

## Conclusions: Germany, the use of force and the power of strategic culture

German perspectives on the use of force have evolved rapidly since the ending of the Cold War and today Germany is one of the key contributors to global peacekeeping missions, with an estimated 10,000 Bundeswehr soldiers currently deployed overseas. Seen in this way, Germany has become a 'net contributor' to European and international security. Certainly, taboos have been broken and in many ways Germany has cultivated a less rigidly restrictive approach to the use of armed force, in particular circumstances. It is, however, clear that, despite changes, current German thinking about the use of force is pervaded still by significant continuities with the past, largely because of the enduring role and influence of Germany's distinctive strategic culture.

By returning to the central conceptual concerns of the book, my aim in this chapter is to consider the three key questions posed in the Introduction in relation to the evidence presented in chapters 1–6. The first of these questions concerns *identification*: what is German strategic culture? The second is about *change*: to what extent and in what form did change in the external security environment after 1989–90 impact on German strategic culture? The third relates to *behaviour*: in what ways has strategic culture affected behaviour and shaped policy choices?

### Identifying Germany's strategic culture

In identifying West Germany's strategic culture I began by characterising its formative period, during which all previous values, beliefs and practices regarding the use of force were rendered obsolete, as exemplified by the notion of *Stunde Null*. A state of 'collective infancy', or

strategic cultural *rupture*, followed in that new affective and evaluative schemes regarding the use of force have had to be constructed *ab initio*. These new policies and practices are grounded in a fresh set of core values and beliefs, born of domestic contextual factors, combined with the will and demands imposed by the Western allies in their configuration of what is required *externally* and what can be offered *internally*. What makes up (West) German strategic culture are properties of three kinds, identified as:

- *foundational elements* – the core values and beliefs of the strategic culture;
- *security policy standpoints* – the intermediary dispositions or preferences arising out of the foundational elements that shape actual policy choices and practices; and
- *regulatory factors* – the governing premises and normative devices that promote core values to the external environment as dictated by the intermediary security policy standpoints.

The foundational elements, extrapolated from a consideration (in chapter 2) of aspects, both domestic and international, of the rearming of West Germany, were identified as historical rupture, the relegation of the use of force, depletion of militarism and the exhaustion of nationalism. The policy preferences arising out of the foundational elements were seen to be determined by a range of security policy standpoints, which also were extrapolated from the consideration of West German rearmament. During the Cold War, those security policy standpoints were:

- an aversion to singularity, unilateralism and leadership in security matters;
- the promotion of stability, with an emphasis on deterrence;
- a general restraint in military matters, reinforced by widespread anti-military sentiments;
- dedication to the pursuit of responsible and calculable security policies generated by the need to ‘make amends’;
- a commitment to fully integrate the Bundeswehr within society and the parliamentary system; and
- co-operation, compromise and consensus-building, domestically and internationally, on security matters.

These security policy standpoints created strong dispositions which translated further into observable policies comprising governing premises and normative devices. Briefly, the governing premises represent the spatial, strategic and political parameters governing the Bundeswehr's organisation and role; while the normative devices relate to the broad civil–military framework in West Germany; the parliamentary control of the armed forces, the limited role of the Generalinspekteur, *Innere Führung* and *Bürger in Uniform*, and conscription and conscientious objection.

West German strategic culture did not fundamentally change, following its initial consolidation, during the Cold War; and, after its ending, there was a relatively settled period throughout which the foundational elements and the external environment were largely mutually reinforcing, thus obviating *fundamental* alterations in policy direction. Any changes that did result from challenges to existing practices were seen to be in line with the postulates of German strategic culture and, moreover, actually sought to further them. An important aspect of this was the consolidation of security policy through a strong consensus among the main parties as to the basic substance, organisation and direction of West German security policy.

### Strategic culture, change and the ending of the Cold War

The second question, relating to change after 1989–90, considered that if the existing (West) German strategic culture was the product of the Cold War – ‘a settled period’ – during which the foundational elements, security policy standpoints and, subsequently, the regulatory factors were in synch with external realities, then the exogenous shocks and changes – an ‘unsettled period’ – brought about by the ending of the Cold War could usher in a state of collective infancy and a cultural rupture–discontinuity with previous affective and evaluative schemes similar to those of 1945 and the years immediately afterwards. In sum, the principal question here is if, as a result of the ending of the Cold War, Germany's strategic culture has changed, and if so in what forms have the changes taken?

