

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

The Nationale Volksarmee in German Reunification: Aspects of Policy and Process

Being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
In the University of Hull

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February 2005

Abstract

Disposing of the Nationale Volksarmee (NVA), the armed forces of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), was viewed as the initial step of a comprehensive German post Cold War defence reform programme. The author of this study intends to challenge a generally accepted perspective originated by the political leadership of the Federal Republic of Germany and subsequently recited by many politico-military commentators that this effort of managing the NVA had significant positive impact on the overall German reunification process. The author assumed that such a political myth was caused by an insufficient basis of judgment, only focused on the initial stage of accommodating former NVA members into the Bundeswehr. Therefore, this study will re-examine the essence and significance of managing the NVA from two new angles, which received less attention from previous researchers. From a study of the negotiating process regarding the NVA in the last days of the GDR regime, the author proves that the future of the NVA never was the core issue to any party other than its military professionals. Hence, it could not be drastically elevated as a key factor in facilitating the post-reunification German national unity. Furthermore, re-visiting the process of disposing of NVA assets other than personnel proves that this had no effect on promoting national consolidation. On the contrary, many scandals that happened in transferring the NVA assets could have had the potential of undermining the national unity. At least, those problems caused numerous criticisms from the citizens of eastern Germany. By summarising the newly explored facts from these new angles, the author still genuinely believes that the Bundeswehr did positively contribute to the German national unity by appropriately managing the NVA thus defusing potential negative impacts on German post-reunification society. Nevertheless, the significance of their task should not be overrated in history.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The Nationale Volksarmee (NVA), the armed forces of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR), was one of the best military forces in the communist bloc during the Cold War era. Its fighting capability was almost certainly better than their Soviet comrades and this was recognised by USA.¹ In spite of many constraints, the NVA successfully established its reputation through its long-time alert status and high military professionalism on military manoeuvres within the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO).

For many years, the military distinctiveness of the NVA was seen by western military professionals as based on German, or arguably Prussian, military traditions, Soviet and communist military teaching, and, most importantly, the political and military directives given by its leadership for securing military effectiveness and political allegiance. Like all the communist armed forces, its political masters tightly controlled the NVA through political officers within its force structure. An extremely high percentage of its members, especially the officers, would inevitably become members of the East German ruling party, *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (SED: Socialist Unity Party).² But the NVA's close association with the dominant ruling party did not improve its ability to determine political policies. Although the NVA consumed massive national resources, yet, the political influence of its military professionals on the national agenda was relatively weak because the NVA had not contributed to the nation-building process or gained any substantial military achievement through a war that defended its people from invasion.

On the contrary, the NVA was generally viewed as a power apparatus of the dictatorship for suppressing the people or a tool to secure the relationship with its

¹ Shalikhvili, John M. *Forward*, in Schönbohm, Jörg *Two Armies and One Fatherland: The End of the Nationale Volksarmee*, New York: Berghahn Books, January 1996, p.vi, translated by Johnson, Peter and Elfi Johnson from *Zwei Armeen und ein Vaterland: Das Ende der Nationalen Volksarmee*. Berlin: Siedler, 1992.

² Zilian, Frederick Jr. *From Confrontation to Cooperation: the Takeover of the National People's (East German) Army by the Bundeswehr*. Westport: Praeger, 1999, p.37, and Herspring, Dale R. *Requiem for*

fellow socialist states, especially, the Soviet Union.³ Whether the NVA would remain loyal to the Soviet Union and attack its German brother force, the Bundeswehr, in a NATO-WTO conflict was questionable, but the NVA was seen as the only military force of the Soviet satellite states in East Europe that "might have been capable of effectively matching up against North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) forces".⁴ The GDR's political leadership used the NVA to secure political support from Moscow.

In 1988, facing imminent Soviet conventional force reduction in Europe, it looked as if the NVA, despite its relative small size, would become even more important to the Soviet military strategy in the foreseeable future.⁵ An article in February 1990 still focused on the military capability of the NVA to invade Western Europe although the author had already noticed the contemporary dramatic changes and uncertainties in East Europe.⁶ In 1990, when the Soviet Union decided to adjust its relationship with the West and thus concluded the Cold War stalemate on German soil, the NVA almost immediately became insignificant at the negotiation table. The NVA was important if, and only if, Cold War rivalry still existed and the Soviets needed its military excellence. Once the existing power structure needed to be reshaped and the mindset of antagonism was abandoned, the NVA was no longer so essential to Moscow.

German unification became a central issue at the conclusion of the Cold War. Its implications can be identified as follows - "The emergence of a unified German state in the middle of a transformed Europe was a major, if not *the* major, turning point in the end of the Cold War".⁷ Yet, given its insignificance in the GDR political decision-making process and relatively weak association with the population, the NVA could not influence public opinion or shape GDR politics before reunification.

an Army: the Demise of the East German Military. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998, p.25.

³ Pfaff, Steven "Collective Identity and Informal Groups in Revolutionary Mobilization: East Germany in 1989", *Social Forces*, Volume 75, Issue 1 (September 1996), p.108

⁴ Brooks, Stephen G. "The Globalization of Production and the Changing Benefits of Conquest", *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Volume 43, Issue 5 (October 1999), p.651

⁵ Herspring, Dale R. "The Military Factor in East German Soviet Policy", *Slavic Review*, Volume 47, Issue 1 (Spring 1988), p.101

⁶ McCausland, Jeffery D. "East German Army - Spear Point or Weakness?", *Military Review*, Volume LXX, No. 2 (February 1990), pp.12-26

⁷ Davis, James W. and William C. Wohlforth "Chapter Six: German Unification" in Herrmann, Richard K. and Richard Ned Lebow (ed.) *Ending the Cold War - Interpretations, Causation, and the Study of International Relations*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, p.132

In all the research into the dynamics of German unification in the GDR, not a single word has appeared about the role played by the NVA.⁸ Neither the driving force for nor the resistance to reunification had ever been initiated by the NVA. Although the final German reunification negotiations happened in July 1990, when the German Chancellor Kohl visited Gorbachev's hometown of Stavropol, all the major concessions made by Gorbachev were linked to the fate of the NVA, yet the destination of the NVA never figured in Gorbachev's strategic calculus.⁹

The NVA itself was never a vital element in the negotiation process of German reunification because the Cold War was settled through a peaceful reconciliation process where the military was not employed. Moreover, "neither the West German nor East German military was a major player in its own political system".¹⁰ The future of the NVA never became an issue in any international treaty regarding the final settlement of German unification.¹¹ Yet, given the risk and uncertainty that could be caused by its capacity, management of the NVA in the final days of the GDR and after unification was important in the overall effort of integrating the two German states.

The Process

The future of the NVA as a pressing issue started in late-1989. Egon Krenz took over power after Erich Honecker's resignation in late October. But very soon the collapse of the Berlin Wall became another catalyst that once more reshuffled the GDR political leadership. Hans Modrow became the leader of the GDR government on 13 November. Less than a week later, Admiral Hoffmann was appointed by Modrow government as the new Defence Minister to manage an insecure military force left by his predecessor, General Kessler. Hoffmann's appointment was quite unusual since he was the first naval officer appointed as the Defence Minister, which was uncommon in a military like the NVA that was generally dominated by army officers. The reason why Admiral Hoffmann became the Defence Minister was his reputation for integrity

⁸ For instance, Pond, Elizabeth "A Wall Destroyed: The Dynamics of German Unification in the GDR", *International Security*, Volume 15, Issue 2 (Autumn 1990), pp.35-66

⁹ Herspring, 1998, Op Cit., p.133

¹⁰ Chung, Jin Min and John D. Nagle "Generational Dynamics and the Politics of German and Korean Unification", *Western Political Quarterly*, Volume 45, Issue 4 (December 1992), p.866

¹¹ Terms regulating the disposal of NVA personnel are only noted in one specific chapter and several

and leadership as well as his distance from some corruptive privileges.¹² Modrow anticipated that Admiral Hoffmann's replacing General Kessler could create a positive image for his government.

Hoffmann immediately demonstrated a high degree of situational awareness and started to promote NVA military reform. The aim of military reform was concurrent with some general political expectation in the GDR at that period - seeking a Third Way between Western Capitalism and Soviet communism as well as establishing a Democratic Socialist GDR in order to save its legitimacy.¹³ Therefore, Hoffmann's military reform was an effort of de-politicisation and democratisation by introducing institutions of the western armed forces to the NVA and, hopefully, converting it to a military that could serve in a future democratic GDR. The SED party organisations stopped their operations in the NVA after the GDR Volkskammer council abolished the monopoly privilege of SED Party as the only legitimate ruling party in GDR politics on 1 December 1989. Hoffmann played a vital role in sustaining discipline and managing some external challenges toward the NVA. He meanwhile also instigated the NVA's military reform in order to establish its compatibility with its German brother force, the Bundeswehr.

The GDR's political future became more obvious to all the citizens in eastern Germany from Hoffmann's inauguration until the first GDR democratic election in March 1990. He subsequently passed the command authority of the NVA to Rainer Eppelmann in mid-April. After the date of the election was decided and the external framework of settling the German reunification, the Two-plus-Four meeting, was agreed by all parties concerned, most people were expecting an inevitable reunification although reluctance of being "Anschluss" by the FRG still existed. Therefore, Discussions of the NVA's future post-reunification gradually emerged after February. Defence Minister Stoltenberg was the first FRG key political actor who delivered his perspectives of post-reunification security arrangement on then GDR's soil that implied the eventual demise of the NVA. Since his viewpoint of extending

sections in other chapters in the appendix of the FRG-GDR Reunification Treaty.

¹² Hoffmann, Theodor *Das Letzte Kommando: Ein Minister Erinnert Sich*. Herford: E.S. Mittler & Sohn, 1993, Chinese translation by Wang, Chien-Cheng, Hai-Ko: Hai-Nan Publishing Co., 2001, pp.32-37.

¹³ Szabo, Stephen F. *The Changing Politics of German Security*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990,

NATO territory to the East Germany could hamper the progress of the political reconciliation with the USSR, therefore, a dispute instantly appeared between Stoltenberg and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the FRG Foreign Minister who essentially masterminded the FRG's diplomacy of reaching German reunification. The FRG Chancellor Helmut Kohl immediately intervened and ended the rivalry with a reassuring Genscher-Stoltenberg joint statement that "no NATO force would be allowed to deploy in GDR territory. The same principle was also applied to all Bundeswehr units, whether or not subordinated to NATO command structure".¹⁴ This subsequently misled the GDR defence decision-makers' judgments of the FRG's determination of disbanding the NVA.

Dr. Gerhard Stoltenberg was a prominent political figure in FRG politics for many years. In April 1989, he was re-appointed as the Defence Minister just after mismanaging tax reform policy in his term as Finance Minister.¹⁵ However, regarding Kohl's reunification guidelines, he was not as influential as Genscher. Therefore, after releasing this joint statement, Stoltenberg started to keep a low profile and declined to comment openly on the future of the NVA or military deployment in eastern Germany until the final political breakthrough of German reunification was achieved at the Kohl-Gorbachev Caucasus summit in July 1990.

After the impact caused by Stoltenberg's statement, the NVA soon faced another significant transition, new defence leadership appointed after the first GDR democratic election. The GDR Defence Ministry evolved into a new structure. A new civilian leadership headed by Rainer Eppelmann, the only member from the Democratic Awakening Party in the cabinet of the GDR coalition government, even changed the name to Ministry of Disarmament and Defence.¹⁶ Eppelmann himself was a pacifist Lutheran pastor involved in dissident movements and a conscientious

p.149.

¹⁴ Genscher, Stoltenberg Agree, DPA, 19 February, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, Daily Reports, West Europe (hereafter: "FBIS - Region Code - Year - Serial Number", e.g. FBIS-WEU-90-034), 20 February 1990, p.9

¹⁵ Szabo, Stephen F. *The Diplomacy of German Unification*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992, p.29

¹⁶ Actually, the plan of establishing an Office for Disarmament and Conversion was already announced by Walter Romberg, the GDR Social Democratic Party minister without portfolio, right before the GDR democratic election in March 1990. The new orientations reflected by the new name of Disarmament and Defence Ministry, therefore, was not a totally new innovation but an effort of consolidating governmental agencies. See *Office To Convert Military Resources Planned*, DPA, 12

objector who had refused the GDR compulsory military service. The decision-making mechanism at the top layer in this newly born ministry had been totally revised. Legitimate power shifted from military professionals to civilian leadership with little or no military background and very different perspectives. Nevertheless, Eppelmann openly expressed his intention of keeping an independent military force in eastern Germany after unification though it was hard to judge whether "personal ambition or a desire to maintain East German autonomy" was the true motive.¹⁷

Soon after Eppelmann's inauguration, the first FRG-GDR Defence Minister's summit took place on 27 April. Instead of specifying the Nationale Volksarmee, Eppelmann introduced a stretchy term called "a second German force" as a bargaining counter. As mentioned above, Stoltenberg already had some reluctance to comment further on any military deployment in eastern Germany after reunification. Therefore, he gave no explicit response to Eppelmann's argument of keeping "a second German force" after reunification in the post-summit press conference though it was never a possible option to Stoltenberg.¹⁸ Many parties soon adopted this term of "a second German force" to comment on the future military arrangement in eastern Germany after reunification. Nevertheless, this term did not have any official significance and never appeared in any formal FRG documentation, but it misled most of the NVA members. Contacts between the two German military forces further expanded. Another FRG-GDR defence summit took place in late-May. More cooperation was addressed but the future of the NVA after reunification was still uncertain.¹⁹ The disbandment of the NVA eventually became clear after Bundeswehr deployment in eastern Germany was confirmed by Kohl's post-Caucasus statement on 17 July.²⁰

March, FBIS-EEU-90-048, 12 March 1990, pp.29

¹⁷ Szabo, 1992, Op. Cit., p.29

¹⁸ "The second German force" was a concept unilaterally initiated by Eppelmann. See *German Defence Ministers Stress United German As NATO Member*, Xinhua General Overseas News Service, 27 April 1990, item no. 0427072, information acquired from LexisNexis website, <http://web.lexis-nexis.com> (hereafter: LexisNexis)

¹⁹ *GDR and FRG Armies to Take Up Official Relations*, ADN, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 29 May, Eastern Europe, EE/0776/I; and *GDR and FRG Defence Ministers' Meeting on Military Cooperation*, ADN, 28 May, BBC Summary, 1 June 1990, EE/0779/A1/1, LexisNexis

²⁰ "Starting immediately upon unification, non-integrated units of the Bundeswehr, i.e., territorial defence units, will be permitted to be stationed within the territory of the present GDR and Berlin", *Point six of Kohl on His Caucasus Meeting with Gorbachev, 17 July 1990*, in Jarausch, Konrad H. and Volker Gransow (ed.) *Uniting Germany - Documents and Debates, 1944 - 1993*. Providence: Berghahn Books, 1994, p.177

The fate of the NVA was in line with the political future of the GDR. The political extinction of the GDR embodied the disbandment of the NVA. The reunification formula, Article 23 of the Basic Law, accepted by the USSR, implied that the previous German länder in GDR territory would reinstate and join the FRG individually.²¹ Therefore, there was no space left for any further existence of the NVA. It was a drastic turn in the Bundeswehr-NVA engagement, from establishing another German brother force compatible with the Bundeswehr to discussing the details of taking over its assets and disposing the NVA members. Meanwhile, the NVA leadership also sifted its focus on the coming negotiation of the FRG-GDR reunification treaty in order to secure the welfare of its personnel. A military organisation, the Eastern Federal Armed Forces Command (BKO: Bundeswehr-Kommando Ost), was established to shoulder the above missions after reunification. Minister Stoltenberg personally selected General Jörg Schönbohm as the BKO commanding general because of his excellent career performance as well as good political connections established from previous service period.²²

Numerous tasks emerged after the BKO started to conduct its operations in eastern Germany. We may even argue that it carried out a new form of "military operations other than war". Apart from disbanding units, discharging personnel, founding new establishments, receiving properties and barracks, collecting and safeguarding sensitive assets such as weapon and, particularly, ammunition, the BKO also needed to establish a new relationship with citizens in eastern Germany as well as selecting and persuading appropriate former NVA members to join the Bundeswehr. Moreover, the BKO also shouldered the liaison mission with the Soviet forces to facilitate their withdrawal from the German soil.

The BKO was never intended to be a permanent organisation under the Bundeswehr's official chain of command. It was an ad hoc mechanism to manage the NVA during the transition phase right after German reunification. From the beginning, the BKO

²¹ Szabo, 1992, Op. Cit, p.77 and 84

²² General Schönbohm's political connections were well-introduced in Bertram, Christoph *"With a Fervid Heart and Cool Head": General Jörg Schönbohm To Integrate Remnants of the NVA Into the Bundeswehr*, Die Zeit, 5 October, Chief of Bundeswehr East Command Profiled, FBIS-WEU-90-224, 20 November 1990, pp.22-24

was only expected to exist till mid-1991, as it was actually disbanded in July.²³ In fact, General Schönbohm's authority was limited. The disposal of the former NVA personnel and assets could not be exclusively decided by General Schönbohm's personal will or BKO's policies alone. In many cases, especially for the matters related to other services and other governmental agencies, General Schönbohm and the BKO could only act as a coordinator at most.

During the BKO era, a normal command structure was set up in the former GDR territory and General Werner von Scheven, General Schönbohm's former deputy of the BKO, became the commander of the newly established Eastern Corps / Territorial Command (*Korps / Territorial Kommando Ost*) on 16 April 1991.²⁴ Corresponding naval and air force commands in eastern Germany were also subsequently established. According to General Schönbohm, the restructuring process was "a step along the road towards normality in the Bundeswehr as well as towards the acceptance of responsibility by the individual services for their units".²⁵ Nevertheless, "authority for all units and agencies passed to the individual services" was not totally achieved until July 1, 1991 when the BKO was officially deactivated and General Schönbohm was also relieved as BKO commanding general.²⁶

The disbandment of the BKO did not bring an end to the task of disposing the NVA personnel. Former NVA members applying for regular service status in the Bundeswehr still needed to pass a two-year term probation period and a further examination in order to clear up any previous connection to the Stasi. Dismantling the Nationale Volksarmee was not the only task for the German defence authority after reunification though possibly the most urgent one. It was viewed as "the first phase of the construction of an all-German Armed Forces".²⁷ After the Cold War, the

²³ Zilian, 1999, Op. Cit, p.69

²⁴ *New Bundeswehr Command East Chief Appointed*, ADN, FBIS-WEU-91-074, 17 April 1991, p.10

²⁵ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit., p.161

²⁶ Zilian, 1999, Op Cit., p.69

²⁷ Casdorff, Stephan-Andreas *The Army Needs a Reformer*, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, 3 July, FBIS-WEU-91-147, Stoltenberg Scored for Lack of Service Reforms, 31 July 1991, pp.15-16. But from General Naumann's viewpoint, the new Bundeswehr Inspector-General had three immediate tasks to be tackled - dismantling the NVA and integrating its remnants, reducing the size of the Bundeswehr to fulfill treaty obligations, and most importantly, accomplishing the previous two tasks within enormous budget reductions. See Peel, Quentin *Keeper of Germany's Peace - Gen. Klaus Naumann, First Head of the Nation's Armed Forces Since Unification*, Financial Times, 13 July 1992, p.26, LexisNexis

Bundeswehr also faced drastic reform of its force structure. The driving force behind defence reform was not only the international obligations explicitly noted in the Two-plus-Four Treaty and the CFE Treaty but also substantial demands from internal sources, such as increasing public pressure on the defence budget. The missions of the Bundeswehr also needed to be re-defined. Besides a new force structure, appropriate military strategy concepts subordinate to the new missions also needed to be formulated.

The debates about reform of strategic concepts started long before reunification. When Dr. Stoltenberg took over from his short-term predecessor Rupert Scholz, in April 1989, many hard decisions awaited him, such as the conscription period, modernisation of aging Lance missiles, development of the Eurofighter, and Bundeswehr force reduction, that needed to be made in order to cope with an increasingly unpalatable domestic political atmosphere and a drastically evolving external strategic environment.²⁸ Stoltenberg first announced the possible manpower scale after force restructuring and reduction in December 1989. It was originally expected that the whole reduction process could be conducted at a moderate pace, allowing eight to ten years for the new force structures to take effect. By so doing, from the human and social points of view, the military professionals could have better opportunities to cope with the impact on their careers and families.

In the beginning, the political upheavals in the GDR, the possibility of reunification and, subsequently, the absorption of the NVA members were not in the calculations of the Bundeswehr's force planning. Only the outcome of the Vienna disarmament negotiations was viewed as a vital factor in further reduction.²⁹ Contemporary comments from the Soviet media only focused on social and financial factors behind the Bundeswehr force reduction within the FRG as well as its impact on NATO strategies. Neither of the factors mentioned above had ever been foreseen or discussed.³⁰ But demands became more pressing after the end of the Cold War.

²⁸ Marsh, David *Defence 3; Militarism's Disorderly Retreat - West Germany*, Financial Times, 17 January 1990, p.III, LexisNexis

²⁹ Klement, Rolf *Interview with Defence Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg*, Deutschland funk Network, 10 December, Defence Minister Talks on Bundeswehr Plan, FBIS-WEU-89-236, 11 December 1989, pp.7-10

³⁰ Grigoryev, Yevgeniy *Correspondent Comments: Fewer Men in Bundeswehr*, Pravda, 2nd ed, 10 December, p.5, Thinking Behind Cuts in FRG's Bundeswehr Viewed, FBIS-SOV-89-237, 12 December

Without clear political directives, subordinate defence planners had to formulate strategy based on guesswork, which created conflicts with the force planning process.

Differences in perspectives when dealing with imminent reform of foreign, defence and security policies, which are the vital basis of the force structure, could ignite tensions and conflicts between the military professionals and civilian leaders.³¹ A typical example occurred at the annual Bundeswehr commanders' meeting chaired by Admiral Wellershoff, the Inspector General of the Bundeswehr - the first held after reunification in March 1991. Wellershoff openly challenged the differentiation between "policy of power" and "policy of responsibility", which was an argument originated by Foreign Minister Genscher a few weeks previously in a speech to the Bundestag.³² The inability to reconcile this animosity through private channels was a demonstration of how severe the actual situation was. Although most German political commentators would agree that the initial management of the NVA was successfully achieved when the BKO was officially disbanded, Minister Stoltenberg still paid the price in German domestic politics because he could not cope with the demands of overall defence reform.³³ Stoltenberg only kept on requesting an increased defence budget but a few months after reunification he still failed to produce a convincing concept for any decisive defence reform, thus undermining his credibility as the defence leader.³⁴ The accumulating unrest eventually led to the end of his political career though he did significantly contribute to the task of managing the NVA in the German reunification process.

The friction between the Bundeswehr and the civilian defence leadership did not end with Minister Stoltenberg's resignation but intensified after Volker R uhe became the Defence Minister. Chancellor Kohl, therefore, needed personally to intervene as an

1989, p.36

³¹ Eisenhammer, John *Huge Cuts in Bases Herald German Military Rethink*, Independent, 7 August 1991, p.6, LexisNexis

³² *Bundeswehr Reform Is Almost a New Start*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 12 March, FBIS-WEU-91-048, 12 March 1991, pp.14-15

³³ Some believe that the real reason why Stoltenburg resigned and ended his political career was guilt about the two arms exports scandals. Nevertheless, the decision to accommodate the former NVA members into the Bundeswehr after reunification was the most important decision in his whole public service career. See Obituary, Pittsburgh Post - Gazette (Pennsylvania), 31 December 2001, p.A-9, and Gerhard Stoltenburg, 73; *Reunified Germany's Armies*, New York Times, 6 December 2001, Section A, p.33, LexisNexis

³⁴ Casdorff, Stephan-Andreas *The Army Needs a Reformer*, Op Cit.

arbitrator and to assert his support of the defence budget in an unusual secret meeting with senior military professionals.³⁵ But the former NVA members were not the only people in the German military to be uncertain of their futures. Many original Bundeswehr members voiced their concern to the German Armed Forces Commissioner in the Bundestag. Bundeswehr members were also fighting for their survival socially and politically. Without a clear future role for the armed forces, former NVA members would rather give up their military careers though they might meet the criteria to be accepted into the Bundeswehr.³⁶

In late 1990s, apart from the end of the Cold War and high unemployment in the FRG, the absorption of the NVA was a major factor that reduced the resources available to the Bundeswehr and later affected Franco-German defence and security cooperation programmes.³⁷ Another observer also believed that the task of absorbing the former East German forces into the Bundeswehr "reduced the money and time available for overall innovation in the German force structure".³⁸ It has been further confirmed by Ministerial Director Hanspeter Oelmeier, who headed the Budget Department in the FRG Defence Ministry, that since 1990 the German defence budget available for investment, i.e. defence technology, including weapons procurement and R&D, had significantly suffered through the decision to merge the NVA into the Bundeswehr as the top priority.³⁹

Actually, the task of managing the former NVA members in the new länder could only indirectly affect the overall Bundeswehr force structure after reunification. In March 1991, the basic outline of the future Bundeswehr, centred on Army Structure 5 but lacking details, would gradually emerge from the annual Bundeswehr commanders' conference chaired by Bundeswehr Chief of Staff Admiral Wellershoff held in Bonn. Two major factors dictating defence restructuring were the demands of Bundeswehr manpower reduction in the Two-Plus-Four Treaty and the progress of managing the

³⁵ Lindemann, Michael *Bonn Gives Pledge on Defence Spending: Armed Forces Budget Will Be Raised to DM 47.9bn Plus Inflation for 4 Years*, Financial Times, 29 August 1994, p.2, LexisNexis

³⁶ Gow, David *Hot Spot for Cold Warriors*, Guardian, 9 July 1993, p.14, LexisNexis

³⁷ Gloannec, Anne-Marie Le "Europe by Other Means?", *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944 -)*, Volume 73, Issue 1 (January 1997), pp.90

³⁸ Laird, Robbin F. "Course Set for NATO Enlargement", *Sea Power*, Volume 40, Issue 7 (July 1997), pp.38-40, ProQuest electronic edition, <http://proquest.umi.com> (hereafter: ProQuest)

³⁹ Oelmeier, Hanspeter "The Defence Budget and Its Investment Share", *Military Technology*, Volume 23, Issue 2 (February 1999), pp.26-30, ProQuest

former NVA legacies. The needs to redefine the missions and strategic concepts of the Bundeswehr and the possible introduction of voluntary service were also significant but seemed less pressing. The annual Bundeswehr conference is an important opportunity to build consensus before actually executing the final decisions of defence policies. The concern of managing the former NVA members and assets originated from the budget burden. As long as the final settlement of disposing of the massive legacy left by the NVA remained incomplete, it deprived resources desperately needed for reconstructing the new Bundeswehr.

