered upon military and bureaucratic efficiency, but Imperial Germany was not a militaristic caricature. Democracy was being practiced on a surprisingly large scale and traditions of protesting the government and creating change based on public opinion and grass roots movements were already being developed in

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<sup>16</sup> Clark, 600.

<sup>17</sup> Military braiding and piping are forms of uniform enhancement. Piping is usually stripes down a uniform and braiding is ornamental decoration on uniforms, like the little braids hanging off of shoulder epaulets.

<sup>18</sup> Hull, 193.

Imperial Germany, creating a foundation for post-World War II peace movements and how they interacted with the German government.

Historian Margaret Anderson writes that “no contemporary would have described the Kaiserreich as a democracy; but men could, and did, describe some of its practices and attitudes as democratic, and many of its politicians as democrats.”<sup>19</sup> Anderson argues that democratic in the nineteenth century often meant plebian and that democracy was plebian enfranchisement. In fact, Germans in Imperial Germany were rapidly transforming a segmentary, authoritarian, and communal culture that abhorred partisanship into a more participatory and public culture. Voter turnout for local and national elections was high and many of the election races were extremely competitive.<sup>20</sup>

The German Empire itself has been called “dualistic” because of the clear separation of powers, in both Prussia and the Reich, between the non-elected executive and the elected legislature. Powerful positions, like the Emperor and Chancellor, were not elected and the German parliament was largely elected. Bismarck introduced universal manhood suffrage in Reichstag elections, but had done so to try and outflank the liberals who were criticizing him heavily in parliament. The new universal suffrage actually led to multiple new political parties in parliament who all criticized Bismarck, so his ploy was largely unsuccessful. Parliamentary elections began to revolve around the common man and large percentages of Germans turned out to vote. Blackbourne describes the German voter as a potent and active agent of change.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Margaret Lavinia Anderson, *Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 19.

<sup>20</sup> Anderson, 4.

<sup>21</sup> Anderson, 20.



Large strides towards a more democratic state were made between 1871 and 1914, but German democracy's roots were not deep enough to survive a world war. Courtiers and royal favorites to Wilhelm II played an important role in Imperial Germany. The Kaiser had three private secret cabinets, for civil, military, and naval affairs, that acted in an advisory role to the Kaiser, but were described as "a kind of shadow government"<sup>22</sup> with better access to the Emperor than the chancellor himself. The power of these extra-constitutional institutions led historian Hans-Peter Ullman to describe the Empire as a "military state."<sup>23</sup> There was no single institution with responsibility for military planning and no clear chain of command between the Military Cabinet, the Prussian War Ministry and the army's General Staff. Military spending was a point of contention between the military and the National Assembly as well, since the German constitution created by Bismarck fudged the issue of army funding. Bismarck had written the constitution so that the Reichstag would have very little control over money flowing to the military and that there would be no civilian officials to oversee army procedure. The German monarchy was strongly influenced by the military and Wilhelm II was often seen in public wearing military uniform and surrounded by military advisors. Many government officials who spoke out against the military found themselves pushed out of office. In 1909 Chancellor Bernhard von Buelow was removed from office for protesting too much against military actions taken against African rebels in South-western Africa. Imperial Germany may have had a growing and vibrant democratic culture evolving within its borders, but the lack of oversight over the military

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<sup>22</sup> Matthew Jefferies, *Contesting the German Empire, 1871-1918* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 97.

<sup>23</sup> Hans-Peter Ullman, *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1871-1918* (Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995), 121.

led to an increased focus by Germany on the arms race that began to sweep through Europe and laid the foundation for a world war.<sup>24</sup>

Kaiser Wilhelm II heartily endorsed German military expansion and modernization because he wanted to retain his country's "place in the sun." Wilhelm II was particularly interested in increasing his navy size and contesting Great Britain's control of the seas. Great Britain and other European countries moved to match German naval expansion and as a result European military expenditure skyrocketed between 1900 and 1914. By 1913, Germany was spending more on its military than any other country in Europe. Only Russia, with a much larger army, came anywhere close to Germany's expenditures.

<b>Nation</b>	<b>1908</b>	<b>1909</b>	<b>1910</b>	<b>1911</b>	<b>1912</b>	<b>1913</b>
Great Britain	\$286.7m	\$306.2m	\$330.4m	\$345.1m	\$349.9m	\$374.2m
Germany	\$286.7m	\$306.8m	\$301.5m	\$303.9m	\$331.5m	\$463.6m
France	\$216m	\$236.4m	\$248m	\$277.9m	\$307.8m	\$363.8m
Russia	\$291.6m	\$315.5m	\$324m	\$334.5m	\$387m	\$435m
Italy	\$87.5m	\$115.8m	\$124.9m	\$133.7m	\$158.4m	\$142.2m
United States	\$189.5m	\$199m	\$197m	\$197m	\$227m	\$244.6m
Japan	\$93.7m	\$95.7m	\$100.2m	\$110.7m	\$107.7m	\$104.6m

*Source: Jacobson's World Armament Expenditure, 1935*

Table 1: Chart of European military expenditures. Germany tops the chart leading up to World War I.

The European arms race culminated in World War I and the desolation of the European continent. Germany won many initial victories, but a long war of attrition led to a German defeat. Throughout the war, the German army became known for carrying out a variety of atrocities. Early in the war German troops began shooting Belgian and

<sup>24</sup>Clark, 608.

French civilians out of frustration over resistance, suspicion of the foreign population, drunkenness, etc. Historians John Horne and Alan Kramer wrote that crimes of excess began within the first day of the war starting and were widespread throughout the German army. During the first two months of the war, 129 major incidents of execution occurred. Horne and Kramer concluded that the crimes were first committed by common soldiers and low-ranking officers, but that these acts were soon approved by higher ranking-officers and systematized in orders at the army level and above.<sup>25</sup> Moltke, for example, “ordered that civilians engaging in combat would be summarily executed, an order repeated on the 26<sup>th</sup>.”<sup>26</sup>

After surrendering, the majority of Germans did not accept blame for the First World War. The Treaty of Versailles placed the blame for the conflict squarely on the backs of the German people and made them pay for their part in it with wartime reparations and massive restrictions on military manpower. Germans created the “stab in the back” legend and dreams of German military dominance lived on in parts of German society, especially within conservative right wing groups. The “stab in the back” legend was a notion widely believed in right wing circles that the German Army did not lose World War I, but was betrayed by the civilians on the home front. The legend undermined public trust in the Weimar republic, Germany’s post-war civilian government, and painted the liberal Social Democratic Party (SPD) as treacherous and unpatriotic. The legend also served to protect the prestige and position of the German military and its commanders. Despite their failures in 1918, military commanders like Paul von Hindenburg and Erich Ludendorff managed to retain their status and influence

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<sup>25</sup> John Horne and Alan Kramer, *German Atrocities, 1914: A History of Denial* (Yale University Press, 2002).

<sup>26</sup> Hull, 209.

in the new republic. Evidence of this can be seen in the election of Hindenburg, who publicly supported the “stab in the back legend,” as president of the republic in 1925. Ludendorff also publicly promoted the idea of the legend and later worked to further undermine the Weimar Republic by participating in attempted coup d'états in 1920 and 1923.<sup>27</sup>

The Weimar Republic was also weak and divided with too many parties and no strong representative body. The President was given powers to overrule the Reichstag and historians have suggested that the German president was not far removed from the former emperor in terms of power. The ability of the president to bypass the Reichstag and call on his emergency powers happened frequently, due to regular stalemates in the Reichstag, and served only to cause further divisions in the government. The Weimar Republic was democratic, but the electoral system felt inherently democratic because seats in the Reichstag were awarded based on what percentage of the vote a party received. The problem with proportional voting was that it prevented any realistic chance of a majority government. Coalitions were required to pass policy and these coalitions were often fractious and fragile. The presence of so many parties and interests hindered debate in the Reichstag and made passing legislation difficult.

German militarism, nationalism and faith in authoritarianism survived the war and also served to undermine Weimar democracy. The main repositories for these ideas were military organizations, including the Reichswehr, the Freikorps, various ex-soldiers' leagues, and political organizations on the Right like the Nazis. Military leaders like Paul von Hindenburg, who should have been disgraced into retirement by the defeat of 1918,

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<sup>27</sup> For more on the Weimar Republic read Everhard Kolb, *The Weimar Republic* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

remained as heroes and important political players in the new society. The ‘old days of empire’ under Bismarck and authoritarian monarchy had ended in a disastrous war, yet they were often romanticized and recalled as better times.

Parties like the Nazis and the Communist Party offered anti-democratic platforms that sought the destruction of parliamentary democracy and managed to undermine inter-war democracy even further. Hitler gained support for his political ambitions through the Nazi party’s organization and rallies and managed to use the Great Depression to expand the influence of his party. They toned down their anti-Semitic and anti-republican language between 1924 and 1932 and managed to gain more seats in the Reichstag. In 1933, Hitler was appointed as the chancellor of the Weimar republic. Political pressure from former Chancellor, Franz von Papen, convinced President Hindenburg to appoint Hitler and further intrigue gave Hitler full control over the German government signaling the end of the Weimar Republic and setting the stage for another world war.

Hitler made immediate moves to help Germany regain its military glory. He re-established the military, which had been Germany’s symbol of national identity, as the true defenders of Germany. The army had been severely reduced by the Treaty of Versailles and felt threatened by the Nazi party’s brown shirted Stormtroopers who seemed to be taking over as the strongest militant force in Germany. Hitler restored military authority over national defense by disbanding the *Sturmabteilung* in exchange for oaths of loyalty from German military officers. Numerous military leaders still opposed Hitler, but were too scared to openly speak out against him as Nazi supporters began to infiltrate and fill up the German military ranks. He stoked the fires of German nationalism by promising expansion and a return of German superiority in Europe. Much of Hitler’s

focus was on creating a military that the German people could truly believe in again as the foundation of a strong German state. The Nazi party was a fairly militarized political party and had actively used storm trooper thugs to influence elections leading up to Hitler's rise to power and enforce policies, but eventually re-created Germany's professional military with nobility at the core of its officer corps. The wealth of Germany in the 1930s went into the military and Hitler spearheaded one of the greatest expansions of industrial production and civil improvement Germany had ever seen. The growth of military industry created new jobs and sparked German economic growth that supported civil improvements, as well as military expansion. March 16, 1935 saw the re-introduction of conscription as Hitler chose to openly reject the military restrictions set for by the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>28</sup> Re-armament had already begun before Hitler became chancellor. Troops were trained and outfitted secretly and officers were rotated through schools, so that the German General Staff would remain basically intact and well trained. Police were basically trained as military reserves and had the training to be called up and fight at any time. Hitler moved ahead much more aggressively with re-armament and made it the government's top priority. Secret flying schools were established and dummy companies were set up to fund the production of weapons and the training of soldiers. By 1935, Hitler was openly flouting the Treaty of Versailles and had reintroduced conscription. Hitler's policies led to nearly full employment during the 1930s and brought many German industries out of the Great Depression.

On September 1, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland and the Second World War started as France and Great Britain chose to declare war on Germany. Hitler's aggressive re-

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<sup>28</sup> For more on Hitler's rise to power read Konrad Heiden, Ralph Manheim and Richard Overy, *The Fuehrer* (Skyhorse Publishing, 2012).

militarization of Germany allowed the German army to dominate Europe for four years before losing on most fronts over the last two years of the war. German dreams of national superiority turned into nightmares over the course of the war as the military carried out atrocities throughout Europe. Prussia had long been known for its brutality in war, but after the Second World War the full extent of German military barbarity began to hit home for many Germans. The army had been used to uproot entire populations before the war to create buffer zones. The perceptions of German soldiers were skewed by indoctrination instructing them that World War 2 was a race war. German soldiers were supposed to fight to protect the racial purity of Germans everywhere. Concentration camps were built for Jews and other undesirables as nearly 6 million Jews were killed by Hitler's Final Solution. The German army also became known for its murderous retaliatory instincts. Their devastating impact can be seen in examples such as the 1941 reprisals in Serbia where over 2,000 civilians were shot in the small town Kragjevac alone or the total demolition of the Vieux Quartier in Marseille with the evacuation of its 40,000 inhabitants after a few roadside bombs had exploded in the city.

Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union highlighted the full extent of the German military's capacity for barbarism. In the summer of 1941, the German Armed Forces High Command ordered the shooting of all political commissars of the Soviet army who were taken prisoners. Most of the German armed forces complied with this order. The Nazis believed that the Slavic peoples were useless sub-humans and therefore, the Soviet elite were to be killed while the remainder of the population should be enslaved or expelled further eastward. As a result, millions of Soviet civilians were deliberately killed, starved, or worked to death. Millions of others were deported for

forced labor in Germany or enslaved in the occupied eastern territories. German planners called for the ruthless exploitation of Soviet resources, especially agricultural produce. Resistance against German occupation was brutally responded to as entire villages were burned or entire populations of rural districts were shot in retaliation for partisan attacks. German leadership made it clear that German soldiers would not be punished for any such crimes. When Germany retreated out of Russia in 1943 the Wehrmacht began a policy of “scorched earth” tactics to not leave anything useful for the Russians behind. All animals, food, and even civilians populations were removed as the German army pulled back.<sup>29</sup>

Even Western countries, such as France, suffered German brutalities. French citizens began experiencing German pillaging, rape, and murder as the German army swept through the countryside. One German soldier wrote in August, 1914: “We destroyed eight houses with their inhabitants. In one of them we bayoneted two men with their wives and girl of eighteen. The girl all but melted me; her look was so full of innocence. But we could not repress the excitement of the troops; at such moments they are beasts, not men.”<sup>30</sup> Oppressive living conditions led to many people growing sick and dying during the winter. The German army carried out many evacuations and deportations to solve overcrowding a lack of resources. The occupying forces were also notorious for creating forced labor gangs in occupied France. Some groups were even sent back to Germany to work there.

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<sup>29</sup> For more on German atrocities in Russia read Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2008).

<sup>30</sup> Quotes pulled from Shannon Wichers, “The Forgotten Victims of the North: French Civilians under German Occupation during World War I”, *Armstrong Archive*, 2011.



Germany lost the war and the subsequent experiences, traumas and occupation served to strengthen and grow a national peace movement that sought to prevent German involvement in any armed conflict again. The war ended with a horrific German loss and the virtual destruction of Germany. German deaths during the war numbered approximately 8,000,000 and 2,035,000 of those deaths were civilian casualties. Many of Germany's cities had been destroyed as well. The carpet-bombing by Allied forces leveled up to 80 percent of the historic buildings in Germany's main cities. Berlin, Cologne, Leipzig, Magdeburg, Hamburg, Kiel, Luebeck, Muenster, Munich, Frankfurt, Dresden, and many other major cities were all devastated. In West Germany alone, some 14 billion cubic feet of rubble was piled up after the war; enough to build a wall two meters thick and seven meters high all the way around the western half of the divided country. Germany was divided into 4 zones of control with the Soviet Union controlling the entire Eastern half. Soviet Soldiers had committed a large number of rapes during the end of the war and many German women continued to be raped during occupation. Historians estimate that approximately 2 million German women were raped by the Red Army, some women as many as 60-70 times. The number of German female deaths related to rapes lies somewhere around 240,000 deaths. English military historian Antony Beevor described the event as the "greatest phenomenon of mass rape in history."<sup>31</sup>

Trust in the military had been destroyed by Germany's loss in the Second World War. Mark Mazower, a professor of history at Wallach University, writes that German military planning during the war had been lacking in terms of foresight and planning. Germany had dominated its political alliances and trusted no one. As a result, Germans

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<sup>31</sup> *Red Army Atrocities*, Laurence Rees interviewing Antony Beevor for *WW2history.com*, accessed Feb. 12, 2016, [http://ww2history.com/experts/Antony\\_Beevor/Red\\_Army\\_atrocities](http://ww2history.com/experts/Antony_Beevor/Red_Army_atrocities).

soon found that they were standing alone against the world as a result of military actions and political paranoia that had prevented Germany from maintaining any positive alliances. The military was forced to accept the blame for defeat and was not able to blame scapegoats like they had after the First World War. The German military could no longer stand as the symbol for German unity and nationalism as it had during the height of Prussian militarism. Germany's military culture essentially changed overnight after the war and was replaced by a mix of war guilt and shame. Post-war occupation by Allied forces served to increase Germany's humiliation and split Germans into a Capitalist West controlled by the Allies and a communist East controlled by the Soviet Union. Sovereignty had been lost along with a national identity and the Germans did not where to turn.<sup>32</sup>

Germans began to resist the concept of Germany potentially re-arming. The next several decades leading up to the War in Afghanistan would result in multiple and escalating confrontations between the German public and the German government over the use of the German military. Protests began in the 1950s against re-armament and culminated in resistance towards a German military presence in Afghanistan and strong protests against a possible invasion of Iraq. Peace movements would emerge across Germany to prevent any use of the military outside of German borders. The clash over military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq would highlight the clash between two different German interpretations of military use. The German government would try to re-establish Germany as a power to be respected while fending off public protests and attempting to garner support for foreign policy moves. The conflict started with

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<sup>32</sup> Mark Mazower, *Hitler's Empire: How the Nazis Ruled Europe* (New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2008), 106.

Germany's first democratic government after the war under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and German re-armament.<sup>33</sup>

Adenauer felt strongly that Prussian militarism and Germany's former military culture had laid the groundwork for Nazism, but still operated as a fairly authoritarian leader and was willing to look towards West German re-armament shortly after the war.<sup>34</sup> The United States suggested that West Germany re-build its military due to concerns over Soviet aggressions and fears that war would break out between East and West Germany just like the war between North and South Korea. Adenauer managed to use America's concerns as a bargaining chip to re-gain German sovereignty, but he ran into difficulties with his own constituency. Polls taken in 1950 showed that over 75 percent of Germans rejected the idea of conscription and would not allow their family members to serve as soldiers, and a strong majority was opposed to West German participation in a European army. A clearly anti-militarist mood existed at the beginning of the 1950s. The slogan "*Ohne Mich!*" (Without me) became very popular in Germany and leading political figures received a flood of letters from war widows, invalids and other victims of war. Soon front doors, letter boxes, walls, pavements and trees were daubed with the words *Ohne Mich!* and large letter Fs which stood for *Frieden*, peace.<sup>35</sup>

Adenauer approached re-armament tactfully and proceeded to outline a plan that would make re-militarization more palatable to the German people. Germany would focus on maintaining better relations with the rest of Europe and be a part of a European

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<sup>33</sup> Chapter Two will approach Germany's history more from the side of the government. This chapter will continue to focus on the German public.

<sup>34</sup> Adenauer gathered much power as Chancellor and carried out many items of foreign policy without consulting the Bundestag at all.