Chapter 1 posited that change in a strategic culture comes in ‘fine-tuning’ and ‘fundamental’ forms (see pp. 18–19). On the basis of the evidence here presented, change in German strategic culture after 1989–90 did not happen as strategic cultural theory might dictate: the

rupture brought about by the ending of the Cold War *should* have led to a fundamental break in strategic culture and a reconstruction of all affective and evaluative schemes in line with fresh foundational elements relating to the unified Germany's new position in Europe and acquisition of full sovereignty. Instead, through an examination of changing perspectives on the use of force in Germany throughout this period, it can be argued that the ending of the Cold War was not followed by a state of 'collective infancy' in Germany akin to that which followed the Second World War. Essentially, none of the foundational elements of the existing strategic culture was fundamentally challenged, disregarded or rendered obsolete, but, as I argue below, rather came to be *reinterpreted* and *reapplied* through adjustments in security policy standpoints and, subsequently, into policies and practices, some of which were adjusted to suit the new external environment.

German strategic culture, then, was fine-tuned rather than fundamentally changed after 1989–90, with different readings and prescriptions being drawn from the negative and positive points of orientation set in the strategic culture. Moreover, and importantly here, even in cases of observable and purposeful policy changes and seeming departures from existing practices, namely Kosovo, such moves *were* in line with the original postulates of the strategic culture. I demonstrate below that German security policy behaviour after the ending of the Cold War was informed *more* by West Germany's experiences after 1945 than by its immediate circumstances arising since 1989–90.

### *The impact of the ending of the Cold War*

The Gulf War, as the first major challenge to Germany's security policy after the Cold War, began the prising open of strategic culture by dislodging the neat consistency that had held during the Cold War between external realities and foundational aspects, a dislocation which had a number of effects.

First, various aspects of German security policy came into tension or even confusion with each other. This was manifest in the emergence among the political elite of differing and often opposing 'readings', prescriptions and views to the change and as to what form Germany's response should take. Certainly, these faultlines had already begun to surface in the 1980s but gained greater prominence at the end of bipolarity, which provided Germany with more room for manoeuvre to potentially broaden its repertoire of policy options. At the same

time, and reinforcing the prospect of change, international expectations rose in favour of greater German participation and burden-sharing in collective security.

These central tensions and quandaries revolved around the notion that since the Second World War a defining feature of the Federal Republic had been that bellicosity should be renounced, militarism rejected and that never again should German soldiers be sent to a war front. However, at the same time West Germany had, over the past fifty years come to cherish and profit from a set of security policies heavily imbued with notions of responsibility and reparation, twinned with an enduring commitment to act as a reliable member of the Western community and especially to avoid unilateralism and any notion of a renewed *Sonderweg*. Crucially, whereas during the Cold War these principles could all be equally and, more or less, satisfactorily met, with the ending of bipolarity, and especially during the Gulf War, these aspects came to contradict each other. Essentially, how could a principled policy of military abstention be maintained if a commitment to responsibility and membership in the Western community would be potentially jeopardised by not partaking in peacekeeping operations? Equally, how could a renewed singularity, or *Sonderweg*, be avoided if Germany was unable or unwilling to participate in multilateral security ventures?

A deep sense of confusion thus emerged within Germany in the 1990s as to how best to respond to new crises and to meet all of the demands on and expectations of it, in terms both of its allies and of the dictates of its strategic culture. Commenting on this in 1991, Uwe Nehrlich said that ‘Germans were geared to show they weren’t a danger, and they then were asked to do something very much outside familiar patterns’.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Bundeswehr Generalinspekteur Klaus Naumann noted: ‘The Gulf War showed very clearly just how confused and sensitive many Germans are when it comes to the use of military force, in particular, German military force.’<sup>2</sup>

The outbreak of armed conflict in the former Yugoslavia exacerbated these tensions and confusions, reinforcing the question of whether German history still pointed to restraint from military engagement or whether that same history now led Germany to embrace active military participation. More than the Gulf War, Yugoslavia showed how there *could* be a possible option for the use of military force that was between the excesses of pacifism and militarism, showing that for Germany a principled practice of non-violence was no longer tenable in post-Cold War Europe.