The former NVA members could not shape the future Bundeswehr force structure though three of them plus the former GDR Deputy Defence Minister, Mr. Werner Ablass, in the capacity of the Head of the Defence Regional Office in German new länder, were invited to participate in this commanders' conference. Their presence merely served as a symbol of the effort to establish the armed forces' unity.⁴⁰ But despite the fact that it was important in symbolising national unity, it was fortunate that managing the NVA was only a very minor part of the overall defence restructuring process. The ongoing security and defence debate extended to the *raison d'être* of the Bundeswehr and significantly damaged morale and defence management during the first few years after Cold War.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the policies of managing the NVA remained less affected by these political turbulences. It, therefore, could maintain consistency, especially in accepting former NVA members into the Bundeswehr.

The limitation of the size of the Bundeswehr never stopped NVA members applying for continuing service, i.e. whatever the constraints within the Bundeswehr, the NVA members were never the victims. There was an existing move to force reduction around Europe before the CFE and the Two-Plus-Four negotiations were completed. Gorbachev unilaterally initiated the withdrawal and reduction of Soviet forces in Europe. Soon, the GDR jumped on the bandwagon and intentionally used force reduction to seek potential political and diplomatic leverage. It was another of

⁴⁰ Feldmeyer, Karl *Generals Face Open Questions: Commanders' Conference in Bonn*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 9 March 1991, FBIS-WEU-91-068, 9 April 1991, pp.21-22

⁴¹ Whitney, Craig R. *Cold War Past, German Ask Why Army is Still Necessary*, New York Times, 23 June 1992, Section A, p.1, LexisNexis

Honecker's attempts to gain kudos in the coming Vienna conventional arms talks.⁴² At the same time, European countries were requested to take comparable measures,⁴³ while the U.S. responded positively to this force reduction decision.⁴⁴ Western reporters were invited to witness the disbandment of the NVA units.⁴⁵ Spectacular ceremonies occurred and conversion plans of the military were also announced.⁴⁶

Following the GDR political upheaval, the FRG responded with a planned force reduction policy from 495,000 to 400,000.⁴⁷ Actually, simply by shortening the duration of conscript service the Bundeswehr could reduce its size to around 350,000 or even less.⁴⁸ This estimation was indirectly confirmed by Stoltenberg's public statement. He assured military personnel who signed up for longer service period that the force reduction plan would affect them less than the conscripts, due to the low birth rate in certain years.⁴⁹ Therefore, after the Kohl-Gorbachev Caucasus summit that set the limit of the Bundeswehr force scale after reunification, the draconian reduction from 600,000, by adding up the Bundeswehr and the NVA, to 370,000 given by the FRG in the Vienna CFE negotiations were not as dramatic and hard as many people would expect.⁵⁰ It was, however, not an easy task.

It would be very interesting here to review when the NVA started to be viewed as a part of the over-all German force in strategic or security calculations. Another Soviet commentary article published after the Caucasus summit following the same logic mentioned above also indicated that the reduction scale of the Bundeswehr would be a sensational total of almost 250,000. At this moment, the still existing NVA members

⁴² Tomforde, *Anna Berlin Follows Gorbachev on Unilateral Troop Cuts*, Guardian, 24 January 1989, LexisNexis

⁴³ McCartney, Robert J. *East Germany to Reduce its Armed Forces; Honecker Urges Other European States to Consider Similar Cuts*, Washington Post, 24 January 1989, p.A1, LexisNexis

⁴⁴ Goshko, John M. *U.S. Hails East German Plan to Cut Military*, Washington Post, 25 January 1989, p.A16, LexisNexis

⁴⁵ Schmemmann, Serge *Soviet Army, Exiting, Says, 'Come Visit'*, New York Times, 8 May 1989, p.9, LexisNexis

⁴⁶ McCartney, Op Cit

⁴⁷ Gow, David *Bonn Announces Cuts in Troops as Tension Eases*, Guardian, 30 March 1990, LexisNexis

⁴⁸ Riddell, Peter *US Signals Flexibility on Troop Cuts in Europe*, Financial Times, 8 January 1990, p.2, LexisNexis

⁴⁹ Stoltenberg *Comments on Security, Disarmament*, Welt Am Sonntag, 18 March, pp.26-27, FBIS-WEU-90-056, 22 March 1990, pp.8-11

⁵⁰ Chernyshev, Vladimir *Talks on Conventional Forces in Europe*, Tass, 22 August 1990.

were already indisputably viewed as a part of the Bundeswehr in the future.⁵¹ Early on, in a commentary assessing that the military potential of NATO could be strengthened by a united Germany, Soviet commentator Yuriy Solton was the first political observer that simply consecutively listed the Bundeswehr and the NVA altogether.⁵² Likewise, another German article published in *Die Welt* on 18 June 1990 analysed the future armed forces in a united Germany by adding up the Bundeswehr and the NVA and thus concluded a figure of 600,000. Interestingly, the size of a unified German military, 370,000, proposed by this article for the Vienna CFE force reduction negotiations was exactly the same outcome as the Caucasus summit.⁵³ It was a general tendency for commentators to estimate the outcomes of reunification by simply adding figures together. A Chinese commentator had even said "the unification of two Germanys, with a combined population of 80 million and 2,400 billion Deutsche Marks, would surely pose serious political and economic threats against the United States".⁵⁴

Nevertheless, two points may thus be concluded. First, German force reduction was an established fact around reunification day; hence, no one could claim that they have been taken by surprise. Some individuals were unfortunate but this should not be surprising. Second, if force reduction could be achieved solely by natural attrition through shortening the duration of conscription, then its impact would be relatively insignificant. But in reality that was not the case because the force reduction tasks needed to coordinate with organisational restructuring. Force reduction was not simply decreasing manpower. De-mobilisation and conversion followed by force reduction increased the complexity.

In mid-1993, long before manpower was reduced to 370,000 as requested by the

⁵¹ Pustov, Vasilij "Observer's Remarks" rubric: "NATO: Who Is Afraid of What", *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 21 July, 1st Ed, p.5, Western Views on German Unification Assessed, FBIS-SOV-90-143, 25 July 1990, pp.5-6.

⁵² Solton, Yuriy *Commentary*, Moscow Radio Domestic Service, 3 May, Solton Urges, 'Militarily Neutral Germany', FBIS-SOV-90-087, 4 May 1990, p.3.

⁵³ Rühl, Lothar *Ein Staat, eine Armee* (One state, one army), *Die Welt*, 18 June 1990, in Ehlert, von Hans and von Hans-Joachim Beth *Armee ohne Zukunft ~ Das Ende der NVA und die deutsche Einheit - Zeitzeugenberichte und Dokumente (An Armed Force With No Future ~ The Demise of the NVA and German Reunification - Testimonies and Documentations)* Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, December 2002 (hereafter: *Armee ohne Zukunft*), pp.419-421.

⁵⁴ Dezhnev, Zheng *On German Reunification*, Renmin Ribao (People's Daily), 14 December, p.4, Roundup Discusses German Reunification, FBIS-CHI-89-242, 19 December 1989, pp.12-15

international treaty for German reunification, the Planning Working Group of the German Defence Ministry predicted that the Bundeswehr would eventually become understaffed after 1995 because of the drastic increase in the number of conscientious objectors, less suitable young people in the respective age group available for military service, a tendency to further shorten the duration of conscription and a declining number volunteering for longer military service.⁵⁵ Egon Bahr, the prestigious Social Democratic Party security expert and foreign policy strategist as well as a core figure of its leadership, already envisaged this tendency right after the reunification day. He predicted that the force scale of German's immediate neighbouring states would influence a further reduction of the Bundeswehr after 1994. Therefore, he concluded that the 370,000 noted in the treaty would only represent a transitional situation.⁵⁶ The FDP defence expert Juergen Koppelin also noted that a force of 370,000 was "more wishful thinking than reality".⁵⁷ Later in early 1994, it was evident that the size of the Bundeswehr was already fluctuating some 10,000 to 30,000 under the treaty obligation size long before its deadline though Chancellor Kohl was still willing to sustain the Bundeswehr force strength at 370,000.⁵⁸ Before all these manpower issues emerged, the Bundeswehr already completed the absorption of the NVA members. Nevertheless, apart from absorbing and discharging personnel, disposing the NVA military assets later proved consuming more time and resources. Moreover, these NVA legacies may possibly last longer and reach further than anyone can image.

Previous Research

The unique experience of accommodating NVA members into the Bundeswehr was an unprecedented event in history. Unlike the usual situation of disposing of the previously hostile and defeated adversaries after actual fighting; there was no

⁵⁵ *Study Says Bundeswehr facing Personnel Shortage*, Bild Am Sonntag, 2 May, FBIS-WEU-93-084, 4 May 1993, p.21

⁵⁶ *Carnegie Endowment for Peace Breakfast Discussion, "New Political and Security Arrangement for Europe"*, Address by: Egon Bahr, Member, German Bundestag, and Chairman, Subcommittee on Disarmament and Arms Control of the Foreign Affairs Committee, Washington, D.C., News Makers & Policy Makers, Federal News Service, 19 October 1990, LexisNexis

⁵⁷ *German Defence Minister Refuses to Name Planned Army Size*, United Press International, 15 March 1994, LexisNexis

⁵⁸ *Defends European Military Defence Role*, DDP/ADN, 5 February, FBIS-WEU-94-025, 7 February 1994, p.18

large-scale armed conflict between the NVA and the Bundeswehr. Although they had been politically hostile and had sustained a military stalemate for several decades, neither side had ever conducted any military manoeuvre causing bloodshed to the other. Each side could only acquire a general understanding of its adversary from its political leaders and allies.⁵⁹

Researching the disposal of the Nationale Volksarmee after German reunification is by no means *terra incognita*. Many academics have worked on different aspects. Inevitably, most were German academics or military personnel from both the Bundeswehr and the NVA who had been associated with this event. Memoirs written by many key actors in the process were important sources providing first-hand information on decision-making. They were, however, definitely not neutral because they were defending decisions the authors made at that time.⁶⁰ Some personal perspectives provided by less influential individuals were also invaluable for seeking the truth from different directions. Several Bundeswehr official research institutions or think tanks such as SOWI - Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr (Bundeswehr Social Science Research Institute), AIK - Akademie der Bundeswehr für Information und Kommunikation (Bundeswehr Academy for Information and Communications) and MGFA - Militärgeschichtliches Forschungamt (Military History Research Institute) devoted enormous efforts to preserve the historical records of this task and eventually contributed significant publications that contained detailed references as well as valuable insights.

Another Bundeswehr institution, Landesverband Ost, Deutscher Bundeswehrverband (Association of Bundeswehr Personnel - Regional Office East), represents the personnel concerned and is also an enthusiastic and significant contributor to the presenting of facts about the NVA as well as the process of accommodating NVA members into the Bundeswehr. Landesverband Ost absorbed a significant number of former NVA members into its organisation after reunification. Therefore, the focus of its publications, notably four workgroup papers, about the former NVA itself and its

⁵⁹ See Scheven, Werner von *Forward* in Zilian, 1999, Op. Cit, p.ix "*as a West German professional soldier, I was restricted from East Germany. How I envied my American colleagues who could travel there and how I wished also to go, at least into East Berlin, the capital city.*" and p. x "*Both armies in Germany never had contact ...Not even once, for example, did a military band visit the other side.*"

⁶⁰ According to Herspring, "*Some of the statements in the various memoirs are contradictory, and all*

members who were subsequently accepted by the Bundeswehr or converted to civilian society are quite different from many publications presented by the Bundeswehr's academic research institutions.⁶¹ These workgroup papers represented different perspectives and persistently address issues such as the legality of using "a. D.", *außer Dienst* (meaning "retired" from military service) by former NVA personnel, which the FRG Defence Ministry still forbids. Many articles originating from these workgroup papers are simply the efforts made by former NVA members to clarify some biased comments in other publications to defend the reputation of the vanished NVA.

Two publications in German that functioned as well as a search engine on the Internet should be mentioned here. *Armee Ohne Zukunft*, sponsored by the Bundeswehr MGFA - Militärgeschichtliches Forschungamt (Military History Research Institute) provides extremely detailed references to documentation and chronology as well as information on, and the testimonies of, key actors.⁶² *Was war die NVA?*, a Landesverband Ost publication contains a massive collection of different articles as well as the most complete bibliography, a well-categorised and organised list of 522 publications, relating to the NVA and the task of incorporating it with the Bundeswehr after reunification.⁶³ For anyone with research interest in this segment of human history, these two publications should be their first texts.

Only two memoirs written by major actors in this event have been translated from the German, General Schönbohm's *Zwei Armeen und ein Vaterland* into English and Admiral Hoffmann's *Das Letzte Kommando* into Chinese.⁶⁴ Also, only two Bundeswehr senior officers involved in disbanding NVA personnel ever publicly

are self-serving". See Herspring, 1998, Op Cit, p.9

⁶¹ See publications published by Landesverband Ost, Deutscher BundeswehrVerband, noted in the bibliography under Deutscher BundeswehrVerband Publication, *Arbeitsgruppe Geschichte der NVA und integration ehemaliger NVA - Angehöriger in Gesellschaft und Bundeswehr beim Landesvorstand Ost des DBwV Information (Workgroup Paper on NVA History and the Integration of former NVA Members into Bundeswehr and Society, for the Landesvorstand Ost des DBwV)*

⁶² *Armee ohne Zukunft*, Op Cit., see note 53.

⁶³ Deutscher BundeswehrVerband Publication, *Was war die NVA? ~ Studien - Analysen - Berichte, Zur Geschichte der Nationalen Volksarmee, Arbeitsgruppe Geschichte der NVA und integration ehemaliger NVA - Angehöriger in Gesellschaft und Bundeswehr beim Landesvorstand Ost des DBwV (What was the NVA? ~ Study - Analysis - Reports for the History of the Nationale Volksarmee by Workgroup on NVA History and the Integration of former NVA Members into Bundeswehr and Society, for the Landesvorstand Ost des DBwV)* Berlin: Offsetdruckerei Gerhard Weinert GmbH and Landesverband Ost, Deutscher BundeswehrVerband, 2001, pp.794-824

⁶⁴ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit, and Hoffmann, 1993, Chinese translation, 2001, Op Cit

released their views in foreign language before their mission was officially completed. Brigadier General Hans-Peter von Kirchbach, commander of Heimatschutzbrigade (Home Defence Brigade) 41, stationed in Eggesin in 1991, in his *Reflections of the Growing Together of the German Armed Forces*, published in February 1992, provided much important information along with his personal perspectives about this process.⁶⁵ Kirchbach fairly described many features that the Bundeswehr encountered in the takeover. Most importantly, he does not allow anything to influence his judgment on former NVA personnel. On the contrary, he pointed out some characteristics of the former East German army that would be positive factors in future German armed forces. His attitude may convince people that the Bundeswehr did exercise a "German to German" mentality when accommodating former NVA military as their comrades.⁶⁶

Soon after Kirchbach's paper was released by the US Army War College, General Werner von Scheven, the former Deputy Commander of the Eastern Federal Armed Forces Command (BKO) and the Commanding General of the Eastern Corps and Territorial Command, gave his perspectives in "*The Merger of Two Formerly Hostile German Armies*", in *Aussenpolitik*. Von Scheven described very concisely and straightforwardly the situations of both the NVA and the Bundeswehr in 1989 to 1990. Reconciliation and transformation efforts made in the integration process were discussed in his paper. He also covered all aspects of interest to the general public and matters of concern to the security observers, including the management of the former NVA members and also of its military hardware and installations.⁶⁷

Given such a huge number of German publications regarding the NVA itself and the process of disposing of the GDR defence establishment after reunification, it is impractical to mention any individual German research. But two features of these publications are noteworthy. First, many included extensive and valuable statistics that provided solid factual evidence. This, however, does not mean that their

⁶⁵ von Kirchbach, Hans-Peter *Reflections of the Growing Together of the German Armed Forces*. Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 14 February 1992

⁶⁶ Similar mindset can also be seen in von Kirchbach, Hans-Peter, Manfred Meyers and Victor Vogt *Abenteuer Einheit: Zum Aufbau der Bundeswehr in den neuen Ländern*. Frankfurt am Main: Report, 1992

⁶⁷ von Scheven, Werner "The Merger of Two Formerly Hostile German Armies", *Aussenpolitik* (English Edition) Vol. 43 No. 2 (II/1992), pp.164-173.

conclusions were totally neutral. Many authors originated from the Bundeswehr or the NVA, so some bias, therefore, could not be totally excluded. Political convictions adopted during the Cold War era led to some unconscious conclusions or prejudices. Some writings contained impulsive and instinctive statements defending collective reputations. Even those with no military background were not totally free from a tendency to preserve previous beliefs. And many of these subjective arguments affected policies toward the NVA after reunification. "Auflösen - ohne Rest", an editorial comment by Günter Gillessen in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on 25 July 1990, is an index of the debate surrounding the disposal of the NVA.⁶⁸ The debates continued within the Bundeswehr, many of which appeared openly in the media.⁶⁹

Even after the basic disposal of the NVA legacy was settled, two articles that appeared in consecutive issues of *Aussenpolitik* would show how hard it is to see the reality and to build a consensus on relative policies. Gunter Holzweissig, Director of the West Berlin section of the All-German Institute and a leading authority on political developments in the GDR, retains a positive assessment of the NVA in his article, *The National People's Army After the Upheaval in the GDR*. Holzweissig believed the on-going political transformation in the GDR and military reform in the NVA would facilitate future integration between the two German armed forces.⁷⁰ But Michael J. Inacker, a former policy planning member in the Bonn Defence Ministry, speculated about the validity and effectiveness of the depoliticized efforts of the NVA leadership before unification. Inacker's articles revealed a clear reluctance to accept the integration of former NVA members into the Bundeswehr though he admitted there were some officers and soldiers who made positive contributions by guarding the ammunition and weapons depots in the unification process. Inacker urged the Bundeswehr to separate the wheat from the chaff among the remaining NVA members and to avoid indiscriminate condemnation.⁷¹ These analyses are good examples of the

⁶⁸ Abenheim, Donald "German Unity and Military Professionalism: The Officer Corps of the German Armed Forces Confronts the Legacy of the Nationale Volksarmee, November 1989 - January 1993." in Wetzel, David and Theodore S. Hamerow (ed.) *International Politics and Germany History: The Past Informs the Present*, Westport: Praeger, 1997, pp.112-113

⁶⁹ Herspring, 1998, Op Cit, pp.131-2 and p.233, notes 90 to 94.

⁷⁰ Holzweissig, Gunter "The National People's Army After the Upheaval in the GDR", *Aussenpolitik* (English Edition) Vol. 41 No. 1 (IV/1990), pp.399-404

⁷¹ Inacker, Michael J. "A Real People's Army After Six Months? Legends and Truths about the National People's Army After the Upheaval in the GDR", *Aussenpolitik* (English Edition) Vol. 42 No. 1

subjective nature of much German discussion of the NVA integration process.

Second, it is hard to find any attempt to establish an academic model based on the German experiences gained from the process of disposing of the NVA. In fact, a general model, "Typical Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme", presented by a German research institute - Bonn International Centre for Conversion, had already been adopted by scholars for interpreting the process happened in South Africa before.⁷² Many German researchers identified a significant number of valuable conclusions but showed no desire to adopt them as a basis to establish or modify a research model. Nevertheless, the case of disposing of the NVA may be a paradigm for future cases. This possibility will be considered in the conclusion of this study.

Research interest in this topic from foreign researchers was limited but worth a brief review. Professor Herspring, the Head of Political Science at Kansas State University, was the first scholar to produce a book in English specifically addressing the integration of the NVA and the Bundeswehr. As a leading expert on East German affairs, he gave a neutral analysis of the external and internal factors that affected the situation within the NVA from the upheaval of the GDR in late 1989 until its final destination was decided just before reunification in and the subsequent integration process. In his book, *Requiem for an Army*, Herspring focused on the depoliticised efforts made by the GDR political leaders and the NVA itself before unification. The alterations and frictions in the politico-military relationship between senior NVA and civilian defence leaders influenced some unification negotiations that determined the future of NVA personnel. Although another respected academic disagrees, Herspring has persistently defended that his view as academically neutral and valid, especially concerning the positive contributions made by the NVA to German unification by refusing to use force to maintain a regime which had lost public support and instead facilitate democratic transformation in the former GDR.⁷³ Although Herspring's

(I/1991), pp.31-36

⁷² Figure 1: *Demobilisation Model* in Shelton, Garth et. al. *Demobilisation and Its Aftermath I - A Profile of South Africa's Demobilised Military Personnel*, Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, August 2001, pp.65 and <http://www.bicc.de/demobil/brief4/graph.gif>

⁷³ Fulbrook, Mary, *Book review of Herspring, Requiem for an Army: the Demise of the East German Military*, in *Slavic Review*, Volume 60, Issue 1 (Spring 2001), p.157-158. Also see the response to the book review from Herspring, *Letter to the editor, Slavic Review*, Volume 60, Issue 3 (Autumn 2001), p.700 and Fulbrook, Mary "Letter for Hersping's response", *Slavic Review*, Volume 60, Issue 3 (Autumn 2001), pp.700-701.

viewpoint is based on a counter-factual assumption, his arguments are still reflected by the tragedy that happened in Tienanmen Square. Even if some unanswered mysteries remain about the causes of some events related in Herspring's book, it is still a key source for those interested in and willing to explore the unusual process of German unification.

Dr. Frederick Zilian, Jr., a distinguished faculty member at the United States Naval War College and a retired U.S. Army officer, provided much valuable materials in his book, *From Confrontation to Cooperation: The Takeover of the National People's (East German) Army by the Bundeswehr*. Herspring, in his capacity as expert and author on this topic, gave his wholehearted support to the academic excellence of this masterpiece.⁷⁴ Lester W. Grau of the Foreign Military Studies Office, US Army Command and Staff College, viewed Zilian's work as an excellent companion to Herspring's book.⁷⁵ Zilian mainly studied the key decisions made by Bundeswehr officials that assured the satisfactory outcomes of the integration process. All actions of the Bundeswehr personnel involved are carefully examined. Many first-hand official documents that determined policies, directives, rules, codes and regulations about the integration and selection of former NVA personnel into the Bundeswehr are reviewed. A separate chapter on military hardware and facilities, though quite concise, covers matters that less concerned by Herspring. Zilian's research mainly focuses on the integration process of the former NVA land forces. It is a sensible decision because, as Zilian says in his book, the land force component was the dominant portion of the overall NVA force structure, which is compatible with Zilian's military expertise.⁷⁶ It also leaves room for other researchers to explore this integration process further, based on the solid foundation of Zilian's research.

Zilian's book is based on his Ph.D. dissertation. Likewise, Charles Steele, in his Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the University of West Virginia at Morgantown in 2000, examined mainly the interactions within the German armed forces.⁷⁷ He adopts a

⁷⁴ Herspring, Dale R., Book Review on "From Confrontation to Cooperation", *Journal of Military History*, Volume 64, Issue 3 (July 2000), pp.912-914

⁷⁵ Grau, Lester W., Book Review on "From Confrontation to Cooperation", *Military Review*, Volume 81, Issue 5 (September/October 2001), pp.116-117

⁷⁶ Zilian, 1999, Op. Cit., p.3

⁷⁷ Steele, Charles Anson *Brother in Arms: Case Studies of Officer and NCO Integration in the New States of the Federal Republic of Germany*, unpublished thesis, Morgantown: University of West

straightforward structure to provide background understanding of the NVA and the Bundeswehr then discusses the integration process directly. The integration process was not only conducted in the geographical territory of the former German Democratic Republic because the Bundeswehr very quickly realised that confining the integration process to the former GDR territory might cause negative consequences. Nevertheless, most major tasks were undertaken there.⁷⁸ Steele's dissertation helps people in understanding that many external factors influenced key policies employed in the integration process.

Several publications that explicitly addressed narrower issues related to this topic include important reference materials. Colonel Mark E. Victorson, United States Army, published his research, *Mission In The East: The Building of an Army in a Democracy in the New German States* through the United States Naval War College in June 1994. Victorson's research centred on how did "Innere Führung" act in this integration process. A major task of the Bundeswehr was introducing former NVA personnel to civic education for military professionals. The impact of Innere Führung on the former socialist armed forces is carefully examined, which makes it a vital source for every researcher interested in this integration process. Innere Führung should not be viewed as a rigid political philosophy. It is a political ideal that needs to adapt to changing external environments and internal conditions the military may encounter. It is a collective effort to secure democratic values in the modern German armed forces. Therefore, it is a very important factor in the reunification process.⁷⁹

Professor Donald Abenheim, a faculty member of National Security Affairs at the US Naval Post-Graduate School, Monterey, California, and Research Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, contributed "*German Unity and Military Professionalism: The Officer Corps of the German Armed Forces Confronts the*

Virginia, 2000.

⁷⁸ Clarke, Douglas L. "From Soldiers to Insurance Salesmen: The End of the NVA", *Report on the East Europe*, Volume 1, Issue 38 (September 21, 1990), p.33, "Stoltenberg has ruled out transferring former NVA officers and NCOs into Bundeswehr units outside the former GDR, at least during the first few years following unification". See also von Kirchbach, 1992, Op Cit, p.27, "Reassignments from the West to the East must not be a one-way street. We must achieve an "exchange of blood" as quickly as possible from the West to the East and vice versa. This is the only way to avoid establishing two different armies within the Bundeswehr".