<sup>35</sup> For more on 1950s German peace movements see Alice Holmes Cooper, *Paradoxes of Peace* (Ann Arbor: The university of Michigan Press, 1996), chapter 2.

defense force. Adenauer emphasized that the purpose of the military was very much for defense. He expressed no interest in expanding Germany's military borders anymore and the form of the military respected that. The goal was to have protection if East Germany ever chose to attack at the behest of the Soviet Union. Soldiers would be educated as "citizens in uniform" and be trained as citizen soldiers tasked with the defense of the democratic state under moral leadership. Adenauer's compromises and leadership convinced West Germans that perhaps re-arming was not a terrible concept and by 1956 roughly two-thirds of the West German population considered re-armament to be politically necessary.<sup>36</sup>

In 1957, Adenauer agreed to let the United States arm West Germany with nuclear warheads as a military option against Soviet attacks. A campaign named "The Fight Against Atomic Death" formed as part of a mass protest against nuclear weapons in Germany. Several demonstrations in Bremen, Kiel, Muenich, Mannheim, Dortmund, Essen, and Hamburg were carried out during April in 1958. The conservative Christian Democratic Union managed to win a majority of seats in parliament that year and wrote off the campaign as a communist led movement. In 1960, pacifist groups responded with the Easter Marches, which were anti-military demonstrations that had been inspired by similar British marches in the 1950s. The first marches were aimed towards ending the use of nuclear weapons in every country around the world. The very first march in 1960 was attended by 1,200 people, but each year the marches grew exponentially. More cities began hosting marches and more West Germans began attending to protest the expansion

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<sup>36</sup> Himmeroder Memorandum, created by Konrad Adenauer and his staff, 1950, in the Bundes Archiv, accessed Feb. 20, 2015, [https://www.bundesarchiv.de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/bilder\\_dokumente/01725/index-2.html.de](https://www.bundesarchiv.de/oeffentlichkeitsarbeit/bilder_dokumente/01725/index-2.html.de)

of military arsenals. The movement changed its name to “Campaign for Disarmament” in 1963 and became large enough to count as an extra-parliamentary group capable of influencing opinions. The Easter Marches are considered to be the first independent new social movement and widespread extra-parliamentary movement in the Federal Republic of Germany. The institution of the Emergency Acts in 1968 led to the break-up of the movement by 1969 as German peace movements briefly splintered, but the Easter Marches were re-started in the 1980s again and continue into the present day as a rallying point for pacifists and people who want to protest nuclear weapons and military expansion.<sup>37</sup>

As the initial Easter Marches were being dismantled, young Germans began practicing political activism and organizing their own protests aimed at critiquing foreign policy and military behavior. Movements, like Kommune I and the Socialist German Student Union, started comparing American actions in Vietnam to Nazi actions during the Second World War and also began criticizing domestic policies. West Germany’s liberal protest movements were concerned with seemingly fascist and imperialist American foreign policies and West German domestic policies. Some historians, like Bernd Greiner and Michael Geyer, wrote that anti-Americanism was at the core of the late sixties student protests. Greiner wrote that Germans used Vietnam to strike out and gain revenge on the United States for the Nuremberg trials and Geyer wrote that Germans were envious of the American and still bitter about the Nuremberg trials. However, anti-Americanism did not seem to truly be the focus of the student protest movements. The students were critical of specific American actions without criticizing America and its culture directly. Left wing publications mainly spoke out against American military

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<sup>37</sup> Cooper, 84.

actions in Vietnam, CIA involvement with right wing paramilitary groups and American support for right wing and military dictatorships worldwide.

The Federal Republic of Germany was not immune to similar criticism as relatively large protests and publications called out the FRG for proposing to pass emergency laws in 1968 which would serve to curb civilian's rights during times of national crisis. Recent histories have mostly ignored the protest against the Emergency Laws and have been fairly critical of the 1968 protests in general.<sup>38</sup> Historians, like Goetz Aly, wrote that the student movements created dangerous militant groups that were actually counterproductive to Germany's democracy.<sup>39</sup> Aly was not wrong in criticizing the dangerous splinter groups that emerged from the student protests, but ignores the positive contributions of the movement. The student uprising of the late sixties did not manage to force any sweeping governmental changes or even prevent the emergency laws from being passed in 1968, but were able to set certain processes in motion that influenced future confrontations between the German government and the German public. German students were able to initiate conversations about democracy, fascism, nationalism, morality, and Germany's place in the world. By striking out against perceived imperialism and fascism the West German students changed German protest culture and provided impetus and groundwork for future political movements.

The West German government passed the Emergency Laws in 1968 without much in the way of apology towards the protestors. The student movements splintered

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<sup>38</sup> The Emergency Laws were passed in 1968 and were designed to curb civilian rights in national emergencies. The laws would limit privacy of correspondence, confidentiality of telecommunication and of postal communications. Freedom of movement could potentially be limited depending on circumstances and occupational freedom might be altered as well.

<sup>39</sup> Götz Aly, *Unser Kampf: 1968 – Ein Irritierter Blick Zurück* (Frankfurt, Germany: S. Fischer Verlag, 2008).

soon after the bill was passed. The movement did bring about one small, but significant change that would influence further interactions between the German public and its government. A paragraph was added to Article XX of the German constitution which officially gave the people of Germany the right, if no other remedy was possible, to resist anyone trying to circumvent the constitutional laws. The use of the German military would soon become a constitutional issue. While not achieving the radical changes that they sought, the students did manage to reorient West German society. Members of political student groups, like the SDS and Kommune I, generated public conversations about fascism and the Nazi past in a country where the older generation was often silent about the past. The anti-fascist left wing movement allowed Germans to view themselves through a different lens by utilizing American actions in the Vietnam War as a mirror to their own history. Protesting perceived fascism and imperialism also allowed West Germans to face their own guilt about being silent during Nazi rule. They even were able to see what a smaller group might achieve through sustained protest when the government added an article protecting civilian rights in the middle of an emergency law.<sup>40</sup>

The 1970s in West Germany saw a new series of domestic protests emerge against the FRG's construction of nuclear reactors that allowed West Germany's peace movements to mature and led to the creation of the Green Party. Large anti-nuclear protests throughout the seventies became the focus for violent clashes between the police and the protestors. Militant urban left-wingers hijacked the anti-nuclear movements and

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<sup>40</sup> "Der Bund und Die Laender," *Deutsche Grundgesetz*, Art. XX Sect. 4, available on the Bundestag website, accessed April 16, 2015, [www.bundestag.de/bundestag/aufgaben/rechtsgrundlagen/grundgesetz](http://www.bundestag.de/bundestag/aufgaben/rechtsgrundlagen/grundgesetz).

created a feeling of civil war between the German police and the protestors, but violence only served to undermine the cause. The confrontational strategies did not mesh well with the pacifist stance that most Germans had taken since World War II and so the 1970s anti-nuclear movement sought to distance itself from radical groups and the German peace movements entered politics for the first time with the founding of the Green Party.<sup>41</sup>

The anti-nuclear movement of the 1970s served to encourage more middle class German citizens to support protests. Nazism had destroyed many of the structures of middle class sociability and also much of the confidence of the German middle class. The movement started as a series of spontaneous events in the form of local siting disputes, where locals were resisting the establishment of nuclear sites near their towns, which aroused public concern about the risks of nuclear power and established the right to resist. Due to the expansion of nuclear programs in 1974 and 1975, political action turned from specific siting decisions, which were localized disputes over nuclear construction sites, to national nuclear policy, and the discourse turned from environmental preservation to more apocalyptic themes.

The second stage in the evolution of protest was marked with disruptive confrontation. Activists sought to prevent the construction of nuclear power plants and were driven by moral fervor to protect justice, democracy, and human life. The mood and tactics of the second phase left little room for negotiation and aggressive confrontation with the government was almost inevitable. The confrontation provoked a very quick

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<sup>41</sup> The Green Party was a pacifist and environmentally focused political party that was officially formed in 1980. Green Party members often tried to act a pacifist conscience to the rest of German Parliament.



response from public authorities. Apparently, public authorities were willing to accept protest so long as it did not threaten crucial policy decisions. Occupations at Wyhl, Brokdorf, Grohnde, and Kalkar pushed these limits and the government moved to mobilize police forces. Media attention had been initially supportive of the antinuclear movement, but started focusing on the violence and potential infiltration of the movement by left radicals and professional troublemakers. The backlash from violent confrontations weakened the movement and created difficulties in mobilizing public support despite some successes in preventing nuclear reactors from being built. After several dramatic confrontations the movement entered a third stage. Protestors started exploring more diverse strategies, such as conventional political participation and nonviolent actions.

The anti-nuclear movement had generally viewed the West German state as more of a coercive apparatus than as a source of opportunity. Therefore, along with the internal divisions over the use of violence, moderate and radical factions in the movement found themselves excluded from the institutional body of politics. William Gamson, a professor of sociology at Boston College, writes that the movement itself failed to be accepted as a legitimate player, but that many of its goals were fulfilled by institutional actors.<sup>42</sup> Gamson meant that compared to the more pluralist approach to parties in the United States, the German political process tends to more firmly institutionalize particular group elements. A greater variety of splinter groups have the chance to be recognized as actual parties and have an impact on politics.

The anti-nuclear movement seized an opportunity to create its own political party and greater opposition in the West German government to nuclear power led to the

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<sup>42</sup>William Gamson, *The Strategy of Social Protest* (Wadsworth Pub Co, 1990).

creation of the Green Party in 1980. Instead of a single issue orientation favored by the conservatives, the Greens decided to embrace a broader program which included labor, foreign policy, minority, and gender issues. Over the next several years the goals of the greater moderate anti-nuclear movement ran parallel to the efforts of the Green Party. Non-violence made each group a natural ally of the other. The militant Left outright rejected the Greens because “electoral participation weakens practical resistance.”<sup>43</sup> Above all, political participation meant accepting the rules of the political process, which was out of the question for the radical movement groups. The question of violence lastingly separated the radical movement wing from the Green Party, which held firmly to the principle of strict nonviolence. By contrast, the radical movement groups propagated the calculated use of violence and thus had to consider the rise of the Green Party as more of a step back.<sup>44</sup>

The American led decision for NATO to station nuclear weapons across Western Europe re-galvanized the German peace movement in the early 1980s. Washington took a double-track decision in December 1979 and offered its rival military bloc, the Warsaw Pact, a mutual limitation of medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles, combined with the threat that in case of disagreement NATO would deploy more middle range nuclear weapons in Western Europe. Following the NATO decision to station 572 nuclear warheads, thousands of nuclear munitions were deployed on West German territory alone targeting cities and civil and military facilities across the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. At the same time, West German territory itself became a major target of

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<sup>43</sup> Green Party, *The Program of the Green Party of the FRG* (Bonn, 1980).

<sup>44</sup> Roger Karapin, *Protest Politics in Germany: Movements on the Left and Right since the 1960s*, (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 103.

the Soviet SS-20 missiles, of which some were stationed in East Germany. In the years that followed, protestors organized human chains, sit-ins, and mass demonstrations that drew hundreds of thousands of West German citizens who regularly protested against NATO and the deployment of United States nuclear weapons in the country. German anti-war songs, like “99 Red Balloons,” became very popular on an international level. The translated lyrics, “99 War ministers...called for war and wanted power. Man, who would have guessed that!” speak to the suspicions that many Germans and others around the world felt towards their governments in the 1980s.<sup>45</sup> The installation of the Pershing II and cruise missiles in 1983 deflated the peace movement. Attendance at meetings and marches dropped significantly and resignation set in as people lost their belief that extra parliamentary action could change security policy. In the late eighties, the movement did technically achieve its goals as global arms control agreements were signed in rapid order. America and the Soviet Union agreed to eliminate all Soviet and American medium range missiles in Europe. The INF treaty, signed in December 1987, eliminated the missiles that peace movement had been fighting against anyway. Even though the West German peace movement had not achieved its goals the thawing of the Cold War rekindled faith in arms control and international diplomacy. The German public continued to believe that international conflicts could be resolved via diplomacy.<sup>46</sup>

East of the “Iron Curtain,” peace movements finally began to gain momentum in the 1980s as well. Large organized protest movements had become relatively common in West German, but were virtually non-existent in East Germany. Tighter government

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<sup>45</sup> These are not the English lyrics, but are instead translated directly from the more poignant German lyrics.

<sup>46</sup> Cooper, chapter 6.

control and Soviet oversight harshly penalized any organized dissidents. In the early 1980s, a movement began that was led by religious organizations. A group of young people met at the Dresden Frauenkirche in 1982 to protest war, violence, and East German militarization. The East Germans sought disarmament and took on the slogan “Swords into Plowshares” as their motto. They gained momentum over the next several years in 1989 the “Peaceful Revolution” occurred. Opposition groups formed across East Germany and protested the government’s policies and the increase of East German militarization. Mass demonstration led to a loss of power for the dictatorship in East Germany and without Soviet Support the border between East and West Germany re-opened. On November 9, the East German Politburo allowed East Berliners to travel to the West side of the city and that night the Berlin Wall was torn down and Germany took a big step towards re-unification.<sup>47</sup>

The fall of the Wall and German re-unification signaled the end of the Cold War and changed both the world and Germany. At the time of the German re-unification in October 1990, Germany followed a policy of strict military abstinence in conflicts outside of Europe. The notion that the Bundeswehr could be used for other purposes than defense of Germany was inconceivable across the political spectrum. Germany’s peace movements had spent several decades pushing for greater awareness and acceptance of collective war memories and guilt of the Second World War and did not want Germany to fall back into the vicious cycle of militarization. Each anti-war protest movement had subsequently built upon the previous movement and Germans, especially West Germans,

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<sup>47</sup> Wolfram Nagel, “From Hope, a movement,” *Deutsche Welle*, November, 6, 2014, <http://www.dw.com/en/from-hope-a-movement-the-role-of-churches-in-the-fall-of-the-gdr/a-18035129>, accessed January 30, 2016.

had established a system for pushing against government policies that they did not like. The end of the Cold War and German re-unification meant that Germany's anti-militarism would be put to the test as Germany's allies began to look to her as an ally in conflicts abroad. The late nineties would see Germany send troops outside of German borders for the first time since the Second World War. When the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 occurred, the German public found themselves caught in a quandary between the pacifist ideals they had spent decades fighting for and the international political position that a re-unified Germany now found itself occupying. Troop deployment to Afghanistan would serve as the issue that would bring Germany's peace movements into conflict with a German government that believed Germany had military responsibilities to the world and had tied itself politically to its western allies.

## Foreign Policy Development in Post-World War II Germany

German foreign policy made headlines in the United States in late 2002 as Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder made his opposition to American plans to launch a preventative war against Iraq the centerpiece of his campaign. Schroeder's campaign slogan, "the German way," sounded awfully similar to *Sonderweg* (special path) or *Alleingang* (going it alone), something Germans had been trying to avoid for the past 50 years, and seemed to point to a changed and more assertive Germany.<sup>48</sup> Had the Cold War era merely been a break in German policy, a short period of inactivity forced by German division and the loss of World War II? Was Germany moving back into a position of using power politics and pursuing its interests in Europe with confidence and a desire for power?

Fears about a new and assertive Germany were not necessarily misplaced as Germany was rapidly becoming a big power in Europe again, but the German Way continued to be influenced by multilateralism, cooperative institution building, skepticism of using military power to achieve ends, and an emphasis on human rights and international laws. Germany remained very much influenced by its ties developed to the West during the post-World War II years and the quest for sovereignty and protection during the Cold War. West Germany's government began searching for a new identity after World War II that would make Germany relevant as a political power, and aiding

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<sup>48</sup> *Sonderweg* is defined as "special path" and identifies the theory in German historiography that Hitler's rise to power was the only natural course of action because of Germany's history and preoccupation with strong authoritarian leaders and lack of significant liberalization across its history. *Alleingang* refers to going it alone and Germany's history of standing apart from other countries while maintaining a solo position. Since World War II, Germany has sought to work hand in hand with other nations and organizations.

the United States in the war against terrorism in Afghanistan was a natural continuation of policy developed during the Cold War.

After World War II, West Germany underwent a complete transformation in how it confronted the world after the devastating defeat it suffered. Germany's role in the world had been defined by its military. Journalist and historian William Shirer moved with the German troops during World War II and observed that Germans were willing misled by their government and that certain culturally shared beliefs and understandings about war and violence were used by the Nazis to gain support for a conflict that nearly destroyed Germany's ability to exist as a nation-state.<sup>49</sup> These beliefs, love for the fatherland, fear of Bolshevism, disgust for the Versailles Treaty, desire for a German "place in the sun," and distrust of non-Germans, were built on traditional beliefs that war could be honorable, virtuous, and sometimes necessary. Hitler used rhetoric and propaganda to twist these cultural attributes into a fascist ideology that allowed for the construction of a brutal, war-making regime. By 1945 all of those beliefs and ideals had been destroyed.

The next three and a half decades after the war saw West Germans develop a foreign policy that allowed them to face their war guilt and achieve acceptance in the international system. West Germany was not a "normal" state, due to its history, but the first postwar political generation wanted West Germany to become a state with equal rights by rejecting the kind of behavior that had led to two major wars in the first fifty years of the century. Germans would have to reject the type of foreign policy thinking that had been dominant since the establishment of the German empire in 1871. Germany

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<sup>49</sup> William L. Shirer, *The Nightmare Years, 1930-1940* (Birlinn, 2011), 629.

looked to create links to the West (*Westpolitik*) and the East (*Ostpolitik*). Through *Westpolitik*, West Germany would integrate itself into western institutions and define itself as part of a western alliance, a process known as *Westbindung* or *Einbindung*. Through *Ostpolitik*, successive West German governments would seek to cultivate better relations with East Germany and the Soviet Union in order to minimize tension and deal with the reality of German division.<sup>50</sup>

In 1949, when the American, French, and British zones were united to form the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the Allies severely limited the political power of the new West German state. Normal rights of sovereignty, such as raising an army, developing an independent foreign policy, and control over internal affairs, were curtailed or nonexistent. Under these circumstances, Konrad Adenauer led the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) controlled coalition into government in 1949. For Adenauer's government, the postwar years were a struggle to regain sovereignty and achieve equality in the international system. By proving Germany a stable and trustworthy ally, Adenauer hoped to persuade the United States to pressure other European states to remove most of the restraints imposed on Germany after the war. In order to do that, Germans would have to adapt to what was expected of them in the U.S. led system. Coming from the western part of Germany, Adenauer considered the cause of Germany's past problems to have been insufficient integration into the Western way of life and a lack of democratic ideals. The Germans, he believed, had a "false sense of the state, power, and the role of

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<sup>50</sup> Scott Erb, *German Foreign Policy* (Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 47-48.



the individual.”<sup>51</sup> He placed reunification goals as second to attaining a more influential place in the international system for the new state.<sup>52</sup>

Adenauer’s approach was termed *Westpolitik*, which meant that Germany would integrate into the Western system of political thought and institutions. As early as 1949, Adenauer suggested that Germany could re-arm to counter Soviet aggression. He was not seeking to return to previous German militarization, but firmly believed that no state could be a sovereign or equal member of the international system without a military. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), led by Kurt Schumacher, believed that West Germany should not have to submit to the demands of any outside powers. Their goal was to re-establish the *Reich* based upon democracy and freedom. Schumacher desired a neutral and unified Germany with the power to defend itself.<sup>53</sup>

Adenauer’s policies won out because of his control over the German government and he wasted no time in trying to develop a web of relationships that would legitimize the German state. He realized that one of the major tasks facing Germany was the effort to rebuild the economy and convincing Germans that Western democracy could work. The other pressing issue was convincing the other European states that the new West Germany was not a threat, and in fact could be a partner. Germany began cooperating with France to integrate into the European system. Adenauer saw German integration as a way to establish legitimacy and become a player in the postwar system. West Germany

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<sup>51</sup> Adenauer, *Memoirs 1945-1953* (Regnery Publishers, 1983), 312.