In short, this period saw the rupture of a consensus which had thus far been a central characteristic governing German strategic culture. New paradigms of varied intensities challenged the dominant practices of restraint and reticence, all of which, importantly, were grounded in the same historical memory but proffered differing responses and prescriptions. In other words, agents contested what the foundational elements through security policy standpoints now meant and should mean, and what new security policies should subsequently be pursued.

After the breach of the Gulf War there was a protracted period of adjustment in strategic culture and the playing out of ideas, as can be seen in the emergence of the CDU-led paradigm which espoused Germany's greater disposition to use military power and in the numerous political and legal challenges mounted against it. Bundeswehr deployments to the Gulf region after the war, as well as to Cambodia and Somalia, together with domestic endeavours to reform the Bundeswehr, are representative of the concrete steps taken by the CDU in adjusting the governing premisses to match the foundational elements in line with the CDU's own reading of the changed external realities and its prescription of the appropriate German response to them. During this and the subsequent period of negotiation, the various 'cultural agents' referred to in chapter 1, most prominently the political parties and ministries, were actively pursuing the hegemony of their own readings and policy prescriptions.

Following this period of negotiations consolidation of the dominant reading proceeded, as was manifest in the final decision of the Constitutional Court, in July 1994, and thereafter in the broad support given to the governing coalition for its deployment of Bundeswehr troops in Bosnia and Kosovo later in the decade. Nevertheless, as noted in chapter 4, a full consolidation and the building of a new domestic consensus regarding the use of force on a scale similar to that of pre-1989, proved elusive.

### The mechanisms of change

Something of the historic rupture of 1945 persists still within German strategic culture, with *Stunde Null* remaining a central and defining element in the construction of policy, principally as a compass by which to steer a course between what is possible and what is not. *Stunde Null*

thus remains a central focus of remembrance and as a point of trauma shared collectively by post-war generations, as witnessed in the systematic mobilising of Germany's past and the rupture of 1945 to legitimise or delegitimise, as the case may be, particular policy options. This was especially evident in the party-political debates over the out-of-area deployment of the Bundeswehr and in the continued promotion of conscription. Here policy choices were clearly shaped by shame and guilt and by a continuing commitment to reparation. Crucially, no 'new root of legitimacy', unrelated to Germany's historic rupture with the past after 1945, emerged, and this is further confirmation that German security policy continues to depend more on the formative implications of the 'collective infancy' of 1945 than on the more immediate influences emanating out of 1989–90.

The second foundational element, relating to the relegation of the use of force, has also persisted. Although the Bundeswehr has been deployed with increased frequency since 1990 and has broken its former out-of-area constraints, the use of force is clearly still not regarded as the means for the resolution of all crises and conflicts; neither is it seen as an automatic or natural tool for the pursuit of national interests. This was particularly the case following September 11 2001, when German perspectives on the use of force clashed with new American thinking about pre-emptive military strikes. Bundeswehr deployment is still viewed largely as a last resort and then only in circumstances where military force is unambivalently required for the resolution of a conflict and where a goal is in sight. In short, no assumption that the Bundeswehr should be deployed in a full range of missions has taken hold, and reticence continues to govern the question of the Bundeswehr's deployability.

Militarism remains an illegitimate ideology. The Bundeswehr has not sought to reconstruct itself as a more traditional form of armed force nor has the practice of conscription been reconfigured in the form of a *Schule der Nation* in the context of national unification. The negation of militarism has been manifest in the reluctance to shed conscription and in the continued commitment to maintaining and strengthening the tools of *Primat der Politik* and existing civil–military relations.