⁷⁹ Victorson, Mark E. *Mission in the East: The Building of an Army in a Democracy in New German States*, Newport Paper No. 7, Newport: U.S. Naval War College, June 1994, pp.37-39

Legacy of the Nationale Volksarmee, November 1989 - January 1993." to *International Politics and Germany History: The Past Informs the Present*, edited by Wetzel and Hamerow and published in 1997.⁸⁰ With his expertise in German military culture and author of *Reforming the Iron Cross*, Abenheim focused on the debates within the Bundeswehr and the Federal Republic of Germany about the management policies of the former NVA personnel.⁸¹ The reconciliation process from different perspectives influenced the decisions of the integration process. The interactions between these two different military cultures are analysed in Abenheim's essay. For anyone involved in the integration process, acceptance and understanding were the crucial criteria for achieving success. In Abenheim's essay, all opinions are examined. Some lessons learned from previous German military history become references for the feasibility and rationality of the treatment of former NVA members. Abenheim's contribution opens up consideration of the frictions between two existing military cultures. Former NVA members struggled to cope with new military procedures introduced by the Bundeswehr to secure their future careers. Actually, in January 1991, Abenheim had already prepared an internal report which addressed the integration of NVA members by the Bundeswehr for the US Navy Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel.⁸² Some assessments were made but no substantial conclusion was available since final outcomes of the process were not yet completed.

Captain Kenneth S. Kilimnik, a reserve officer of the Judge Advocate General's Corps, United States Army, in his well-structured essay, *Germany's Army After Reunification: The Merging of The Nationale Volksarmee into the Bundeswehr, 1990 - 1994*, provided some invaluable insights, mainly related to the legal and judicial concerns of the integration process. Although the integration process of the NVA into the Bundeswehr was chiefly directed by realistic political decisions and driven by pragmatic necessities, all the measures adopted are bound by international and domestic judicial arrangements. Without knowing these judicial constraints, we cannot judge the legitimacy and justice of many controversial issues in the integration process and further developments in the Bundeswehr itself. Kilimnik's research

⁸⁰ Abenheim, 1997, Op Cit., pp.103-125

⁸¹ Abenheim, Donald *Reforming the Iron Cross: The Search for Tradition in the German Armed Force*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988.

⁸² Abenheim, Donald *German Soldier and German Unity: Political Foundations of the German Armed Forces*, A report prepared for the CNO Executive Panel, United States Navy, Monterey: US Naval

provided a suitable springboard for conducting further research upon this aspect. But Kilimnik is by no means the pioneer in this aspect. As he noted, an article by Rolf Thiemann had already addressed the legal framework for the former NVA personnel who joined the Bundeswehr.⁸³ Other than academic analyses, there were many reports and commentaries that appeared in various foreign media but neither their scope nor their depth could match the serious academic publications described above.

Scope

In summary, although scholars have contributed enormous efforts, facts have not been surveyed and examined completely. Previous researchers have already clarified many misleading reports, which saved a latecomer a huge amount of time and research expenses. Issues in this process can still be explored further. Bartholomeu Dias's exploration did not stop Vasco da Gama's efforts; Christopher Columbus's discovery did not end the aspiration of Amerigo Vespucci and Ferdinand Magellan. The possibility of extending research on this topic still exists although some approaches, such as interviews or other social surveys, have already become less practicable because memories fade. Furthermore, the ethics of tracing NVA members who joined the Bundeswehr after so many years is arguably inappropriate. It can be viewed as continuing harassment.

The author conducted interviews with German military personnel, both former NVA professionals as well as Bundeswehr officers, yet no significant and firm conclusions could be drawn from them. These meetings were both inspirational and educational. The author started with a general interest in matters concerning the accommodation of former NVA members into the Bundeswehr at the beginning of German reunification in the early 1990s. More than ten years after reunification, it became clear that this methodology was not adequate to produce sufficient depth of analysis for the study any more.

Post-Graduate School, January 1991.

⁸³ Thiemann, Rolf *Die ehemaligen Soldaten der Nationale Volksarmee und ihre Rechtsverhältnisse zum Dienstherrn Bundesrepublik Deutschland (The Former Soliders of the NVA and their Legal Relationship to Their Service Employer, The Federal Republic of Germany)* in *Neue Zeitschrift für Wehrrecht (New Journal for Military Law)*, Volume 35, No. 4 (1993), p.147-168, in Kilimnik, Kenneth S. "Germany's Army After Reunification: The Merging of The Nationale Volksarmee into the

After initial assessments and surveys, the author concluded that the focus of previous efforts mainly concentrated on issues of the disposal of previous NVA members. It is no surprise that the amalgamation into the same military structure of two different armed forces composed of people who originally share a common culture but who were trapped by a wider international political agenda, the Cold War, which caused hostility between them, attracted more researchers' interest. On the other hand, less effort had been allocated to explore the decision-making process of this matter as well as the problem of the disposal of military assets other than personnel. Disposing the legacy of the Nationale Volksarmee was unpremeditated, unprecedented and almost unexpected. The problems involved were originally over-optimistically assessed but the Bundeswehr tackled them with some success in the initial phase of German reunification. The author would like to argue that the halo effect of the apparent success of disposing of the NVA personnel at this stage unbalanced and distorted perceptions of all the dimensions of the issue as a whole.

As mentioned already, disposing the former NVA personnel was not the only problem that the Bundeswehr needed to solve after the Cold War. The disposal task itself was, at most, an initial phase of the evolving German defence restructuring process. The significance of the task was magnified by comments given by the FRG political and military leadership. The question of the disposal of the NVA is often addressed from too limited a perspective. Analysts concentrate on solving the problems of integration of personnel. This is held to be a great success story as it supposedly played a major role in facilitating the whole process of national reintegration. However, this gives a misleading impression of the degree of success of the whole process. It both overrates the importance of the NVA question in reunification and underrates the real problems faced in the various dimensions of NVA disposal other than accommodating personnel.

Therefore, the author took an unorthodox approach to his research. The scope of this study is by no means comprehensive but a compromise between research quality, academic originality and task attainability balanced by resource affordability and the

Bundeswehr, 1990 - 1994", *Military Law Review*, Vol. 145, Summer 1994, pp.114-115, note 5

researcher's personal ability. Purposely, selective engagement with some aspects of this event that attracted less attention from previous researchers has been pursued in order to observe the whole issue from various new angles. The objective of this study is to re-examine the significance of managing the NVA in the German reunification process from fresh angles. In this study, the author would like to further explore the political debate on the future of the NVA before reunification day. A critique will be offered of the decision-making of the last GDR Disarmament and Defence Minister as well as an analysis of the disposal of the NVA legacies after reunification. This will clarify the true significance of the task. An attempt will be made to provide a more objective analysis than those which have previously appeared. The study will be presented thus.

Chapter one, the introduction, will provide general information giving readers a basic understanding of the NVA itself and the historical account of the event. Previous research will also be outlined in this chapter.

Chapters two and three will be devoted to decision-making before reunification. Chapter two will look at different political propositions expressed by various parties in order to assess what political signals were delivered and how different states weighed the importance of the NVA issue in their individual political or strategic calculations. How did the actors, mainly those in the GDR defence authority, perceive and judge these political signals and what kind of actions had been taken by the decision-making system to cope with these inputs. Extended from the analysis in Chapter two, Chapter three will further explore how relevant actors subsequently made decisions after receiving certain external inputs. On what basis, mainly the sources of the information, were these decisions made? The rationality of the decision-makers can thus be better assessed. To a certain extent, the value framework of the major actors is reflected by the analyses in Chapters two and three.

Chapters four, five and six will focus on the processes and characteristics of disposing of the NVA assets. All NVA legacies other than personnel will be discussed in these three chapters. Much of the previous research has already focused on converting the NVA members into civilian society or into the Bundeswehr regular service but less effort has been devoted to exploring the significance of disposing of the military

assets though some detailed transfer statistics and records were officially made with predictable German precision. No attempt will be made in these three chapters to review all these records. Several cases will be studied in these chapters in order to identify the subsequent impact caused by absorbing, converting, transferring, reselling or demolishing these assets. Many seemingly trivial but actually interesting cases will also be noted because they may illuminate military conversion tasks.

Chapter seven will conclude this study by examining some generally perceived features of accommodating the former NVA members into the Bundeswehr in order to reinforce a viewpoint repeatedly addressed - realities can be very different from prior predictions and general perceptions. Furthermore, the gap between truth and conviction may eventually undermine the fairness of judging the historical significance. A further examination of the task's actual significance in Chapter seven will show that facts were occasionally partly, perhaps merely instinctively, understood by the general public and actually there is no solid and objective ground for certain expectations or judgments. The value of this unprecedented and unparalleled German experience, particularly to other nations or armed forces, will also be commented on in the concluding chapter.

Chapter Two

Perceptions, Judgments, Decisions and Actions

The political ramifications of disposing of the NVA after German reunification will be discussed in this chapter. Basically, there were several key security and military aspects such as united German membership of NATO, the size and character of the armed forces appropriate for a unified Germany and NATO strategy and policy for German reunification. Nevertheless, the chapter will only focus on factors that had directly influenced the future of the NVA after reunification; other key issues such as Soviet acceptance of German NATO membership, have already been thoroughly studied by numerous researchers.

Two criteria will be used to examine the rationality of policy. First, all the political propositions should satisfy the general principles of logic, especially the chain of causation between themselves and the objectives to be achieved. Second, the political propositions ought to be in line with objective realities. Although they may be based on the originators' subjective judgments and expectations, it is impractical to expect all others involved will naturally follow the value framework unless the originating party possesses dominant power, which assures an invincible position in political bargaining. Compatibility between actual strength and expected objectives, therefore, is vital.

These policy propositions are worth examining because they reflect the importance of managing the NVA to accommodate differing political requirements. In general, efforts made in political reconciliation should reflect the importance of the objectives concerned. The seriousness of political statements also indicates the importance of the specific political manoeuvre. Consequently, by examining such policy statements, propositions and arguments, we should get a better understanding of to whom and how the task of disposing of the NVA is important. Major actors within the decision-making mechanism in all likelihood believed that they were magicians, the only ones who could understand the tricks of the game. Alternatively, the political commentators saw themselves as coaches of judo or wrestling players, who have a

better overview than the players who were tussling together all the time, thus limiting their vision. Nonetheless, the realities prove self-justification and self-satisfaction are the aliases of self-delusion and self-deception.

Perspectives From Nations Other than Two German States

Amongst all the nations involved in the settlement of the German issue, the Soviet Union was the first to demand a limitation on the size of the armed forces in a united Germany. Oleg A. Grinevsky, the Chief Soviet delegate at the Conventional Arms Reduction Talks, initially disclosed this Soviet official stance thus: "the size of a reunified Germany's forces must be settled at the reunification talks", (i.e. the Two-plus-Four meeting), at a news conference on 15th March 1990 in Geneva. The Soviet Union clearly wanted to put the size of German armed forces high on the agenda of negotiating German reunification and eventually as a part of the final agreement though it was never mentioned when the "Two-plus-Four" formula was agreed a month before, in Ottawa.⁸⁴ Although the Soviet Union wanted to see a demilitarised Germany, the Russians fully understood the sensitivity of repeating the errors created by the Treaty of Versailles. Before formal diplomatic negotiation of German reunification was started, Andrey Grachev, a key advisor of Mikhail Gorbachev, advocated that the attempt should not be made in an isolated situation but in the more general context of an overall European demilitarisation process.⁸⁵

Several comments specifically concerning the future of the Nationale Volksarmee appeared in various Soviet media. In February 1990, before the GDR democratic election, an article published by Izvestiya noted the willingness of NVA members to serve in the Bundeswehr.⁸⁶ Another comment in April 1990 clearly excluded the possibility of any future military friction between the Bundeswehr and the NVA but in the meantime the media started to ask "what will be the relationship between the FRG and the GDR Armed Force?" as well as "In a united Germany, where will draftees be

⁸⁴ Lewis, Paul *Soviets Propose Reduction in Armed Forces of United Germany*, New York Times, Section A, p.8, 16 March 1990 LexisNexis

⁸⁵ *Grachev on German Unity Without Military Danger*, AFP, 19 February, FBIS-SOV-90-036, 22 February 1990, p.17

⁸⁶ Guk, S. and Ye. Korolev *On Both Sides of the Berlin Wall. Which Does Not Effectively Separate Anyone Anymore*, second / final part, Izvestiya, 18 February, p.5, Izvestiya Assesses GDR Opposition

sent for their military service?".⁸⁷ Neither any probable answer nor attention to these questions had ever been given, which probably indicated that there was lack of genuine interest in it.

Among numerous Soviet commentaries of future security arrangements after German reunification and German NATO membership, the NVA was generally viewed as insignificant or ignored completely. Only one article, written by Major General Geli Viktorovich Batenin, military expert of the Soviet Union Communist Party (CPSU) Central Committee, gave the NVA serious consideration in the overall strategic calculations; subsequently some assessment of the NVA's status in the future was addressed. Two key points, "the Bundeswehr, being part of NATO's United Armed Forces, will remain within the boundaries of the Western part of a united Germany. In the Eastern part, the National People's Army will continue to exist, however, it will no longer be under the operational control of the United Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact" and "A nonaligned army will develop on the basis of the National People's Army, which is subject only to national control" were insisted upon by General Batenin as basic principles of disposing of the NVA. In addition, Batenin also weighed the influence of the NVA in any future power reshuffling process by arguing "As a result, the military-strategic balance will be considerably upset in this region" as well as "It will be caused by membership in NATO (even mere political membership) of the future Germany and the weakening of the organisation of the Warsaw Pact, which partly results from the elimination of the National People's Army from its operational control".⁸⁸ Nevertheless, General Batenin's perspective was not the central theme of the strategic calculations taken by the Soviet leadership.

Only on a few rare occasions did members of the Soviet political or military leadership specifically address the fate of the NVA. Soviet Defence Minister, Marshal Dmitriy Yazov, elucidated the Soviet standpoint concerning the NVA in May 1990 thus: "As for your quite legitimate interest in the future of the East German army in a united Germany, the decision here is the prerogative of the East German government.

Forces, FBIS-SOV-90-06, 22 February 1990, pp.18-20

⁸⁷ Bovkun, Ye. *Germany Between East and West*, Izvestiya, 2 April, Morning Ed., p.3, Europeans Concerned About United Germany, FBIS-SOV-90-063, 2 April 1990, pp.32-33

⁸⁸ Batenin, Geli Viktorovich *Preferred Variety: All of Germany in NATO*, Berliner Zeitung, 4 May, p.3, German Unification, FBIS-SOV-90-090, 9 May 1990, pp.2-4

Although I must say that we are not indifferent to the way it will be solved". The Soviet stance was clear: the USSR would not intervene in this matter by taking the risk of challenging others' sovereign rights. Nevertheless, Marshal Yazov also highlighted the basis of Soviet policy by emphasising "It is obvious that such a major component of the Warsaw Pact must not become a part of NATO. I would like to draw your attention to the specific approach of Western politicians to this dilemma".⁸⁹ This implied that certain space for manoeuvring would be tacitly granted in the future. The Soviet stance was so obvious that only the size of the German armed forces after reunification was discussed: whether it would contain the members of the NVA seemed totally outside the Soviets' agenda.

The fate of the NVA was not a factor in U.S. strategic calculations of German reunification either. From various relevant sources within executive and legislative branches of the US government, the basic concern in the mid-1990s, before the negotiation was completely settled, was responding to the Soviets request for a limitation on the size of German forces after reunification. In a congressional testimony given by William Taft, U.S. Representative to NATO, during a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on the future of NATO in February 1990, concern that a larger Bundeswehr might become a sensitive concern of the Soviet Union was mentioned.⁹⁰ About the same time, a U.S. scholar David Newsom, Director of Georgetown Centre for Diplomacy, noticed reports regarding the gradual disintegration of the NVA. Newsom made a daring guess about future military arrangements in Germany by arguing it was "not inconceivable that the Soviets would see a maintenance of Germany in NATO with Western, with US and German forces in what is now West Germany, without necessarily building another comparable German military force in the East, but maintaining their own troops there". Newsom also believed that in essence it would be "a question the Germans have got to sort out" but the best advice he could give was "a non-NATO portion of Germany".⁹¹ It was quite

⁸⁹ *Marshal Yazov Puts Some Questions to NATO*, APN Press Release, 9 May, Yazov Questions NATO Cuts, Unified Germany, FBIS-SOV-90-102, 25 May 1990, pp.5-6

⁹⁰ *The Future of NATO*, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Chaired by: Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI), Capitol Hill Hearing, Federal News Service, 9 February 1990, LexisNexis

⁹¹ *Eastern Europe And The Transatlantic Relationship*, George Washington University Seminar, David Newsom, Director, Georgetown Centre For Diplomacy, Williams Lewis, Professor of Political Science, George Washington University, Washington, D.C., News Makers & Policy Makers, Federal News Service, 15 February 1990, LexisNexis

clear, as many political observers had already noticed, that the NVA had become an insignificant chip in any future power game.

Nevertheless, the US basic stance was against any arrangement that singularised the military force scale of the FRG and treated it as a prerequisite of German unification.⁹² Soviet attempts to put the size and role of the Bundeswehr in a unified Germany into the agenda of the Two-Plus-Four negotiation were firmly declined by the Bush administration.⁹³ The US government emphasised that it fully respected the Germans' sovereign rights, especially, after the renunciation of Four Power rights on Germany, which was a legacy left over from World War II and indeed a precondition for German reunification. The White House believed that the size of a unified German force, therefore, should be an integral issue within the context of the comprehensive European force reduction negotiation and decided by the FRG itself, though the US leadership unquestionably perceived the Soviet concern.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, the concern of the US administration only focused on the size of the German force after reunification, not a single word relating to the possibility of integrating the NVA was ever mentioned.⁹⁵

On the other hand, the US was already aware of a tendency towards a smaller Bundeswehr, from the 20% force reduction unilaterally announced by the FRG in early 1990.⁹⁶ This implied that Soviet expectations and the concern of all neighbouring countries around these two German states could be easily reached without US open and active intervention. Within the US congressional internal discussions, the US clearly comprehended the danger of a Versailles II syndrome among the German population, stimulated by an arrangement, which singularised the

⁹² *Bush-Gorbachev Summit*, White House Background Briefing, Attribution: Senior Administration Official, From the White House, Federal News Service, 29 May 1990, LexisNexis

⁹³ *Arms Control Issues*, White House Background Briefing, Senior Administration Official, White House Briefing Room, From the White House, Federal News Service, 22 May, LexisNexis. According to testimony given by US State Secretary James Baker, congressional hearing March 1990, the role and size of a united German force seemed an issue to be discussed through the Two-Plus-Four mechanism. The US stance later altered. See *Foreign Operations Appropriations*, US Congressional Hearing Record, Hearing of the Foreign Operations Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee, 1 March 1990, Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service.

⁹⁴ *Record of White House Media Briefing*, 05/30/90 5-1, From the White House, Federal News Service, 30 May 1990, LexisNexis

⁹⁵ *Arms Control Issues*, 22 May 1990, Op Cit.

⁹⁶ *Reorienting Defence in the 1990's*, U.S. Congressional Record - Senate, 101st Cong. 2nd Sess., 136 Cong Rec S4056, Vol. 136, No. 41, 5 April 1990, LexisNexis

size of a unified German force. This stance was clearly expressed to the US by Chancellor Kohl and Minister Genscher.⁹⁷ But a US expert, Andreas Zumach, international security correspondent for the German media *Die Tages Zeitung*, successfully predicted in his congressional testimony that it could be solved by a voluntarily declaration of force scale by the FRG. This actually happened later in the Kohl-Gorbachev summit in July 1990. The possibility of absorbing the former NVA members into a unified German force was a point of interest in policy discussion but was never serious enough to warrant a policy statement.⁹⁸ Moreover, in June, 1990, the U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, after his discussion with the GDR Foreign Minister Markus Meckel on the external aspects of German reunification during the ministerial Two-Plus-Four meeting in Berlin, openly emphasised that all so-called politico-military problems, including German NATO membership, German military force levels after reunification and the arrangement of Soviet withdrawal, would be better discussed in international fora rather than at Two-Plus-Four meetings.⁹⁹

It seemed that, in the American perspective, how to manage the NVA was virtually an internal affair that should be decided between the two German states themselves. In 1991, in the nomination review of the new US Ambassador to Germany, when the US senate was questioned on US interests in the FRG that related to almost every dimension of German society and its relationship with neighbouring countries after reunification, not a single word was mentioned about the task of merging the NVA members, though the attitude of German citizens in eastern Germany towards the US was a centre of attention in this process. Inquiries concerning the German military were still focused on the size of the Bundeswehr and its relationship to NATO.¹⁰⁰ After reunification, the task of absorbing NVA forces had no relevance to US relations

⁹⁷ Kohl clearly elaborated the FRG stance on the size of the German force raised in the post Bush-Kohl summit press conference in June 1990 thus: "*The strength of the future German army is not a private matter to be decided only by the Germans. It's a question, which is of enormous importance for the overall security configuration of Europe. And I'm strictly against any going it alone by the Germans - the Germans steering a single or separate course. ... And that is to say which is connected with the Vienna negotiations, and we, the Germans, are ready to participate in a reasonable solution for the future*". See *Questions and Answers with President Bush and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl Following their Dinner Meeting at the White House, Washington, D.C.*, 8 June 1990, Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service

⁹⁸ *News Makers & Policy Makers*, Federal News Service, 5 June 1990, LexisNexis

⁹⁹ Marsh, David, Ian Davison and Robert Mauthner *West Germans Look Both Ways on NATO: The '2 plus 4' Group Meets Today in Berlin*, London, Financial Times, 22 June 1990, p.3, LexisNexis

¹⁰⁰ *Nomination of Robert Kimmitt to be Ambassador to Germany*, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee: Chaired by: Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE), Capitol Hill Hearing, Federal News

with the FRG

Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement informally expressed the only statement about the future of the NVA from the French government in late May 1990. Minister Chevenement believed that the NVA would unquestionably be disbanded, on condition that "Moscow must be reassured as much as possible". He also anticipated "that a force of around 100,000 men may be maintained on the territory of what will be the former GDR". Therefore, from Chevenement's perspective, it was clear that the identity of the NVA would be abolished but its members would still exist. Nevertheless, the scale of the future German force and the effect on the Bundeswehr of the abrupt drop of the German birth rate was still the major concern upon which the French focused.¹⁰¹

The only official statement from the British government about the NVA was delivered by Defence Secretary Tom King right after the Kohl-Gorbachev Caucasus summit. As he said to the House of Commons, "The German proposals for the Bundeswehr and the Volksarmee were well anticipated and we have taken note of them".¹⁰² This indicated that the British government viewed the future of the NVA as a matter that did not need active British involvement.

The Polish media implicitly expressed its concern about NVA members integrating with the Bundeswehr by mentioning "special companies of ex-GDR citizens are already in the process of being formed, and apparently, some 115,000 ex-GDR citizens are already in the queue to join the Bundeswehr". The commentator noted that "fears of the potential growth of the Bundeswehr can be alleviated by Western promises of linking this army to NATO and thus securing some direct control" as well as "by securing obligations to reduce the Armed Forces of the two German states to a necessary minimum".¹⁰³ The size of the German military after reunification, therefore,

Service, 30 July 1991, LexisNexis

¹⁰¹ Darcourt, Pierre and Franz-Oliver Giesbert *Interview with Defence Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement*, *Le Figaro*, 30 May, p.10, Chevenement Interviewed on German Unification, FBIS-WEU-90-106, 1 June 1990, pp.17-18

¹⁰² Column 853, *House of Commons Hansard Debates for 17 July 1990*, electronic edition, information acquired from <http://www.publications.parliament.uk>

¹⁰³ Markowski, Jerzy *Without Beating About the Bush*, *Zolnierz Wolnosci*, 14 February, pp.1-2, Bundeswehr Reduction Proposed, FBIS-EEU-90-036, 22 February 1990, p.69

was the issue, not the integration of the NVA into the Bundeswehr. The official Polish view was formally declared in March by Polish Foreign Minister Krzysztof Skubiszewski, during the WTO foreign ministers' consultative meeting in Prague, when he stated: "the armed forces of united Germany should be cut radically in comparison with the overall state of the two German armies at present". Meanwhile, no specific questions dealing with issues about the army of a unified Germany were discussed during this meeting; perhaps this implied that no other WTO member state, except the USSR and Poland, would actually think it was a matter likely to affect their interests significantly.¹⁰⁴

In 1990 February, the Polish military already assumed that there would only be a united German military force after reunification because Stoltenberg had previously announced that some members from the NVA would be selected to enter the Bundeswehr. Polish concerns were reflected in a comment in the Polish military newspaper *Zolnierz Wolnosci*: "it is difficult to imagine that this united army would turn into a benevolent Salvation Army".¹⁰⁵ The fate of the NVA and its members did not interest the Poles, but the subsequent strategic environment shaped by the demise of the GDR and the NVA did.

A pragmatic comment from Netherlands' Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek analysed the importance of the GDR and the NVA to the Soviet Union when he argued that the USSR would accept a unified Germany's NATO membership only if accompanied by compensation of the loss of the GDR: "the loss of GDR territory in strategic terms as well as the loss of the National People's Army in military terms" should be recognised at the disarmament talks.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, the concern was how to comfort Soviets fears. The NVA was seen as nothing but a small pawn in the power game. To states other than the FRG and GDR, how the Russians would react to losing the NVA was important but the future of the NVA itself was not.

¹⁰⁴ 'Different Opinion' on Unifying Germany, CTK (Czech Telegraph Agency), 17 March, FBIS-EEU-90-053, 19 March 1990, p.1

¹⁰⁵ Markowski, Jerzy *A German Toast Drunk With Soviet Champagne*, *Zolnierz Wolnosci*, 13 February, pp.1-2, Army Daily Calls for Western Border Guarantee, FBIS-EEU-90-033, 16 February 1990, p.50

¹⁰⁶ Hetzel, Helmut *German Unity Under Article 23 Would Also Be Advantageous for the EC - Interview with Netherlands Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek*, *Die Welt*, 12 April, p.6, Foreign Minister Interviewed on German Unification, FBIS-WEU-90-072, 13 April 1990, pp.2-3

Consensus in Bonn?