<sup>52</sup> Adenauer, 178.

<sup>53</sup> William H. Paterson, *The SPD and European Integration* (Saxon House, 1974), 30.

even rejected offers of peace talks from the Russians and became even more firmly entrenched in the western system.<sup>54</sup>

The Korean War broke out in 1950 and policy makers in the United States became convinced that German re-armament was a necessity. Adenauer saw re-armament as a means to regain West German sovereignty, but many West Germans were not convinced that re-armament was a good idea. Despite significant opposition from both Germans and the French, West German re-armament was approved on November 12, 1955. Germany joined NATO and promised not to use its military to try and reunify the country. The new military was called the *Bundeswehr* and the constitution of West Germany was changed to accommodate re-armament for homeland defense and later to authorize conscription. The SPD was worried that rearmament would lead to an antidemocratic military and there was a public outcry against the idea of a new German military so soon after the war's end.<sup>55</sup> West Germany's minister of internal affairs, Gustav Heinemann, even resigned in 1950 as a protest to Adenauer's plans. Erich Ollenhauer and other SPD members claimed that rearmament was unconstitutional, but Adenauer argued that only a war of aggression and not a defensive war would violate the constitution. Article 87 clearly states that the *Bundeswehr* could be deployed as a defense force in emergencies, but that further use would need parliamentary approval. To prevent a resurgence of traditional militarism, the new German army was planned to be "citizens in uniform" rather than a professional army. German soldiers would no longer be a separate clique with special privileges. Soldiers were asked to understand politics,

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<sup>54</sup> Adenauer, 420.

<sup>55</sup> Holger Nehring, *Politics of Security: British and West German Protest Movements and the Early Cold War, 1945-1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

question orders they saw as immoral, and have all of their democratic rights intact even within the military structure.<sup>56</sup>

Adenauer pushed his policies through regardless of public opposition to militarization.<sup>57</sup> He had very strong control over the government and the incredible growth of the German economy served overcome much of the opposition to his policies. Adenauer believed that if Germany were to be part of the Western system and reap its rewards, it had to accept military responsibility and embrace the Cold War. In the 1950s, this dissonance between public opinion and foreign policy could be brushed aside rather easily. Besides the old knowledge that the new German military was very different from the old, Germany wedded its military to the NATO alliance, and the American strategy of massive retaliation meant that it would be hard to imagine German soldiers actually fighting. Germans had the luxury of being able to have a military that they did not need to seriously think about and they could speak of in terms of using it only for their self-defense as their partners were taking care of security interests and other Cold War confrontations. German rearmament occurred despite antimilitarism in the population and by 1963 the Bundeswehr had grown to over 400,000 troops. West Germany managed to gain more international equality by rejecting pure antimilitarism despite re-arming,<sup>58</sup>

The deployment of American nuclear weapons on German soil was pushed through in spite of massive popular protests. Invoking the past with terms such as “nuclear holocaust” the peace movement attempted to establish a link between the new

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<sup>56</sup> “Nicht im Grundgesetz,” *Der Spiegel*, February 13, 1952.

<sup>57</sup> Holger Nehring, *Politics of Security: British and West German Protest Movements and the Early Cold War, 1945-1970*.

<sup>58</sup> Hans Mommsen, “Nationalismus und transnationale Integrationsprozesse in der Gegenwart”, in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 1980, 3-14.

NATO defense doctrine and the cruel effectiveness of the Nazi extermination camps. Adenauer responded by pointing to the consequences of the Western appeasement of Hitler's territorial claims in Eastern Europe and stating that totalitarian states could only be negotiated with from a position of strength. In order to regain public support, the West German government designed a policy that combined Western military solidarity with an attempt to promote détente and negotiations with the East. In a government resolution of March 1958, the superpowers were urged to enter into general disarmament talks. With the Harmel report of 1967<sup>59</sup>, the dual pillars of defense and negotiation were adopted as official NATO strategy to the great satisfaction of the German mainstream.<sup>60</sup>

From 1966-69, the Grand Coalition of the CDU and the SPD governed and continued to work towards better communication with the East. The Grand Coalition was forced to face the student protests taking place during the late sixties against West Germany's support of American foreign policy and also against the Emergency Laws that the government sought to pass. The laws basically stated that the government had the right to curb certain civilian freedoms, like introducing curfews, during a national crisis. Almost every other nation had a similar law that afforded governments even greater powers, but Germans envisioned the return of the Nazis. Despite vigorous student protests the Grand Coalition stood firm in its support of the Emergency Laws and continued to debate and defend them.

The bill was preceded by almost ten years of public debate on this issue and more than a yearlong discussion of the proposal by the federal

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<sup>59</sup> The 1967 "Report of the Council on the Future Tasks of the Alliance," also known as the Harmel report, was a seminal document in NATO's history. It reasserted NATO's basic principles and effectively introduced the notion of deterrence and dialogue, setting the scene for NATO's first steps towards a more cooperative approach to security issues that would emerge in 1991.

<sup>60</sup>Jeffery Herf, *Divided Memory* (Harvard University Press, 1997), 298.

government...I would dare claim that this house has rarely been as well prepared to debate and make a decision on a draft presented to it...It is not true that this draft paves the way to dictatorship...It is not true that this draft will do away with civil liberties. Freedom of opinion, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly and association will not be affected by it.<sup>61</sup>

Knowing that the emergency laws were the only way to achieve complete independence from the Allied control over West German policies; the bill was passed by the Federal Republic of Germany on May 30, 1968. The days previous to the bill passing were filled with thousands of students demonstrating against the bill, but the demonstrators began to splinter after they had been defeated. The students had received broad support from a large segment of the German population, but the confrontational methods used by the protestors tended limit other West Germans from joining the protests.<sup>62</sup> Once again, the German government pushed through an unpopular policy because it believed that the policy was necessary for the good of the country.

Willy Brandt became chancellor of West Germany in 1969 and focused on *Ostpolitik* as the major cornerstone of his foreign policy. He tried to build links between East and West Germany and in doing so soften the border. He believed that Germany could be re-unified through open discussion. Brandt also tied his foreign policy into a broader agenda of how to deal with Germany's past. Public reflection on the darker sides of German history became a part of his trust building strategy towards the East. In a series of acts of atonement and reconciliation, German political memory was extended back to the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939 and the Soviet Union in 1941. His bent knee

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<sup>61</sup> "In Support of the Emergency Laws (May 15-16,1968)," in *Document – Politics between Immobility and Change*, accessed March 30, 2015, [germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org).

<sup>62</sup> Martin Klimke, *The Other Alliance* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 242.

at the memorial to Jews killed in the Warsaw ghetto was a powerfully symbolic gesture and an essential component of his diplomatic strategy. It signaled that Germany was not a revisionist power looking to regain lost territory in the East.

Under the motto “daring more democracy, Brandt linked his policy towards the East and the past to a domestic agenda that tapped into the sentiments fueling the student movement of 1968. He criticized elements of Adenauer’s rearmament and rearmament policy. The “1968ers” fought for democratization of German politics as well as the demilitarization of international relations. Against the backdrop of the American war in Vietnam, the peace movement from the 1950s had been reinvigorated as the rallied against capitalist power politics and the use of force in international relations.

Brandt’s new security policy thinking and approach to the East rested on a belief in ‘soft’ power, such as the potential of economic, political, and cultural instruments of foreign policy. Even though governments might be at odds, societies and people shared common interests. Willy Brandt’s foreign policy continued to affect German thought about how foreign and security policy could be carried out until the present day. A number of peace research institutes popped up in Germany during the 1970s as academia was influenced by foreign policy. They focused on topics such as socialization and aggression, the arms race, and how images of enemies were used. West Germany continued to seek West and European integration as a part its foreign policy. Both *Westpolitik* and *Ostpolitik* required cooperation and integration as a means to pursue security, prosperity, and in the long run, unity. However, West Germany would remain in the middle of the Cold War and even after reunification would continue to be pulled in directions that the public did not want to go by allies. By tying itself so strongly to NATO

and Europe, Germany would be forced to make some very difficult decisions between the 1980s and the war in Afghanistan that created conflict between the government and public opinion. The German government was striving to make decisions and policies that would benefit Germany, but those decisions were often not in alignment with the sentiments of the German public.<sup>63</sup>

When Helmut Schmidt entered office in 1974, he shifted the focus of foreign policy and downplayed *Ostpolitik* while emphasizing the importance of superpower détente. Normalizing relations with the East allowed Germany to maintain its adherence to the Western alliance even when many Germans feared that the United States would be too quick to draw Europe into a war that would destroy Germany. Part of this effort was domestic, convincing a skeptical public that they were working to make sure that the feared war would never happen. Social scientist Professor Scott Erb writes that the path of multilateralism and institutional cooperation provided Germany with a means to balance potential international contradictions. The emergence of these values as a part of German foreign policy seemed to take place in the 1960s and 1970s. What began as a strategy to achieve German interests in a world where Germany was divided and needed allied approval for most initiatives became an ingrained and expected approach for most Germans. Armed force began to seem unnecessary as Germany managed to establish respect and achieve goals without resorting to military force.<sup>64</sup>

Schmidt's superpower détente strategy led to him promoting the idea for the dual track decision near the end of the 1970s. He proposed that NATO negotiate with the

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<sup>63</sup> Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism, and Peace Enforcement*, 31-34, and Scott Erb, *German Foreign Policy*, 42-47.

<sup>64</sup> Jeffery Herf, *War by Other Means* (Free Press, 1991), 40-55.

Soviets to have their new SS-20 missile system removed, but that NATO be prepared to install Pershing II and cruise missiles as a balance should the negotiations be unsuccessful. The reaction in Germany was an outpouring of anti-military feelings that surpassed even the debate over rearmament. Massive protests and arguments within the government undermined the leadership of Helmut Schmidt. He was replaced by Helmut Kohl in 1982, who immediately proclaimed that the double track decision would continue despite popular German protest. Even though protests against the double track decision were on a far larger scale than the later protests against the war in Afghanistan and the Iraq War, the West German government was able to generally push aside any opposition. The government tried to dissuade protesters in 1982 and 1983 by arresting them en-masse and fining them hundreds of marks when they did things such as block United States bases. Some estimates from the summer of 1983 showed that approximately three million people were active in the peace movement and polls showed that Germans opposed the stationing of missiles by a margin of 70-30.<sup>65</sup>

The Kohl government responded to critics of the missile deployment by arguing that it was impossible for Germany to refuse to deploy the missiles without betraying the alliance. Kohl appealed to NATO loyalty and Western values, as well as the importance of deterring the Soviet Union. By doing so, he expressed the logic that defined German foreign policy, that of institutionalism, multilateralism, and identification with Western values. Germany was a part of an institution that entailed responsibilities to the alliance partners. These were not just matters of self-interest, but also matters of international importance. The disarmament negotiations remained inconclusive and when West

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<sup>65</sup> "Friedensbewegung zweifellose verwerflich," *Der Spiegel*, October 4, 1982.



Germany agreed to allow missile deployment, Russia aborted the negotiations. On November 22, 1983, the Bundestag approved the missile deployment and as soon as the missiles were installed as planned, support for the peace movement disappeared.<sup>66</sup> Kohl effectively disarmed the Peace Movement by mixing acceptance of the missiles with a continuation of *Ostpolitik*, basically rejecting the United States emphasis on confrontation. Danish historian David Gress writes that the lack of resiliency in the German peace movement reflects the fact that the movement itself was driven by a fear that Germany was supporting the kind of Cold War policies that the Reagan administration was pursuing. Once it became clear that Germany would not be following Reagan style policies the depth of the opposition to missile deployment evaporated. While the missile issue exposed the contradiction between German policy goals and cultural attitudes toward military conflict, the policy of *Ostpolitik* continued to assuage German fears of a potential conflict.

The 1980s represented another moment in German history where public opinion and foreign policy did not match up at all. However, the German government continued to find success in pushing aside concerns and passing unpopular policy. Probably a big reason for the lack of governmental concern with public opinion was the Cold War, but also the strong ties to NATO and the West. Kohl's government, just like preceding and succeeding German governments, continued to approve policies that they felt would keep Germany safe and also strengthen Germany's presence in Europe. Military might was viewed as a necessary tool and relationships with the West, especially the United States, would serve to influence German foreign policy until the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

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<sup>66</sup> Paterson, *The Chancellor and Foreign Policy*, 136.

The 1980s ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the reunification of Germany. Newly reunited Germany was thrust onto the world stage like never before and the course of German foreign policy would be affected by new circumstances. NATO and the United States decided that a free sovereign Germany was a welcome within the alliance and so East Germans were brought into the Western fold. The East German foreign minister, Markus Eckel, advocated that Germany withdraw from NATO and demilitarize, but Chancellor Helmut Kohl strongly objected and instead that Germany remain a NATO member and maintain its military. Even though West Germany was not seeking military conflict, it had become used to being allied with the West and expected to at least have some form of military. The unification treaty was officially signed in 1990 and Germany regained its full sovereignty.<sup>67</sup>

At the time of German re-unification Germany was still following a strict policy of military abstinence in conflicts outside of Europe. The notion that the Bundeswehr could be used for a purpose other than defense seemed unimaginable to many Germans.<sup>68</sup> Much would change leading up to the war in Afghanistan. New international responsibilities coupled with several crises in Europe and the Middle East pushed Germany to deploy its military outside of German borders despite public disapproval. During the 1990s the government would continue to develop arguments to gain public support for military deployment, but those arguments would begin to fall flat by the time Germany entered Afghanistan. Between 1990 and 1994, the big issues in the domestic

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<sup>67</sup> Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany 1918-2008: The Divided Nation* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), chapter 14.

<sup>68</sup> German Federal Ministry of Defense, *History of the Bundeswehr*, [http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg!/ut/p/c4/FcxJDoAgEAXRG3Xv3XkKh41h-IG00BJAvb6S2r4U7\\_yn5pFgulxqEq-8OZnsSzY\\_gZq4iBohvZUrSZeT7K0e7UWsFNbc\\_EUHmZqBw6MeEB2el7FOgTcol5znD7YAV34!/](http://www.bmvg.de/portal/a/bmvg!/ut/p/c4/FcxJDoAgEAXRG3Xv3XkKh41h-IG00BJAvb6S2r4U7_yn5pFgulxqEq-8OZnsSzY_gZq4iBohvZUrSZeT7K0e7UWsFNbc_EUHmZqBw6MeEB2el7FOgTcol5znD7YAV34!/).

German battle regarding military use were the requirements of partnership and the lessons of Germany's past. The fault line ran between the political center right and the left. The former argued that the expectations of Germany's partners towards the bigger and more secure Germany as well as the lessons of Germany's history called for an extended German engagement in international security and the latter claimed the opposite. Several factors served to fuel the domestic debate. First, increased international pressure for a German contribution to multinational peace missions made it possible to harness the sentiments condensed in "never again alone." Second, the First Gulf War and the breakup of Yugoslavia indicated the limits of unarmed diplomacy in managing the crises of the new era and protecting innocent civilian lives. These new crises threw into doubt the belief in a policy that simultaneously committed Germany to Western integration, a maximum restraint in military matters, and to values such as democracy, international law, and human rights.

Even though Germany was finally removed as the world's geopolitical strategic center with the end of the Cold War, its policy makers did have much time to rest. Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in August 1990 placed the question of Germany's new role in international security on the agenda before the negotiations on German unity were even finished. Key German schools of thought, "never again alone" and "never again war," were thrown into conflict with each other. As all of Germany's major partners rallied behind the United States in the Gulf, only German government bent over backwards to support the effort without appearing to do so and hundreds of thousands of Germans took to the streets to protest the war. Eventually, the allied forces were forced to make do without German troops. Trying to compromise historical opposition to fighting

and the desire to show solidarity, the German government extended material and financial help to the United States led coalition while declining any direct military involvement. Besides covering a substantial part of the costs of Operation Desert Storm and aiding countries indirectly hurt by the conflict, Germany permitted American and British armed forces unrestricted use of their German bases and installations, supported the movement of American and British troops to the Gulf, and supplied several ammunition shipments to the international coalition.<sup>69</sup>

The absence of German troops in the international coalition made Germany the target of criticism and accusation of security free-riding and risk avoidance from both its European allies and the United States. The Gulf Conflict served to modify the thinking of the German government in regards to military actions outside of Germany. Conservative proponents of out-of-area engagements were able to gain the ear of the party mainstream, arguing that Germany's standing and influence as a partner in Europe and NATO was threatened by the policy of strict military abstinence. "Never again alone" became a successful motivator in attempting to change minds on the military debate. The CDU announced in late 1990 that they would start working on a plan to create clarification of the German constitution to enable the Bundeswehr to "participate in actions agreed upon by the Security Council within the framework of the UN Charter."<sup>70</sup> The Gulf Conflict also modified the position of the German Liberals. The crisis had mounted an intellectual challenge on the belief in international cooperation and pacifist conflict resolution. Diplomatic efforts had failed during the Gulf War and the Liberals had been caught

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<sup>69</sup> For more on German and the First Gulf War read Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 48-52, James Sperling, *Germany at fifty-five*, Paul Hockenos, *Joschka Fischer and the Making of the Berlin Republic*.

<sup>70</sup> quote from Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement*, 50.

unprepared for that. However, the Liberals still maintained a strong aversion to the use of military force and the German public was generally still opposed to military involvement as well.<sup>71</sup> Arguments for Bundeswehr deployment began to surface in the government and would continue to be used over the next decade. Two suggestions were brought forth by Helmut Kohl and other members of the CDU, concerning Germany's responsibility to its past and that its partners needed Germany's engagement. These suggestions grew into arguments that proved effective when Germany sent troops to Kosovo, but were less than ideal for the war in Afghanistan when the German people decided that troop deployment was unnecessary.