Finally, the pursuit of multilateral options in dealing with security matters and the conceiving of interests via institutions have continued to be actively promoted, and both testify to the enduring exhaustion of nationalism. The broad institutional setting of German security

policy has been further confirmed through a number of bilateral and trilateral initiatives. Moreover, the ongoing desire to avoid singularity and to maintain its status as a reliable ally has prompted Germany to participate more readily in military deployments, since to abstain would jeopardise its place within the alliance and put it out of step with its allies. In this sense, then, the Bundeswehr is regarded as an armed force within an alliance rather than an embodiment of purely national military strength.

The explanation for the endurance of these foundational elements of Germany's strategic culture was alluded to earlier when it was observed that the events of 1989–90 did not herald an emergent collective infancy, as had been the case in 1945. This time the existing foundational elements inherited from West Germany were simply writ large on the unified Germany and were deemed both valid and workable. Crucially, although since 1989–90 new formative experiences have entered the domain of strategic culture, in the absence of a collective infancy following major trauma, all new challenges to and expectations placed on Germany have been filtered and assessed through existing strategic cultural milieu.

### *Reaffirming German strategic culture*

What, then, accounts for the observable changes in German perspectives on the use of force since 1989–90, allowing the Bundeswehr to become involved in missions during the 1990s? Change is explained by a number of adjustments facilitated by the security policy standpoints.

To reiterate, during the Cold War the foundational elements of West German strategic culture found expression through the security policy standpoints. As detailed in chapter 1, these standpoints were: an aversion to singularity and unilateralism combined with a commitment to reliability as an ally; the promotion of stability; the preferment of deterrence and of the *political* role of the Bundeswehr; a general reticence regarding the use of armed force; the pursuit of responsible security policies; a commitment to extensive civilian control of the armed forces and to consensus-building in security matters at both domestic and international levels. Prior to 1989–90 these standpoints found expression in the regulatory practices of West German strategic culture – the governing premises and normative devices.

It is significant that with the ending of the Cold War a number of the security policy standpoints came into tension or contradicted one

another, or else lost relevance and had to be adjusted to maintain the consistency of the foundational elements and policies. The important aspects of this change are outlined below.

The aversion to singularity–unilateralism, which had previously been assured through West Germany's firm allegiance to the alliance, of which it was a member, and through a commitment to the defence of national and alliance territory, could be assured in its new post-Cold War incarnation only by a demonstration of its reliability as an ally and its readiness to participate in out-of-area crisis-management activities. This then furthered the broader political role of the Bundeswehr of assuring Germany's position and credibility within the alliance. Crucially, if Germany was to successfully resist being relegated to the position of junior partner within the alliance a greater capacity and willingness to deploy the Bundeswehr *had* to be created in the 1990s.

Tied to this is the objective of practising a set of responsible security policies. Whereas prior to 1989–90 this was best achieved through West Germany's low-profile stance of restraint and by meeting allied requirements, after the ending of the Cold War responsibility dictated a more active restrained stance. Had Germany not extended the remit of the Bundeswehr, then some of its basal functions – generating credibility within the alliance and exercising responsibility in security policies – would not have been fulfilled. These ideas were apparent in the CDU's prescribed role for the post-Cold War Bundeswehr. In an unpublished essay of 1991 Karl Lamers called for Germany to acknowledge its own strength and the responsibility that this entailed, seeing that it would be irresponsible of Germany to act as if oblivious to its strength, which would only engender mistrust. Lamers thus advocated that Germany, without forgetting its history, become as 'normal' as possible.<sup>3</sup> Kohl voiced a similar conviction in 1991 that 'minimalist solutions' (Blue Beret) missions would not suffice, and that participation in UN Chapter VII missions would display Germany's willingness to shoulder some of the burden for international security. Defence Minister Rühle concurred that Germany's credibility rested on such actions, emphasising that Germany's 'difference' from other countries in security matters was clearly undesirable.<sup>4</sup>

A number of security policy standpoints were, then, put under pressure in Germany's adjustment to new circumstances. An aversion to singularity, the furtherance of the Bundeswehr's broader political role, responsibility in security policy and the maintenance of restraint were,

to varying degrees, articulated in new ways in order to best serve the existing foundational elements. Restraint or reticence in security matters changed in the sense that it became less rigid and uncompromising, although restraint remains a distinctive quality of German strategic culture and policy as a whole. Likewise, a preference for stability and consensus-building has remained intact; while in the area of civil–military relations and the civilian control of the armed forces no tension developed and no adjustment has been required.