Concepts of post-reunification security arrangements planned by the Bundeswehr gradually emerged in mid-February 1990. When the Two-Plus-Four mechanism for negotiating the external dimensions of German reunification reached a consensus in Ottawa, a German newspaper, *Suedkurier* in Konstanz, commented that the question about the future of the two German armies was wisely pushed aside. But it expected that the possible outcome would put their armed forces under one command after reunification. Thus, the question was asked whether the NVA would be dissolved or merged with the Bundeswehr.¹⁰⁷ Admiral Dieter Wellershoff had already been posed this question in a press interview. For some unknown reason, possibly because the principles of this issue were still undecided, Wellershoff did not answer the question directly but addressed it to the GDR citizens' opinions after the democratic election in March. He declined to make a firm decision then by arguing "I wonder what makes us think we have a right to make decisions in advance?".¹⁰⁸

In early February 1990 West Berlin Mayor Walter Momper, during a visit to London for discussions with British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, raised the concept of applying the West Berlin model to the entire GDR. A continuing Soviet force should be stationed on GDR territory at the same number and strength as the other three WWII victorious powers had acted in the FRG and West Berlin, until a collective security system could be established in Europe. He also proposed to demilitarise East Germany and adopt the same regulations that had applied to West Berlin.¹⁰⁹ With regard to the status of NATO, Momper's view was that all the territory of a united Germany ought to be included in NATO but meanwhile NATO must not extend its influence into the GDR territory.¹¹⁰ Since Momper's concept was not clear, the media immediately asked for further elaboration that specifically focused on the implication

¹⁰⁷ *Press Comments on Agreement at Ottawa Summit*, Deutschlandfunk Network, 15 February, FBIS-WEU-90-034, 20 February 1990, pp.10-11

¹⁰⁸ *Interview with Admiral Dieter Wellershoff*, Inspector General of the Bundeswehr by M.G., Welt am Sonntag, 11 February, pp.6-7, Bundeswehr's Wellershoff on Strategies, FBIS-WEU-90-033, 16 February 1990, pp.14-17

¹⁰⁹ Schaffmann, Christa *West Berlin Model Ought To Be Applied to the GDR*, Berliner Zeitung, 5 February, pp.1-3, FBIS-EEU-90-033, 16 February 1990, p.31

¹¹⁰ Korolev, Ye., *Izvestiya Correspondent, West Berlin: The Mayor's Contradictory Stance*, *Izvestiya*, 4 March, morning ed, p.5, FRG's Momper Stance on Unity 'Contradictory', FBIS-SOV-90-050, 14 March 1990, pp.37-38

for the NVA. Momper gave a very straightforward answer by stating "there will be no NVA any longer".¹¹¹ This reply, though it was seemingly decisive, did not merit much consideration from the NVA since Momper was not the right person in FRG politics to have the final say in the mechanism of the German Federal Government for formulating its diplomatic and security policies. Likewise, in February 1990, Gerhard Brenn, the Deputy Chairman of the GDR Independent Social Democratic Party (USDP), also demanded the disbandment of the NVA by the end of 1991.¹¹² Given the level of political influence held by the USDP in GDR politics, Brenn's perspective drew little attention.

But two weeks later, Minister Stoltenberg publicly made a clearer statement, though the plan for disposing of the NVA was still not specified. In addition to the fundamental FRG insistence on security structure and NATO membership for a unified Germany, Stoltenberg took the opportunity to reveal several other features, which eventually caused German domestic political disturbance. Stoltenberg emphasised that the NATO protection assurance must extend to cover the whole of Germany after reunification, though he also guaranteed that NATO forces would not be posted to the former GDR territory. Although Germany would keep committing its forces to NATO, no German force or military agency assigned to NATO's command and control structure would be present in eastern Germany. Nevertheless, for the future deployment of some non-NATO commanded German force in eastern Germany, Stoltenberg admitted that its size and structure was still undecided and would need more discussion within the German Federal Government.¹¹³ Genscher immediately and vigorously expressed his disagreement to Stoltenberg's perspectives since he had just reached an understanding with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker two weeks previously during his working visit to Washington D.C. that the German reunification would not imply "the eastward extension of NATO's defence and security sphere", a principle which applied not only to the GDR but also to other East European states.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Schaffmann, Christa *Interview with Berlin Governing Mayor Walter Momper - Following his talks in London*, Berliner Zeitung, 5 February, p.3, FBIS-WEU-90-027, 8 February 1990, pp.9-10

¹¹² *Social Democrats Demand Army Disbandment*, ADN, 26 February, FBIS-E-90-038, 26 February 1990, p.42

¹¹³ Klement, Rolf *Stoltenberg on NATO Protection*, Deutschlandfunk Network, 16 February, FBIS-WEU-90-034, 20 February 1990, p.7

¹¹⁴ Tass *Sharp Debate*, Izvestiya, 5 February, morning ed., p.4, German Unification Debate Developments Reported, FBIS-SOV-90-025, 6 February 1990, p.12. James Baker firmly stood by his commitment personally reached with Genscher and restated "there would be no extension eastward of

The Soviet Union heard all these political statements with apprehension. Sometimes, sensational statements made by figures no longer directly involved in the policy-making process such as a comment from William Odom (who had just been relieved from heading the U.S. National Security Agency) "Our primary task is to get the Soviets out of East German territory without having to leave West Germany", could still irritate the Soviet political observers because the statement was not merely viewed as a 'carelessly expressed personal opinion'.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, commentators in Moscow already noticed from the information leaked from NATO Headquarters in Brussels that the Western Alliances had insisted that a unified Germany must be a NATO member but would also be willing to agree that NATO troops and armaments should not be deployed on GDR territory. The western media saw this as a concession to the USSR. Yet the Soviet political commentator Yuriy Kornilov still viewed it as hardly constructive and realistic.¹¹⁶ Another Soviet commentator viewed such a guarantee of non-extension of the NATO sphere to the GDR territory as caused purely by the concern of insisting German NATO membership might virtually block the way to the German unification.¹¹⁷ A Soviet commentator argued that, according to Kohl's perspective, incorporating the GDR into the FRG and thereby into NATO implied the NATO sphere of influence would naturally extend eastward to the Oder-Neisse border.¹¹⁸

Genscher emphasised that affairs within the GDR could not be decided by the FRG or

NATO's force under the scenario that we have just discussed, that is, a unified Germany as a member of the NATO alliance" in the testimony of a congressional hearing in March 1990. He also confirmed US support for preserving the existing Bundeswehr structure. See Foreign Operations Appropriations, 1 March 1990, Op Cit.

¹¹⁵ Borisov, T. "U.S. Generals on a United Germany: According to Whose Scenario?", *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 9 February, single ed., p. 5, FBIS-SOV-90-032, 15 February 1990, pp.12-13

¹¹⁶ Kornilov, Yuriy *Commentary of political news*, Tass, 9 February, Kornilov Opposes United Germany in NATO, FBIS-SOV-90-029, 12 February 1990, pp.48-49 Note that about the same time French Minister Dumas openly declared, "When the time comes", i.e. with German unification, "France is prepared to extend to the whole of Germany the special defence and security relationship which now binds it to the FRG". See *Dumas on German-Polish Border*, *Le Monde*, 3 March, p.6, FBIS-WEU-90-044, 6 March 1990, p.22. Interestingly, neither the Soviet Union nor the FRG were irritated by this statement nor actively responded to Dumas.

¹¹⁷ Grigoryev, Ye. *Unplanned Visit*, *Pravda*, 10 February, 2nd ed., pp.1 and 4, FRG Seen Aiming at 'Annexation' of GDR, FBIS-SOV-90-029, 12 February 1990, pp.49-50

¹¹⁸ Baygarov, S. *Abroad - More and More New Problems ... The Path to the Unification of the GDR and the FRG Cannot Be Easy*, *Pravda*, 15 February, 2nd ed., pp.1 and 5, Obstacles Outlined, FBIS-SOV-90-033, 16 February 1990, pp.4-5

NATO but by a freely elected GDR government and in agreement with the USSR.¹¹⁹ The GDR Roundtable, an ad hoc political mechanism established to collect GDR citizens' opinions for political reforms that attracted much media attention explicitly rejected any suggestion to either directly or indirectly expand NATO coverage into GDR territory.¹²⁰ A few days later, the participants of the Roundtable further rejected NATO membership of a unified Germany by a majority vote. It was viewed as fundamentally irreconcilable with the aim of German unity within the framework of a European peace order.¹²¹ It was clear that any inconsistencies which appeared in the stances towards post-unification politico-military arrangements, especially ones which reversed any existing political proclamation, might totally ruin all previous diplomatic efforts.

From Genscher's viewpoint, to deploy any German military forces, even those not commanded and controlled by NATO, in the then GDR would in essence be the same as or the equivalent of extending NATO territory eastwards. Considering the misgivings that would be raised by the Soviet Union, this attempt could undermine all the diplomatic efforts already expended on German reunification. Genscher, therefore, insisted that Bundeswehr units should not be deployed in the eastern part of a united Germany. Apart from clarifying that the deployment of German forces in eastern Germany was only Stoltenberg's personal view, Genscher further emphasised there was no consensus for it within the FRG government. Genscher would rather seek a security agreement concluded by all parties concerned for assuring the security of the people in the GDR. Consequently, he dismissed the necessity of expanding Bundeswehr forces into GDR territory. But FRG Defence Ministry spokesman Colonel Winfried Dunkel soon rebuffed Genscher's argument by describing Genscher's criticisms of Stoltenberg's concept as "the expression of a personal view".¹²² Colonel Dunkel also admitted to an internal understanding amongst different ministries of the German Federal Government that if there was any

¹¹⁹ Nahrendorf, Rainer and Hans Jörg Sottorf *Report on Interview with Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher*, Handelsblatt, 9-10 February, p.6, Foreign Minister Genscher on Disarmament, Unity, FBIS-WEU-90-030, 13 February 1990, pp.5-7

¹²⁰ *Roundtable Positions on Kohl-Modrow Talks*, ADN, 12 February, FBIS-EEU-90-031, 14 February 1990, pp.32-33

¹²¹ *Rejects NATO Membership*, ADN, 19 February, FBIS-EEU-90-034, 20 February 1990, p.26

¹²² *Genscher Rejects FRG Troops in GDR*, DPA, 17 February, FBIS-WEU-90-034, 20 February 1990, pp.7-8

Bundeswehr deployment beyond the Elbe River after reunification, then such forces should not be put under NATO's command. On the contrary, Genscher argued that such possibilities should not hinder the renunciation of any NATO expansion into eastern Germany.¹²³

Besides strong rejection from GDR Prime Minister Hans Modrow, Stoltenberg's perspective also stirred serious criticisms within the FRG. Both the Free Democratic Party and the Social Democratic Party openly opposed his stance. FDP Chairman Otto Graf Lambsdorff visited Chancellor Kohl to eliminate this friction within the FRG ruling coalition. Lambsdorff firmly supported Genscher in excluding western troops from deployment in eastern Germany after reunification. Even Chairman Wenzel of the German Bundeswehr Association strongly rejected Stoltenberg's viewpoint. He expressed his support for Genscher in an interview on *Saarbrücken Saarländischer Rundfunk* Network, stating that the deployment of Bundeswehr forces must be confined to the previous FRG territory even after reunification.¹²⁴ Hans-Jochen Vogel, Chairman of the Social Democratic Party, believed that Stoltenberg's statement would certainly provoke the Soviet Union and fuel mistrust of German reunification process. Vogel commented that Stoltenberg's view was 'incomprehensible' and vowed to take the initiative on this matter, should the Federal Government fail to correct further developments without delay. A few days later in Leipzig, in an address to the party congress of the GDR SPD, the sister party of the FRG Social Democratic Party, Vogel again strongly rejected the idea of NATO extending to the Oder.¹²⁵

Free Democratic Party disarmament expert Olaf Feldmann delivered an even stronger denunciation that viewed Stoltenberg's perspective as "political arson".¹²⁶ Egon Bahr supported Genscher's viewpoint by pointing out that extending a NATO guarantee to eastern Germany would be a "factual inclusion of the GDR in the Western Alliance", a

¹²³ CDU, FDP Differ on Troops in GDR, DPA, 18 February, FBIS-WEU-90-034, 20 February 1990, p.8

¹²⁴ Modrow Rejects Stoltenberg NATO Plan, Deutschlandfunk Network, 19 February, FBIS-EEU-90-035, 21 February 1990, p.26

¹²⁵ Vogel Address Congress, ADN, 25 February, FBIS-EEU-90-038, 26 February 1990, p.31

¹²⁶ Feldmann's comment was quoted by the Soviet media in a report of the Genscher-Stoltenberg dispute but rephrased in translation using a less sensational term "political provocation". See Tass *Discussion Heats Up*, Krasnaya Zvezda, 20 February, 1st Ed., p.3, FRG, U.S., UK Attitudes on German Unity, FBIS-SOV-90-038, 26 February 1990, pp.40-41

"nonsense and divorced from reality".¹²⁷ Bahr again viewed the expansion of NATO's sphere of influence to the Oder-Neisse border as "unthinkable".¹²⁸ Later Bahr further elaborated his view on the Bundeswehr by saying "the ideas about extending the protective function of the Bundeswehr, which is under NATO's supreme command, to GDR territory are simply crazy".¹²⁹ Nonetheless, according to a media report based on the interview with Bahr shortly before this incident, Bahr himself actually had no premeditated mature stance but only responded to Stoltenberg's argument by his first instinct. When Bahr was asked about his perspectives on granting a special status to the GDR, highly likely a provisional measure, he simply confessed, "I do not think anything of this". Subsequently, instead of providing any firm and direct reply to the interviewer, Bahr retaliated with questions including "Should the Bundeswehr, or whatever the army will be called, quickly advance to the Oder River?" Several key concerns such as the geographical locations for exercising forward defence as well as compulsory military services for eastern German citizens after reunification were also mentioned but no solid stance was identifiable.¹³⁰

The squabble between Stoltenberg and Genscher on the deployment of Bundeswehr troops on GDR territory became so heated that it inevitably attracted all major German newspapers. The *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, *Westfälische Rundschau* and *Neue Presse* of Hannover all commented negatively on Stoltenberg's viewpoints.¹³¹ Meanwhile, the Soviet media kept a close eye on the different positions disclosed by Genscher and Stoltenberg. No immediate comment was made but there were indications of a certain level of anxiety and misgiving by the Soviets.¹³²

Kohl soon intervened in the dispute between Genscher and Stoltenberg. After Kohl's

¹²⁷ CDU, FDP Differ on Troops in GDR, DPA, Op Cit.

¹²⁸ SPD's Bahr Reacts to Shevardnadze Warning, Deutschlandfunk Network, 20 February, FBIS-WEU-90-034, 20 February 1990, p.12

¹²⁹ Günther, Rolf *Social Democratic Party Leaders Discuss Unity*, Neues Deutschland, 21 February, p.6, FBIS-WEU-90-038, 26 February 1990, pp.7-8

¹³⁰ Hoffmann, Gunter and Gerhard Spoerl *Interview with Egon Bahr, Social Democratic Party of Germany Presidium member*, Die Zeit, 9 February, pp.9-10, SPD's Egon Bahr Discuss Unity, Europe, FBIS-WEU-90-033, 16 February 1990, pp.21-23

¹³¹ *Press Views Controversy*, Deutschlandfunk Network, 19 February, FBIS-WEU-90-034, 20 February 1990, pp.8-9

¹³² Tass *Minister Condemns Minister*, Pravda, 19 February, 1st Ed., p.1, Genscher Censures Aide's NATO, GDR Remarks, FBIS-SOV-90-041, 1 March 1990, p.37

arbitration, a joint statement endorsed both by Genscher as well as Stoltenberg was announced assuring that "no NATO force would be allowed to deploy in GDR territory. The same principle was also applied to all Bundeswehr units, whether or not subordinated to NATO command structure."¹³³ Days after the Genscher-Stoltenberg joint statement assuring Bonn's stances on the security arrangements of a future united Germany, a Soviet political commentator still delivered a negative comment on Stoltenberg's stance. The intent of deploying the Bundeswehr on the GDR territory was viewed as unconstructive in future international interactions in Europe.¹³⁴

Responses from the NVA

Meanwhile in Berlin, the NVA response to Stoltenberg's statement was silence. A formal proclamation made on 20th February by the GDR Defence Ministry addressed the two key stances "the expansion of NATO's sphere of responsibility up to the Oder-Neisse line" as well as "the incorporation of the NVA, part of the military potential of the Warsaw Pact, into NATO" as "unrealistic and must be prevented". Yet, it also emphasised that the NVA would be guided by the realities of the politico-military structure and by possible developments of the European security framework in order to facilitate the growing together of the two German states and on the prospects and development of their armed forces. It was implied that some forces of the NVA would keep their place as a component of a future federal German army.¹³⁵ Two days later, a formally printed policy statement titled "The Future of the Armed Forces in the Process of the Two German States' Growing Together" was issued via the media after discussions in the GDR central Roundtable meeting. For the first time it contemplated the possibility of integrating the Bundeswehr and the NVA into a united federal military force.¹³⁶

According to Hoffmann, GDR Premier Modrow personally approved the content of this statement. Nevertheless, some members of the GDR central Roundtable meeting

¹³³ *Genscher, Stoltenberg Agree*, Op Cit.

¹³⁴ *Commentary by Konstantin Patysuk*, Moscow Domestic Radio Service, 21 February, Moscow Radio Airs German Unity Problem, FBIS-SOV-90-036, 22 February 1990, pp.36-37

¹³⁵ *Ministry Says NATO Expansion 'Unrealistic'*, ADN, 20 February, FBIS-EEU-90-034, 20 February 1990, p.23

¹³⁶ Hoffmann, 1993, Chinese translation, 2001, Op Cit., pp.414-418, Appendix 2

still criticised it, saying it should not be disclosed before a discussion specifically addressing military reform.¹³⁷ Again, Stoltenberg's name was never mentioned either in the text of this documentation or in the press conference when Hoffmann introduced this policy statement, although Stoltenberg's argument was the real reason that the NVA leadership drafted it. Hoffmann felt that the FRG politicians ignored both the GDR and the NVA in their debate on Stoltenberg's viewpoint.¹³⁸ Interestingly, the texts of reports provided by two major German news agencies on Hoffmann's media disclosure mainly focused on the concept of a future federal military force that should accommodate citizens from all parts of a united Germany.¹³⁹ Two days later, in a *Neues Deutschland* report based on the interview with Hoffmann, although this GDR Defence Ministry policy statement was again mentioned, yet, the media focus still concentrated on a future federal military force in a unified Germany.¹⁴⁰ The nature of the GDR statements as significant response to the Genscher-Stoltenberg dispute was totally ignored.

Unsettled Speculations in Moscow

Although the political stir over future Bundeswehr deployment apparently calmed down, its ripples continued, both in the FRG as well as outside. A German newspaper made a counter factual assessment arguing that all the efforts attempted by Genscher could have been destroyed and the schedule for German reunification could also have been totally upset, had Stoltenberg's ideas not been rejected by Kohl. It commented that Stoltenberg's argument violated Genscher's policies "in a rude way". An advance by the Bundeswehr to the Oder-Neisse line was "bordering on sabotage". Kohl, it argued, should reprimand Stoltenberg for having gone too far, otherwise "the Bonn diplomats will have difficulty anyway in nailing the Soviets down to the Genscher plan".¹⁴¹ Beyond Germany, comments on German reunification by the likes of A.

¹³⁷ Ibid, pp.204-205 and p.216

¹³⁸ Ibid, p.204

¹³⁹ Hoffmann Proposes Federal Army for Germany, ADN, 22 February and Further on Military, DPA, 22 February, both reports in FBIS-EEU-90-037, 23 February 1990, p.30

¹⁴⁰ Funke, Rainer *In the Future, A Federal Army of 300,000 Men?* - Interview With Defence Minister Theodor Hoffmann, Neues Deutschland, 24-5 February, p.3, Hoffmann Outlines Army Concept After Unity, FBIS-EEU-90-043, 5 March 1990, p.25 and *Defence Minister Wants Troops To Stay*, ADN, 24 February, FBIS-EEU-90-038, 26 February 1990, p.26.

¹⁴¹ Sommer, Theo *Back and Forth*, Die Zeit, 23 February, p.1, *Post-Unity Plan Said 'Bordering on Sabotage'*, FBIS-WEU-90-038, 26 February 1990, p.9

Bogomolov, correspondent of the Soviet *Sovetskaya Rossiya* were understandably strong: "Many of us fear that, as a result, NATO's zone of activity will extend eastward, and we will lose our cordon sanitaire".¹⁴²

A few days after the Genscher-Stoltenberg joint statement, some Soviet political commentators were not convinced and expressed continued negative comments on Stoltenberg's perspectives. The inconsistency between Genscher and Stoltenberg was noticed. Although Kohl had intervened and settled the political crossfire by publicising a joint statement, one commentator, Boris Andrianov, still thought that the FRG has not yet achieved an ultimate policy of post-unification politico-military arrangements on GDR territory.¹⁴³ Andrianov was not the only commentator ignoring the existence of the Genscher-Stoltenberg joint statement. Judging by a comment made by Ye. Bovkun, correspondent of the Soviet *Izvestiya*, "The Chancellor is not exerting his influence although he does, presumably, share Genscher's views", it seemed that not all Soviet observers were aware of Kohl's decisive settlement.¹⁴⁴ Otherwise, the only reasonable interpretation is that the Genscher-Stoltenberg statement still failed to convince Soviet commentators. Even though it was perceived that Stoltenberg had retracted what he had previously advocated, another commentator Stanislav Blazhenkov still firmly believed that Stoltenberg's statement was not a simple slip of the tongue but "improvidently divulged intentions that Bonn does not discuss out loud today", in other words, no matter what the FRG had declared, Russian deep-rooted suspicion of a German hidden agenda was still ineradicable.¹⁴⁵ Commentator Viktor Levin also agreed "it is hard to treat the defence minister's statement as a chance slip of the tongue". Despite the criticisms led by Genscher and disagreements concerning Stoltenberg's statement shown by many Germans in the FRG, Levin still advocated that the Soviets should keep alert for

¹⁴² Bogomolov, A. *For and Against a United Germany* - Interview with Prof. D. Procktor, *Sovetskaya Rossiya*, 28 February, 2nd ed, p.5, Procktor on Pros, Cons of United Germany, FBIS-SOV-90-043, 5 March 1990, pp.9-11

¹⁴³ *International Observers Roundtable*, Foreign Policy Commentators: Boris Andrianov, Nikolay Agayants and Gennadiy Venedyapin, Moscow All-Union Radio Broadcasting Service, 25 February, 'Observers Roundtable' Discusses Germany, FBIS-SOV-90-038, 26 February 1990, pp.2-4

¹⁴⁴ Bovkun, Ye. *German Question - Bonn: Unscheduled Train*, *Izvestiya*, 12 March, morning ed., p.5, Problems of Rapid Unification Viewed, FBIS-SOV-90-059, 14 March 1990, pp.38-41

¹⁴⁵ Stanislav Blazhenkov, Foreign Political Commentator; Rafail Nadzhipovich Moseyev, International Affairs Journalist and Vladimir Pasko, Yuriy Isayev and Viktor Levin *International Situation - Questions and Answers*, Moscow All-Union Radio Broadcasting Service, 23 February, 'Questions, Answers' Programme Views East Europe, FBIS-SOV-90-038, 26 February 1990, pp.5-7

Stoltenberg's perspectives.¹⁴⁶

Perspectives from many Soviet political commentators about Stoltenberg's stance have already been examined. Actually, it is hard to measure precisely how influential their comments were. Nevertheless, they became for the basis for the arguments to formulate the political propositions used in negotiations by the participants in the decision-making system. The possibility of using political balloons to test responses from the Western or Soviet side also could not be totally excluded. In addition, their viewpoints could lead public opinion, which was something that even the leaders of the WTO dared not ignore. There were numerous contemporary comments made by different commentators addressing the formulas for settling German reunification. Therefore, officially, the Soviet government maintained a certain degree of reticence in response to these comments. Soviet Foreign Minister spokesman Gennadiy Gerasimov once said "It makes no sense now to comment on each argument: whether or not Germany stays in NATO and, if it does, whether or not there will be NATO troops or Soviet troops on the territory of the German Democratic Republic".¹⁴⁷

Even so, the major actors within the Soviet decision-making circle did have different strategic calculations that were reflected by several open statements specifically corresponding to this subject. Eduard Shevardnadze, USSR Foreign Minister and member of the Soviet Union Communist Party Central Committee Politburo, believed that the commitment of not deploying NATO forces on the GDR territory after German reunification did "not alter the question in essence".¹⁴⁸ Shevardnadze rightly identified the core issue as a united Germany's membership of NATO.¹⁴⁹ Extending NATO protective cover, deploying the Bundeswehr or other military forces to GDR territory and the eventual fate of the NVA were matters that could be decided after the

¹⁴⁶ Levin, Viktor *Commentary*, Moscow Domestic Radio Service, 3 March, "Boehme, Kohl Stands on German Unity Assessed", FBIS-SOV-90-043, 5 March 1990, pp.11-12

¹⁴⁷ *German Question*, Tass, 14 March, FBIS-SOV-90-051, 15 March 1990, p.1

¹⁴⁸ *Shevardnadze Backs Poland on Germany Negotiations*, Tass, 23 February, FBIS-SOV-90-038, 26 February 1990, pp.28-29

¹⁴⁹ In terms of means and ends, GDR Minister Without Portfolio Walter Romberg exhibited the best insight by stating "*For the Soviet Union a solution is only acceptable from which it can expect that it provided lasting security and is stable*" but the content of the solution was indeed a matter of perception and interpretation. See Urbanski, Bettina *Shaping the Future For the Benefit of the Europeans* - Interview with Minister Without Portfolio Walter Romberg, Berliner Zeitung, 16 March, p.4, Minister Romberg on Unification, Europe, FBIS-EEU-90-063, 2 April 1990, pp.22-24

nature or consent of German NATO membership was decided.¹⁵⁰ Shevardnadze's viewpoint was openly endorsed and further elaborated by A. L. Adamishin, USSR Deputy Foreign Minister. Adamishin pointed out that a promise of excluding the Bundeswehr from GDR territory and allowing Soviet forces to remain there for the time being was not sufficient to be the quid pro quo for acquiring Soviet consent for German membership of NATO after reunification.¹⁵¹ Adamishin further emphasised that "the transfer of the GDR into the opposing military bloc would justifiably be assessed as a violation of the existing equilibrium" because "the disarmament process are just being outlined" and "we are still operating in terms of equilibrium and balance of forces".¹⁵² Switching the GDR to the sphere of NATO was intrinsically a significant power landslide that would reshape the existing stability in Europe. Yet, Adamishin's statements implied the possibility of a compromise, if some conditions could be satisfied. NATO membership for a united Germany, the origin of the potential power re-arrangement in Europe, therefore, was still the focus but was negotiable.