Germany's first out-of-area engagement occurred during the breakup of Yugoslavia and the ensuing war in Serbia and Montenegro. The German government decided to contribute Bundeswehr units to monitor a sea and air embargo against Serbia and Montenegro (Operation Sharp Guard) and to enforce a no-fly zone over Bosnia. From July 1992 to June 1996, Germany contributed with three sea-surveillance aircraft and two destroyers to patrol the shores of Montenegro and Albania. The opposition to military deployment expressed concerns over the re-militarization of German policy. The government pushed ahead with the deployment and the SPD lodged a complaint with Germany's Constitutional Court. The German contribution to *Operation Sharp Guard* did not qualify as a humanitarian mission, it was argued, and therefore violated the German constitution's Article 87. The constitution emphasized the use of the German military as a defense force and Foreign Minister Hans Dieter Genscher declared to the *Bundestag* on August 23, 1990 that he believed the military deployment of troops outside of German

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<sup>71</sup> Dalgaard-Nielsen, *Germany, Pacifism and Peace Enforcement* (Manchester University Press, 2006), 50.

controlled territory to be illegal. The main case asked the Court to determine where the deployment of Bundeswehr units outside of the NATO area violated German Basic Law and was not decided until 1994. Initially in 1993, the Court decided that German troops could stay in Yugoslavia because the political consequences of withdrawal would be far more detrimental to Germany's relationship with its allies than maintaining a troop presence. The main reason appeared to be "never again alone" instead of "never again war."<sup>72</sup>

The arguments for German military participation outside of German borders finally gained some traction with a larger German audience. Pointing to Germany's historical experience and invoking one of the most powerful symbols in German political history, the Nazi extermination camps, the government argued that military measures were sometimes necessary to stop an aggressor and end large scale human rights violations. Defense Minister Volker Ruehe stated that "The concentration camps in Germany were shut down by soldiers and not by diplomatic declarations! Again, in the future it may be possible to stop the deepest immorality only by using soldiers. In such cases the deployment of military means is required on moral grounds."<sup>73</sup> Appealing to the ingrained urge to avoid being without allies again, and fears over losing influence with NATO and European allies, the government also argued that Germany's international standing and credibility as a partner and as a responsible member of the international community was at stake. As long as German armed forces had to hold the central Cold War front in Europe they were exempted from wider global responsibilities, but the bigger and safer re-unified Germany had an obligation to support international efforts to

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<sup>72</sup> German Basic Law, Article 87.

<sup>73</sup> Volker Ruehe, *Plenarprotokoll Deutscher Bundestag*, 12/132, 1994.

safeguard peace and stability in line with the other Western democracies. Against this backdrop, proponents of an extended German role in international security could present a German contribution to manage the Balkan crisis as a precondition for further European political integration. “How exactly do you imagine you can build Europe if the German ships as a matter of principle take a course that differs from the ships of all our allies?” Volker Ruehe asked in the face of opposition to *Operation Sea Guard*.<sup>74</sup> Germans began to acknowledge that perhaps military intervention might represent the only way to protect civilian lives. “As a very last resort, when all other means have failed, when there is no other way of protecting defenseless people, it might be the case that the dispatch of UN soldiers is necessary,” said Gerd Poppe of the Green Party.<sup>75</sup>

On July 12, 1994 the German Constitutional Court handed down a final decision on the out-of-area question and opened up the path for further military deployments outside of Germany. The Court ruled that the deployment of German troops in military operations outside of NATO area was constitutional, provided they formed part of a multilateral operation designed to uphold international peace and security, carried out by an organization of collective security such as NATO or the UN. The German Bundestag would need to approve each individual deployment with a simple majority. The 1994 ruling approved a policy that broke with practice of the previous fifty years. Yet, no major political debate arose after the decision was handed down. The center right simply greeted the result as a victory for the policy of international solidarity and responsibility. The Social Democratic leaders offered statements about international responsibility and the need for Germany to contribute to all out-of-area missions covered by the UN charter.

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<sup>74</sup> Volker Ruehe, *Plenarprotokoll Deutscher Bundestag*, 12/101, 1992.

<sup>75</sup> Gerd Poppe, *Plenarprotokoll Deutscher Bundestag*, 12/166, 1993.

However, no discussion took place regarding how potential out-of-area interventions might serve Germany's interest. Multinational frameworks that would best serve German national interest were not debated and no one talked about what the geographical and military limits of Germany's participation would be. Memories of Germany's past did lead to an emphasis on Germany remaining a "civilian" instead of a military power and continuing to resolve international crises through diplomacy instead of military force. Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel stressed that Germany would never act alone and would consider military measures only in missions where they formed part of a broader approach aiming at lasting political solutions in the conflict.<sup>76</sup>

In early July, 1995, Serbian security forces overran the "safe" area of Srebrenica and proceeded to kill over 8000 Muslims who had sought refuge there. The UN peacekeeping troops in the area were confined to their compound and made no move to prevent the genocide. Srebrenica left German pacifists speechless. Diplomatic means and economic sanctions had done nothing to prevent the biggest single mass murder in postwar European history. The potential price of pacifism and the inner contradiction between humanism and principled military abstention was exposed in a shocking manner. The shock of Srebrenica caused much consternation and soul searching on the German Left. The motto "never again Auschwitz" overcame "never again war" as Germans decided that perhaps military intervention was now necessary. Germany proceeded to contribute several thousand troops and equipment, like military aircraft, to the international peacekeeping forces in Yugoslavia. When violence escalated in Kosovo in

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<sup>76</sup>" Urteil des Bundesverfassungsgericht vom 12. Juli 1994 zu Auslandeinsatzen der Bundeswehr", reprinted in *Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik*, 7/1994.



1998, Germany took the final step towards full participation in international crisis management.<sup>77</sup>

The 1998 election in Germany constituted a power change in the German government as Gerhard Schroeder<sup>78</sup> of the SPD became chancellor and the powerful CDU party lost the election. The SPD formed a coalition with the Green Party and Joschka Fischer<sup>79</sup> became the new Foreign Minister. The Red-Green Coalition represented the left side of the German government and had been a proponent for peace, but Schroeder and Fischer would oversee Germany's military and peacekeeping expansion. The Schroeder administration pledged Germany's support of NATO airstrikes in Kosovo and Fischer of the Green Party reiterated the "never again Auschwitz" philosophy that pushed him and other pacifists to support military actions.<sup>80</sup>

Between the Second World War and the Kosovo Crisis, Germany had moved from abstaining entirely from military deployment to being a willing international partner in crisis management and peacekeeping. The German government since 1949 had repeatedly preached that Germany needed a military to have sovereignty and be respected as a leader internationally and regionally. The Cold War limited the scope of Germany's international cooperation as Germans focused mainly on potential war with the Soviet Union and East Germany, but served to tie Germany tightly with the West. German

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<sup>77</sup> Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (Modern Library, 1999), 69-70.

<sup>78</sup> Schroeder was a German politician who emerged as a leader of the SPD. He organized protests against the United States and the deployment of NATO missiles in Germany and even embraced Marxism. He won a Bundestag seat in 1980 and worked his way towards eventually becoming chancellor.

<sup>79</sup> Fischer had been a leading figure for the West German Greens since the 1970s and was arguably Germany's most popular politician for most of time in the government. He participated in the 1968 student protests. Domestic terrorist acts in the 1970s shocked him to the point where he renounced violence and became a pacifist and a founding member of the Green Party.

<sup>80</sup> Hockenos, 261.

reunification put Germany on the world stage and generated requests from allied nations for military support. The German government began to develop several arguments that supported and justified military intervention as a part of foreign policy and countered the antiwar taboos of a generally pacifist German public. Importance was placed on maintaining good relationships with allies since Germany desired to be “never again alone.” Emphasis was also placed on humanitarian aid as Germany sought to fulfill multilateral responsibilities and rectify past mistakes, and preventing anything like the horrors of Nazi Germany from happening again.

The war in Afghanistan would demonstrate that the German public was not willing to join a war simply because the government made these arguments. Antiwar taboos still ran strong and the German government tried to overcome these even while trying to fulfill international obligations to allies. Germany’s postwar history was a story of the German government attempting to regain German pride and doing what they considered in the country’s best interests while coming up against peace protests who feared remilitarization and a return to Nazism or prewar Germany. The attacks against the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001 would rekindle the discussion on German military deployment and lead to an eventual rejection of the Second Gulf War.

### **Afghanistan: German Domestic Dispute over Troop Deployment**

The German government chose to send troops to Afghanistan late in 2001 in response to terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and United States requests for international support. Early German public opinion on the war in Afghanistan was relatively divided. Many Germans seemed to feel that something should be done about Afghanistan and terrorist activity, but did not believe that German military involvement should be the first course of action. Various factors explaining the steady decline in public approval over the next two years can be determined by looking at German pacifist ideals and concerns for how the United States was conducting the war. Other factors include German concern over casualties, concerns for the future of Afghanistan, and the fact that many Germans felt that the situation in Afghanistan was not truly a humanitarian crisis and did not actually require German Bundeswehr involvement.

The German domestic debate over whether Germany should deploy troops outside of German borders came to a head in between September, 2001 and April, 2004 as the German government attempted to justify troop deployment to Afghanistan and potential deployment to Iraq. Initial success in convincing the German public to support military action soon ran into difficulties as German collective memory and cultural taboos informed a public negative response to Germany's military deployment in the Middle East. The debate surrounding Afghanistan was largely influenced by Germany's strong pacifist tendencies that had been developed after World War Two in response to the militarism inherent within the Nazi regime, as well as the peace movements that had been discussed in the previous two chapters.

On September 19, 2001, only eight days after the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder addressed the Bundestag with a call for action. He declared that the attacks represented not just war with the United States, but also with the “civilized”<sup>81</sup> world. Schroeder pointed out that many feared a “war of the cultures,” but also stated out that the world was growing smaller and that Germany needed to respect other cultures around the world. The chancellor said that terrorism was the real threat which was directed against “everything that our world holds most dear, like the human life, human honor, and the values of freedom, tolerance, and democracy.”<sup>82</sup> Schroeder wanted to emphasize that Germany was not looking to fight Afghanistan, but wanted to defeat terrorism. He quoted the American Declaration of Independence: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness,” and stated that nothing in these ideals contradicted Islamist teachings. Schroeder declared that “Germany stands at the side of the United States of America in the face of these unprecedented attacks!” He went on to say that “our acknowledgement of our political and moral solidarity with the United States is these days more than just a self-evident truth.”<sup>83</sup>

Schroeder went on to remind Germans that the time for action was probably near. “We don’t know yet what support the United States will require from its NATO partners. It could include military support; that’s a possibility that cannot be ignored and therefore I will not rule it out...We, as Germans and Europeans, should be willing to offer

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<sup>81</sup> I’m using “civilized” as Schroeder did. He implies that “civilized” means the stable, democratic world. He is indicating that terrorism is a barbaric action which threatens civilization.

<sup>82</sup> Bundestag, *Plenarprotokoll Deutscher Bundestag* (14/187), September 19,2001.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

unrestrained solidarity with the United States...even militarily.”<sup>84</sup> Schroeder’s call for potential action was designed to remind Germans that they stood for the higher cause of defending civilization from terrorism and that action needed to be taken against terrorists who were threatening civilized nations around the world. Schroeder thanked the United States’ contribution to German freedom and liberty, but stated that other reasons existed for Germany to aid the United States’ war effort in Afghanistan. He said that, “Thankfulness is an important and weighty category. However, it is not enough to legitimize existential decisions which stand before us. We need to let one thing guide our decisions, our Nation’s future competency to protect itself in a free world.” Germany needed to demonstrate that they were capable of protecting their own borders and simultaneously working together with other nations to eliminate international threats. The Security Council of the United Nations established in Resolution 1368 that the terror attacks on New York and Washington were threats to world peace and international security. Schroeder believed that the Security Council’s resolution provided legitimacy for many Germans to the idea of planning a war on terrorism in Afghanistan, because most Germans were more comfortable deploying troops abroad under the umbrella of an internationally sanctioned operation. He pointed out that actions taken by the United States and their allies against aggressors, as defined by the United Nations and NATO, were legitimate and completely legal.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

Schroeder's words received warm applause and vocal support from each political party present at the Bundestag meeting.<sup>86</sup> German politicians seemed to be caught up in the shock and outrage which permeated much of the world after the September 11 attacks and were willing to consider war with terrorist elements hidden in Afghanistan. They even applauded when Schroeder reminded them that NATO had invoked Article V of the Brussels Treaty<sup>87</sup> which called for collective defense of an attacked allied nation. Friederich Merz, the chairman for the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union<sup>88</sup> and usually a political opponent of Schroeder, stood up to voice his support: "September 11 has fundamentally changed the world. I want to put special emphasis on the fact that we need to give the community of free peoples, our alliance, NATO, and especially our friends in the United States of America a clear yes. This is not the time for a yes, but."<sup>89</sup>

The initial reaction of most Germans seemed to be in line with the rest of Europe and was characterized by shock and outrage. Peter Struck, the Bundestag majority leader declared, "Today we are all Americans."<sup>90</sup> Josef Joffe, the publisher-editor of *Die Zeit*, wrote that civilization was under attack.<sup>91</sup> Joffe graphically wrote that "Uncounted are the dead, the wounded. Just like in war the law of triage rules. The rescuers only help those

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<sup>86</sup> The parties present were the Social Democratic Party, Christian Democratic Union, Christian Social Union, The Greens, Free Democratic party, Party of Democratic Socialism

<sup>87</sup> As evidenced in previous chapters, many Germans were not sure whether they wanted to be a part of NATO

<sup>88</sup> The larger conservative party. The CSU was simply the Bavarian branch.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> *Die Zeit* is a German national newspaper that gets published every week. The newspaper was founded in 1946 and has oscillated between being slightly right leaning and slightly left leaning. Its readership is approximately 2 million readers and is the most widely read German weekly newspaper. *Die Zeit* often publishes dossiers, essays, third party articles, and excerpts from different lectures and authors emphasizing their points of view on a single aspect or topic.

that hang between life and death.” He outlined the horrors and concerns for world peace and expressed fear about terrorism. The ashes of the World Trade Center represented a new kind of war; Joffe called it a war of cultures. Joffe continued to say that Germany needed to join in solidarity with the United States to prevent the breakdown of civilization. “Terrorists do not place value on anything in their lives and civilized nations need to show that their way of living has much value.”<sup>92</sup>

On September 14, more than 200,000 Germans appeared at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin to demonstrate their rejection of the attacks and solidarity with the victims. In general, German support of America was very high shortly after the terrorist attacks and the outrage felt by most Europeans was very real.<sup>93</sup> Many Germans were outraged because a number of the hijackers had been trained in a terrorist cell in Hamburg. Emotions were running high in Germany as people seemed to see the attacks in New York as an assault against Western civilization. Speaking outside of the Brandenburg Gate, the Bundestag majority leader Johannes Rau, declared that “America does not stand alone!” Rau called upon memories of the Berlin Airlift as well as President John F. Kennedy’s call for German friendship at a speech in 1961. “No one knows better than the people of Berlin what America has done for freedom and democracy in Germany. We would not be able to stand here at the Brandenburg Gate this evening had America not supported us over many years and in difficult times.” Rau continued to articulate what most Germans were feeling as he considered the horrible images coming out of America. “As Germans our thoughts and our feelings also go out to America. We still have the

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<sup>92</sup> Josef Joffe, “Die Zielscheibe: Unsere Zivilisation,” *Die Zeit*, September 13, 2001.

<sup>93</sup> “Memorial Service in Berlin for the Victims of 9/11,” *German History in Documents and Images*, [http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_image.cfm?image\\_id=3395](http://germanhistorydocs.ghi-dc.org/sub_image.cfm?image_id=3395).

dreadful pictures in our heads. We cannot get them out of our minds. We have become witnesses to murderous acts of violence such as the world has never before experienced outside times of war.”<sup>94</sup>

Germans extended a verbal pledge of solidarity with Americans and called for cooperative action. Islamic radicalists were decried as murderers and many Germans declared that they would stand against Islamic fanaticism that aimed to condemn entire religions and cultures. Rau appealed to German humanitarian sensibilities at the Brandenburg Gate rally by stating that “Whoever wants to truly overcome terrorism must ensure through political action that the ground is cut from below the feet of the prophets of violence. Poverty and exploitation, misery and lack of rights drive people to despair.”<sup>95</sup> Rau called for Germans to combat terrorism and declared that they would defeat it. While receiving applause from the gathered crowd he warned them that actions taken against terrorism would be laborious and time consuming. Achieving peace and a just international order would take time and money. Rau would prove to be prophetic, but his speech was received with approval, based on polls expressing German support of the United States’ plans for invading Afghanistan, and a desire to aid the United States against a perceived terrorist threat.<sup>96</sup> Over fifty percent of Germans believed that the United States was justified in invading Afghanistan and that Germany could find non-military ways of providing aid. Rau’s words may not have been a call for military intervention, but were still a call for intervention. He wanted Germany to become

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<sup>94</sup> Speech by Johannes Rau, <http://usa.usembassy.de/gemeinsam/rau091401e.htm>.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> “Militaerischer Beistand,” *Infratest Dimap*, October 2001, <http://www.infratest-dimap.de/umfragen-analysen/bundesweit/ard-deutschlandtrend/2001/oktober/>.



involved in Afghanistan and to find a way for Germany to aid in eliminating the terrorist threat.

Ten days after the attack, German parliament passed a resolution expressing full solidarity with the United States, passing 611 out of 666 possible votes, with only the PDS showing solid opposition.<sup>97</sup> Despite being so far away from the site of the attacks, fifty percent of Germans feared that a similar attack could happen in Germany and fifty-seven percent believed that a counterattack by the United States on those responsible would be justified. The same percentage, fifty-seven percent, also rejected the idea of German participation in such a counterattack. So, a majority of Germans believed that the United States should launch an attack against terrorists in Afghanistan, but did not want Germany to join the invasion. Public support for military action against terrorists did not, therefore, entail support for German military intervention. German and United States intelligence began working closely together, recognizing that if there were to be a United States attack against Afghanistan and that if Germany were to join the United States in that effort, the threat level to Germany would increase dramatically. Germany also attempted to employ a more multi-lateral approach to preventing an increased escalation by sending Joschka Fischer to speak with the Israelis and the Palestinians to revive their dialogue and prevent a wide-scale Middle East conflict. Fischer was ultimately unsuccessful. Fischer and Schroeder each made trips to the United States, both to learn what the United States was planning and to try and shape the response as much as

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<sup>97</sup> The Party of Democratic Socialism was a democratic socialist political party active between 1989 and 2007. They were considered the left-wing party from the East. "Das Parlament stellt sich hinter der Regierung," *Der Tagesspiegel*, September 20, 2001.

possible, using their pledge of solidarity to get the United States to take German and European concerns seriously.<sup>98</sup>

Despite concerns over terrorist attacks, the domestic political scene created the most direct danger to the Schroeder government. German parliament had officially shown support U.S. actions in Afghanistan, but Schroeder's own coalition and various members of the German public expressed concerns, in the days following the vote, over the legitimacy of a United States military response to the acts of terror and the wisdom of Schroeder's pledge of "uneingeschraenkte Solidaritaet" with the Americans.<sup>99</sup> By the end of September, Schroeder was trying to figure out how to gain enough support for sending troops to Afghanistan and was reportedly speculating with ideas ranging from ignoring opposition within his own coalition to forming a grand coalition with the Christian Democrats, who were much more supportive of military action. Opposition within the SPD and the Green Party voiced concerns that a war would cause civilian deaths and potentially bring more instability to a region of the world already wracked by poverty, corruption, and fanaticism. As it became clear that Schroeder and Fischer would support United States military action, the first rumblings came from the Green constituency that they would not accept such a move and that it would tear apart the coalition. The government was helped by the fact that the United States did not move extremely quickly in their attack on Afghanistan. A quick attack would have indicated a thirst for revenge and an attempt to display American power and would have created rapid German opposition to the entire conflict. When the United States declared war against Afghanistan on October 7, 2001 by launching Operation Enduring Freedom, Schroeder

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<sup>98</sup> "Mehrheit der Deutschen befuerwortet Vergeltungsschlag," *Der Tagesspiegel*, September 15, 2001.