The preferences expressed by Germany's security policy standpoints in some cases took on different implications, thereby facilitating certain policy changes, all of which pointed to the necessity of extending the Bundeswehr's remit. The persistence of the existing foundational elements as well as the security policy standpoints meant that unless Germany extended this remit it would be acting against the dictates of its strategic culture, a situation which, as argued earlier, would not transpire if a strategic culture is intact.

This, then, confirms the continuation of the German strategic culture after the ending of the Cold War. Following the ideas of culture and change advocated in chapter 1, change in strategic culture is perfectly consistent with culturalist postulates if it occurs in the form of an adaptation to an altered situation and if the function of the change is to maintain the consonance of existing cultural patterns.

To further substantiate this idea it is important to identify the options and possible policy paths that were rejected or excluded from the outset. What is clear is that at the time of the debates over the out-of-area role of the Bundeswehr, there was no question but that Bundeswehr action would be undertaken within a collective framework, whether of the UN, the OSCE or NATO. Likewise there was no real questioning among the political elite as to the continuance of NATO membership – earlier consideration of this by some SPD politicians was dubbed an 'abortive debate'.<sup>5</sup> Any moves towards a re-nationalisation of German military force was totally excluded, as was the idea of a neutral Germany. A new, more reflexive, armed forces with a global reach, able to be deployed with rapidity, was never considered a possibility – it took time enough for the Bundeswehr's crisis-reaction forces to be created. Furthermore, the institutions that exercise parliamentary control over the armed forces and the broader framework of civil–military relations were not questioned; nor did the Bundeswehr come to seek the enhancement of its position in politics and society.

On the basis of these considerations, it can be asserted that German strategic culture was not changed by the ending of the Cold War; rather, it successfully adapted during the 1990s to its new circumstances.

### *Strategic culture and policy behaviour*

The issue of change within a strategic culture is intimately tied to the latter's relationship to security policy behaviour. It was posited earlier that all security policy behaviour is dependent on strategic culture and that behaviour outside of the domain of a given strategic culture will occur only if that culture has fundamentally changed or collapsed. A second hypothesis was that the influence of strategic culture on behaviour will depend on contextual factors. In *settled* times of certainty strategic culture will influence behaviour indirectly, at a distance, while in *unsettled* periods of greater ambivalence strategic culture will directly govern behaviour almost as an ideology. With the ending of the Cold War the impacts of strategic culture on German security policy behaviour were far more direct, with the nexus between policy and strategic culture being close.

From the time of the Gulf War onwards German security policy behaviour has visibly been governed by strategic culture, as can be seen most vividly at the level of discourse and in the multifarious processes of inclusion and exclusion that characterised the formulation of standpoints and policies. In the form of strategic culture both positive and negative points of orientation were provided, thus setting the parameters of possible options, by providing decision-makers with a finite repertoire of policies to pursue. At the same time policy-makers became acutely aware of strategic culture as the framework for their actions and of the pressures and expectations this placed on them. This was evident in the vocabulary of strategic culture discourse – ‘the weight of the past ...’, ‘responsibility leads us to ...’, ‘history does not permit us to ...’ – and so on – use of which became more pronounced to add a sense of legitimacy or to justify the adoption or rejection of certain policy paths, for example in the of the out-of-area debate and the issue of conscription.

### *Facilitating change: the Bundeswehr's out-of-area role in the 1990s*

Change in the Bundeswehr's remit to include the possibility of out-of-area deployments came about via the facilitating role played by strategic

culture. After the initial tensions, a protracted period of negotiation and policy adjustment, followed by the emergence and broad acceptance of the CDU-led paradigm, German strategic culture actively provided the impetus for the enlargement of the Bundeswehr's role.