The Soviet military professionals, meanwhile, viewed these strategic developments from a different angle; their responses to media inquiries were very different. For instance, when Soviet Defence Minister Dmitriy Yazov was asked about maintaining Soviet forces on GDR territory for a transitional period, Yazov simply ignored the question, which implied that he did not envisage it should be the core issue, but strongly expressed his disagreement of Germany's membership of NATO.¹⁵³ The response of Gorbachev's advisor, Sergey Akhromeyev, was particularly strong. He emphasised that any NATO guarantee after reunification would not encompass forces on GDR territory; no matter what promises were given by the FRG, the United States

¹⁵⁰ Shevardnadze never treated the future of the NVA as a significant matter. After the Caucasus summit, where the size of a united German force as well as the German NATO membership was decided, Shevardnadze immediately and pragmatically shifted his focus to details of Soviet force withdrawal from the GDR territory. Any matter concluded in the Caucasus summit would never again be mentioned in further engagements with his FRG counterpart. See *Joint Press Conference of Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher*, unofficial transcript translated from USSR Foreign Ministry Press Centre material, 17 August, Washington, D.C.: Federal News Service, 1990

¹⁵¹ Maksimov, M. *On the "Two Plus Four" Formula* - Interview with A. L. Adamishin, USSR deputy foreign Minister, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, 25 April, No. 17, p.15, Deputy Minister Queried on German Unity Talks, FBIS-SOV-90-084, 1 May 1990, pp.41-44

¹⁵² *Adamishin Views 'Building of German Unity'*, Tass, 25 April, FBIS-SOV-90-080, 25 April 1990, pp.33-34

¹⁵³ Mandeville, Laure *Interview with Soviet Defence Minister Dmitriy Yazov*, *Le Figaro*, 30 March, p.3,

or any other state, it would not be acceptable. Marshal Akhromeyev distrusted the FRG's political assurance after Stoltenberg's statement due to the historical experience of the demilitarisation of the Rhineland created by the Treaty of Versailles that had so easily been broken by Hitler in 1936.¹⁵⁴

GDR media quickly noted that Akhromeyev's perspective was specifically aimed at the FRG's promise of no Bundeswehr deployment on GDR territory after reunification. The report underlined Akhromeyev's distrust of such a guarantee ever serving as a reliable basis to assure the Soviet Union's security.¹⁵⁵ Captain M. Zheglov, a commentator and a military professional, used the following arguments: "The idea of keeping the former FRG in the North Atlantic bloc and not extending the zone of its responsibility to the territory of the former GDR has gained the upper hand. But if military institutions are destroyed in one part of Germany - it is not important which - and preserved in the other, the balance of interests is upset. This could have unpredictable consequences. Thus it is possible that the only point of this idea may be to cover up plans to include all the territory of a united Germany in NATO". Zheglov, therefore, interpreted Stoltenberg's proclamation of a possible Bundeswehr deployment on GDR territory as evidence to support his assessment by stating "FRG Defence Minister G. Stoltenberg has already put forward the idea of totally swallowing up the GDR in the military context and integrating it within the FRG military system".¹⁵⁶

Commentators with a military background naturally considered the worst-case scenario. M. Monin, a scholar and a retired senior Red Army officer argued that NATO membership could give "strength to NATO and weaken the Warsaw Pact".¹⁵⁷

Yazov Interviewed on Germany, NATO, Lithuania, FBIS-SOV-90-064, 3 April 1990, pp.5-6

¹⁵⁴ Ostrovsky, Vladimir *Interview with Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergey Akhromeyev - We Cannot Agree to an Imbalance of Forces*, *Zolnierz Wolnosci*, 20 March, pp.7, Akhromeyev Interviewed on German Reunification, FBIS-SOV-90-057, 23 March 1990, pp.17-18

¹⁵⁵ *Akhromeyev Calls FRG Promise 'Insufficient'*, ADN, 13 March, FBIS-EEU-90-050, 14 March 1990, p.35. Akhromeyev made similar comments in an interview for the Soviet news agency *Novosti*. See *Akhromeyev Warns About Troops on GDR Territory*, Deutschlandfunk Network, 13 March, FBIS-SOV-90-050, 14 March 1990, p.37

¹⁵⁶ Captain M. Zheglov *The World Today: Problems and Opinions / There Are More Questions Than Answers*, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 4 March, 1st ed., p.3, Concern Noted Over FRG 'Swallowing Up' GDR, FBIS-SOV-90-044, 6 March 1990, pp.40-41

¹⁵⁷ Monin, M. (retired Major General and Doctor of historical sciences) *The Politicisation of Warsaw Pact and NATO: Practicability and Prospects*, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 4 May, 1st ed., p.3, Prospects for NATO, Pact Politicisation Examined, FBIS-SOV-90-090, 9 May 1990, pp.6-7

Actually, speculations expressed by Colonel I. Vladimirov directly questioning the trustworthiness of the promises made by Genscher and Kohl for defusing Stoltenberg's advocacy of Bundeswehr GDR deployment were not groundless. Vladimirov recited the contents of an FRG Foreign Ministry directive exposed by the French paper *L'Humanite*, 'According to this document, at the first stage, it is proposed to demobilise the GDR National People's Army without sending Bundeswehr troops onto GDR territory, but on fulfilment of the following conditions: The Soviet Union must renounce its right as a victor power to station its troops in the GDR and must reduce its military presence there to a level that "suits the German people". At the second stage, it is planned to send onto the territory of the present GDR "limited contingents of national German troops" which supposedly will not be integrated in NATO or equipped with offensive weapons'; this cast serious doubt on the value of the Genscher and Kohl guarantees.¹⁵⁸

It is noteworthy that some arguments expressed by the Soviet political commentators were actually not in line with the official stance. In terms of clearly challenging the viewpoints held by ruling political leadership, these commentaries were no less searching than their western counterparts. Vyacheslav Dashichev, Gorbachev's policy advisor on Germany, argued for the rightness of NATO membership for a united Germany when he was asked to comment on the result of the GDR democratic election. Dashichev's view indicated that the Soviet Union did understand the importance to the West of requiring the FRG to stay in NATO after reunification. He argued, "A united Germany must be bound in the framework of NATO. There is the metaphor of the gun on the deck of a ship, which is not lashed" and "Once Germany is united and sovereign" Soviet troops should be withdrawn as "it does not make sense any longer for Soviet troops to stay in Eastern European countries". This gave some indication that the possibility of Soviet consent to Western wishes did exist.¹⁵⁹ Dashichev's viewpoint was a surprise to the West. Soon Dashichev had another opportunity to elaborate upon his agreement that Germany's NATO membership should not be totally unconditional though various forms of a compromise were

¹⁵⁸ Colonel I. Vladimirov *United Germany and NATO*, *Krasnaya Zvezda*, 15 March, 1st ed., p.3, Military Status of United Germany Questioned, FBIS-SOV-90-052, 16 March 1990, pp.6-7

¹⁵⁹ Schell, Manfred *A United Germany Must Be Bound Within the Framework of NATO* - Telephone Interview with Vyacheslav Dashichev, Germany policy advisor to President Mikhail Gorbachev, Moscow, 19 March, *Die Welt*, 20 March, p.9, Policy Advisor Sees United Germany in NATO,

conceivable. For the sake of Soviet security interest, the USSR would prefer it if "no NATO troops were to be stationed on current GDR territory" and that like France "Germany could stay outside NATO's military organisation".¹⁶⁰ Dashichev also mentioned other conditions such as "a reduction of the Bundeswehr, withdrawal of foreign troops from Germany, and no nuclear weapons on German territory" whilst Dashichev reiterated his belief that "the integration of a united Germany in NATO does not pose any danger to us".¹⁶¹

Regardless of how much Dashichev's view reflected Gorbachev's, at least Dashichev had proved that the Soviet advisors were not so uniformly homogeneous that they could only follow the official line or leaders' preferences in such important issues. Indeed, Dashichev was not alone in voicing differing prospects. Aleksandr Yevgeniyevich Bovin judged that the eventual ability of each nation to choose its own path would ultimately be "a victory for common sense, really rational policy as well as democracy". Yet, Bovin advocated that "in order to reach that ultimate point, we've got to overcome a great many of the conventional stereotypes to which we've become accustomed". Bovin was the first Soviet commentator to challenge his audiences to study the map in order to confirm his conviction that "it's hardly likely that the inclusion of the present territory of the GDR in the territory of NATO could affect our security in any degree". He also believed that "membership or nonmembership of NATO would be no guarantee of a peace-loving new Germany".¹⁶² Clearly, Bovin did not consider German NATO membership an essential matter in the process of political reconciliation. Bovin later met sombre criticisms from other participants in a famous Soviet television political commentary programme. Bovin persistently defended his viewpoint that the security of the Soviet Union would not be affected by NATO's sphere extending eastwards into GDR territory, though one hundred thousand square kilometres of land would be added to NATO's territory. Bovin asked the Soviets not to be entrapped by "some nice illusions" but to face the reality of East Europe hard

FBIS-SOV-90-056, 22 March 1990, pp.28-30

¹⁶⁰ *United Germany Could Stay in NATO*, Deutschlandfunk Network, 31 March, FBIS-SOV-90-063, 2 April 1990, p.34

¹⁶¹ Nille, Irmgard *Reunification Possible as Soon as in December* - Interview with Gorbachev's advisor on Germany Vyacheslav Dashichev, Bild, 28 May, pp.1 and 4, Gorbachev's Advisor Interviewed, FBIS-SOV-90-107, 4 June 1990, pp.6-7

¹⁶² Bovin, Aleksandr *International Panorama*, Moscow Television Service, 3 March, Options for Future of Warsaw Pact Weighed / German Role in NATO Examined, FBIS-SOV-90-043, 3 March 1990, p.4

though that was. Most importantly, by mentioning "when you said the lessons of the past - I myself made the same mistake. In the nuclear age, what can we say now? 1914, 1939, 1941? None of those analogies have any point in the new era. The strategic laws have changed".¹⁶³

Nonetheless, to many other commentators, memories of historical experiences firmly stood as the basis of suspicions, thus dominating their judgments and, arguably, affecting rationality. As *Pravda* journalist V. I. Mikhaylov commented: "They attempt to weaken the explosiveness of such plans with a *promise* technically not to advance NATO troops eastward to the Polish border. The authors of these assurances evidently believe that people in Europe have already forgotten how under the Treaty of Versailles German troops were prohibited from being sent west, into Rhine region, and how easily that decision was overturned".¹⁶⁴ Marshal Akhromeyev was reported as saying that the "experiences of history are very instructive here. After the signing of the Treaty of Versailles a demilitarised Rhine zone was established (from the French and Belgian borders to the Rhine). In 1936, however, fascist Germany violated these regulations and occupied the Rhineland. We all know what happened then..." to argue that all the promises of not stationing troops on GDR soil made by the FRG or even the United States could not be trusted by the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁵

The fear of repeating history was not only expressed by a few individual Soviet commentators, GDR Minister Romberg, during his visit to Moscow, realised that this concern would make the acceptance of a special status of GDR territory totally unacceptable to the USSR.¹⁶⁶ Nevertheless, the same fear could also be constructive. To eliminate the possibility of repeating the same mistakes, Andrey Grachev, a key advisor to Gorbachev, who fully understood the historical references, persuaded the

¹⁶³ Levin, Viktor Nikolayevich, Aleksandr Yevgeniyevich Bovin and Nikolay Vladimirovich Shishlin *International Observers Roundtable*, Moscow Domestic Television Service, 9 March, Weekly 'International Observers Roundtable' Aired, FBIS-SOV-90-048, 12 March 1990, pp.4-9

¹⁶⁴ Falin, V. M. and *Pravda* journalist V. I. Mikhaylov *Two Germanies, One Europe? - Dialogue Between a Historian and a Publicist*, *Pravda*, 12 March, 2nd ed., p.5, "Falin, Journalist Debate German Unity", FBIS-SOV-90-051, 15 March 1990, pp.3-6

¹⁶⁵ *Interview with Marshal of the Soviet Union Sergey Akhromeyev, former Chief of Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces*, ADN, 14 March, Akhromeyev Queried; Discussed a United Germany, FBIS-SOV-90-052, 16 March 1990, pp.25-26. Akhromeyev repeated similar arguments in another Czechoslovakian media report. See Ostrovskiy, Vladimir (Novosti Correspondent) *Looking for New Solutions - Interview with Sergey Akhromeyev*, Bratislava, *Pravda*, 30 March, p.11, FBIS-SOV-90-064, 3 April 1990, p.1

Russians that any attempted diplomatic negotiations concerning German reunification should never be made in an isolated framework.¹⁶⁷ Dashichev shared this view. He suggested "Let us remember the Versailles peace Treaty: Did not this, with its humiliating articles for Germany, promote the growth of German nationalism and revanchism and help to bring Hitler to power? These lamentable lessons of history must be forgotten". Dashichev further argued that the concept of equilibrium could not maintain its previous significance; hence, a united Germany in NATO would not substantially diminish the security of the Soviet Union.¹⁶⁸ The Soviet leadership accepted Dashichev's advice. Historical fact is a two-edged sword; its utilisation depends on how it is perceived and interpreted.

Echoes from Parties Concerned

Comments from nations other than the two German states and the Soviet Union are worth studying. An important Polish Parliamentarian, Marshal A. Stelmachowski during his visit to the Soviet Union said that NATO should not cross the Elbe River, which included the German armed forces, especially as the FRG military was already a sizable force.¹⁶⁹ Soon after Stoltenberg's statement of the possible Bundeswehr deployment on GDR territory, the Polish Defence Committee decided to delay the withdrawal of Soviet troops on 13 March 1990. The Polish Government's spokeswoman Malgorzata Nezabitowska explained that the decision was prompted by the formation of the pan-European security system and promoted by Polish security interests.¹⁷⁰ Stoltenberg's statement had created concerns over future FRG military deployment next to Polish territory. Misgivings over the German-Polish border question, the extension of NATO's sphere to the Oder-Neisse River and into Poland was also added to FRG politicians' agenda. For instance, Oskar Lafontaine, candidate of the SPD for the German chancellor, needed to affirm that "the pushing forward of NATO troops to the Oder-Neisse border cannot be the answer to the developments in

¹⁶⁶ Urbanski, Bettina *Shaping the Future For the Benefit of the Europeans*, Op Cit.

¹⁶⁷ *Grachev on German Unity Without Military Danger*, Op Cit.

¹⁶⁸ Dashichev, Vyacheslav *Viewpoint: Europe Weighed on the German Scales*, Komsomolskaya Pravda, 15 May, p.3, Problems of German Unification Examined, FBIS-SOV-90-097, 18 May 1990, p.5

¹⁶⁹ Tass *In a Friendly Atmosphere*, Pravda, 22 March, 2nd ed., p.5, Soviet Troops 'Best Guarantee' of Polish Security, FBIS-SOV-90-057, 23 March 1990, pp.18-19

¹⁷⁰ *Troops in Poland Said Necessary for Security*, Tass, 14 March, FBIS-SOV-90-051, 15 March 1990, p.26

East Europe" during his visit to Poland.¹⁷¹

Was Stoltenberg's perspective fundamentally incorrect or just unwisely expressed at wrong time? Responses from various sources reflected different judgments but most seemed to favour the latter. After Kohl settled the dispute between Genscher and Stoltenberg, Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti used a key phrase, "One has to proceed step by step", to answer media inquiries including "How should the united Germany be integrated in NATO? Should NATO be extended to the GDR, as FRG Defence Minister Stoltenberg demanded?"¹⁷² Andreotti diplomatically expressed his disagreement with Stoltenberg for making such a reckless statement. Indeed, for any 'normal' sovereign state, unless it needs to surrender to international obligations or foreign pressures, there is no reason to put any restriction on the military deployment within its own territory. Later developments however proved that Stoltenberg's view then was merely circumstantially inappropriate, not fundamentally unjust, because once political concessions could be given by the Soviets, perhaps also Poland, then his policy preference still could be fulfilled.

A Joint Statement But No Consensus

According to Herspring's analysis, "for the time being, a victory for Genscher", it seemed that the joint statement concluding Kohl's intervention was simply an appeasement of international reality but not a total abandonment of principle.¹⁷³ There was no indication that the Bundeswehr had totally abandoned its original concept of deploying its units to eastern Germany after the Genscher-Stoltenberg joint statement. Some planning and analysis was still undertaken. But its members became even more reluctant to express any opinion on this aspect before the political arrangements were settled. For instance, on 13 March 1990 at the "Forum: Bundeswehr and Society" organised by the German newspaper *Die Welt Am Sonntag* in Hamburg, Admiral Dieter Wellershoff, the Inspector General of the Bundeswehr, hardly made any comment relating to the possible impacts of German unification in

¹⁷¹ *Lafontaine Supports Poland in Border Questions*, DPA, 5 April, FBIS-EEU-90-067, 6 April 1990, p.40

¹⁷² Meichsner, *Friedrich Andreotti in Favour of German Unification*, *Die Welt*, 17 February, p.8, FBIS-WEU-90-044, 6 March 1990, pp.23-24

his speech entitled with "*Tasks and Self-Image - the Service of Bundeswehr Soliders in the Nineties*".¹⁷⁴ Stoltenberg's personal attitude might have partially influenced him.

In that same forum, Stoltenberg stood by his promise in the Genscher-Stoltenberg joint statement that clearly promised no NATO units or installations would be deployed on GDR territory and that the interests of the neighbouring East European states must be taken into account. Stoltenberg also declined any public discussion of the future of the NVA. He declared that government members should not discuss it before the GDR democratic election.¹⁷⁵ Stoltenberg skilfully and successfully evaded discussing whether or not non-NATO-commanded Bundeswehr would be stationed in GDR after reunification. Again, on 7 March Stoltenberg spoke to the "Preservation of Peace" working circle in Bonn. He repeated the FRG's political commitment of no NATO units or installations in GDR territory but gave no guarantee of rejecting Bundeswehr deployment eastward to eastern Germany.¹⁷⁶

As a result of this, Genscher became more watchful in commenting on events that might stimulate suspicion within the Soviet Union. Genscher even made a comment that "The West would be well-advised to make it clear that it did not want to benefit unilaterally from the changes in central and Eastern Europe" as a response to the willingness of becoming a NATO member expressed by the Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Horn.¹⁷⁷ Genscher also cautiously chose some more flexible terms in order to avoid irritation. When the representatives of the Warsaw Pact were first invited to attend a West European Union Parliamentary Assembly in Luxemburg, Genscher did mention that special though unspecified arrangements would be needed for the territory of what was the GDR to achieve NATO membership within a unified Germany.¹⁷⁸ The German media constantly mentioned two formulae. One

¹⁷³ Herspring, 1998, Op Cit, p.108

¹⁷⁴ *Admiral Wellershoff on 90's Bundeswehr*, Welt Am Sonntag, 18 March, p.28, FBIS-WEU-90-056, 22 March 1990, pp.7-8

¹⁷⁵ *Stoltenberg Comments on Security, Disarmament*, Op Cit

¹⁷⁶ *Stoltenberg Comments on Future of NATO*, DPA, 7 March, FBIS-WEU-90-053, 19 March 1990, pp.6-7

¹⁷⁷ *Genscher Urges Guarantee for Poland's Border*, DPA, 23 February, FBIS-WEU-90-038, 26 February 1990, p.12

¹⁷⁸ *Krieger, Jörg FRG's Genscher Speaks at WEU Meeting*, Deutschlandfunk Network, 23 March, FBIS-WEU-90-058, 26 March 1990, p.3

was "*Berlin Status*" for GDR territory, which meant no membership in NATO but military protection by the Atlantic alliance. The other was "*French Status*" for a united Germany, which indicated membership in NATO but not in its military organisation.¹⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the bottom line of the FRG was unknown and never openly discussed. No further elaboration was given by the FRG until all the political settlements were actually achieved.

Kohl took an ambiguous approach to describe the future security arrangement for East German territory. Immediately after the Chancellor had settled the Genscher-Stoltenberg dispute, based on the mutual understanding gained from the Camp David summit with President Bush in February 1990, NATO membership for a united Germany was unambiguously readdressed both by Bush and Kohl. But for the future of the GDR territory, only "a status that takes the security interests of the other European countries, including the USSR, into account" was promised.¹⁸⁰ Yet, if a united Germany became a "full-scale member of NATO", one Soviet commentator immediately comprehended that the "*French Status*" described above would never be considered as a sensible option by the West.¹⁸¹ The Soviet Union kept a close watch on the outcomes of the Kohl-Bush Camp David summit. A specific statement from Bush that endorsed Kohl's stance, 'In a unified Germany, the current GDR's territory could be given a special status, in order to "include the legitimate security interests" of neighbouring countries and the Soviet Union', was particularly noted in the Soviet Union.¹⁸² Again, no further elaboration of this key paragraph was ever given. With regard to the "*transitional situations*" mentioned by Kohl, some Soviet reporters merely debated whether it would include the presence of Soviet troops on GDR territory.¹⁸³ The potential Bundeswehr deployment in East Germany, which would presumably lead to the demise of the NVA, was never discussed.

Misled by Perceptions or Convictions?

¹⁷⁹ Sommer, Theo *Back and Forth*, Op Cit

¹⁸⁰ *Holds Talks With Bush*, DPA, 25 February, FBIS-WEU-90-038, 26 February 1990, p.7

¹⁸¹ Kornilov, Yuriy (Tass Political Observer) *Kornilov Comments*, Tass, 26 February, FBIS-SOV-90-038, 26 February 1990, pp.1-2

¹⁸² *TASS Notes Kohl-Bush News Conference*, Tass, 25 February, FBIS-SOV-90-038, 26 February 1990,

p.1

¹⁸³ A. Blinov (Washington) and V. Ganshin (Moscow) *After the Camp David Meeting*, *Izvestiya*, 27 February, morning ed., p.4, "Bush, Kohl Discuss German Reunification / Views Shared on NATO",

The information or perspectives directly acquired from discussions with high-ranking FRG officials were important inputs to the GDR defence decision-making mechanism before reunification. Among the GDR political leadership, formed after 1990 March democratic election, Disarmament and Defence Minister Rainer Eppelmann inevitably played an essential role that influenced the fate of the NVA after reunification. Before Eppelmann officially took the office as the Minister, during a visit to the GDR Defence Ministry, he clearly expressed his support for the NVA to continue its existence after GDR democratic elections.¹⁸⁴ Eppelmann further repeated the same stance in another panel discussion at the NVA Land Force Command in Geltow.¹⁸⁵ At this stage, Eppelmann's perspective was consistent with that of GDR Premier Hans Modrow, who expressed his support for the continuing existence of the NVA, though without specifically clarifying its exact duration, in an interview with "*Volksarmee*", the most influential official periodical in the GDR military. He believed it should be an essential element in the process of the growing together of the two German states but also expected reductions within the NVA would be unavoidable.¹⁸⁶ Nevertheless, in the same article, Modrow addressed the issue of the NVA ensuring the external security of the GDR and its citizens.¹⁸⁷ Eppelmann persistently kept the same position; even advocating preserving the NVA as an individual military organisation in former GDR territory after reunification, though his recommendation totally ignored political reality.

Minister Eppelmann misinterpreted some of the inputs from the FRG, which brought critical consequences. For instance, both German states were obviously aware that Soviet security interests would be the vital factor that dictated the future of German reunification. Eppelmann made clear his support for a unified Germany maintaining the membership of the Atlantic Alliance in the first historic meeting with Minister

FBIS-SOV-90-043, 5 March 1990, p.8

¹⁸⁴ *Minister visits Defence Ministry, discusses future role of army*, ADN, 19 February 1990, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 2 Eastern Europe; B. Internal Affairs; German Democratic Republic; EE/0694/B/1, LexisNexis

¹⁸⁵ *ADN Existence of National People's Army Necessary*, Berliner Allgemeine, 21 February, p.2, Army's Importance Stressed, FBIS-EEU-90-037, 23 February 1990, p.30

¹⁸⁶ *Premier on NVA and the Need for its Continuing Existence*, ADN, 13 February 1990, BBC Summary, EE/0687/B/1, LexisNexis

¹⁸⁷ *Tass On the Tasks of the National People's Army*, Krasnaya Zvezda, 16 February, 1st ed., p.3, FBIS-SOV-90-036, 22 February 1990, p.20

Stoltenburg on 27 April 1990 at Köln Airport, while two other key figures of GDR politics, Premier Lothar de Maiziere and Foreign Minister Markus Meckel, still remained hesitant. Key sentences noted in the post-meeting joint statement, such as "Our goal is a united Germany as a member of the Atlantic Alliance without NATO's military structures or equipment being extended on to the territory of East Germany." and "The details of how this happens must take account of the security interests of our neighbours and especially those of the Soviet Union." proved that Eppelmann failed to achieve his aims in this meeting but Stoltenberg's preferences were fulfilled. To keep the NVA as a separate military body in alliance with the Bundeswehr after reunification did not appear in the joint statement but was only unilaterally addressed by Eppelmann without Stoltenberg's endorsement.¹⁸⁸

The day before the FRG-GDR Defence Ministers' summit, a media report stated that Eppelmann "gave noncommittal answers to questions about NATO membership".¹⁸⁹ This judgment was mainly based on Eppelmann's statement reminding them that the relative alliance agreements remained in force and their violation could cause concern.¹⁹⁰ Whether Eppelmann's manoeuvre was in essence a bargaining chip for acquiring Stoltenberg's backing to retain the NVA after reunification is worth exploration. According to Eppelmann's previous statements when he took the office as the GDR Disarmament and Defence Minister, it seemed highly likely.