<sup>99</sup> "Vor dem Ernstfall," *Der Tagesspiegel*, September 30, 2001.

announced that he would continue to support the United States and left the door open for possible German participation.<sup>100</sup>

In contrast to the German reaction to the First Gulf War, a majority of Germans supported the American invasion of Afghanistan, but were concerned about potential civilian casualties.<sup>101</sup> Retired general Hartmut Bagger criticized the scope of the United States bombing because too many civilian sites were being hit.<sup>102</sup> As the war continued into November, many German voices continued to offer skepticism of the United States' strategy and were concerned by the lack of a legal or political complement to the military mission. However, no Bundestag faction, except for the PDS, actually wanted to end the American actions. No one seemed willing to turn against the United States so soon after the attacks on the World Trade Center. On November 6, Gerhard Schroeder asked that Germany honor the U.S. request for German military aid by sending 3,900 troops to Afghanistan to be made available in the campaign against terrorism. Most of the promised German soldiers provided various types of logistical, and not combat, roles. The German military contribution would consist of soldiers to operate nuclear, biological, and chemical detection tanks, a medical unit of some 250 Bundeswehr soldiers, air transport forces, naval forces, and logistical support forces. A little noticed part of the offered military package was the German government's request that German armed forces be only deployed in Northern part of Afghanistan. Schroeder did not broadly publicize this information, but on November 12, 2001, the Green party did publicly state

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<sup>100</sup> "Niemand muss angst haben," *Der Tagesspiegel*, October 8, 2001.

<sup>101</sup> Pew Global, *Americans and Europeans Differ Widely on Issues 2002*, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2002/04/17/americans-and-europeans-differ-widely-on-foreign-policy-issues/>.

<sup>102</sup> "Deutscher Ex-General kritisiert US-Strategie," *Die Welt*, October 31, 2001.

that German troop movements would be very limited in Afghanistan. Such details were to be figured out later. Schroeder's request for troops meant that his support of the United States was put to the test and the Chancellor was put on the defensive.<sup>103</sup>

Schroeder's announcement brought criticism from several sides, including voices on the political Left, Right, and from the German academia. Schroeder's cabinet approved of his plan to make troops available, but several members within the SPD<sup>104</sup> and the Green Party spoke out against the plan and threatened to vote against it, thereby also threatening coalition stability. Schroeder responded with power politics, a form of political strong arming, to get his plan passed and despite his success, created a political atmosphere which was ripe for severe criticism and protest from the German public, as well as politicians within the Bundestag.

Initially, the Schroeder administration reacted calmly to the threat of opposition within its own party and noted that the Free Democrats and the Christian Democrats were moving to support sending troops to Afghanistan and that enough positive votes were already lined up to pass the proposal. However, Schroeder appeared to be struggling with the fact that having opposition come from within his own party made him look weak. He also seemed concerned about the fact that a foreign policy split within the SPD during Helmut Schmidt's administration twenty years ago had weakened and caused the failure of Schmidt's government. Therefore, Schroeder decided on an aggressive move to try and bring the SPD in line with his own goals. On November 13, 2001, Schroeder announced

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<sup>103</sup> "Operation Enduring Freedom: Foreign Pledges of Military and Intelligence Support," *CRS Report for Congress*, October 17, 2001.

<sup>104</sup> Social Democratic Party, a traditionally somewhat more liberal party and the ruling party in German politics from 1998-2005. Often found itself playing the role of the main opposition party in German politics.

that he would be putting his government in jeopardy by tying the vote on Afghanistan to a *Vertrauensfrage* or a vote of confidence. The SPD was being asked to decide between going to war or seeing their government fall. The vote, on both Afghanistan and the *Vertrauensfrage*, was to be held on November 16 and would be nationally televised.<sup>105</sup>

Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer also needed to apply some strong arm tactics to the Green Party. Naturally, the Green Party was struggling with the need for war since the Party's history was one of anti-militarism and preserving the environment. Fischer stood by Schroeder and felt that Germany needed to aid the United States in Afghanistan in light of the terrorist attacks just the month before. Fischer met with the Green Party Bundestag faction and informed them that he would step down from his position if they voted against the planned military involvement in Afghanistan. The *Berliner Zeitung* quoted him saying "Ich klebe nicht an diesem Sessel," or "I am not tied to this seat."<sup>106</sup> The Green Party consisted of only a small percentage of the Bundestag, but represented the left wing, peaceful ideals of many Germans. The Green Party was also part of Schroeder's government coalition and therefore, helped to represent the majority of the government and also the majority of German public opinion.

The days after Schroeder's announcement were chaotic as his move to discipline his own party had upset many within the SPD. Voting on German involvement in a war was an issue of great importance and politicians wanted to be able to vote based on their own conscience and what their constituents wanted. They did not want to have the added

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<sup>105</sup> "Kanzler erhoehrt den druck," *Westfalen-Blatt*, November 14, 2001.

<sup>106</sup> Regine Zylka, "Streit um Einsatz der Bundeswehr Fischer droht Gruenen mit Ruecktritt," *Berliner Zeitung*, November 8, 2001.

pressure of considering the failure of the current government added to what was already a difficult decision. The Greens, in particular, were in a bad position since they would probably have trouble regaining the necessary five percent of the vote needed to have representatives in the Bundestag. Most of the Greens were actually supportive of Schroeder's proposal, but there were twelve Greens who were truly pacifist and were against the war based on principle and not because they did not believe that Germany should not be involved. The Christian Democrats were also upset since they felt that they could not vote "yes" on the *Vertrauensfrage*, because they were in the opposition party, even though they were willing to support the war on terror. One factor that made the decision easier to vote "yes" for sending German troops to Afghanistan was news of American successes on all fronts. Kabul had fallen to the Northern Alliance, a local Afghan force that had been formed to fight the Taliban, and other Taliban strongholds were weakening. The Greens especially, grasped at this news as a weak rationalization to vote "yes" on the war.<sup>107</sup>

Many Germans seemed torn on what they wanted to happen despite being supportive of the U.S. military campaign. On the day before the November 16 debate and vote, the magazine *Stern* appeared with photos of a number of well-known Germans from show business, politics, business, and literature with the title "Prominent Germans demand: Stop this war!" The twelve page article demonstrated the depth of German uncertainty about the conflict, and the strength of anti-militarism even in the face of terrorist attacks.<sup>108</sup> While Americans appeared to be nearly completely supportive of the "war on terror," Germans continued to reflect on the moral and political issues, worrying

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<sup>107</sup> "Die Rot-Gruene Mehrheit Wackelt," *Neue Presse*, November 9, 2001.

<sup>108</sup> "Aufruf gegen den Krieg!," *Stern*, November 15, 2001, pp. 54-70.

that this might be the wrong path, with too many innocent casualties and the chance that the conflict could spread and create more problems that would prove difficult to resolve. Polls from *Infratest Dimap* indicated that in November Germans were still supportive of America's invasion of Afghanistan, but did not want German troops to be sent over. Support of Schroeder's proposal by the CDU/CSU and the FDP would allow the Red-Green coalition to show that they had the capacity to complete the transition from German anti-militarism to getting approval for full German participation in allied military actions. The debate that took place before the November 16, 2001 vote provides a window into the views of German leaders and some prominent members of the German public that shows how deep the norms of anti-militarism and pacifism had become. Even broad German support for American actions and a fear of terrorism were not enough to make Germans easily vote in favor of military involvement.

The November 16 debate was carried out on live German television on a Friday morning. The two issues that were the focus of the debate were whether or not Germany should make 3,900 troops available to participate in Operation Enduring Freedom and also whether Schroeder and the Red-Green coalition should be allowed to continue to govern. Schroeder opened the debate with a calm explanation for why he believed that Germany should participate in the fight and also why he had called for a *Vertrauensfrage*. He outlined the opportunity presented by the war for providing humanitarian aid to the suffering people of Afghanistan. The pieces were falling into place for establishing a stable democratic government in Kabul and the United Nations would soon have the opportunity to unify Afghanistan.<sup>109</sup> Schroeder emphasized that the current German

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<sup>109</sup> Bundestag, *Plenarprotokoll Deutscher Bundestag*, 14/202, November 16, 2001.

government coalition had, since being voted into power, been focused on bringing stability to the rest of the world through a variety of alliances and the defense of freedom. 100 million Deutschmarks (DM) had already been set aside for humanitarian purposes in Afghanistan to protect people from the approach of winter. Another 160 million DM had also been set aside for the re-building of Afghanistan. Schroeder pointed out that current military success against the Taliban had provided opportunities to finally put that money to work.<sup>110</sup>

Turning to Germany's particular role, the chancellor argued that since 1989 Germany had accepted new duties as a partner with equal rights in the family of nations. This meant that Germany could not stand aside and let others do the work in securing peace and security. Schroeder also explained his reasons for calling a *Vertrauensfrage* under article 68 of the German constitution even though he would have received a majority vote for the proposal. He argued that he needed to show the world and German citizens that his own coalition government stood with him and the German government was not divided and fragmented on such an important decision. This would be the only way to demonstrate decisively that Germany would be relied upon. Schroeder was already building on the themes that he would rely on when asked to defend Germany's involvement in Afghanistan to the German public. He mentioned humanitarian aid, supporting Germany's allies, and establishing Germany's place in a post-Cold War world.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*



Several other politicians, like CDU speaker Friedrich Merz, questioned the ability of the Red-Green coalition to govern effectively. He called out “anti-American” voices in the SPD and Green Party and noted that he strongly supported Schroeder’s call for troops, but also thought that the *Vertrauensfrage* was completely unnecessary. Kerstin Mueller of the Greens reminded her colleagues that the debate about involvement in Afghanistan was a question of hot dispute in society and it did German democracy no good simply to ignore the concerns of the general public and make it seem as if worries and concerns about a decision are somehow illegitimate. Mueller noted that there were still those in Germany who remembered the Nazi era and the horrors of war and that the Bundestag should consider Germany’s past before rushing to war in Afghanistan.<sup>112</sup>

Numerous other arguments were thrown back and forth for participating in Afghanistan and other representatives stood to attack or defend the government. SPD leaders, such as Peter Struck and Gert Weisskirchen, stressed humanitarian problems in Afghanistan and how Germany needed to participate in Afghanistan so that it could influence the political developments and play a role in trying to support long-term diplomatic solutions. They emphasized that the last twenty-two years of Afghan history had been marked by war and deprivation, arguing that war could initiate a process leading to a better future. The SPD speakers stated that it would be pointless for Germany to refuse to be involved and have nothing to say about what was done down the line. Opposition speakers from the CDU and FDP focused less on the issue of war, most likely because of their previously voiced support, and instead attacked the coalition for not being united on the issue in the first place, claiming that this hurt Germany’s reputation

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*

and threatened to cause others not to trust Germany to be a partner in times of need.<sup>113</sup> In regards to the war, the FDP and CDU shared the emphasis on humanitarian aid and a need to establish peace, even though the FDP leader mocked the Green for believing that “people who would only understand force” could be reasoned with using human rights resolutions.<sup>114</sup>

When the vote finally took place, four of the Greens voted “no” to assuage their consciences in regards to war while the other 43 Greens voted “yes” to support the coalition. The Red-Green coalition needed 334 votes and received 336 votes supporting the proposal with 326 votes against. Schroeder and Fischer had managed to lead most of the traditionally pacifist German Left of the SPD and Green Party, into supporting German participation in military action. Many CDU and PDS party members, along with four Green and one SPD member voted against the deployment of troops and the vote of confidence. Much of the CDU opposition expressed support for the war even as they voted “no” against the coalition. Germany had agreed to send troops to Afghanistan and much of Germany seemed to agree with the decision. That opposition to military action came from the German Left, comprised mostly of the PDS and Greens, served as no surprise because of their traditional pacifist stances. Schroeder’s policies had received support from across the political aisle and seemed to represent a broader German sentiment of wanting to help and guide policy building and reconstruction in Afghanistan. However, any sense of German unity on the war was not long lived. Shortly after German deployment in Afghanistan, concerns over civilian casualties and questions

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<sup>113</sup> Free Democratic Party-a traditionally liberal party that had been in the German Federal government longer than any other party.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

over the purpose of Germany's involvement in Afghanistan began to surface in the form of protests and strongly worded editorials in major magazines and newspapers.<sup>115</sup>

The vote had passed and Germany was sending troops on a military mission outside of European borders for the first time since World War Two. A poll in the *Leipziger Volkszeitung* showed that approximately 60 percent of Germans were against German participation in such a combat mission outside of Europe.<sup>116</sup> However, as the coalition forces appeared to push towards a swift victory by mid-November, German support shot up to two-thirds for Operation Enduring Freedom. In December 2001, Schroeder and Fischer hosted the “post-war”<sup>117</sup> reconstruction talks and the agreement to help create a broad-based transitional government, eliciting talk about a permanent German seat on the United Nations Security Council.<sup>118</sup> Germany agreed to provide over 4,000 troops to participate with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for patrolling and rebuilding Afghanistan. Opposition to German engagement in Afghanistan also worried that the door had been opened for Germany to possibly get involved in military operations in East Timor, Sudan, Macedonia, Kosovo, Bosnia, Georgia, Kuwait, Kenya, the Strait of Gibraltar, Uganda, and the Mediterranean Sea. German Defense Minister Scharping warned that the German Bundeswehr might be stretched too thin.<sup>119</sup>

Despite good feelings at the Bonn Conference regarding reconstruction in Afghanistan, the war was not truly over. German forces found themselves in firefights on

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<sup>115</sup> Bundestag, *Plenarprotokoll Deutscher Bundestag*, 14/202.

<sup>116</sup> *Leipziger Volkszeitung*, November 17, 2001

<sup>117</sup> Postwar is in quotes since the war in Afghanistan truly had not ended and war had never truly been declared in the first place.

<sup>118</sup> A goal that the Red-Green Coalition would unsuccessfully pursue in the coming years.

<sup>119</sup> Conrad Schetter, “Afghanistan Zwischen Wiederaufbau und Destabilisierung,” *Jahrbuch Internationale Politik* (Muenchen: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2006).

the ground and coalition forces were still conducting airstrikes and other missions against Taliban forces. German public support quickly waned as reports of civilian casualties started to be reported in the news. Civilian casualties seemed to bring back memories of World War Two and the many atrocities that had been carried out by both sides resulting in massive civilian deaths. The German peace movement seemed to shake off its post Srebrenica shell shock and moved to protest German involvement in Afghanistan. A number of anti-war protests were staged in several major German cities as polls started to show a drop in support for military operations in Afghanistan. The British newspaper, *The Guardian*, reported on a number of protests around the world including over 25,000 protestors taking to the streets in German cities. The largest German demonstration took place in Berlin on October 13, 2001, where over 15,000 people marched to the central square carrying banners that read, "No war – stand up for peace."<sup>120</sup> The anti-war rally filled the Gendarmenmarkt, a large square in front of Berlin's main concert hall, and spilled onto surrounding streets for several blocks in every direction. At least 30 pacifist and anti-globalization groups participated in the demonstration against the war in Afghanistan. "It's the biggest demonstration we've had," said Hans-Christian Stroebele, a member of the Green Party. "We stand with America, but we don't stand with this war."<sup>121</sup> Ronny Weise, a student and web designer from Berlin, added, "Ultimately the war will not end the violence. It's not a modern reaction. It's a Middle Ages response. The vicious circle of violence has to be broken."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> "20,000 join anti-war protest," *The Guardian*, October 13, 2001, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/oct/13/afghanistan.terrorism5>.

<sup>121</sup> Donna Leinwand, "About 20,000 protest in Germany," *USA Today*, October 13, 2001, <http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/sept11/2001/10/13/germany.htm>.

<sup>122</sup> Leinwand.

An article in *Der Freitag*, written by Dietmar Wittich in April 2002, pointed out that Germans believed that the war continued in Afghanistan even though the United States had announced that their actions had been successful. The article also discussed the fact that Germans became more hesitant to support combat in Afghanistan as reports of German deaths started to creep into the media, but that there was still a general sense of support for Germany's military presence overseas. The German government attempted to engage in some media control to maintain public support for troop involvement and employed a tactic of not informing the public about some of German military casualties occurring in Afghanistan because of combat actions. Reports surfaced in 2003 that two soldiers had died at the beginning of 2003, but that official sources had not specified the cause of death despite the fact that the German soldiers; deaths were likely connected to hostile actions. German media also reported in 2005 that at least twelve Kommando Spezialkraefte (German special forces) had died in Afghanistan since the war started, but an interview five years later with KSK commander Hans-Christoph Ammon reported that no KSK soldiers had been killed in action.<sup>123</sup> However, a press release from United States European Command confirmed that at least one soldier had been killed in actions sometime before 2005.<sup>124</sup>

The *World Politics Review* wrote in 2011 that the government had been severely handcuffing the German media concerning reports on German actions in Afghanistan. In those instances where the news media reports on German operations that the government would rather have ignored, the official response was swift and unrelenting. When the

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<sup>123</sup> Helmut Michelis, "KSK-Kommandeur Ammon im Gesprach," *RP Online*, <http://www.rp-online.de/politik/deutschland/toeten-gehoert-zum-auftrag-aid-1.2294527>.

<sup>124</sup> "Special Forces Soldier receives highest honor from German army," *EUCOM*, <http://www.eucom.mil/article/21060/special-forces-soldier-receives-highest-honor-army>.

*Financial Times Deutschland* reported on German offensive operations in early 2003, officials from the German Foreign Ministry were in the FTD offices within days of the article's publication to dispute the paper's characterization of the event.<sup>125</sup> Military actions presented to the public were depicted as harmless, while the good deeds of the army were emphasized. Reports, pictures, and videos of German troops providing humanitarian aid were more commonplace in the news than reports of combat. Though, as discussed later in this chapter, there were still plenty of reports about civilian and soldier deaths that were shown and negatively affected German public opinion. Germany was a democratic country where the government only had limited control over media outlets. Wittich speculated that the government's tactics of allowing fewer combat reports to surface were more effective in the West than they were in the East since a slight majority of Germans in Western Germany were supportive of military engagement in Afghanistan while a majority in the East was opposed. However, initial support for troop deployment barely hovered above 50% and started to decline before 2002 ended.<sup>126</sup>

German news media, like the *Deutsche Welle (DW)*, began to report unrest within the German public. A report from the *DW* on March, 2002 reported that "Afghanistan Angst"<sup>127</sup> was starting to develop throughout Germany. The German Defense Ministry reported in early March of 2002 that the first Bundeswehr soldiers had died near Kabul. The *DW* stated that Germans were beginning to awaken to the reality that Germany might be at war and not just on a humanitarian mission in Afghanistan and that German soldiers

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<sup>125</sup> David Francis, "Germany and Afghanistan: A Nation Turns Inward," *World Politics Review*, January 25, 2011.