In the context of change within German strategic culture after 1989–90, while the foundational elements remained intact, security policy standpoints took on new significance, leading to changes in observable policies. Of central importance here were the new interpretations of the *responsibility* and *calculability* of security policy, of what constituted a *solid* and *credible ally* and of what *equality* meant within the alliance that eventually came to force the change apparent in the Bundeswehr's remit. That change, however, was neither immediate nor unbounded. In the period immediately after 1989–90 strategic culture impacted on behaviour by actively constraining change in the Bundeswehr's role. At the time of the Gulf War, there was resistance to a shift to a more participatory contribution that went beyond Germany's traditional role of paymaster. Strategic culture at this time thus influenced German policy by acting directly as a brake, preventing action outside of familiar patterns.

Subsequent change in strategic culture's role was initiated by a number of factors which served to invalidate how that culture affected behaviour. First, an overt imbalance emerged between the demands and expectations of allies and domestic audiences as to the kind of role Germany should now play. Germany came under fire from Western allies for lack of commitment, reliance on cheque-book diplomacy and a stance seemingly justified by increasingly questionable constitutional claims. At the same time German society was coming to terms with unification and was thus disposed to see the continuation of restrained, low-profile, policy. Thus tensions transpired since elites had to mollify an anti-war public while showing a commitment to the anti-Iraq alliance. This tension was bridged by considerable financial commitments on the part of Germany, plus the deployment of Bundeswehr Alpha Jets to Turkey, a NATO partner, a move legitimised to a weary German polity as being for defensive purposes only.

In the wake of the Gulf War and the onset of the break-up of Yugoslavia, the tensions within strategic culture became both more acute and of a kind that were not so easily bridged using existing policies and practices. From this point onwards, then, strategic culture came to more actively facilitate change in security policy behaviour as notions of responsibility, credibility within the alliance and the desire

to resist a renewed singularity steered a course towards a more varied Bundeswehr remit and, with it, a greater crisis-reaction capacity.

*Hindering change: conscription as sacrosanct*

In contrast to the Bundeswehr's remit, change did not occur in the practice of conscription; indeed, as chapter 6 showed, every opportunity was taken to strengthen the practice after 1989–90. This situation came about because there was, at least until 2001, no tension in strategic culture acute enough in those areas governing conscription to force a change in policy. Essentially, the prevailing strategic culture actually validated the continuance of conscription in Germany following the Cold War.

The initiation of conscription in 1956 and its incorporation within the Basic Law issued directly from two facets of the Federal Republic's strategic culture: deterrence and civil–military relations. In this way conscription performed a dual role, enabling the Federal Republic to create a vast augmentable armed force, thereby positioning the Bundeswehr as the central feature in NATO's European defence, while also performing a normative role in the Federal Republic's prescription for civil–military relations in preventing the Bundeswehr's re-emergence as a state within a state. Throughout the Cold War, with West German strategic culture in consonance with the external environment, conscription endured as a means by which to service Bonn's position within the alliance and to fulfil civil–military requirements.

The chief (strategic) rationale for conscription in Germany was largely eclipsed by the ending of the Cold War, as seen most vividly in the Bundeswehr's out-of-area crisis-management remit. This should have led to a diminished use of conscription, or at least have seen the onset of serious debate on the utility of the practice, whereas conscription has in fact endured as a practice: it has been reworked and endorsed through a range of essentially non-strategic lines of argumentation.

Crucially, the practice of conscription is sustained by a broad and apparently robust range of factors in German strategic culture in the form of civil–military arguments tied to Germany's past. This is evident in the way the majority of the political elite read the ending of the Cold War and what it meant for conscription. It is also manifest in the very nature of the post-1989–90 'non-debate' over conscription and in the well-worn arguments invoked in its support, as detailed in chapter 6.

Tensions in strategic culture are, however, apparent still, and these will come to challenge the perpetuation of conscription. As external security conditions change, especially after September 11, and German society evolves new meanings and values to assign to the foundational elements of its strategic culture, the practice of conscription may come under terminal stress. In particular, it is the emergent tension between the Bundeswehr's extended remit and broader political role, on the one hand, and the commitment to conscription, on the other, factors increasingly at odds with one another, that will ultimately bring strategic culture to render conscription obsolete. Thus far, this tension has been managed by efforts to modernise the practice of conscription while preparing the Bundeswehr for its out-of-area role and retaining a sizeable commitment to national and alliance defence.