To support German membership of NATO after reunification was not Eppelmann's personal initiative. Basically, the GDR's democratically elected Volkskammer had openly expressed that it would accept NATO membership for a united Germany as long as NATO adjusted its strategy, which was the stance repeated by Meckel.¹⁹¹ But Eppelmann responded to Volkskammer with: "if Germany remains in NATO and East Germany gives up its Warsaw Pact membership, no NATO troops should be stationed in what is now East Germany".¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Gow, David E. *Germans Aim at Joint NATO Membership*, London: Guardian, 28 April 1990, LexisNexis

¹⁸⁹ *Eppelmann Announces 49% Military Budget Cut*, Deutschlandsender Network, 26 April, FBIS-EEU-90-081, 26 April 1990, p.21

¹⁹⁰ *GDR-FRG Defence Talks in Cologne Viewed*, Moscow Radio Broadcasting Service, 27 April, FBIS-SOV-90-084, 1 May 1990, p.5

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹² Fisher, Marc *New East German Legislature Asks Forgiveness for Holocaust; Cabinet Voted In, Unity Terms Set*, Washington Post, Washington, D.C., 13 April 1990, p.A1, LexisNexis

After Eppelmann's first meeting with Stoltenberg, his stance on NATO membership was supported by the GDR military professionals. Anonymous high-ranking NVA officers told the FRG paper *Bild* that "they would agree immediately" to a united Germany being a NATO member as long as western troops would not be stationed on GDR territory.¹⁹³ It suggested that there was a hidden assumption. Eppelmann seemed to assume that all the Bundeswehr forces would remain totally under NATO command and control structure after reunification. It was a misunderstanding originating from projecting the NVA's status to the Bundeswehr. Unlike the situation for the rest of the WTO member states, all of the GDR's forces were "under the control of the Supreme Command of the Warsaw Pact".¹⁹⁴ Eppelmann therefore believed that the relationship between NATO and the Bundeswehr was the same and would remain so. Based on this perception, he took the initiative to argue that there was a need for a second German force, which was highly unlikely to be a Bundeswehr force, stationed in eastern Germany as a transitional arrangement.¹⁹⁵ But this represented a general misperception about the political and military command relationship of the Bundeswehr.

It is noteworthy that the Bundeswehr status was misunderstood, as shown by a Soviet commentator saying, "The FRG's armed forces are incorporated in the military structures of the bloc and are subordinated to the Supreme Commander in Chief of the NATO Forces in Europe - read, directly to the Americans".¹⁹⁶ A Soviet military writer, Colonel I. Vladimirov, was also not willing to differentiate between non-NATO assigned Bundeswehr forces and NATO assigned ones in his commentary. Although Stoltenberg promised that no German force or military agency assigned to NATO command and control structure would be present in eastern Germany, Vladimirov still argued "the minister believes that it is also necessary to station Bundeswehr subunits there - i.e. move the North Atlantic bloc's zone of responsibility right up to the border with Poland".¹⁹⁷ Even General Geli Viktorovich Batenin, military expert of the Soviet

¹⁹³ *NVA Officers, USSR Yazov on NVA Future*, Bild, 9 May, p.4, FBIS-EEU-90-090, 9 May 1990, p.27

¹⁹⁴ Ludz, Peter Christian *The German Democratic Republic from the Sixties to the Seventies: A Socio-Political Analysis*. Occasional Papers in International Affairs, No.26, Centre for International Affairs, Boston: Harvard University, November 1970, p.66

¹⁹⁵ *German Defence Ministers Stress United German As NATO Member*, Op Cit

¹⁹⁶ Borisov, T. "U.S. Generals on a United Germany: According to Whose Scenario?", Op Cit.

¹⁹⁷ Colonel I. Vladimirov *United Germany and NATO*, Op Cit.

Union Communist Central Committee, had a misconception about the legal status of the Bundeswehr: "The Bundeswehr, being part of NATO's United Armed Forces, will remain within the boundaries of the Western part of a united Germany".¹⁹⁸

Soviet experts had support from western sources in their opinions about the Bundeswehr. For instance, Thomas Berger, a professor of political science at Johns Hopkins University, commented in an article "Militarily, this meant that the Bundeswehr became a NATO army, integrated into the NATO command structure and without an independent general staff of its own".¹⁹⁹ In February 1990, even such an experienced and prestigious SPD politician like Egon Bahr expressed his disagreement to Stoltenberg's concept of Bundeswehr deployment in eastern Germany after unification in a strongly worded statement, "the ideas about extending the protective function of the Bundeswehr, which is under NATO's supreme command, to GDR territory are simply crazy".

Although the Bundeswehr was unquestionably committed to NATO and exclusively used for defending German territory, these obligations did not deprive the FRG of the sovereign right to control its own armed forces. Whether to assign its military forces to NATO was subject to the FRG government's sovereign decision. In practice, its sizeable Territorial Home Defence Force has never been formally committed to NATO and would remain under FRG national control even in wartime.²⁰⁰ Consequently, the agreement that no NATO troops should extend into eastern Germany did not exclude the possibility of a non-NATO Bundeswehr command and control structure absorbing the NVA and being stationed in the former GDR territory after reunification.

There was evidence indicating that General Manfred Grätz, the NVA Chief of Staff, clearly understood the fact that the entire Bundeswehr was not assigned to NATO but he still hoped that a restructured NVA could be retained as a territorial force in eastern

¹⁹⁸ Batenin, Geli Viktorovich *Preferred Variety: All of Germany in NATO*, Op Cit.

¹⁹⁹ Berger, Thomas "Unsheatheing the Sword?" , World Affairs, Vol. 158, Issue 4, Spring 1996, p.174, ProQuest

²⁰⁰ "Legal Constraints on German Military Power" in Stares, Paul B. *Allied Rights and Legal Constraints on German Military Power*, Brookings Occasional Papers, Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1990, pp.12-17

Germany after reunification.²⁰¹ But before the Kohl-Gorbachev Caucasus summit, the GDR defence leadership never openly discussed the possibility of the NVA being taken over by non-NATO Bundeswehr command. Perhaps the concept, first mentioned by Stoltenberg in February but soon rejected by a Genscher-Stoltenberg joint statement, clouded NVA members' judgment and thus reduced their awareness that outcomes could still be as Stoltenberg had advocated.

According to Professor Herspring's research, Eppelmann did not correctly read the signals concerning the position of the FRG defence authority from his two meetings with Stoltenberg. Admiral Hoffmann judged the situation more accurately.²⁰² But it could not change the situation since Admiral Hoffmann had already lost his position in the GDR defence organisation. Even military professionals within the NVA, with differing awareness of the situation, were very reluctant to openly express their viewpoints, especially after Eppelmann had shown his iron fist when responding to an open letter in the *Junge Welt* on 23 April 1990.²⁰³ In mid-May 1990, General Manfred Grätz publicly confessed that the NVA military professionals had no authority to decide important policy: "as far as the future is concerned, you will understand that this is, of course, a rather difficult question for us military people, because it is the politicians, first and foremost, who decide these things".²⁰⁴ The unwillingness to challenge the civilian defence leadership headed by Eppelmann was clear. But the possibility of providing constructive proposals also vanished.

Eppelmann then delivered his interpretation of the FRG position to key members at an NVA Commanders' Meeting on 2 May 1990. Eppelmann misguided the NVA that Stoltenberg had already agreed on the concept of establishing "a second German force" after reunification by emphasising this concept was the result concluded from his talk with Minister Stoltenberg.²⁰⁵ Nonetheless, the phrases introduced by

²⁰¹ Caligaris, Luigi *Interview With General Manfred Grätz*, *Corriere Della Sera*, 31 July, p.6, GDR Defence Chief Views Impact of Unification, FBIS-WEU-90-155-S, 10 August 1990, pp.2-3

²⁰² Herspring, 1998, *Op Cit*, pp.129-131

²⁰³ This incident will be discussed later.

²⁰⁴ "Vremya" newscast, Moscow Television Service, 15 May, Leaders Changes Views, FBIS-SOV-90-095, 16 May 1990, p.7

²⁰⁵ *"Es wird auch nach der Vereinigung auf DDR-Territorium eine zweite deutsche Armee geben, die, in kein Militärbündnis integriert, hier eigene, territoriale Sicherungsfunktionen ausüben wird und dementsprechend strukturiert, ausgerüstet und ausgebildet werden muß. Das ist auch das Ergebnis der Absprachen mit Minister Stoltenberg. Es wird aber keine NATO-Truppen auf dem Gebiet der*

Eppelmann were vague. "*A second German force*" did not definitely guarantee the continuing existence of the NVA after reunification. Any ad hoc military organisation different from the normal Bundeswehr structure may easily fulfil this loose description. A self-governing reformed NVA was not the only possible interpretation of this unclear term. Nevertheless, it still misled many NVA members at that time.

Wording in political pronouncements is always tricky but important. No public statement was made by any FRG political leader that specifically assured the continued existence of the NVA. Instead of making a promise that precisely specified limited freedom of action, vague terms such as "*the second German force*", which was firstly introduced and given some political significance by Eppelmann in the press conference after his first meeting with Stoltenberg, were frequently adopted in political negotiations by both sides. Even the leaders of the FRG opposition party, such as SPD Chairman Hans-Jochen Vogel, would use vague terms to allow for flexibility in future negotiations. When asked how he saw the future of the Bundeswehr and the NVA after completion of the unification process, Vogel unambiguously used the formal name of the Bundeswehr to clarify the SPD's proposal of halving its force strength. The term "*the armed forces in the GDR*" was adopted to express the SPD's proposal of synchronised reduction; yet this term had never been clearly defined: was Vogel speaking of the NVA?²⁰⁶

It seemed that the NVA members neither correctly perceived the political signals nor asked Eppelmann to clarify what "*the second German force*" really implied. Eppelmann was very confident about this self-fulfilling concept and believed it could assure the survival of the NVA after reunification. He therefore insisted on retaining the conscription system in GDR even though he had admitted that part of the NVA's functions had already vanished thanks to the improved security situation in central Europe.²⁰⁷ A draconian 49% military budget reduction was still decided.²⁰⁸

heutigen DDR geben." (There will also be a second German military force that will not be integrated into any alliance stationed on the GDR territory, accordingly trained and equipped, to conduct its own territorial security function. This is the result concluded from the discussion with Minister Stoltenberg. There will be no NATO troops deployed on today's GDR territory.), Minister Eppelmann's Speech at NVA Commanders' Meeting, 2 May 1990, Arme ohne Zukunft, p.388

²⁰⁶ Guensche, K. L. and Butkov, S. *United Germany: Opinions and Forecasts / The Time Has Come to Disarm* - Interview with SPD Chairman Hans-Jochen Vogel, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 31 March, p.3, FRG's Vogel on 'All-European Security Structure', FBIS-SOV-90-066, 5 April 1990, pp.41-42

²⁰⁷ *Speeches By Foreign and Defence Ministers*, DPA, 26 April, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts,

Facing such an empty assurance of a second German military force continuing to exist after reunification, there were increasing complaints and expressions of insecurity from the military professionals. No credible guidelines had been given by "those above" to direct them in how to fulfil their duties but they still genuinely believed that if the NVA became "as compatible as possible" with the Bundeswehr through military reforms this could prevent their military careers from being terminated immediately after reunification.²⁰⁹ Wishful thinking misled the NVA members: subjective convictions disconnected from reality prevented them from coping with real difficulties and taking more appropriate measures. There were many media reports released later indicating that, even before the issues of the German force scales and NATO membership were fully settled, the absorption of the NVA by the Bundeswehr was inevitable.²¹⁰ The only seemingly reasonable alternative, a second German force concept unilaterally initiated by Eppelmann at the press conference after the first FRG-GDR Defence Minister meeting, never could become a viable option to Stoltenberg but he remained silent when Eppelmann advocated it.²¹¹

Even before the Kohl-Gorbachev Caucasus summit, the signals were very conflicting. A few years later some FRG published files indicated that internal policy reconciliation had not been reached. It was clearly expected by Chancellor Kohl in his discussion with President Bush on 8 June 1990 that the Bundeswehr would absorb the NVA. According to Kohl's personal assessment, a maximum of 20% of the NVA members would be accepted by the Bundeswehr and, in principle, it was unthinkable to accept any NVA officer.²¹² Kohl's perspective was nothing new: it was consistent

30 April 1990, Part 2, Eastern Europe, EE/0751/C2/1, LexisNexis

²⁰⁸ Eppelmann Announces 49% Military Budget Cut, Op Cit

²⁰⁹ Moniac, Ruediger *Fewer Soldiers and New Strategy*, Die Welt, 7 March, p. 4, FBIS-EEU-90-046, 8 March 1990, p.35

²¹⁰ See Knutson, Lawrence J. *No Easy Answer to the German Question for Gorbachev, Bush*, Associated Press, 30 May; Marsh, David *Kohl Advisor Warns Moscow over Talks*, London, Financial Times, 7 June, p.2; Gow, David and Hella Pick *Bonn Wants Nuclear-Free Germany*, London, Guardian, 7 June; and Marsh, David, Ian Davison and Robert Mauthner *West Germans Look Both Ways on NATO; The '2 plus 4' Group Meets Today in Berlin*, Op Cit. The earliest media report that predicted the merge of the Bundeswehr and the NVA after reunification was published in February 1990, long before the GDR democratic election and Admiral Hoffmann's personal proposal. See Marsh, David *Ready to Roll on the Road to Unity*, Financial Times, 7 February 1990, p.18. All from LexisNexis

²¹¹ One media report clearly indicated that this concept of two German forces was not in the joint statement but solely promoted by Eppelmann. See *German Defence Ministers Stress United German As NATO Member*, Op Cit.

²¹² *Gespräch des Bundeskanzlers Kohl mit Präsident Bush, Washington, 8. Juni 1990* (Talk between

with an open statement made by the FRG Defence spokesman four months previously.²¹³ But inside the FRG Defence Ministry, an internal assessment report by the Director of the Organisational Department to State Secretary Dr. Carl on 13 June 1990 indicated that the FRG Defence Ministry were still pragmatically analysing the possibility of appropriate measures to establish a joint command and control structure with both German defence authorities. According to this analysis, there were three functions, personnel, budget and organisation, that the FRG Defence Ministry would control in this assumed Bundeswehr-NVA structure.²¹⁴ Yet, without these three significant functions, there would be no reason for the NVA to remain in existence as an individual entity because it would not be a self-governing organisation.

On the same day, in Stoltenberg's speech to the Bundeswehr Commanders, he told the press that he would not accept two German forces after reunification. According to the media, Stoltenberg addressed three key issues. First, there could only be one German military force, which was the eventual goal, after a short transitional period. Second, NVA members would be accommodated into the future German force through some appropriate restructuring processes. Last but not least, NATO would extend its protection coverage to all Germany after reunification.²¹⁵ Of course, some information might not have been available to the NVA then. Nevertheless, Stoltenberg's speech was well received by the NVA members. Former FRG State Secretary Lothar Rühl's article "One State, One Army", published by *Die Welt* a few days after Stoltenberg's speech, undermined the trust of the NVA leadership. Strong reactions from NVA members after receiving conflicting information about their future were apparent in the routine situation report prepared for the GDR defence leadership.²¹⁶

Chancellor Kohl and President Bush on 2 June 1990 in Washington), *Armee ohne Zukunft*, p.406

²¹³ Fisher, Marc E. *German Military Reforming; Prospect of Unity Prompts Unease*, Washington Post, 13 February 1990, p.A12, 1st Section, LexisNexis

²¹⁴ *Vorlage des Leiters des Organisationsstabes im BMVg, Ministerialrat Hofer, für eine gemeinsame Führungsstruktur von BMVg und MfAV vom 13. Juni 1990* (Draft submitted on 13 June 1990 by the Director of the Organisational Department Hofer for assessment of establishing a joint command and control structure for the FRG Defence Ministry and the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry), *Armee ohne Zukunft*, pp.408-410

²¹⁵ Ibid, p.411, *Rede des Bundesministers der Verteidigung, Dr. Gerhard Stoltenberg, bei der 31. Kommandeur-Tagung der Bundeswehr am 13. Juni 1990 in Fellbach*, Quelle: *BMVg, Material für Presse, Bonn, 13. Juni 1990* (Defence Minister Stoltenberg's speech at 31st Bundeswehr Commanders' Meeting on 13 June 1990 in Fellbach, Source: the FRG Defence Ministry Media Reference Material, Bonn, 13 June 1990)

²¹⁶ Ibid, pp.422-423, *Meldung zur Lage in der NVA am 22. Juni 1990 (Auszug)* (The NVA Situation

There were also clear indications that the Bundeswehr needed officers and non-commissioned officers in the lower ranks. The basic principles of the new Bundeswehr as well as procedures for recruiting applicants from the NVA were also revealed, proving that a second German force was indeed an unreachable concept, but no one in the NVA seemed willing to challenge its attainability.²¹⁷ Moreover, before the first meeting of the two German Defence Ministers, Stoltenberg again announced that any NVA members who moved across the border would be able to join the Bundeswehr. An American analyst, therefore, concluded that this statement was the first step toward a combined German military force.²¹⁸ Even during the second meeting between two Defence Ministers in Strausberg on May 28, 1990, the need to precisely define the implication of a second German force was totally overshadowed by the main theme of the meeting, the official relationship and cooperation of the two existing German forces.²¹⁹

From media reports at that time, the topics under discussion were European security, security policy, disarmament, arms control, arms conversion, utilisation of military material, the development of military administration, military budget, cooperation in the sphere of internal security, training, as well as guidelines on official and unofficial contacts between the soldiers of two sides - even sports in the armed forces. But the

report on June 22, 1990 - excerpt)

²¹⁷ *Possible Acceptance of NVA Soldiers Reported*, Die Welt, 10 March, p.8, FBIS-WEU-90-048, 12 March 1990, p.7. The media did not reveal its source but it seemed to be a Bundeswehr internal analysis report. Early in January 1990, Stoltenberg had explicitly expressed the intention of the Bundeswehr to admit young qualified NVA soldiers "if a careful check confirms their suitability and if we can assume that they are serving truly in accordance with the principles of our Constitution", (Stoltenberg's own words) when he first announced the possibility of such arrangement in a German television programme on channel ARD. See *Stoltenberg Says GDR Troops Could Join Army*, DPA, 31 January, FBIS-WEU-90-022, 1 February 1990, p.6. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Stoltenberg had actually made some internal preparations after his proclamation. Nevertheless, after General Schönbohm became Commander of the BKO, he immediately expressed to the press that the Bundeswehr did expect to accept those NVA young officers and non-commissioned officers "who we believe are particularly capable of learning and can adapt to the new task". It appeared there was a link between recruitment targets and actual manpower demand. *General Says Third of NVA to Transfer to Army*, ADN, 16 October, FBIS-WEU-90-201, 17 October 1990, p.14

²¹⁸ Smith, Jeffrey R. *Warsaw Pact - Endgame; In Eastern Europe, the Military Alliance Is Dead*, Washington Post, 4 February, p.C1; But another media report still ignored Stoltenberg's statement and believed that the Bundeswehr had no interest in recruiting the NVA members who deserted simply because of security reasons. See Kaplan, Fred *Armies of the East: Soldiers Without a Cause; Facing Reunification With the West, German Troops Lose Will to Hold the Line*, Boston Globe, 2 March 1990, p.1, LexisNexis

²¹⁹ *GDR and FRG Armies to Take Up Official Relations*, Op Cit; and *GDR and FRG Defence Ministers' Meeting on Military Cooperation*, Op Cit.

meaning and role of the second German force was never mentioned.²²⁰ Again, the only statement related to the future fate of the NVA was mentioned unilaterally by Eppelmann two days before the meeting. According to the media report released by the GDR official news agency, "No one can presently say how long the NVA will remain. This depends on many factors. The minister *assumes* that the NVA will exist as long as two military alliances exist in Europe. Only when there is a unified security system, to which all European states have access, can the NVA cease to exist". The media unquestionably knew that as no firm guarantee had ever been given to Eppelmann by the FRG.²²¹ But Eppelmann still believed that he had been granted a tacit consent after his first meeting with Stoltenberg and subsequently misled the NVA.

Failing to correctly identify the trend towards unification from the beginning was the fundamental reason that all Eppelmann's efforts to preserve the NVA failed. No wonder it hit the NVA members hard when the final verdict of the NVA's fate was disclosed by Chancellor Kohl on July 17, 1990, two days after the Caucasus summit, "Starting immediately upon unification, non-integrated units of the Bundeswehr, i.e., territorial defence units, will be permitted to be stationed within the territory of the present GDR and Berlin".²²² One British media commentator immediately anticipated that the NVA would vanish and become a part of Bundeswehr after reunification.²²³ But the Soviet official news agency focused only on the size of the German force after

²²⁰ *Military Ties To Begin 1 Jun; Eppelmann, Stoltenberg Begin Talks; Further on Talks; and Stoltenberg Notes 'Good Spirit'*; all by AND on 28 May and in FBIS-EEU-90-103, 29 May 1990, pp.21-22

²²¹ *Eppelmann on Military Reform, Disarmament*, ADN, 26 May, FBIS-EEU-90-103, 29 May 1990, p.21

²²² *Point six of Kohl on His Caucasus Meeting with Gorbachev, 17 July 1990*, in Jaraus, Konrad H. and Gransow, Volker, 1994, Op Cit., p.177

²²³ Gow, David *Troop Reductions and A New Treaty*, London, Guardian, 17 July 1990, LexisNexis. Ironically, on the other side of the Euro-Asia continent, although some political commentators in the communist China were also interested in the future of the NVA, political signals were still poorly perceived and interpreted. A PRC radio commentary broadcast in late-August 1990, six weeks after Kohl's post-Caucasus proclamation, still assumed and discussed three opinions for disposing of the NVA. See *"International News and Current Events Program: Roundup on the Recent Crisis in the GDR"*, Beijing Domestic Broadcasting Service, 28 August, Problems of German Unification Examined, FBIS-CHI-90-170, 31 August 1990, pp.14-15. Actually, political wrestling to decide the future of the NVA was already a dead issue by then. Detailed executive policies and juridical arrangements for this task were virtually settled. The FRG-GDR Reunification Treaty was a documentation of nearly 1,000 pages, though the GDR newspaper *Junge Welt* still criticised it as "a house with uncompleted work". See M. Podklyuchnikov *House With Uncompleted Work*, Pravda, 2 September, 2nd ed., p.7, Signing of German Unification Treaty Reported, FBIS-SOV-90-173, 6 September 1990, pp.2-3

negotiation. The fate of the NVA did not interest them at all.²²⁴ Kohl finally fulfilled his intention of "stationing of Bundeswehr troops in all parts of a unified Germany", as he had firmly decided and clandestinely expressed when programming the German unification formula three months earlier, on 2 April 1990.²²⁵

The general GDR response to Kohl's post-Caucasus statement was one of great disappointment. Commentators felt that nobody was interested in GDR's views the Kohl-Gorbachev agreement was just a pragmatic settlement between the FRG and the USSR.²²⁶ Nevertheless, Kohl's statement became a catalyst to the GDR defence authority, forcing it to drastically adjust its stance in follow-on negotiation. Preserving the NVA or converting it into a second German force as an individual entity other than the Bundeswehr was no longer an option. The reality meant settling terms in the reunification treaty for securing the NVA members' interests when it was taken over by the Bundeswehr. According to Dr. Oberst a.D. Horst Schulze, the negotiation team, whose structure was dictated by Eppelmann and Ablass and specifically intended for the new negotiation context, was immediately formed.²²⁷

Kohl's policy immediately received endorsement from the Social Democratic Party, the major opposition party in the FRG. Its military expert Erwin Horn expressed the party's view that there should not be a separate military force with special characteristics and its own tradition on the former GDR territory after reunification. The goal must be the creation of joint armed forces, with universal conscription.²²⁸ A week after Kohl's post-Caucasus press statement, he reiterated that only one military force, the Bundeswehr, would exist and the NVA would be scrapped after reunification.²²⁹ But before Kohl formally released his statement, Ablass, the GDR Defence State Secretary, correctly perceived that the situation had changed and some

²²⁴ Abrosimov, Vladimir and Vladimir Serov *Kohl Praises Outcome of Talks With Gorbachev*, Tass, 17 July 1990, LexisNexis

²²⁵ Herspring, 1998, Op Cit, p.118

²²⁶ Prokot, Gerd *Without a Viola*, Neues Deutschland, 17 July, p.1, Criticised for Disregarding GDR, FBIS-EEU-90-139, 19 July, p.31; Adam, Bo *Realpolitik in the Caucasus*, Berliner Zeitung, 19 July, p.1, Accords Called 'Realpolitik', FBIS-EEU-90-139, 19 July, pp.31-32; and Heims, Hans-Jörg *Up to the Summit*, 17 July, p.3, Dependence on Each Other Assessed, FBIS-EEU-90-139, 19 July 1990, p.32

²²⁷ Interview with Dr. Oberst a. D. Horst Schulze, 19 November 2003

²²⁸ *SPD Demands 'No Separate Army' on GDR Territory*, DPA, 18 July, FBIS-WEU-90-139, 19 July 1990, p.14

²²⁹ *Kohl 'Arrogant' in Unity Talks, East German Minister Says*, Toronto Star, 22 July 1990, p.H4, LexisNexis

decisions had already been made by the Bundeswehr during the so-called "*take-over negotiation*" in Bonn. According to the "supply plan" drafted by the Bundeswehr, the Bundeswehr had no intention of allowing the NVA, or an alternative second German force, to exist as an individual entity after reunification. All the contemporary logistic efforts indicated that the Bundeswehr would like to take over the NVA personnel and to establish a command structure under the FRG Defence Ministry, as dictated by the pace of political developments.²³⁰ Mysteriously, NVA members were blinded by the concept of "the second German force", which conflicted with almost all the FRG alternatives but was only supported by a few GDR politicians.