<sup>126</sup> Dietmar Wittich, "Zum Verdraengen Verbreit", *Der Freitag*, April 5, 2002, <https://www.freitag.de/autoren/der-freitag/zum-verdrangen-bereit>.

<sup>127</sup> "Afghanistan Angst," *Deutsche Welle*, March, 6, 2002, <http://www.dw.com/en/afghanistan-angst/a-468240>.

might be active participants in combat. The *DW* mentioned that the German government was trying to restrict sensitive information to protect soldiers, but also to protect “Afghanistan Angst.” Shortly after news broke that some German troops were engaged in combat the German newspaper, *Welt am Sonntag*, gave a vague report that a wave of hysteria swept through Calw, where many families of German special forces soldiers lived (KSK), in south-western Germany.<sup>128</sup> The German Ministry of Defense quickly squashed the story and attacked the media in general by saying that German journalists were being unprofessional in their attempts to gain information over the deployment of German Special Forces and that family members of KSK soldiers had to be given new identities to protect them from potential terrorist attacks.<sup>129</sup>

Wittich was not accusing the German government of propaganda. Memories of Hitler and Goebbels’ uses of propaganda during World War Two added a considerable amount of heavy meaning to that word. Largely, German television media did very little to increase the conflict between the German government and the German public. News stations, like ARD and ZDF, were very willing to roundly criticize the United States and show civilian casualties, but generally did not show any news or pictures that were overly critical of German actions in Afghanistan. Since 2009, reports by the German media, steeped heavily in hindsight, were more than willing to severely critique the way that the German media generally reported on the war in Afghanistan. Hans Wallow, writing for *Der Freitag* in 2009, wrote that the German media distorted the reality of Afghanistan by

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<sup>128</sup> “Hysteriewelle,” *Welt am Sonntag*, March, 17, 2002.

<sup>129</sup> Tobias Plueger, “Die Calwer Truppe Kommando Spezialkraefte auf Terroristenjagd,” *Informationsstelle Militarisierung*, <http://www.imi-online.de/2002/03/05/die-calwer-truppe-ko/>.

leaving out difficult facts.<sup>130</sup> Even news stations like ARD left out reports and visuals about the deaths of German soldiers or glossed over how soldiers died. Even word choice was important. German media did not use the word “Gefallene” or fallen soldiers until late 2008. Words like “torn from life” or “perished” were more commonly used. The term “Gefallene” was strongly associated with soldiers killed in war. Emphasis was placed on the fact that the Bundeswehr was involved in a peacekeeping mission and not an invasion.<sup>131</sup> Reports of children going to school and young girls playing soccer were more important than the dangerous missions upon which some German soldiers were embarking. In 2013, the German news station ZDF released a number of documentaries about the war in Afghanistan which actually used the word propaganda. The documentary *War-Our War-Combat Deployment Afghanistan* stated that the rosy picture painted of Afghanistan throughout the early years of the war was propaganda and that the living status of the general Afghan people had not improved. In fact, Afghanistan had become one of the most corrupt nations in the world and the introduction of more troops, German or otherwise, actually created a less safe environment for the local Afghan population.<sup>132</sup> Critiques of the German involvement in the war were largely found in newspapers or in editorials and not in television news.

German public discourse regarding the role of the German military was strongly informed by a “civilian power” perspective. A civilian power only uses the military as a last resort and attempts to find other multilateral solutions. Combat aspects of the army’s job description were only regarded as secondary and were systematically played down.

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<sup>130</sup> Hans Wallow, “Die taegliche Dosis Desinformation,” *Der Freitag*, Dec. 21, 2009.

<sup>131</sup> “Gefaerliche Jahre am Hindukusch,” *Tageschau*, Oct. 6, 2013.

<sup>132</sup> “Krieg – Unser Krieg – Kampfeinsatz Afghanistan,” *ZDF*, September 10, 2013.



Germans viewed Germany as more of a civilian power and less of a military power. Foreign policy revolved around diplomacy, economics, and humanitarian aid instead of military action. The German military represented an organization whose main purpose was defending Germany and delivering humanitarian aid outside of Germany as stated in the German constitution. Overseas deployments were meant to be rare and required parliamentary approval. Many Germans viewed the military as a highly organized humanitarian aid institution. The German government seemed to be taking advantage of the fact that many Germans tended to view the Bundeswehr in favorable terms because most Germans saw the Germany military in the context of humanitarian aid. The Bundeswehr's Social Science Institute (SOWI)<sup>133</sup> reports of public opinion poll data since the mid-1970s in Germany showed that German soldiers were highly esteemed for all sorts of disaster relief and humanitarian actions, but decidedly not for the military part of their job. When asked about the priorities of Germany's foreign policy and security policy, the most prominent issues and goals, with high degrees of concurrence among Germans were disaster relief, prevention of genocide, and environment protection.<sup>134</sup>

Careful attention was paid to making sure that the German public understood that Germany's approach was multilateral and encompassed more than just an armed presence in Afghanistan. The German foreign policy website stated that, "military means alone are insufficient to build a stable Afghanistan capable of protecting its citizens and providing

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<sup>133</sup> That state of the art survey has an excellent reputation among social scientists outside the defense establishment.

<sup>134</sup> "2002 Population Survey," *Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr*, [http://www.kommando.streitkraeftebasis.de/portal/a/kdoskb!/ut/p/c4/04\\_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP315EyrpHK94uyk-OyUfl3y1MySIOKS4hK9qtzipHL9gmxHRQAR4-o9/](http://www.kommando.streitkraeftebasis.de/portal/a/kdoskb!/ut/p/c4/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP315EyrpHK94uyk-OyUfl3y1MySIOKS4hK9qtzipHL9gmxHRQAR4-o9/).

essential services.”<sup>135</sup> The government sought to create an emphasis on the good work being done in Afghanistan by Germany through their foreign policy website. Germany was portrayed, by the government to its citizens, as a “strong and reliable partner in the international efforts to help build an Afghanistan that will never become a haven for terrorists.”<sup>136</sup> Germany’s efforts to stabilize and reconstruct Afghanistan were highlighted as well as the fact that German military engagement had been fully in line with the priorities outlined for Afghanistan by NATO and the broader international community. Opportunities were being provided for employment and support was given towards the creation of an Afghan government that would be able to provide education, basic services, and infrastructure with the ultimate goal of handing over rule of Afghanistan to Afghan authorities.<sup>137</sup>

German security strategy was dependent on the support that the German public was willing to lend its parliament. In 1999, Detlef Puhl, speaker for the German Ministry of Defense, noted that “public support for government action is a fragile that has to be fought for every day and there is no alternative to freely consented public support. This is especially critical in times of military action.”<sup>138</sup> German public opinion was initially supportive of sending German troops to Afghanistan to help stabilize the country, but was not supportive of military engagement.<sup>139</sup> Late 2001 into early 2002 saw support in Germany sitting at 61 percent for the war and 31 percent against the war fought by the

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<sup>135</sup>“Key Messages on the German Engagement in Afghanistan,”  
[http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/06\\_\\_Foreign\\_\\_Policy\\_\\_State/02\\_\\_Foreign\\_\\_Policy/05\\_\\_KeyPoints/Afghanistan\\_\\_Key.html](http://www.germany.info/Vertretung/usa/en/06__Foreign__Policy__State/02__Foreign__Policy/05__KeyPoints/Afghanistan__Key.html).

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Wolfgang-Uwe Friedrich, “The Legacy of Kosovo: German Politics and Policies in the Balkans,” *German Issues*, no. 22 (2000).

<sup>139</sup> SOWI

United States.<sup>140</sup> However, by the summer of 2002 the split had already reached 50-50 and approval for German military deployment continued to drop. When the Iraq War started in 2003 there were limited polls taken on Afghanistan, but by 2007 approximately two-thirds of the German population was expressing disapproval with the war in general and with German involvement and that number continued to rise.<sup>141</sup> Various factors for the drop in approval were determined by looking at German pacifist ideals, concerns for how the United States was conducting the war, civilian casualties, German casualties, concerns for the future of Afghanistan, and the fact that many Germans felt that Afghanistan was not truly a humanitarian crisis and did not actually require German Bundeswehr involvement.

Early German public opinion on the war in Afghanistan was relatively divided. Many Germans seemed to feel that something should be done about Afghanistan and terrorist activity, but did not believe that German military involvement should be the first course of action. Dietmar Wittich reported in the newspaper *Der Freitag* on April 5, 2002 that fifty-eight percent of Germans were supportive of diplomacy and talks over German military action. In late 2001, fifty seven percent of Germans had still been supportive of an American invasion, but by the spring of 2002 support for even the American invasion began waning because of the negative reports on United States tactics and civilian deaths. He also wrote that nearly two thirds of Germans were against the deployment of NATO ground troops. Wittich pointed out that there was a distinct difference of opinion among the political parties. Voters for the CDU/CSU and FDP were fairly accepting of German

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<sup>140</sup> Any seeming mathematical discrepancies are in fact people who expressed no opinion on the polls.

<sup>141</sup> Available from [pewglobal.org/2002/04/17/americans-and-europeans-differ-widely-on-foreign-policy-issues/](http://pewglobal.org/2002/04/17/americans-and-europeans-differ-widely-on-foreign-policy-issues/).

military options with 53% and 51% respectively, which was not necessarily a strong majority. Green Party, SPD, and PDS voters were unsure that German military force was the correct option.<sup>142</sup>

An editorial in the *Frankfurter Rundschau* newspaper, by Ludger Volmer<sup>143</sup> in early 2002 discussed German pacifism and conscience as stemming from both religious ideals and cultural memory of World War II. “Nie wieder Auschwitz, Nie wieder Krieg (Never again Auschwitz, Never again War)!” Volmer also argued that political pacifism was directed by societal norms, but had to find a way to respond to supposed enemies and threats. Pacifist Germans had the duty to push back the emphasis on military action and call for more multi-lateral actions in the war on terror. The German government should not necessarily reject the use of military options, but should not consider the military to be the only option.<sup>144</sup> Volmer was writing mostly for Green Party supporters, a traditionally pacifist party, but his articles reached a larger German population through various pacifist oriented publications, like the *AG Friedensforschung* which was a university group based around peace research. Some reader responses to his article included confirmation of the concept that pacifism in Germany needed to be stronger now than ever. Germans needed to step up and support a downsizing of German military activity and search for other methods of dealing with the Taliban in Afghanistan. Some readers criticized Volmer for siding too much with the United States and not pushing hard enough for an end to German engagement in Afghanistan. One reader, Hans-Juergen

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<sup>142</sup> Wittich.

<sup>143</sup> Ludger Volmer was a German Green Party politician working in the Foreign Ministry. He was a pacifist who consistently struggled with the concept of going to war and later wrote several books on the difficulties of being a Green Party member doing foreign policy.

<sup>144</sup> Ludger Volmer, “Was bleibt von Pazifismus? Die alten Feindbilder der Kriegsgegner haben ausgedient: Warum militaerische Mittel nicht ganz verzichtbar sind.” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, January 7, 2002.

Kolbe, wrote that the Afghanistan conflict was a questionable disciplinary action and expressed concern that the United States would call for German support in a more aggressive war. Kolbe wrote that he believed non-military options to be available, but that the government had to want them.<sup>145</sup>

One major concern that plagued many Germans, both civilians and politicians, before the Bundeswehr even deployed to Afghanistan was the United States strategy for carrying out the war. Reports of civilian deaths and non-military targets being bombed circulated through Germany and negatively impacted the slight majority in favor of deployment in Afghanistan. Many Germans were worried that Germany would be pulled or coerced into a similar type of warfare. In fact, many Germans felt that their fears had been realized when in 2003 the new German Defense Minister, Peter Struck, made an extremely controversial statement saying that Germany's security was being defended in the Hindu Kush.<sup>146</sup> The German media and general public reacted with astonishment and lack of understanding, despite the fact that terrorism had become a global phenomenon.

Even before Struck's statement, some German media were not playing along with government attempts to create a softer image of the conflict and started pushing back against the German involvement in Afghanistan by reporting civilian deaths and other atrocities committed by the Western coalition. In December of 2002, ARD, a German news station, aired the documentary *Afghan Massacre: the Convoy of Death* filmed by Irishman Jamie Doran about the massacre of Taliban prisoners in the Dasht-i-Leili desert.

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<sup>145</sup> "Leserreaktionen auf Ludger Volmers Abrechnung mit dem Pazifismus," *AG Friedensforschung*, 2002.

<sup>146</sup> Peter Struck, "Landesverteidigung findet auch am Hindukusch statt' [National defence is also taking place in the Hindu Kush", *German Parliament*, stenographic record, 16th legislative period, 2nd session, Berlin, 8 Nov. 2005.

The German newspaper *Der Spiegel*, reported that the United States government strongly criticized Germany for showing Doran's film. The documentary accused American soldiers of standing by and possibly being involved while Taliban prisoners were stuffed into containers for transport. Many Taliban died due to lack of oxygen and possibly from American soldiers shooting holes into the containers. The American government denied any allegations and the only evidence for the film came from eyewitness accounts. The German government was called upon, by publications like *Der Spiegel* and public outcry, to launch an investigation into the possible massacre. Several years after the documentary came out there were still some tensions about the massacre which even led to President Obama asking his national security team to look into the allegations that the Bush administration had resisted calls to have the matter investigated.<sup>147</sup>

Concerns over civilian casualties were even more relevant to Germans than war atrocities against captured combatants. An article in *Der Spiegel* on January 1, 2002, pointed out that many civilians were being killed during "Operation Enduring Freedom" and that no real attempt was being made to tally up the dying. The article claimed that reports of dead civilians had been rolling in since the beginning of the war, but that no one was really sure how many had been killed. The "precision war" being carried out by the Coalition was being touted in the American media as an efficient war that would reduce casualties and bring about swift victory by eliminating important targets and leaders. Dr. Marc Herold, a professor at the University of New Hampshire, criticized the United States media for not considering the civilian casualties to be important, so as to maintain American public support for the war. Many Germans, on the other hand, called

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<sup>147</sup> "Das Massaker von Afghanistan," *Der Spiegel*, December, 2002.

on memories from World War Two and the millions of civilian deaths caused by indiscriminate bombing.<sup>148</sup>

Often, public opinion will turn against armed conflicts when reports of casualties start coming in from the front. The United States certainly experienced this trend during the Vietnam War. *Endgame for the West in Afghanistan?* was a report written for the Strategic Studies Institute and clearly laid out a series of studies that demonstrated how each country involved in the war in Afghanistan began to lose support for military actions when reports of casualties started mounting.<sup>149</sup> Germany lost significantly less troops than other countries involved, but the results were very much the same. Many Germans had been very sensitive to casualty reports since World War Two nearly wiped out a generation of soldiers. Most of Germany's limited casualties in Afghanistan were incurred during 2002 and 2003, 19 deaths, and the trajectory of German public approval for the war deteriorated along with the increased deaths. Even though the German government tried to limit reports of soldier deaths, certain news sources, like *Der Spiegel*, continued to remind the German people that Germans were dying in Afghanistan. The fact that most of the deaths were non-combat related did not seem to matter. Leaders in the German government worked to keep German troops out of dangerous areas. One way that German strategy in Afghanistan reflected the need to protect troops was by stipulating that Germany would only be willing to operate in Northern Afghanistan where there was less fighting. German soldiers were also given orders to never pursue enemies beyond the small German areas of control and soldiers not allowed to patrol at night. Any

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<sup>148</sup> "Afghanistan-Feldzug: Der Blutige Praezisionskrieg," *Der Spiegel*, January, 2002.

<sup>149</sup> Charles A. Miller, "Endgame for the West in Afghanistan?: Explaining the Decline in Support for the War in Afghanistan in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, France, and Germany," *Strategic Studies Institute*, 2010.

attempt made to argue that casualties were not a key factor in the fall of German public support for the war runs into a “chicken and egg” problem since German casualties were low precisely because fear of the public’s reaction to casualties caused German leaders to minimize the risk for German troops.<sup>150</sup>

The German government spent a significant amount of time and effort trying to convince the German public that the Bundeswehr was being deployed on a humanitarian mission to Afghanistan. Most German politicians seemed convinced that what they were doing was right and so, in subsequent years the Bundestag would continue to extend Germany’s stay in Afghanistan. In the case of Kosovo, the humanitarian aspect of the deployment of German forces was dominant. Gerhard Schroeder and Joschka Fischer had argued it was a moral responsibility to help end gross violations of human rights within Europe. In Afghanistan, the situation was different. Many Germans did not view Afghanistan as a humanitarian emergency, and the alternative of not acting would not have had the same consequences as Kosovo. The terrorist attacks on the United States provided less obvious humanitarian reasons for military involvement in Afghanistan than genocide had provided for military involvement in Kosovo. Assisting another super power against a poor war-torn nation certainly offered some basis for the argument that the Bundeswehr was involved in a humanitarian mission, but the stakes were not the same for Germans as they had been in Kosovo.

There was also a sense in Germany that Afghanistan was a lost cause shortly after the war began. The Taliban began to reform and fight back shortly after the United States

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<sup>150</sup> Peter Struck refers to the strategy of German forces keeping a low profile as a “success strategy” in a speech to the Bundestag in 2005.



had declared victory and the country was in complete disarray. Germans felt that Afghanistan was too disorganized and would possibly never have a stable democracy. Reports about warlords, robber, bands and corruption gained some traction in Germany. *Der Spiegel* ran an article about the widespread corruption running rampant in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban. Hamid Karzai, the leader of the transitional government and eventual president of Afghanistan, was viewed as corrupt. Afghan commanders were asking for large amounts of cash from news teams for interviews. Even in early 2002, many Germans were losing hope that Afghanistan would ever be able to become a properly unified and civilized country and therefore, the need for the Bundeswehr to conduct a humanitarian campaign seemed pointless.<sup>151</sup>

German public support was dropping despite a strong campaign by the German government to shift public opinion in favor of the war. German cultural anti-war taboos and general anti-war feelings caused support for the war to hover just above fifty percent. Germans were willing to *tolerate* the war in Afghanistan as long as it seemed that the Bundeswehr was part of a peacekeeping operation and was generally staying out of combat. However, German anti-war feelings had been stirred up by the war in Afghanistan and by mid-2002 burst forth and combined with anti-American feelings to strongly protest the approaching Iraq War. The war in Afghanistan was disapproved of and never openly protested in the streets like the Iraq War was, but public disapproval of Afghanistan strongly influenced decisions made surrounding the Iraq War.

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<sup>151</sup> "Taliban-freies Afghanistan: Unter Strolchen und Raeubern," *Der Spiegel*, January 2001.