In short, strategic culture has actively worked *for* the continuance of conscription and *against* the switch to an AVF. It is clear, then, that the maintenance of conscription cannot be satisfactorily explained by anything other than strategic culture.

#### *September 11 2001 – a critical juncture?*

The events of September 11 2001 and the subsequent war on terror brought fresh challenges to German thinking about the use of force, in many ways bringing about a new *unsettled* period. Two interrelated questions arise in this context. First, did September 11 lead to a reversal of trends in German security policy on the use of armed force? Second, has German strategic culture undergone a transformation as a result of the recent changes in the security environment?

Germany's perspectives on the use of force over the course of 2001–3 were in line with the existing postulates of German strategic culture. Rather than signifying an actual reversal of the post-1989 trend, which saw the Bundeswehr being deployed in ever wider missions, Afghanistan and Iraq signified that there were clear limits to this trend and, crucially, that the use of force was contingent on particular factors and conditions. Moreover, German security policy after September 11 brought into focus the complex domestic consensus regarding the Bundeswehr's role. The tenor of US foreign policy thinking and its strategy for Iraq had little resonance with German strategic culture and thus mitigated against Germany's active military support in three main ways. First, US strategy posted military force at its core; second, it failed to take into account consultative and multilateral fora; and,

third, it was largely bereft of a vision or strategy for post-conflict reconstruction.

With regard to the question of change, German strategic culture was certainly challenged by Afghanistan and Iraq, though the result was one rather of fine-tuning than of fundamental change. Germany's commitment to Afghanistan as contrasted to its inflexibility towards Iraq demonstrated the strength of the influence exerted on policy, at different points, by strategic culture. Nevertheless, in the face of quite adverse challenges German strategic culture remained robust at its core. What transpired during this phase was arguably a *firming-up* of German strategic culture through a more *orthodox* reading and its application to an inflexible policy. A hypothesis that might be spun from this would be that in the light of the challenges thrown up by September 11 Germany's existing strategic culture *peaked* in its capacity to sanction a wider range of military missions and Germany may subsequently opt to deploy the use of force in more predictable, less sensational, overtly humanitarian contexts.

### Outlook: Germany, the use of force and the power of strategic culture

From a contemporary vantage point a Germany more self-assured in security issues seems to be emerging. Berlin is likely to be increasingly able and willing to decide whether to deploy its troops and, crucially, to defend its stance and choices on the basis of its own interests and priorities. This is a symptom of a broader undercurrent of intellectual change in German politics and society, and suggests that German strategic culture is maturing in line with the Berlin Republic's growing sense of confidence. Additionally, the 'domestics' of future German security policy may remain fragile and complex, and as a result the role of the Bundeswehr and its reform programme, not to mention the issue of conscription, will continue to be highly contested and politicised issues.

In conclusion, it can be said that Germany's strategic culture has not changed in a fundamental sense since its inception in the aftermath of the Second World War. Its vitality and relevance have persisted and continue to govern contemporary German perspectives on the use of force. Although the ending of the Cold War heralded a formative period for German security thinking, and while its security policy clearly has come a long way since 1989, Germany's negative experiences prior to

1945, coupled with positive formative experiences post-1945, as embodied in its distinctive strategic culture, have had – and will continue to have – a decisive impact on Germany’s thinking about the use of force.

### Notes

- 1 Uwe Nehrlich quoted in ‘Germans’ Response to Gulf Underscores Nation’s Search’, *Wall Street Journal*, 21 January 1991, p. 12.
- 2 Klaus Naumann (1991) ‘Germany’s Military Future’, in Susan Stern (ed.) *Meet United Germany* (Frankfurt and Main: FAZ GmbH), p. 211.
- 3 Karl Lamers (1991) ‘Selbstverständnis und Aufgaben des vereinten Deutschland in der Aussenpolitik’, unpublished essay.
- 4 Volker Rühle (1991) ‘Die weltpolitische Verantwortung des geeinten Deutschlands’, in CSU Dokumentation, no. 17, p. 9.
- 5 Elizabeth Pond (1990) ‘A Wall Destroyed: The Dynamics of German Unification in the GDR’, *International Security*, vol. 15 (autumn), p. 64.