Not A Monologue by Eppelmann

As well as the defence leaders, the GDR political leaders, Modrow and de Maiziere, continued to make promising statements indirectly supporting the continuing existence of the NVA. Before formally taking office as GDR Prime Minister, Lothar de Maiziere, in his capacity of GDR CDU Party Chairman, told the press that deploying NATO Forces on East German territory was not acceptable to him.²³¹ But after his inauguration, de Maiziere stated "There will be a drastically reduced National People's Army with strictly defensive functions on the territory of what is now the GDR alongside the Soviet Armed Forces during the transitional period", in his first Volkskammer speech.²³² The GDR defence leadership were not entirely to blame for misleading the people.

There were only two ministers in the GDR democratically elected government who continued to support the existence of the NVA after reunification, Michael Meckel, the GDR Foreign Minister, and Minister Eppelmann.²³³ Studies of statements

²³⁰ *Clear Direction*, Der Spiegel, 16 July, p.14, Bundeswehr Plans to Take Over NVA by 1 Jan 91, FBIS-WEU-90-137, 17 July 1990, pp.9-10

²³¹ Tass Teletype, Sovetskaya Rossiya, 22 March, 2nd ed., p.3, De Maiziere Says NATO Presence 'Not Possible', FBIS-SOV-90-056, 22 March 1990, pp.17

²³² Lapskiy, V. - Izvestiya Correspondent *GDR: Government Programme Statement*, Izvestiya, 21 April, morning ed., p.5, Izvestiya Reports GDR Government Programme, FBIS-SOV-90-080, 25 April, pp.28-29. Soviet political observers heartily appreciated this key standpoint as NATO membership of a united Germany had not been mentioned in de Maiziere's statement. See Podklyuchnikov, M. - Pravda Correspondent *On the Spot Report: Goals Set; GDR Government's First Steps*, Pravda, 22 April, 2nd ed., p.7, "Programme for Unification, Market Economy Viewed", FBIS-SOV-90-080, 25 April 1990, pp.29-30

²³³ Murray, Ian *Berlin to Spend £1.3bn in Military Update*, London, Times, 30 July 1990, Overseas

presented by these Ministers on different occasions show that their political arguments were somewhat fragmented. Meckel never issued a set of political arguments that identified the need to preserve the NVA after reunification: he was simply responding to situations at the time or statements issued by others. At most, before Meckel became the GDR Foreign minister after the March 1990 democratic election, he issued a statement about the future of the NVA that clearly stated that in the future the NVA could not continue to exist in its original structure. Most possibly, the NVA "could be transformed into something like militia" but "its command structure would have to be clarified". Furthermore, this "would have to take Soviet security interests also into consideration".²³⁴

Alternatively, Eppelmann had a political "model" containing five propositions that defined the role of the NVA after reunification, but some of these were contradictory. In his private correspondence, Eppelmann advocated, first, the Bundeswehr should keep its current military and political arrangement after reunification. Second, NATO membership for a united Germany was acceptable but should be no more than political dialogue. Third, the NVA should be preserved as an independent military force. Fourth, the NVA should be a military force commanded by its own command structure and not belong to any military alliance system. Fifth, the NVA should not be a subdivision of the Defence Ministry of a united Germany.²³⁵ Several points should be noted about Eppelmann's "model". First, Eppelmann never openly presented all five propositions together. From time to time he would discuss elements of them. Therefore, no one had a complete picture of his plans. Furthermore, Eppelmann did not always stand by his viewpoints. His stance drifted back and forth. Also, there was no evidence that Eppelmann ever asked his staff or members of the NVA to analyse the attainability of his propositions. Unquestionably, Eppelmann expressed his ideas in NVA internal meetings. Yet it was highly unlikely that Eppelmann ever successfully acquired political endorsement of his views from other GDR politicians or its leaders.

News, LexisNexis

²³⁴ *Foreign Policy Press Breakfast, "The Election in East Germany"*, Markus Meckel, Deputy Chairman of the SPD, GDR; Hans Misselwitz, Foreign Policy Advisor, GDR; Horst Ehmke, Deputy Chairman of SPD Parliamentary Group, FRG; Dietrich Stobbe, SPD Member of Parliament, Former Mayor of West Berlin, FRG; Moderator: Charles William Maynes, editor, *Foreign Policy*, Washington, D.C., News Makers & Policy Makers, Federal News Service, 8 March 1990, LexisNexis

²³⁵ Eppelmann, Rainer *Wenderwege ~ Briefe an die Familie (The Route of Transition ~ Letters to the Family)*, Bonn, Dietmar Herbst, Bouvier, 1992, p.60

All five propositions in Eppelmann's "model" lacked strong interdependence and were often conflicting. Terms used in these propositions were also imprecise. Any concept seemingly undermining the sovereignty of a united Germany needed very precise definitions, which Eppelmann never achieved.

Nevertheless, both Ministers expressed their disappointment when their expectations vanished after the Kohl-Gorbachev Caucasus summit.²³⁶ Although Meckel asked the media to announce that he viewed the outcome of the summit as a great success,²³⁷ still intended to discuss and clarify the future status of the NVA and to demand a proportional force reduction for both German forces as part of the Reunification Treaty.²³⁸ In addition, both ministers subsequently tried different approaches, either emphasising the NVA members' contribution to the peaceful revolution (Eppelmann) or arguing that future force reduction should not all be at the NVA's expense (Meckel), to make a last effort to defend NVA members' interests, though they undoubtedly knew they had little chance of challenging the *fait accompli*.²³⁹ These arguments could not change the course of ongoing developments within the FRG. Disbanding the NVA and installing a Bundeswehr command structure to manage all the NVA's legacies was announced in mid-August 1990.²⁴⁰ Only then did Eppelmann finally accept reality. He could only urge the Bundeswehr and the FRG to support relocation and retraining programmes for former NVA members, in order to limit further damage.²⁴¹

Their stand of the two ministers had been supported by another GDR major political figure, Karl-August Kamilli, SPD member of the Volkskammer. Before Kohl's

²³⁶ Fisher, Marc E. *German Balking at Unity Pace; Election Rules, Army Are Disputed Issues*, Washington Post, 23 July, p. A13; and Kohl 'Arrogant' in Unity Talks, East German Minister Says, Op Cit.

²³⁷ *Meckel Calls for Two Armies in United Germany*, Vienna Television Service, 19 July, FBIS-EEU-90-140, 20 July 20 1990, p.26

²³⁸ Baum, Karl-Heinz *NATO Must Undergo Further Changes - Interview With Foreign Minister Markus Meckel*, Frankfurter Rundschau, 20 July, "Views NATO, Two-Plus-Four Talks", FBIS-EEU-90-141, 21 July 1990, pp.33-34

²³⁹ Farr, Michael *Armies Out of Step as They March Towards Union*, London, Guardian, 23 July, LexisNexis. Before the Kohl-Gorbachev Summit, Eppelmann emphasises that the NVA declines to use the force against GDR citizens, See *Official: E. Germany Tried to Reclose Wall*, Florida, St. Petersburg Times, 10 July 1990, p.14A, LexisNexis

²⁴⁰ *Plan for "Bundeswehr Command East" to Take Over NVA Straight After Accession*, DPA, 18 August, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, EE/0848/B/1, 21 August 1990, LexisNexis

²⁴¹ *Eppelmann Says Soviet Troop Withdrawal possible by the End of 1992*, ADN, 27 August 27, BBC Summary, 31 August 1990, EE/ 0857/B/1, LexisNexis

Caucasus summit, Kamilli had foreseen the possibility of the NVA's total disbandment but had insisted that an all-German military could not be formed simply by "abolishing the NVA and slightly reducing the Bundeswehr"²⁴² Similar objections were expressed by Egon Bahr, the SPD security expert who was advisor to Eppelmann at that time. Although Bahr had used some strong statements, such as "It was objectively impossible and not something which could be resolved overnight" and "That would be ethically irresponsible and politically unwise to let the NVA members become margins of society or social void", he was not fundamentally opposed to the eventual integration of the two German forces, merely requesting more handover time to make them become compatible before further incorporation.²⁴³ When facing the Bundeswehr officers' general concern of the NVA members' ideological inclinations, Bahr emphasised that the NVA had already made the effort to de-politicise itself. It would be unreasonable to exclude all NVA professionals indiscriminately. A personnel inspection committee, therefore, would be needed to review every individual in order to explore his true feelings.²⁴⁴

When Bahr accepted Eppelmann's invitation to be advisor to the NVA in July 1990, he stated emphatically that the goal must be "a single German Army", but with special arrangements for the NVA made during reunification. He would not accept the concept of Germany as a country with two different armies and two different security zones because it would not enhance European stability but be counter-productive.²⁴⁵ According to Bahr: "If I espouse united German forces as an aim, then I must make the Federal Army and the NVA compatible - that is, bring them together", therefore, he believed that the dissolution of the NVA would be "wrong in principle".²⁴⁶ A few days later, Bahr adjusted his position to accept the immediate incorporation of the two forces but still made another attempt to establish a formula for establishing personnel representation within the Bundeswehr, by arguing that its size should depend on the

²⁴² *Reports on Germany; First Joint Session of Defence Committee of German Parliaments*, ADN, 20 June, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 2 Eastern Europe, EE/0799/A1/1, 25 June 1990 LexisNexis

²⁴³ *German Affairs; Egon Bahr Rejects Immediate Fusion of Bundeswehr and NVA*, ADN, 18 and 19 July, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 20 July 1990, LexisNexis

²⁴⁴ Auth, *Edgar Beginning of the End of NATO*, Frankfurter Rundschau, 18 July, p.5, FBIS-WEU-90-139, 19 July 1990, pp.13-14

²⁴⁵ *SPD's Egon Bahr Begins Work as Army Advisor*, ADN, 5 July, FBIS-EEU-90-130, 6 July 1990, pp. 35-36

²⁴⁶ *Egon Bahr Favours Uniting Bundeswehr; NVA*, ADN, 19 July, FBIS-EEU-90-139, 19 July 1990, pp.

corresponding size of the population vis à vis the FRG and the GDR before reunification.²⁴⁷ This argument was similar to the formal stance of the GDR Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor of the former SED party, that wanted any reduction of the German force to apply equally to the Bundeswehr and the NVA, as declared by the PDS party chairman Gregor Gysi when he expressed his basic support for the results of the Kohl-Gorbachev summit.²⁴⁸ Bahr's ideas never received any significant response from the FRG defence authorities, but only a week after assuming the responsibility of the former NVA members' future, General Schönbohm started to openly resist "drastic steps" in the reduction of personnel levels. This was in direct opposition to the prescribed policy directed by the Defence Ministry.²⁴⁹

Why the seeming inconsistency? It was the result of confusion between the continued existence of the NVA and the welfare of its personnel and their families. As Bahr put it, "I cannot develop all-German armed forces by abolishing the NVA. Behind this is not only an apparatus but 100,000 people, 100,000 people with their families".²⁵⁰ The same misunderstanding also appeared in Meckel's comment whilst he saw the dismissal of the NVA as the dismissal of 80,000 to 90,000 soldiers.²⁵¹ The disbandment of the NVA would certainly mean the disposal of its members. But it was unreasonable to demand the further existence of the NVA simply to ensure the future of NVA members and their dependents. Taking decisive measures to abolish the NVA after reunification would be justified as long as it did not imply that its members would be badly treated. Nevertheless, it seemed that many were confused about these two different issues.

The Rationality of the Political Arguments

Primarily, there was an essential failure of logic in Eppelmann's argument. The

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²⁴⁷ *Senior GDR Official: Unified Germany Must Have Unified Army*, Xinhua General Overseas News Service, item No: 0730045, 30 July 1990, LexisNexis

²⁴⁸ *People Should Decide on Alliance Membership*, Neues Deutschland, 20 July, p.3, *PDS' Gysi on Kohl-Gorbachev Meeting Outcome*, FBIS-EEU-90-143, 25 July 1990, p.32

²⁴⁹ *Former NVA Commander Against Drastic Reduction in Eastern Command*, DPA, 9 October, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 2 Eastern Europe, 11 October 1990, EE/0892/B/1, LexisNexis

²⁵⁰ Staecker, Dieter *We Get the MIG-29 For Nothing - Interview With Egon Bahr*, Die Presse, 17 July, p.4, SPD's Bahr on Unifying Armed Forces, FBIS-WEU-90-137, 17 July 1990, pp.10-11

²⁵¹ *Meckel Calls for Two Armies in United Germany*, Op Cit

continuing existence of the NVA on GDR territory after reunification was not totally unconditional. From his inauguration as the GDR Disarmament and Defence Minister on 18 April 1990, he consistently argued that the continuing existence of two alliances in Europe forced the need to retain the NVA.²⁵² Eppelmann not only repeatedly declared his convictions - "After the unification of the two states, there could be a second German Army on GDR territory which, not integrated in any military alliance, will exercise its own, territorial safeguarding functions" - but also allowed his statement to be published.²⁵³ Admiral Hoffmann publicly reiterated Eppelmann's argument in an NVA Commanders' Meeting on 23 May.²⁵⁴

To be fair, the GDR politicians were not the only people who unilaterally advocated this concept. A prominent FRG security expert, non-offensive defence movement activist and famous dissident, Admiral Elmar Schmähling, who was discharged from the Bundeswehr because of his openly criticisms on the FRG defence and security policies in early 1990, expressed a similar argument for separate military entities in June 1990.²⁵⁵ At a meeting of retired high-ranking German officers from both German armed forces, in March 1990, Schmähling also advocated that the NVA should leave the Warsaw Pact and assume territorial tasks with reduced force strength. This "informal exchange of opinions" was included in a joint communiqué presented to both German Ministries of Defence.²⁵⁶ Eppelmann's stance was in line with Schmähling's and was endorsed by nine retired senior military professionals from the two different armed forces. But apparently Schmähling did not represent mainstream FRG policy.

²⁵² *Minister for Disarmament and Defence Takes Office*, ADN, 18 April, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 20 April EE/0743/B/1; and *GDR Minister of Disarmament of Defence Takes Office*, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 20 April 1990, EE/0743/i, LexisNexis

²⁵³ *Eppelmann on Unification, Pan-European Process*, ADN, 2 May, FBIS-EEU-90-086, 3 May 1990, p.25

²⁵⁴ "*Der Minister für Abrüstung und Verteidigung, Rainer Eppelmann, hat darüber - wie Sie sicher aus den Medien erfahren haben - eine andere Auffassung. ... Vor allem hat er mehrfach darauf verwiesen, daß es auch nach vollzogener Staatlicher Vereinigung von BRD und DDR noch eine Nationale Volksarmee auf unserem Territorium geben werde, solange die beiden Militärorganisationen der NATO und des Warschauer Vertrages bestünden.*" (Minister Eppelmann mentioned more than once There will be a Nationale Volksarmee stationed on today's GDR territory as long as NATO and the Warsaw Pact still existed.) See *Ausführungen des Chefs der Nationale Volksarmee, Admiral Hoffmann, auf der Kommandeurstagung der NVA am 23. Mai 1990* (The Chief of the NVA Admiral Hoffmann's Speech in 23 May 1990 Commanders' Meeting), *Armee ohne Zukunft*, p.397

²⁵⁵ Kalintsev, Nikolai *Admiral Schmähling Opposes Germany's NATO Membership*, Tass, 4 June 1990, LexisNexis

²⁵⁶ *Role of National People's Army Discussed*, DPA, 25 March, FBIS-WEU-90-058, 26 March 1990,

When Schmähling attended a discussion on disarmament held in West Berlin in January 1990, he openly endorsed a four-point disarmament plan proposed by the SED Chairman Gregor Gysi. This included halving the strength of both the Bundeswehr and the NVA, reducing the duration of conscription on both sides, halting all weapon system modernisation plans and withdrawing all foreign forces from the two German states no later than 1990. Schmähling further considered that the WTO was already politically incapable of action; therefore there was no reason to retain conscription that was not based on substantial training but was merely to sustain the size of the Bundeswehr. After Schmähling criticised NATO, Professor Gonnermann, of the East Berlin Humboldt University, who attended as the representative of the NVA, responded "We must dissociate ourselves from the tutelage of our two big brothers".²⁵⁷ Schmähling himself was sceptical about the association between the German armed forces and their relative military alliance systems. Therefore, Schmähling's argument in June 1990 about the continued existence of the Bundeswehr and the NVA because of their relative memberships in two different military alliances was actually very weak.

In 1990 it was clear that for NATO, WTO, FRG, GDR, Bundeswehr and NVA, there was no returning to the past, but neither could they remain as they were. European security arrangements needed to be redefined to cope with the evolving strategic environment. Commentators delivered divergent views. Some were even self-contradictory. Although sometimes perspectives from different sides could be superficially similar, they originated from different standpoints. Furthermore, only statements from the actual power-holders could create substantive results. Nevertheless, political comments could still mislead and create unrealistic expectations. When Eppelmann took office as the GDR Disarmament and Defence Minister, he had already agreed that a united Germany would de jure be a member of NATO.²⁵⁸ The same expectation was expressed to Stoltenberg in their first official

pp.9-10

²⁵⁷ Gottschlich, Juergen *Admiral Schmähling on SED Disarmament Course: Top Man in Bundeswehr Feels Proposals Coming Out of East Berlin Are Realistic; Bundeswehr Can Reduced Immediately From 490,000 to 250,000 Men; Rejection of EFA, European Fighter Aircraft, and Other Modernisation Steps; Discussion Session on Disarmament in West Berlin*, Die Tageszeitung, 8 January, pp.4, Schmähling's Remarks at Berlin Before Ouster, FBIS-WEU-90-027, 8 February 1990, pp.13-14

²⁵⁸ *Minister for Disarmament and Defence Takes Office*, Op Cit.; and *GDR Minister of Disarmament of*

engagement and noted in the ensuing joint statement.²⁵⁹ Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was the only participant in the previous month's WTO foreign ministers' consultative meeting who spoke against NATO membership for a united Germany.²⁶⁰ Foreign Ministers from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland all supported a united Germany staying in NATO, which would reduce the potential for German military predominance.²⁶¹ But if a unified Germany became a NATO member state, then there would be no need to retain another separate military force, whether or not it was the NVA or a "second German force", after reunification, just because NATO and the WTO continued to exist in Europe.

In addition, if Eppelmann was confidently proposing such ideas, then he needed to assess the likelihood of the Warsaw Pact's future survival. Given an analysis made in late 1989 by Francois Heisbourg, Director of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, the WTO was already less likely to be able to act as a whole in any contingency operation because of animosity between its member states after the Soviet Union loosened its grip. At most, it could only be "a forum for discussion and a means of managing tensions" amongst the member states.²⁶² After the Bush-Gorbachev Malta Summit, Viktor Kremenjuk, a foreign affairs expert of United States of America and Canada Institute in Moscow, made a very pessimistic comment on a British television news programme about the future of the WTO. It was made known that the Kremlin would allow the WTO member states freedom to make their own decisions about Warsaw Pact membership.²⁶³ By early 1990 it was extremely clear that the collapse of the WTO was only a matter of time. The continuing existence of the WTO was drawing to an end. In early-February, when the USSR still expected both German states to withdraw from their respective military alliance

Defence Takes Office, Op Cit

²⁵⁹ Gow, David E. *Germans Aim at Joint NATO Membership*, Op Cit. Unlike Eppelmann, GDR Foreign Minister Meckel did not enthusiastically embrace German NATO membership. In May 1990, Meckel still argued that "*Without a reform of NATO, Moscow will never agree to membership in NATO of a united Germany*" in his speech to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, where he criticised the Soviet proposal of a joint NATO-WTO membership for a united Germany as "inconceivable". See *Meckel Considers Double Membership in Alliances 'Inconceivable'*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 11 May, p.1, *Meckel Rejects Membership in Two Alliances*, FBIS-WEU-90-093, 14 May 1990, p.7.

²⁶⁰ *'Different Opinion' on Unifying Germany*, CTK (Czech Telegraph Agency), Op Cit.

²⁶¹ *Horn on Pact, Germany, Havel Meeting*, MTI (Hungarian Wire Service), 17 March, FBIS-EEU-90-053, 19 March 1990, pp.4-5

²⁶² *A Pact of Independents*, London: Independent, 16 November 1989, p.15, LexisNexis

²⁶³ *Foreign Affairs Expert Cited on Pact's Future*, Channel 4 News, ITV Television Network, 4 December, FBIS-SOV-89-234, 7 December 1989, pp.7-8

systems, the deputy spokesman of the Soviet Foreign Ministry, Yuriy Gremitskikh, said "We are prepared to disband the blocs today", which confirmed the imminent disbandment or transformation of the existing alliance systems.²⁶⁴

In mid-May 1990, Eppelmann finally admitted that "it looks as if the Warsaw Pact is going to break apart", but still argued the need to keep the Warsaw Pact as a political alliance, "at least for a transitional period".²⁶⁵ Within ten days, an assessment contained in the International Institute for Strategic Studies annual report concerning the WTO stated "it is doubtful whether as an institution it will long survive the departure of East Germany from its ranks".²⁶⁶

Some political features in the FRG, mainly the left wing of the Social Democratic Party, questioned the necessity of a post-reunification NATO membership though it was less likely accepted by most of the FRG citizens at the time. Even Minister Stoltenberg himself was very keen that NATO should reform its structures, redefine its tasks and change its military strategies in order to counter resistances to FRG's NATO membership after reunification.²⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the general perspective from different NATO member states was that NATO needed to evolve or reform its missions and characters in order to justify its further existence in post-German reunification or even post-Cold War Europe.²⁶⁸ The outcome of these demands as well as the need to allay Soviet misgivings on NATO membership of a unified Germany was the "*London Declaration*", issued after the NATO meeting of 5 - 6 July 1990. An ending to the enmity between NATO and the WTO was firmly advocated. Subsequently, NATO adjusted its military strategy to the new politico-military situation in Europe. Further disarmament was also promised by member states.²⁶⁹ The London Declaration was the last silver bullet that effectively eliminated the

²⁶⁴ *Gremitskikh Comments on German Unity*, DPA, 2 February, FBIS-SOV-90-026, 7 February 1990, p.27

²⁶⁵ *Eppelmann Says Warsaw Pact 'Breaking Up'*, ADN, 14 May, FBIS-EEU-90-094, 15 May 1990, p.41

²⁶⁶ Voskoboynikov, Dmitriy *Strategic Studies Institute Report Detailed*, Tass, 24 May, FBIS-SOV-90-012, 25 May 1990, p.6

²⁶⁷ *Defence Minister on NATO Structure, Tasks*, DPA, 3 February, FBIS-WEU-90-024, 5 February 1990, pp.13-14

²⁶⁸ Pierre, Andrew J. *Despite the Thaw, NATO Shouldn't Melt*, Boston: Christian Science Monitor, 28 March 1990, p.19, LexisNexis

²⁶⁹ Xue, Yongxing and Shengliang Wang: *NATO Decides To Adjust Its Strategy*, Liaowang, Overseas ed., 16 July, No. 29, p.30, FBIS-CHI-90-143, 25 July 1990, pp.5-6

Soviets' resistance to a united Germany's NATO membership, which had been the core issue of reunification negotiations. But it undermined all Eppelmann's arguments that linked the further existence of the NVA to these two antagonistic military alliances. The fundamental question was: although Eppelmann had only advocated the existence of a second German force as a temporary arrangement after reunification, yet, was it sensible to link the NVA with some institution that was so shaky and uncertain?

An article released immediately after the Kohl-Gorbachev summit deduced three factors behind Gorbachev's eventual concession. First, the western alliances' undivided position on FRG's NATO membership after reunification has created unbearable pressure on the Soviet Union. Secondly, NATO had adjusted its strategy in response to Soviet misgivings. The London Declaration concluded on 6 July immediately before the Caucasus summit successfully defused Soviet internal resistance. Third, there was a genuine expectation and need by the Soviet Union for economic aid from the FRG and the EEC for its economic reforms. Gorbachev was facing urgent internal matters; therefore maintaining a good relationship with the FRG was essential for any further interaction with EEC states.²⁷⁰ Nevertheless, none of the above factors represented a sudden change. They were all predictable from numerous earlier indications. Therefore, it was unlikely that NVA members would fail to perceive these on-going developments and blindly adopt Eppelmann's convictions. Another key factor worth examining is Eppelmann's competency in dealing with affairs regarding military alliances in Europe. Eppelmann himself had already stated: "I have no detailed understanding and experiences of NATO, therefore, I will not talk about my opinions about NATO issues in public. I will talk more on social policy in the future".²⁷¹ This was indeed a surprising statement after Eppelmann had raised so many arguments about the status of NATO membership in order to assure a future for the NVA after reunification.