## German anti-Americanism and the Iraq War

German foreign policy regarding Afghanistan cannot be discussed without also analyzing Germany's refusal to join the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Debate over the extent and area of Germany's deployment in Afghanistan had been affected by fears that Germany might be asked to join an offensive in Iraq. United States President George W. Bush gave early indications, even in 2001, that Iraq was next in America's sights and that an invasion was probably inevitable. Tensions increased between Germany and America throughout 2001 and onward as German distrust towards the United States grew based on German misgivings about the Bush administration's "cowboy" approach to foreign policy.<sup>152</sup> Bush tried to create a link between the War on Terror and toppling Saddam Hussein's administration, but Germans, both public and in the government, were not willing to buy that argument. Disapproval of American tactics in Afghanistan appeared to factor into doubts about how another military campaign would be carried out and whether the United States was truly seeking to continue the war on terrorism or whether other factors, like revenge or oil, were coming into play. The German public strongly protested the Iraq War and Gerhard Schroeder sided with his constituency as he realized that there was no way of convincing them to support what Bush was calling "an extension of the war in Afghanistan." Schroeder wrote in his memoirs that he was opposed to the war itself, but would have been willing to aid the United States in an attempt to preserve good relations between the two countries.

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<sup>152</sup> Cowboy diplomacy is a term used by critics to describe the resolution of international conflicts through brash risk taking, intimidation, military deployment, or a combination of such tactics. Another criticism is that cowboy diplomacy tends to stem from an over simplified world view and contains aggressive and provocative phraseology.

Even by early 2002, the international debate on what to do with Iraq and Saddam Hussein began to overshadow any discussion about Afghanistan. Interest in Iraq created a more limited amount of poll data for public opinion on Afghanistan, but indicated that the German government had pushed the German public too far and that further war was unacceptable. Any tolerance for the conflict in Afghanistan had used up German willingness to support military missions abroad. German criticisms over Bundeswehr soldiers being engaged in active combat in Afghanistan exploded on an entirely new level when confronted with the possibility of sending troops into Iraq as well. The German government had to make a decision whether it would continue to support American foreign policy or join German anti-war protesters in decrying another military action in the Middle East. Schroeder and Fischer found themselves in a difficult position where they had to consider whether the Red-Green Coalition could survive another decision to send German troops into harm's way. Both leaders stressed in their memoirs that they believed an invasion of Iraq was foolish, but felt that they had made promises to the United States government of possible aid, in the form of unrestricted access to German military bases, for an invasion of Iraq. After the combat operations in Kosovo and Afghanistan, there were already signs that the Bundeswehr had been stretched too far based on current size and military equipment. A strong segment of German public opinion, with its predisposition against the use of force, also opposed further German troop deployments into a potential war. The pacifist histories of the SPD and the Green Party made them especially vulnerable to public concerns about the use of military force.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Michael Staack, "Nein zur Hegemonialmacht: Deutschlands aussenpolitische Entscheidungsprozesse im

In Germany, already at the beginning of the war in Afghanistan, a slow but steady distancing from U.S. leadership by the German public and government had begun to set in. Tensions had been evident in German-U.S. relations since Germany had re-unified in the nineties and emerged as a world power. Germany quickly became a big player in European politics and the United States still largely tried to influence what was happening on the European continent. Both sides worked at maintaining good relations and at the beginning of his first term in 1998, Schroeder supported the Clinton administration's military actions, like air strikes against terrorist networks in Sudan and Afghanistan in the summer of 1998. Most importantly, the chancellor supported NATO policy in Kosovo and the use of force there. Certain issues, like the proposed no-first-use policy regarding NATO and nuclear weapons<sup>154</sup>, created conflict between the two nations as Germany and America did not see eye to eye. Overall though, German-American relations were relatively warm until the election of George W. Bush.<sup>155</sup>

The first official meeting between Gerhard Schroeder and George W. Bush on March 29, 2001, was overshadowed by unbridgeable differences with regard to the Kyoto protocol. Germany was looking to lead the world in reducing greenhouse gasses and the United States largely opposed its efforts because of the possible detrimental effects on the American economy. This was actually the first time a policy disagreement between the two countries went on public record. One sentence in the minutes of this meeting certainly did not escape the attention of the new American administration: a passage

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Irak-Konflikt," in Michael Staak, *Europa Nach dem Irakkrieg* (Baden-baden, 2004).

<sup>154</sup> The Red-Green coalition wanted NATO to approve a policy stating that no NATO country would use nuclear weapons unless attacked with nuclear weapons.

<sup>155</sup> Joschka Fischer, "Die Rot-Gruenen Jahre: Deutsche Aussenpolitik von Kosovo bis zum 11 September (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2007), 100.

under the title “evaluation,” which described the new U.S. president as “inexperienced” and “influenceable.” Usually, these minutes are top secret, but this one was only marked “confidential and went to several dozen officials in the German government. *Der Spiegel* was able to quote directly from the document.<sup>156</sup> It was not the finest hour of German diplomacy, and let everyone see the beginning of a troubled relationship in substance and style.

Iraq appeared as a foreign policy issue that Bush and Schroeder had trouble seeing eye to eye on even before the September 11 attacks. Paul O’Neill, the former Secretary of the Treasury who had served in Bush’s first cabinet, was convinced that the Bush administration had begun planning for an invasion of Iraq even as early as January of 2001.<sup>157</sup> Regime change, after all, was the declared United States policy against rogue states. The Clinton administration had also considered regime change in Iraq as a United States policy objective. The Iraq Liberation Act, signed into law by President Clinton on October 31, 1998, stipulated that “it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime.”<sup>158</sup>

W. Michael Blumenthal wrote that when the Bush administration took power in 2001 that it soon fell under the sway of neo-conservative advisors.<sup>159</sup> Blumenthal described the neo-conservatives as “radical activists” who maintained a simple black and

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<sup>156</sup> Fischer, 110.

<sup>157</sup> Paul O’Neill, in an interview with *60 Minutes*, CBS Television, 2004, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETqX3DRtZtU>.

<sup>158</sup> United States Government, *Iraq Liberation Act of 1998*, pg. 112, Sec. 3, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-105publ338/html/PLAW-105publ338.htm>.

<sup>159</sup> W. Michael Blumenthal is an American business leader, economist, and political advisor who served as United States Secretary of the Treasury under President Jimmy Carter. At age 13, Blumenthal escaped Nazi Germany with his Jewish family in 1939.

white view of a world split into good and evil. Because the United States held a preponderance of military power, they believed that it should, when necessary, be used preemptively and unilaterally to promote good and defeat evil.<sup>160</sup> Joschka Fischer believed that the seemingly quick and easy victory in Afghanistan led to extreme overconfidence by the United States government and the neo-conservatives. Saddam Hussein and Iraq seemed to become an obsession of the Bush administration throughout 2002.<sup>161</sup>

Bush's singling out of North Korea, Iran, and Iraq as the "axis of evil" in his State of the Union Address on January 29, 2002 was largely interpreted as an announcement of military actions against this "axis." Many Germans were wary of Bush's aggressive language and were concerned about future military engagements and U.S. aggression. Fischer stated in an interview with *Die Welt* in February 2002, that the various European foreign ministers were all taken aback by Bush's strong language and that throwing Iran, North Korea, and Iraq into a single pot would not benefit anyone. Schroeder visited Washington in February 2002 and upon his return assured Germans that the U.S. president had not decided anything yet. At home, Schroeder was forced to deal with growing criticism and concern about Germany's military commitments. The campaign in Afghanistan had become extremely unpopular and American foreign policy was received with suspicion and concern.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> W. Michael Blumenthal, "The Closest of Strangers: German American-Relations in Historical Perspective," *Bulletin of German Historical Institute*, issue 36, Spring 2005.

<sup>161</sup> Joschka Fischer, *I am not convinced: Der Irak-Krieg und die rot-gruenen Jahre* (Knaur Taschenbuch Verlag, 2012), 91.

<sup>162</sup> Gerhard Schroeder, *Entscheidungen: Mein Leben in der Politik* (Hoffman and Campe Verlag GmbH, 2006) 193.

What began to sink in for the German leader was that the Bush administration's official statements about the war on terror would lead to the use of force sooner rather than later. Schroeder was very cautious about letting politicians close to him know what he was thinking since many of his advisors were very outspoken. Schroeder was worried that his concerns would be leaked to the German public and the American government. Any signs that he was struggling with what to do in the Middle East would have led to difficult conversations both at home and abroad.<sup>163</sup> Michael Naumann, minister of culture from 1998-2001 and close friend of Gerhard Schroeder, reflected Schroeder's thinking when he made some observations for the *New York Times* on February 18, 2002. Naumann stated that sliding into a conflict with no clear moral sense of one's mission or the likely military outcome could lead to an uncontrollable military escalation. Most Germans were certainly concerned about military escalation since that would require more troops and exact a great casualty toll. Naumann stated that the undisputed threat of global terrorism should be met with forceful diplomacy and not American unilateralism and also raised the question that many Germans seemed to be asking: Who will govern Iraq after Saddam?<sup>164</sup>

The Bush administration's commitment to a doctrine based around preemptive war was troubling to the German public and government. Concerns surfaced about the difficulty of distinguishing between legitimate acts of self-defense and wars of aggression. The new doctrine went beyond classical international law, which recognized preemption as a legitimate act of self-defense in case of a real imminent threat---most often a visible mobilization of armies, navies, or air forces and not a putative threat. The

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<sup>163</sup> Schroeder, 210.

<sup>164</sup> Michael Naumann, "Why Europe is wary of War in Iraq," *New York Times*, February 18, 2002.

Bush administration claimed the right to take “anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack.”<sup>165</sup> Schroeder was not only concerned about possible American “wars of choice” but also about the danger of preemption in other regions of the world, for example, in the crisis-prone relationship between China and Taiwan.<sup>166</sup>

President Bush’s visit to Berlin in May 2002, included an address to the Bundestag which, according to the German chancellor, was surprisingly moderate in tone. Nothing in the speech or in the official talks revealed any indication that course had been set for another war. But the chancellor remembered this visit as overshadowed by massive anti-Bush demonstrations. It was necessary to seal off half the city of Berlin to guarantee the security of the American president. CNN reported on Friday, May 31, 2002 that over 10,000 heavily equipped police officers were heavily deployed throughout Berlin. Concerns over tens of thousands of protestors coming to protest against United States policies on trade, the environment, Afghanistan, and the possible strike against Iraq were cited as the reason for the heavy police deployment. Earlier in the week, 20,000 protestors had already marched through East Berlin on the eve of Bush’s arrival chanting “Yankee go home” and waving banners reading “No blood for oil” and “Axis of Evil runs through the Pentagon.”<sup>167</sup> One protestor, Ralf Rippel, was quoted, “We’re not against America—I have many friends there. We’re against the warmonger Bush.” Another protestor added, “Bush should be put in front of a war crimes tribunal.”<sup>168</sup> The

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<sup>165</sup> U.S. National Security Council, “National Security Strategy,” 15.

<sup>166</sup> Schroeder, 220.

<sup>167</sup> “Germany Braces for Bush protests,” May 21, 2002, [www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/05/21/germany.bush/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2002/WORLD/europe/05/21/germany.bush/index.html)

<sup>168</sup> “Germany Braces for Bush protests”.



protestors referred to themselves as the “Axis of Peace” and represented over 200 organizations committed to non-violence. The “Axis of Peace” issued a statement that “The Right to self-defense that the U.S. government claimed after Sept. 11 has long turned into a pretext for waging war.”<sup>169</sup>

Bush spoke warmly about German-American relations and Germany’s contributions in the war on terror, in particular Germany’s support for the war in Afghanistan. At a meeting afterwards, Schroeder reconfirmed his promise of “unrestricted solidarity” with the American president and committed himself to stand shoulder to shoulder with the United States in the fight against terrorism by stating, “Should Iraq like Afghanistan harbor al Qaeda fighters, we will be a reliable partner of the United States.”<sup>170</sup>

Due to the narrow victory in the vote of confidence in November 2001, Schroeder had to assume that another German military commitment would fail to get the necessary votes of his own party in the German Bundestag. Based on the Constitutional Court’s decision in 1994, a majority of the Bundestag was a sine qua non requirement for a military mission of the Bundeswehr abroad. The United States perceived that Schroeder stood with them, but failed to make note of the fact that Schroeder said he would not stand in the way of military intervention “as long as it did not interfere with the election.” However, as the issue began to affect the 2002 election Schroeder began to take a clearer stance opposing any military invention in Iraq. Schroeder responded to U.S. criticism by saying, “how could I have survived the election campaign without taking a clear position

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<sup>169</sup> “Germany Braces for Bush protests.”

<sup>170</sup> Schroeder, 230.

on an issue that was so moving for the people?” German displeasure with the prospect of adding another war when there was already so much disapproval of the war in Afghanistan was strongly affecting Schroeder’s foreign policy moves. The more the German public focused on the September 22, 2002, national elections, the more it became obvious that the Red-Green Coalition would need to position itself against a war in Iraq if it wanted to remain in power. German public opinion had turned anti-Bush during the war in Afghanistan because of how the United States was conducting the conflict and fears were raised that Germany might be drawn into a new major war. Chancellor Schroeder and Foreign Minister Fischer both knew that given the U.S. policies on Iraq on the one hand, and the state of German public opinion on the other, that a decision on Iraq needed to be struck soon.<sup>171</sup>

Public opinion surveys in the summer of 2002 gave Schroeder solid backing for his foreign policy course. *Der Spiegel* published poll data from the beginning of August 2002 showing a 51 percent majority for the position that German should not participate in any way in an invasion of Iraq. The opposition to Iraq was very much in line with the way that public opinion was trending for the war in Afghanistan. Initial polls for Iraq started at the same level that Afghanistan disapproval had dropped to after support for Afghanistan had started higher and dropped down to 50 percent by the summer of 2002. Only nine percent of Germans were actually willing to send German troops to Iraq. With respect to party affiliation, the surprising result of the data generated by Infratest was that CDU/CSU supporters did not think differently from SPD members or even the Greens. A total of 43 percent of CDU/CSU supporters rejected any German participation in an

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<sup>171</sup> Schroeder, 245.

invasion.<sup>172</sup> Similar surveys in the middle of August 2002 reinforced the fact that a large majority of Germans were dead set against any participation in a war. A total of 62 percent of the Germans agreed with the position not to participate in any shape or form in an attack on Iraq.<sup>173</sup> Public opinion specialists even suggested that as long as there was no concrete threat scenario, roughly 80 percent of the Germans opposed the use of military force by anyone in Iraq.<sup>174</sup>

Schroeder still seemed hesitant to commit fully to an anti-war stance. The Chancellor was convinced that it was necessary to overcome the taboo of using the German armed forces and to reverse the trend that force should never be used other than in a case of self-defense. Schroeder had pushed his philosophy on military deployment through in the cases of Kosovo and also Afghanistan, but his success put him in a difficult spot in regards to Iraq.<sup>175</sup> The majority of German public opinion simply would not support another war. The Schroeder administration's arguments for the war in Afghanistan had garnered just enough support to maintain troops there, but German anti-war feelings were straining against the idea of more fighting. Two-thirds of the German population opposed the idea of war in Iraq and SPD leaders recognized that the German public would not change its fundamental position on war. Schroeder's administration found itself in a difficult spot. Schroeder wanted to maintain positive relations with the United States, but was faced with growing domestic discontent over the Afghanistan and fears over being drawn in to a further conflict in Iraq. Bearing in mind that public opinion

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<sup>172</sup> *Der Spiegel*, August 5, 2002.

<sup>173</sup> *Maerkische Allgemeine*, August 10, 2002.

<sup>174</sup> *Die Welt*, September 13, 2002.

<sup>175</sup> Schroeder, 246.

of the German deployment in Afghanistan was rapidly deteriorating after less than a year, Schroeder chose to side with public sentiment and openly oppose a new war.<sup>176</sup>

On August 1, 2002, Schroeder told his party that he would commit himself to opposing the any military intervention in Iraq and accept full consequences. However, there was still the issue of the war in Afghanistan. How could the German government oppose any military engagement in Iraq while still trying to justify their engagement in Afghanistan? When journalists at the *Tageszeitung* grilled Fischer on the ostensible hypocrisy of consenting to the invasion of Afghanistan, but not the war against Iraq, he responded:

Intervention in Afghanistan was the response to a type of international terrorism that posed a new threat to international peace. This terrorism possessed a destructive capacity that in the past only states had. You can't negotiate with it. But, in addition to this terrorism, it is at least equally important to resolve regional conflicts so that the people involved in them won't establish links with terrorist organizations. This is the lesson of September 11: not to permit these forgotten regional conflicts to fester.<sup>177</sup>

Fischer seemed to be trying to frame Afghanistan as purely a war against terror and not an invasion against another country. Afghanistan presented security policy for Germany and the world as well as aid to a country that might harbor terrorists. Schroeder had told Bush in clear terms, in early 2002, that Germany would be willing to aid in the war against Iraq if the United States could prove that Iraq was hiding and supporting terrorists.<sup>178</sup> Fischer and Schroeder both began to sense that the United States had long wanted to oust Saddam Hussein and that the invasion of Iraq would serve to secure

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<sup>176</sup> Schroeder, 250.

<sup>177</sup> Joschka Fischer, "Ich bin kein Gruener Helmut Kohl," *Tageszeitung*, September 19, 2002.

<sup>178</sup> Fischer, 118.

strategic oil reserves and deal a defeat to radical Islam. The German Red-Green administration was also very doubtful about the presence of weapons of mass destruction. Fischer wrote that the German government felt that the existence of atomic weapons was extremely unlikely. The German government also believed that the presence of chemical weapons was a possibility, but that the weapons were probably outdated and still in stock after the First Gulf War, and that the presence of biological weapons was unclear, but could probably be produced fairly easily.<sup>179</sup> The German government was doubtful the United States' assertions regarding weapons of mass destruction and did not believe that enough evidence had been gathered to properly link Iraq and Saddam Hussein to terrorist plots.

Fischer's response, when asked why Germany was saying "no" to Iraq, was in line with Schroeder's call, in the Bundestag in September 2001, for undercutting terrorist support by aiding poor and war torn countries. However, Iraq was another story and Fischer explained to the *Tageszeitung*:

With Iraq, we're dealing with the future of the entire Near East. The real question is whether a war against Iraq is the proper means to bring about a new order there. Or whether the point of departure should be brokering a peace between Israel and Palestine, and then with that as a basis going on to address other regional problems. Also, we should be moving forward in a spirit of cooperation rather than confrontation: in order to defuse hatred in the Near and Middle East, to integrate it into the world economy and open a way for Islam into modernity.<sup>180</sup>

Fischer questioned whether a military action was appropriate for bringing about change in the Middle East. Afghanistan was still depicted as a humanitarian aid campaign in

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<sup>179</sup> Fischer, 120.

<sup>180</sup> Joscka Fischer, "Ich bin kein Gruener Helmut Kohl," *Tageszeitung*, September 19, 2002.

Germany and Schroeder and Fischer seemed convinced that humanitarian efforts in Afghanistan would prove successful in curtailing terrorist activity there. Neither man could find a way to explain Iraq in terms of humanitarianism so German public opinion won the day. German public support had been stretched thin over Afghanistan. Schroeder was forced to try and keep German troops out of harm's way while demonstrating that the Bundeswehr was fulfilling a humanitarian mission. Iraq was one step too far and public outcry against Afghanistan was turned fully against Iraq. Schroeder and Fischer realized that there was no chance of swinging public opinion in favor of Iraq and therefore made no attempt. The two politicians had hoped to support the United States and preserve good relations, but Fischer and Schroeder quickly realized that any hint of a pro-American stance in the 2002 election would spell their defeat. They sided with public opinion and loudly decried the war. Schroeder even took to the streets to stand with anti-war demonstrators. Schroeder announced that

This much my government has proven, that in times of crisis it is in the position, with determination and a level head, to stay a reasonable course...We're also prepared to show solidarity, but under my leadership this country won't participate in adventures...And concerning the discussion about military intervention in Iraq, I warn against speculating about war and military actions, and I say to those who are planning something, they should not only know how they're going to go in, but how they're going to get out...Playing around with war and military intervention, this I warn against. With me, that's not going to happen."<sup>181</sup>

Schroeder's statement on Iraq may have seemed hypocritical considering the criticisms of his policy in Afghanistan, but politically his anti-war stance was a success.

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<sup>181</sup> Schroeder speech available at [http://assets06.nrwspd.net/docs/doc\\_437\\_20028711260.pdf](http://assets06.nrwspd.net/docs/doc_437_20028711260.pdf).

German anti-war fervor was high enough that the promise of not sending German troops into another Middle Eastern country proved to be a successful political strategy. The 2002 Bundestag election was the closest since the first election in 1949. Fischer and the Greens provided a much needed political boost and the Red-Greens were elected for another four year term. Schroeder had lost popularity due to economic difficulties and his strong support of the war in Afghanistan, but managed to harness German anti-war fervor that had developed during Afghanistan and manifested itself throughout the buildup to the Iraq War. However, the Red-Green political heroics and anti-war policies were not enough to keep them in power for long. Despite coming out strongly against Iraq, continued public disapproval and high unemployment served to drive the Red-Green Coalition out of power in 2005, one year before scheduled elections.<sup>182</sup>

German public opinion had turned against the United States during the war in Afghanistan due to American policies and military tactics. Public opinion continued to sour due, in no small part, to the public discussion in the United States over regime change in Iraq. On August 27, 2002, American Vice President Dick Cheney gave a speech in Nashville, Tennessee where he stated that with regard to Iraq “the risks of inaction are far greater than the risks of action.”<sup>183</sup> Cheney’s speech seemed like a strong case for war as he mentioned Iraq’s pursuance of nuclear weapons and the fact that Saddam might soon control a great portion of the world’s energy supplies. Cheney also pointed out that regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits to the region and that after liberations the streets of Baghdad and Basra would erupt in

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<sup>182</sup> “Fischer ist Geschichte,” *Die Tageszeitung*, May 30, 2005.

<sup>183</sup> the text of the speech of the vice president is available at [www.guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk).

joy.<sup>184</sup> Internationally, Cheney's speech received a negative reaction. For Germans, Cheney's speech shoved the Iraq War to the forefront and made Iraq an important part of the upcoming German elections in 2002. Many Germans began to say that the goal of the Bush administration no longer seemed to be to persuade Iraq to allow unconditional arms inspections by United Nations experts.<sup>185</sup> Instead, the American goal seemed to be to remove Hussein by military means regardless of whether inspection was to occur or not. Schroeder, in particular, was resentful at finding out about the speech after it had occurred through the media. After standing by the United States and barely surviving a "no confidence" vote, Schroeder felt like he should have been informed or at least consulted before Cheney had so boldly stated the United States' intentions for Iraq.

In Germany, traditional anti-American emotions, widespread in the past in conservative circles, merged with popular left-wing anti-Americanism and a powerful dislike for the foreign policies of the Bush administration.<sup>186</sup> Blumenthal wrote that the "openly polemical books of Michael Moore" graced the German bestseller lists and were often given credence as gospel truths.<sup>187</sup> Blumenthal also mentioned that he was surprised at the standing ovations he would receive in Germany when he expressed reservations about elements of United States policy and the stony silences he encountered when defending them. He also wrote that statistics were beginning to show that noticeably fewer students were choosing the United States for their overseas studies. According to one content analysis, about 600 items on the United States went to air in July 2002 on

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<sup>184</sup> Dick Cheney, Speech given in Tennessee on August 27, 2002.

<sup>185</sup> "German Reaction to U.S. Iraq Policy," *C-SPAN*, German ambassador Wolfgang Ischinger speaks on C-SPAN, September 1, 2002, <http://www.c-span.org/video/?172374-2/german-reaction-us-iraq-policy>.

<sup>186</sup> For more on German Conservative anti-Americanism see page 17 in Chapter 1.

<sup>187</sup> Blumenthal, 34.



German television news shows. More than 60 percent of these were negative; fewer than 10 percent were positive.<sup>188</sup>

Although not anti-American, Schroeder did little to contain the growing anti-Bush sentiments in Germany. The German Iraq War opposition, like earlier waves of opposition to United States policies, such as the anti-Vietnam war movement and the peace movement during the missile crisis of the 1980s, included elements of deeply rooted antagonism, but did not reach the level of true anti-Americanism. Schroeder felt that political differences must be allowed to be expressed openly, instead of behind closed doors, and that the democratic process should allow those differences to be played out in public discourse.<sup>189</sup>

Schroeder knew how much the American image had changed in Germany and Europe since the arrival of the Bush administration in 2001. A Pew survey of 38,000 people in forty-four countries found that in 2002, America's image had slipped worldwide compared with prior polls conducted by the State Department.<sup>190</sup> Another survey conducted in 2003 after the invasion of Iraq would show that those numbers were no longer slipping, but plummeting. According to a Eurobarometer survey in October 2003, Europeans considered the United States a threat to world peace. Some countries, like Greece, Spain, Finland, and Sweden, even viewed the United States as a greater world threat than Iran or North Korea.<sup>191</sup> During German electoral campaigning, the

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<sup>188</sup> Wilhelm Haumann and Thomas Petersen, "German Public Opinion on the Iraq Conflict: A Passing Crisis with the USA or a Lasting Departure," *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2004.

<sup>189</sup> Schroeder, 231.

<sup>190</sup> "What the World Thinks in 2002," *Pew Research Center*, <http://www.people-press.org/2002/12/04/what-the-world-thinks-in-2002/>.

<sup>191</sup> "Globalization: Iraq and the Peace in the World," *European Commission Public Opinion*, November 2003,

German minister of justice sought to gain public approval by comparing Bush's policies and strategies to those of Hitler. Comparisons to Hitler were a step too far, even for the angry German public, and Schroeder quickly moved to apologize to the United States, but the damage had been done.<sup>192</sup>

In the past, Germany and the United States had openly praised the maturity of their relationship. The war in Afghanistan led to an increase in international tensions between the two countries and the German refusal to join the war in Iraq created mutual incomprehension. Political interests, values, leadership styles, growing antiwar sentiment in Europe, diametrically opposed domestic constraints and expectations with regard to the electoral consequences of the use of force all came together in a powerful clash between two different political cultures. Most Germans did not agree with America that the long struggle against global terrorism was in fact a war. Bush continued to try and link the conflict between Afghanistan and Iraq, but Germans were not buying the American argument.

The buildup to the Iraq War and the subsequent United States invasion were fully covered by German television as many of the larger news stations devoted nearly fifty percent of their air time to the war.<sup>193</sup> Media coverage of Iraq built upon German concerns and public complaints about Afghanistan and a German public, highly sensitized to war, tuned in to learn more about what was happening in the Middle East. American news stations largely interpreted information coming out of Iraq as evidence

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<http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/PublicOpinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/yearFrom/1973/yearTo/2003/surveyKy/381>.

<sup>192</sup> Thomas Reinhold, "Schwaebische Schwertgösch vermässelt dem Kanzler das Wahlfinale," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, September 20, 2002.

<sup>193</sup> Udo Michael Krueger, "Der Irak-Krieg im Deutschen Fernsehen," *Media Perspektiven*, September 2003.

that the United States needed to go to war. The German media tried to provide a broader perspective that suited German viewers and offered hope that Iraq was seeking to cooperate with the United Nations and the United States. Much of the information regarding Afghanistan revolved around humanitarian aid and the good that German soldiers were doing. Criticisms of Americans and American policies were also strongly evident in Afghanistan coverage and that trend continued with regards to Iraq. The German company *Media Tenor* reported through its content analysis of German media that the press did not critically distance itself from growing anti-Americanism that had started to develop during the war in Afghanistan. The German media seemed to jump on the anti-war band wagon even as it was critical of Schroeder and his government.<sup>194</sup>

News stations, like ARD and ZDF, ran stories about the high numbers of civilian casualties that the United States was creating during the very early phases of the invasion of Iraq. On February 21, 2003, Christoph Maria Froehder reported for ARD that Iraqis were having trouble understanding why America was invading and that the idea of weapons of mass destruction was a lie.<sup>195</sup> ARD and ZDF also openly reported and criticized the United States for bombing areas inhabited by the Kurds in northern Iraq in 2003. The United States was also questioned for shooting at the Hotel Palestine in Baghdad even though that building was generally understood to be a media headquarters where many journalists regularly rented rooms. Froehder reported that Iraqis were beginning to plunder homes and shops because of fear over what would happen when the

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<sup>194</sup> "Liebesentzug in Alten Europa: Warum die Berichterstattung ueber Politik und Wirtschaft fuer U.S.-Marken zum Image-Problem wird," *Medien Tenor Forschungsbericht*, 2005.

<sup>195</sup> Christoph Maria Froehder, "Wie Ich die Schlacht um Bagdad erlebte," ARD, March 20 2003.

American soldiers came through.<sup>196</sup> German media continued to provide very similar coverage of Iraq as had been done in Afghanistan. Anti-war feelings for Afghanistan based on humanitarian concerns, historic anti-war fears, and disagreements over U.S. policies continued to pervade German airwaves and strike a chord with the German public.

The next few years actually led to an increase of German involvement in Afghanistan since the German government was trying to mitigate the stress placed on U.S.-German relations after Germany's refusal to enter Iraq. Increased emphasis was placed on convincing the German public that the Bundeswehr's mission was one of peace and not of war. In 2005, Defense Minister Peter Struck announced that "Without the ISAF troops Afghanistan would not have made the successful political developments of the last four years. We do not conduct a war campaign, but a peacekeeping mission."<sup>197</sup> Stability in German controlled Afghan provinces and seeming humanitarian success did not raise German public support for the war, but did maintain stable public approval of just under fifty percent for the next few years.<sup>198</sup>

2007 and 2008 represented a surprising increase in public approval for Afghanistan under Minister of Defense Franz Josef Jung, who had a policy of avoiding German casualties at all costs. Jung referred to simple metrics that would bolster his claim of progress and accomplishments achieved by the ISAF missions. Schools built, roads paved, and Afghan National Security Forces trained and equipped were a part of

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<sup>196</sup> Froehder, ARD.

<sup>197</sup> Peter Struck, speech in Bundestag, September 25, 2005.

<sup>198</sup> Charles A. Miller, "Endgame for the West in Afghanistan? Explaining the Decline in Support for the War in Afghanistan in the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia, France and Germany," *Strategic Studies Institute*, 2010.

every speech delivered by Jung on Afghanistan. However, by 2009 Jung was forced to publicly admit that Germany was involved in an actual war and public approval dropped to new lows, never to rise again.<sup>199</sup> By 2011, German approval for the war in Afghanistan had dropped down to around thirty percent.<sup>200</sup> Germany would finally announce the withdrawal of all troops from Afghanistan in 2014, despite having claimed since 2001 that they would remain in Afghanistan until proper peace and stability had been achieved.<sup>201</sup>

Afghanistan may have been overshadowed and generally taken out of the German public's view from 2003-2007 because of the war in Iraq, but the two conflicts and the anti-war feelings are generally linked. Afghanistan was barely accepted by the German public as an acceptable war since there were enough humanitarian justifications to match German concerns over increased German military activity and foreign deployment. Schroeder's government managed to allay German historical concerns just enough to send and maintain troops in Afghanistan. However, the German public's distaste for war, which had been straining against the war in Afghanistan, burst forth when the United States announced that it wanted to invade Iraq and requested German aid. Schroeder's administration quickly realized that the public had been pushed too far and chose to oppose the war as the Iraq War basically signaled that the attempt by the German government to shift public opinion in favor of foreign deployment had failed.

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<sup>199</sup> Infratest Dimap, *Der Spiegel*, July 6, 2009

<sup>200</sup> German Marshall Fund of the United State – Transatlantic Trends 2011 surveys, <http://trends.gmfus.org/transatlantic-trends/about/>.

<sup>201</sup> "Die Bundeswehr verlässt Afghanistan," *Deutsche Welle*, July, 26, 2013.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, the German government's attempts at gaining public support for the war in Afghanistan were not very successful. Although the arguments implemented by the government were not wholly ineffective and managed to maintain a high enough level of support for the first few years of the war to justify a continued troop presence, an ongoing drop in support led to eventual withdrawal. The three main themes employed in support of the war--supporting Germany's allies, atoning for Germany's past mistakes, and the need for humanitarian aid--fell on increasingly deaf ears in Germany.

Even though World War II had ended over 50 years before Germany deployed to Afghanistan, many of the same concerns that had plagued Germans after the war continued to undermine support for the war in the Middle East. German's rejection of Prussian militarism and fears that such militarism might return provided a framework through which many Germans maintained a negative view of any military actions. Ludger Volmer evoked memories of how Prussia and Imperial Germany resorted to military might to resolve diplomatic issues, and how militaristic values fed into National Socialism and established the foundation for Hitler's rise to power continued to haunt many Germans. Volmer had been discussing the development of German pacifism that stemmed from cultural memories of World War II.<sup>202</sup> Germany's first postwar Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, had reinforced the anti-militarism mindset by blaming World War II on German militarism, and subsequent German military policy tried to

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<sup>202</sup> See Chapter 3, pg. 22.

create a new type of military than what Germany had in the past. The new military was designed as a moral, defensive instrument of the civilian government with a focus on humanitarian aid and producing autonomous civilian soldiers. Concerns that Germany's military actions in Afghanistan did not fit within the framework of a multilateral diplomatic model arose and weakened many arguments utilized by the government.

The justification that the German military was carrying out humanitarian aid was not overly successful either. The German government pushed this particular argument more than any of the others. Many Germans were simply not convinced that Afghanistan was in desperate humanitarian need. Invading Afghanistan began to seem more like an attempt by the United States to gain revenge for the destruction of the World Trade Center and less like a true attempt to root out international terrorism. In fact, concerns over American strategies, objectives, and tactics began to cause disapproval for the war in Afghanistan and undermine the government argument that Germany needed to remain tied to the West, so that Germany would never again stand alone.

Anti-Americanism began to emerge more strongly after the election of George W. Bush and became strongly evident in the protests surrounding the Iraq War. Resistance to the conflict in Afghanistan was given full voice when America announced its intentions to invade Iraq and German leaders were forced to take voter interests into account. The Schroeder Administration had been strongly supportive of backing American policies regarding the war in Afghanistan. Schroeder even gave lip service to German support of an Iraq invasion. The German public's anti-war outcry in 2002 drove Schroeder to publicly recant any support he might have given to American policies and take to the

streets with the protestors, so that he could retain his position of chancellor in the next election.

The decision to send troops overseas was made shortly after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center during an emotional moment in history. German politicians jumped to send troops to Afghanistan despite many concerns over German soldiers becoming involved in fighting. The German government tried to get ahead of any protests and started laying out their justifications for German involvement. Approval ratings dropped swiftly and anti-war editorials, protests, newspaper articles, speeches, etc. began to abound, but Germany did not begin to pull out until 2014. Did German public opinion have no effect? Were concerns ignored by the government again as unpopular policies were pushed through? Observing government reactions and policies after the war started demonstrates that public opinion had a very real effect. The German government appeared to go out of its way to avoid troop casualties by stationing troops in low risk areas and limiting the combat of troops already stationed in Afghanistan. Negative public opinion certainly kept Germany from diving full force into any conflict. Government officials in the Schroeder administration became concerned that they would not get re-elected because of their pro-war stances. Protests against the Iraq War provided Schroeder and his administration a clear opportunity to come across as anti-war. Schroeder sacrificed good relations with the United States and pursued a very different policy from his Afghanistan policy to change voter minds.

Continued negative public opinion eventually forced the German government to consider withdrawing troops from Afghanistan despite having made promises to remain there until Afghanistan had been rebuilt. First, the German government admitted that



Afghanistan was indeed a war and not just a peaceful humanitarian mission. Second, plans were put in place for withdrawal by 2014. Just like in the past 50 years, German peace movements had not created any immediate sweeping change, like an early military withdrawal, but did demonstrate that the government could not afford to ignore them for fear of being voted out of office. Policies could be pushed through, but public opinion had to be respected and could encourage strong change in policy through determined and consistent resistance.

This thesis becomes particularly relevant in light of recent events in the Middle East and the re-deployment of German troops to combat terrorism. Threats by ISIS and bombings in several major European cities during 2015 and 2016 has re-kindled German support of anti-terrorist activity. Germans have been willing to show support for new actions in the Middle East as world peace appears to be under attack once more. Gaining public support of military actions since the end of the Cold War relied on German perceptions of legitimate humanitarian and even genocidal threats. ISIS appears to represent that type of danger and Germany seems to be willing to help NATO oppose the Islamic State. Further mobilization by Germany also has raised concerns around the world that the German military may become the same powerhouse it was 50 years ago. Peter Schwarz, writing for the *Global Research* in 2010, stated that the German bombing of tankers near Kunduz, Afghanistan resulted in a big German media cover up of the event. Schwarz wrote that the first victims of militarism are truth and democracy and that Germany's reaction to the civilian deaths caused by the bombing indicated a big step

forward for German militarism.<sup>203</sup> Even Joschka Fischer, writing for *The World Post* in 2015, declared concerns over Germany's push to a position of power and dominance in Europe through political and economic posturing.<sup>204</sup> Fischer and others are wondering if Germany is beginning to focus more on its national goals and less on cooperative European goals and how that might influence how Germany's military would be used in the future.

Research for this paper suggests that concerns over the return of German militarism are unfounded. The German public has emerged as a powerful anti-war force that is willing to step up and criticize any overtly militaristic decisions made by the German government. Most Germans expect a multilateral approach to German foreign policy with military force as a last resort, and will work to oppose policy that sends in the military before other options of been explored. Governments, even Germany's, will probably always look to the military as an important tool for protecting national sovereignty and advancing national interests, but German society has advanced to a place where the use of the military should be of little concern. Decades of peace movements and confrontations with collective war guilt have created an anti-war mindset in Germany that would be very difficult to overcome.

Germany emerged from World War II as a changed country. Democracy evolved into a viable form of government for the German people and humanitarian concerns became one of the focal points of German foreign policy. Germans have tried to distance themselves from the militarism of Imperial Germany and Prussia. The pacifistic and anti-

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<sup>203</sup> Peter Schwarz, "The Return of German Militarism," *Global Research*, April 22, 2010, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-return-of-german-militarism/18808>.

<sup>204</sup> Joschka Fischer, "The Return of Ugly Germany," *The World Post*, July 24, 2015.

war elements of German society have become defenders of the new German philosophies on military use and will continue to make sure that Germany remains a peaceful and conscientious nation in the international sphere.

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