In fact, the NVA members had no intention of preserving the NVA indefinitely. On the

²⁷⁰ Jianguo, Jiang: *Roundup: The USSR-West Germany Summit Meeting*, Renmin Ribao (People's Daily), 20 July, p.6, Soviet Change on German Reunification Viewed, FBIS-CHI-90-143, 25 July 1990, pp.6-7

²⁷¹ "Von der NATO habe ich im Detail keine Ahnung und mit ihr keine Erfahrung. Ich will mich darum zu NATO-Fragen auch öffentlich nicht äußern. Wilmer will ich in Zukunft Sozialpolitik Betreiben." in

contrary, when Hoffmann initially stated the concept a federal military force composed of citizens from all parts of Germany, he was implying that the NVA would not exist forever.²⁷² Moreover, from an early stage, the NVA members had intended to do their utmost towards integration.²⁷³ Neither did Eppelmann want to keep the NVA forever. In July 1990, based on the uncertainty caused by Minister Stoltenberg's statement of "one people, one government, one army" presented on 25 June, Volkskammer member Dr. Kney instigated an inquiry into the arrangements for military forces in the future. Eppelmann answered that there was an understanding between two German defence authorities. Eppelmann, therefore, unambiguously confirmed that "there will be something like Territorial Army East (Territorial Ost)" after reunification but the nature of this military command had not been specified. Nevertheless, Eppelmann had also clearly stated that the ultimate goal should be just one military force in a united Germany.²⁷⁴

Apart from NATO and WTO, there was another alternative - a European security system. Eppelmann had viewed this possibility as a condition for retaining the NVA or a second German force on the GDR territory.²⁷⁵ Eppelmann's Disarmament State Secretary Frank Marczinek suggested the creation of a European alliance, but specifically excluded the possibility of the Bundeswehr being stationed in eastern Germany after unification.²⁷⁶ But Eppelmann never clearly explained what the exact context of this condition should be and when could it possibly be fulfilled. The only circumstance that might eliminate this condition was European unification that Eppelmann expected around 1992, though he still tried to use it to decelerate the German reunification process.²⁷⁷

Before taking charge of the GDR defence authority, Eppelmann expressed his

Eppelmann, 1992, Op. Cit., p.161

²⁷² Hoffmann Proposes Federal Army for Germany, Op Cit. and Further on Military, Op Cit.

²⁷³ NVA Officers, USSR Yazov on NVA Future, Op Cit

²⁷⁴ Fragestunde der Volkskammer der DDR u.a. zu Fragen der Zukunft der NVA am 5. Juli 1990 (Auszug) (Policy Inquiry Meeting on the Future of the NVA in the Volkskammer, 5 July 1990 - excerpt), *Armee ohne Zukunft*, pp.433-435

²⁷⁵ Eppelmann on Need for Two German Armies, ADN, 1 June, FBIS-EEU-90-107, 4 June 1990, p.31; and Brinkmann, Peter *Only One Alliance for All of Europe* - Interview with Eppelmann, Bild, 1 June, p.2, Eppelmann on Future of Bundeswehr, NVA, FBIS-EEU-90-108, 5 June 1990, p.36

²⁷⁶ Military Official on NVA after Unification, ADN, 14 May, FBIS-EEU-90-094, 15 May 1990, p.41

²⁷⁷ Staecker, Dieter *Not Rushing German Unity Through; Rainer Eppelmann Is Still Missing Appropriate Political Structures in His Country* - Interview with Eppelmann, Die Presse, 21 May, p.4,

conviction that the path to unification was so complicated it could not be achieved before 1992. This assessment was very different from that of most political observers.²⁷⁸ The GDR Foreign Minister Markus Meckel also disagreed with Kohl's concept of establishing Bundeswehr units in eastern Germany as declared in his Caucasus summit statement. On various occasions Meckel still advocated, "a defence organisation constituted independently of the Bundeswehr in eastern Germany and later integrated into a pan-European comprehensive security structure", which was similar to Eppelmann's proposal.²⁷⁹ Meckel stuck to his original intention of establishing compatibility but not immediate integration between the NVA and the Bundeswehr because he argued that structural adjustments between these two very different forces should not simply be ignored.²⁸⁰ But the GDR German Social Union (DSU) members in the Volkskammer immediately opposed Meckel's stand. They believed his argument showed adventurism that lacked the reality of Kohl's plans, therefore they requested GDR Prime Minister de Maiziere ignore Meckel's views.²⁸¹

Eppelmann also met significant resistance from GDR Christian Social Union members when he advocated that Soviet forces should be deployed on GDR soil as long as NATO troops continue to be stationed on FRG territory. Although the GDR CSU key figure Wolfgang Bötsch believed that neither stationing NATO forces on GDR territory nor withdrawing them behind the Rhine was likely, yet, from his comment towards Eppelmann's view, "I hope that Eppelmann's position does not represent the position of the GDR", it was clear that Eppelmann's political credibility and influence in GDR politics had already been lost.²⁸² Even Eppelmann's deputy, the GDR Defence Parliamentary State Secretary Dr. Bertram Wieczorek, seemed not to appreciate his standpoint. In response to Kohl's Caucasus summit statement, Wieczorek viewed the entry of the GDR into NATO as a first step towards developing an all-European security system. He took a very pragmatic attitude to the terms that

FBIS-EEU-90-100, 23 May 1990, pp.27-28

²⁷⁸ *Eppelmann Sees No German Unity Before 1992*, ADN, 30 March, FBIS-EEU-90-063, 2 April 1990, p.22

²⁷⁹ *Meckel Counters Kohl's 'Unified Bundeswehr'*, DPA, 17 July, FBIS-EEU-90-138, 18 July 1990, p.26; and *Meckel: Kohl-Gorbachev Agreement Ignore GDR*, ADN, 19 July, FBIS-EEU-90-139, 19 July 1990, p.22

²⁸⁰ *Meckel Favours NVA 'Independent Structure'*, DPA, 21 July, FBIS-EEU-90-141, 21 July 1990, p.33

²⁸¹ *DSU Welcomes Kohl-Gorbachev Agreement*, ADN, 17 July, FBIS-EEU-90-138, 18 July 1990, p.26

²⁸² *Christian Social Union Against Soviet Troops*, Frankfurter Rundschau, 30 May, p.2, CSU Opposes Soviet Troops on GDR Territory, FBIS-WEU-90-104, 30 May 1990, p.8

should be added to the reunification treaty in order to secure the NVA professional members' interests: either they could apply to join an all-German force or they would need to join civilian society.²⁸³ For Wiczorek, this was a significant move from his previous stance. When Wiczorek addressed the NATO Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Paris on 11 May, he repeated the propositions declared by the GDR defence leadership that "East Germany will maintain an army with a purely defence character which will not belong to any alliance for a transitional period after unification" as well as "This army will have territorial security functions for a limited period".²⁸⁴ Meckel and Eppelmann had never received a direct response to these demands from the Bundeswehr, thus proving how unrealistic these ideas were in the eyes of the FRG defence leadership.

Furthermore, there was a fundamental argument almost totally ignored by the GDR defence authorities. If the NVA did propose to be a symbol of GDR sovereignty, then conversely the demise of the GDR's sovereignty would definitely eliminate the reason for the NVA's existence.²⁸⁵ But Eppelmann had not only advocated the continuing existence of the NVA on GDR territory after reunification, he opposed its coming under the command of the defence minister of a united Germany: he required it be under the joint command of the five *länder* in the eastern Germany. His conviction of the necessity of such a politico-military arrangement was based on the historical parallel of Germany before World War One.²⁸⁶ Eppelmann genuinely believed that a German state with more than one German military force could be acceptable to the German public.²⁸⁷ Furthermore, Eppelmann explicitly reiterated that Germany during the Holy Roman Empire and the German Confederation era had more than one army – indeed, there were four armies in the Kaiser's Empire until 1918.²⁸⁸ These ideas,

²⁸³ *Defence Ministry Official on Membership in NATO*, ADN, 17 July, FBIS-EEU-90-138, 18 July 1990, p.27

²⁸⁴ *Mitterrand on German Unification, NATO*, *Le Monde*, 13-14 May, p.4, FBIS-WEU-90-093, 14 May 1990, p.14

²⁸⁵ "The NVA's original role, in the words of an expert, as outwardly to be a symbol of the sovereignty of the German Democratic Republic" in Keegan, John *World Armies*, 2nd ed., London: Macmillan, 1983, p.201

²⁸⁶ *Eppelmann on NATO Role, NVA Reductions*, ADN, 12 June, FBIS-EEU-90-114, 13 June 1990, p.35

²⁸⁷ Eppelmann, 1992, *Op Cit.*, p.64

²⁸⁸ "Das Heilige Römische Reich Deutscher Nation und der Deutsche Bund besaßen mehr als eine Armee, und - das ist uns historisch vielleicht noch ein bißchen näher - auch das Kaiserreich hat bis 1918 vier Armeen gehabt." See *Bis 1918 gab es sogar vier Armeen (Until 1918 Even Four Armies Existed)*, *Rheinischer Merkur*, Christ und Welt, 13 July 1990, Auszug aus einem Interview mit dem Minister für Abrüstung und Verteidigung, Rainer Eppelmann (Extracted from an interview with

however historically based, had little leverage in a political context dominated by the seductive ideal of "national unity".

Eppelmann embraced the outcomes of the Kohl-Gorbachev Caucasus summit, as shown in his private correspondence dated 18 July 1990. He realised that the NVA would be disbanded²⁸⁹ and argued that, since Gorbachev had agreed to NATO membership for a united Germany, his previous advocate of two armies in one German state was no longer needed.²⁹⁰ Yet in public, Eppelmann reverted to his argument that the NVA should assume territorial command in eastern Germany under the control of a national high command.²⁹¹ But on another occasion, he explained that this national high command should be parallel with the FRG/GDR relationship at that time - the NVA would be like clothing to prevent the GDR from feeling naked.²⁹² Eppelmann's stance on disbanding the NVA lacked precise elaboration. Misperceptions plus illogical presumptions by the leaders in the decision-making system of the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry created erroneous outputs that led to their subordinates being ill-prepared when the NVA's fate finally emerged in mid-July 1990. The fundamental flaw Eppelmann had shown in his endeavour to preserve the NVA after reunification was that he failed to establish a consistent argument for the continuing existence of the NVA as a condition of any acceptable settlement. It was hard to envisage the NVA becoming a successful link in any post Cold War security arrangement: because of its relative insignificance in overall security and strategic calculations.

Analysis of a Fruitless Endeavour

All political failures and military defeats can be analysed by dividing the relevant decision-making process into several phases, then further examining each phase in order to explore the missing links. Facing the imminent challenges, did the GDR defence leadership fail to perceive, or fail to comprehend, or fail to judge, or fail to

Disarmament and Defence Minister Rainer Eppelmann), *Armee ohne Zukunft*, pp.436-437

²⁸⁹ Eppelmann, 1992, Op Cit., p.113

²⁹⁰ Ibid, p.115

²⁹¹ *Against Disbanding NVA After Unification*, ADN, 21 July, FBIS-EEU-90-141, 21 July 1990, pp.32-33

²⁹² Schwarz, Ulrich and Wolfram Bickerich *This Is Incredibly Beautiful - Interview with Minister*

respond to, or inappropriately respond to the challenge, or was the reality simply beyond control and nothing could be done to change the course of history? First, the final outcome of the fruitless endeavour for preserving the NVA after German unification is a combination of different failures described above. Not all the information was available to the GDR defence leadership at that period though numerous political statements had been delivered. Some political propositions were misinterpreted because of the preconceptions held by the major figures. Responses given by these key actors did not convince the ultimate decision-makers. Collective misperception, not just one person's misguidance, was the fundamental reason for many miscalculations, though poor leadership undeniably played a vital and fatal role.

Second, in a different scenario, had the GDR leadership read all the indications correctly, history would still have been unlikely to detour in the NVA's favour whatever efforts were made by its members, because the future of the NVA was so peripheral in the final settlement of German unification and the political influence of the NVA was so insignificant.

Third, the inconsistency between the final conclusion to dispose of the NVA and the stance shown in the Genscher-Stoltenberg statement in February 1990 was not a premeditated deception but rather an advancement of opportunity immediately followed the diplomatic breakthrough in the Caucasus summit. Before the Kohl-Gorbachev Caucasus summit, no one in the Bundeswehr or in the FRG Foreign Ministry could have anticipated that the security structure preferred by the FRG would be accepted by the Soviet Union. No detailed planning for disbanding the NVA had ever been completed by the Bundeswehr, proving that the possibility of a final compromise such as the acceptance of "a second German force", possibly, the NVA or its variant, could not be totally excluded. Nevertheless, a retrospective analysis of these political propositions justifies the fox's wisdom - those hounds that can actually bite deserve more attention than those that only bark.

Last but not the least, judging from all the political propositions made by different parties, it was clear that the future of the NVA was not of vital interest for any party;

therefore, it was never a core issue for concluding the terms of the German reunification. It is actually a vivid indication that nobody expected the NVA, or the task of integrating the NVA to the Bundeswehr, would have any potential to exercise significant social influence in German post-reunification society. It was a peripheral matter that was subsequently decided by the Soviet Union's attitude to Bundeswehr deployment in eastern Germany. This explained why Eppelmann's fervent effort of preserving the NVA, or "the second German force" was, in his own words, eventually so unrewarding.

Chapter Three

Leadership and Decision-Making

This chapter will mainly examine Eppelmann's leadership and his decision-making as GDR Disarmament and Defence Minister. Analysis will focus on how, or on what bases, decisions were made, if the information was sufficient, and what were the major information sources available for decision-making. What were the factors that conditioned the decisions made by the defence authorities? How did the external political inquiries instigated by the press influence these decisions? How did the GDR defence authority, as a decision-making mechanism, respond to the media, and why did it take such action? Who had the power to negate decisions made by the GDR defence authority? Similar situations occurred in Admiral Hoffmann's time; how Minister Stoltenberg or General Schönbohm, in his capacity as BKO commander, reacted will be compared, but such a link does not prove either excellence or mediocrity of leadership because defence leadership, directing defence policies, administrating a military organisation and operational command and control are all very different issues. Hoffmann, Eppelmann, Stoltenberg and Schönbohm fulfilled their individual tasks under different conditions. But should some principles always be followed in decision-making and exercising leadership?

Defence Summits

Two FRG-GDR defence summits were held before reunification. Their outcomes had very little influence on determining the ultimate terms of the Reunification Treaty that affected the NVA members' fate. Nevertheless, Eppelmann persistently treated these two summits as vital to promote his blueprints for managing the NVA after reunification. The origin and timing of these summits is worth examining. Although the major actors in the decision-making system had control over the agendas without practical requirements as the driving forces, personal expectations and even some actions could only be symbolic. The intentions of the major actors would be checked and balanced by existing institutions, higher political directives and internal resistances from their subordinates. Therefore, in many cases, statements made by the

defence leadership of the two German states could be misleading and virtually impossible to fulfil.

Before Hoffmann attended as the GDR Defence Minister, his predecessor General Kessler had already proposed direct engagement with the FRG Defence Minister.²⁹³ Kessler personally wrote a letter to Stoltenberg specifically addressing this proposal. Stoltenberg replied by indicating that high-level officials from both sides had already been engaged in the Vienna negotiations; if results were to be concluded, it would require direct engagement with Kessler in Vienna.²⁹⁴ In Hoffmann's initial media conference after becoming Defence Minister, he reiterated his willingness to have direct dialogue with Stoltenberg.²⁹⁵ Hoffmann reminded the press that his predecessor had initiated the offer and he had no intention of reneging on the existing proposal.²⁹⁶ In a media interview on the same day, Hoffmann repeated, "The offer of talks is still on the table". Nevertheless, Hoffmann did not expect an immediate response from his FRG counterpart because he also said "I believe at the appropriate time there will be a decision on this". Furthermore, Hoffmann was concerned about the GDR leadership's attitude on this matter. Therefore, he declined to express enthusiasm for a meeting with Stoltenberg and asked for more time to prepare a more specific answer.²⁹⁷

Since Hoffmann had promised reforms of the NVA, the immediate response from Stoltenberg was very positive. Stoltenberg confirmed the possibility of establishing links between the Bundeswehr and the NVA. Furthermore, he anticipated co-operation and exchanges between the two German military forces.²⁹⁸ But this seemed to be Stoltenberg's personal expectation prior to any policy discussion within the FRG Defence Ministry. Apparently, Stoltenberg saw Hoffmann's introduction of the concept of "military reform" at the NVA commanders' meeting on 20 November 1989

²⁹³ *Defence Minister Ready To Talk with FRG*, ADN, 20 November, FBIS-EEU-89-223, 21 November 1989, pp.27-28

²⁹⁴ Klement, Rolf *Interview with Defence Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg*, Op Cit.

²⁹⁵ Chudov, Vadim *GDR Defence Minister Comments on Reform*, Tass, 20 November, FBIS-SOV-89-223, 21 November 1989, pp.26-27

²⁹⁶ *A Defence Minister to Whom You Can Talk*, Briefing by Admiral Hoffmann following a commanders' meeting in Berlin on 20 November, National Zeitung, 22 November, p.3, *New Defence Minister Examines Goals*, FBIS-EEU-89-230, 1 December 1989, pp.64-67

²⁹⁷ Rehfeld, Klaus *Report on "exclusive" interview with Defence Minister Theodor Hoffmann*, East Berlin Voice - GDR domestic broadcasting service, 20 November, FBIS-EEU-89-223, 21 November 1989, pp.38-39

²⁹⁸ Murray, Ian *Bundeswehr and the National People's Army Links; East Germany*, Times, 25

as a positive indication of co-operation.²⁹⁹ No defence leadership summits had even been mentioned at this time. Eventually, the newly appointed GDR Defence Ministry spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Uwe Hempel specifically responded to Stoltenberg's proposal of promoting Bundeswehr-NVA engagement on 6 December 1989 while he introduced Admiral Hoffmann's plans of de-politicising the NVA through planned "military reform" to the press. Hempel emphasised that the NVA "had no reservations" about improving relations with the Bundeswehr to borrow "good ideas" from Western forces.³⁰⁰

Apart from Stoltenberg's initial comment, no other firm response came from the FRG Defence Ministry. Several weeks after Hoffmann reiterated his expectation of a summit between the two German Defence Ministers, Stoltenberg finally replied that such an engagement could only take place if "the GDR Defence Minister is elected in free elections and there is a democratically legitimated government". Stoltenberg admitted in a media interview that the condition for such a meeting differed from what he had previously agreed to in the letter to Kessler. There were long-standing political pressures from the FRG opposition parties asking Stoltenberg to promote large-scale meetings of civil and military representatives from the two sides in the hopes of establishing closer links.³⁰¹ Yet, before the GDR political upheaval in late 1989, Stoltenberg persistently refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the Honecker government and declined to increase contact, unless it was necessary to solve substantial issues. Nevertheless, Stoltenberg was aware that co-operation between the two German armed forces was proceeding in various multilateral arenas such as scientific institutions, universities and military academies. Moreover, more comprehensive and bilateral encounters between members of the two German forces were easier after the changes in political conditions in eastern Germany. A democratic

November 1989, Issue 63561, LexisNexis

²⁹⁹ *Zeittafel* (Chronology), *Armee ohne Zukunft*, p.534

³⁰⁰ Binder, David *Upheaval in the East; East Germany Revamping and Taking the Politics Out of Its Army*, New York Times, 7 December 1989, Section A, p.20, LexisNexis

³⁰¹ Some media such as *Frankfurter Rundschau* asked the FRG Defence Ministry "to take leave of the fixed enemy image, to overcome the thinking in terms of blocs, and to direct one's gaze to global requirement". East German newspaper *Neues Deutschland* also argued that "it seems naïve when in our country some groups call for the disbanding the National's People's Army and thus for the reunification of defence" and "a community of treaties between the GDR and the FRG without mutually coordinated positions on questions of disarmament and security is hardly conceivable". See Knipping, Franz *Drop in Birthrate and Fighter 90*, *Neues Deutschland*, 12 December, p.2, FRG Bundeswehr Planning Policies Viewed, FBIS-EEU-89-240, 15 December 1989, pp.39-40

election in GDR was going to take place in 1990 and this became a condition for calling a summit between military professionals and defence leadership.³⁰²

As Stoltenberg was initially very positive, many people believed that the links between the German forces would shortly strengthen. When asked whether the Bundeswehr and the NVA would soon co-operate and even exchange soldiers, Stoltenberg reiterated his proviso of a democratic elected government in eastern Germany with whom he could talk about co-operation, although the Bundeswehr were already well-prepared for co-operation in various fields.³⁰³ This position never altered. In March 1990, when Stoltenberg was actively involved in the GDR election, he reaffirmed in a speech to the East German public the readiness of the FRG to work with any democratically legitimised government after the elections.³⁰⁴ Meanwhile political promises were made by the FRG to the GDR citizens, such as when Genscher said in his birthplace, Halle, "I can assure you that after 18 March, negotiations without preconditions between the two German states will begin immediately with a freely elected government as an equal partner".³⁰⁵ Stoltenberg retreated from his initial stance responding to Hoffmann's offer of direct engagement with military professionals and the defence leadership made few weeks previously. From then on, this thwarted plans for any mutual interaction between the Bundeswehr and the NVA.

A few months after his first mention of a defence summit between two German states, Hoffmann proposed to merge the two German armed forces into a joint force as well as to increase co-operation but the Bundeswehr refused to enter into any discussion before the outcomes of the GDR democratic election was settled.³⁰⁶ Hoffmann also rejected NATO membership for a unified Germany when he proposed the joint force concept; this could be another reason for the Bundeswehr's lack of enthusiasm.³⁰⁷ It is

³⁰² Klement, Rolf *Interview with Defence Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg*, Op Cit.

³⁰³ *Stoltenberg on Gorbachev, GDR, Disarmament*, Bild, 15 December, pp.1-2, FBIS-WEU-89-241, 18 December 1989, pp.5-6

³⁰⁴ *Speaks in Rostock*, ADN, 3 March, FBIS-WEU-90-044, 6 March 1990, p.18; *FRG Defence Minister Addresses Rally*, ADN, 3 March, FBIS-EEU-90-043, 5 March 1990, p.28.

³⁰⁵ *Genscher Opens League of Free Democrats Campaign*, ADN, 16 February, FBIS-EEU-90-034, 20 February 1990, pp.33-34

³⁰⁶ Schmemmann, Serge *Upheaval in the East; In East German Army Ranks, A Headlong Farewell to Arms*, New York Times, 5 March 1990, p.1, Section A, LexisNexis

³⁰⁷ *Reuter E. Berlin Proposes Merger of Armies*, Independent, 23 February 1990, p.8, LexisNexis

unfair to blame Admiral Hoffmann for promoting direct engagement between the NVA and the Bundeswehr at the wrong time. The initial response from Stoltenberg implied a similar offer; it was indeed of mutual interest then. But why Stoltenberg readdressed a condition that substantially suspended any co-operation with the NVA is still unknown. Internal resistance from the military professionals, intervention from other segments of FRG domestic politics, the lack of a need to increase interactions with the NVA, or even the failure of the NVA military reforms to reach expectations could have caused the Bundeswehr's reluctance, which seemed contrary to Stoltenberg's initial proclamation.³⁰⁸ Similar attitudes among other FRG ministers at that time implied suspending further discussion until after the GDR democratic election, particularly, direct meetings between FRG and GDR ministers unless it was vital, as between the Foreign Ministers.

The Bundeswehr were more enthusiastic about similar proposals made by Eppelmann even though he still wanted to preserve the NVA after reunification.³⁰⁹ There were several reasons behind the different responses shown by the Bundeswehr. First, from the Bundeswehr's viewpoint, the effective governance, or even legitimacy, of the GDR government in such a chaotic situation was still questionable. The Western intelligence community confirmed that morale and discipline within the NVA was poor, totally undermining its combat readiness.³¹⁰ Besides, it was hard to establish whether Hoffmann's perspectives were purely personal or representative of the collective consensus within the NVA. A few days after Hoffmann made the proposal, his Deputy Minister and the NVA Chief of Staff, General Manfred Grätz, expressed a

³⁰⁸ The Bundeswehr authority was very careful not to make a move or policy that might stimulate misgiving. The restrictions on travel to East Europe were finally lifted before the 1989 Christmas holidays. The restrictions on Bundeswehr military appearances and activities, such as memorial services, receptions, military band performances and balls, previously established to prevent incidents along the border with the CSSR and GDR were lifted in January 1990. But the Bundeswehr was still excluded from any direct negotiations about border issues with the GDR or Czechoslovakia; that remained a privilege reserved for U.S. and British forces. See *Defence Minister's Decree on Conduct Near Borders*, *Die Welt*, 3 January, p.4, FBIS-WEU-90-003, 4 January 1990, p.2

³⁰⁹ Establishing a mechanism for developing formal relations with the Bundeswehr, as following the German motto - *growing together of the two German states*, was a consensus between Minister Eppelmann and Admiral Hoffmann even before the GDR democratic election. See *Minister visits Defence Ministry, discusses future role of army*, Op Cit.

³¹⁰ *Reuter East German Army Said to Be Shrinking*, *Toronto Star*, 1 March 1990, p. A18; *Reuter East German Army Is Collapsing, NATO Officials Say*, *Toronto Star*, 28 February 1990, p. A17; *It's 1, 2, 3, What Are We Fighting For?*, *Newsweek*, United States Edition, 12 March 1990, International Section, p.61; and Epstein, *Edward East German Army Is Simply Drifting Away*, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 7 March 1990, *World Insider*, p.A13, LexisNexis

conflicting perspective by giving strong ethical arguments against the concept of integrating the NVA into the Bundeswehr, mainly stimulated by the flow of NVA deserters applying for commissions in the Bundeswehr.³¹¹ Furthermore, the possibility of Hoffmann's proposals being accepted by the GDR political leadership was unlikely.³¹² Any reckless positive response could increase the legitimacy of the person who made these proposals as well as strengthen his political stance and influence, which was the situation that the Bundeswehr wanted to avoid.

Second, just before Admiral Hoffmann's statement to the press, Stoltenberg announced plans to extend NATO coverage and station non-NATO Bundeswehr units in GDR territory after reunification. That stirred a political storm. In fact, Hoffmann's statement was his response to Stoltenberg's announcement though Stoltenberg's name was not specified. (See Chapter two). Thus any FRG-GDR defence dialogue was rendered unlikely.

Third, political settlement between the two German nations was uncertain when Hoffmann made his proposals. The future of the two German armed forces would be secondary to a political settlement. Without clear political direction from the political leadership, the FRG defence authority could not deliver any appropriate response. Actually, the Bundeswehr wanted to discuss the future directly with the NVA, following progress made by the political leadership.

Fourth, there was no immediate necessity or public pressure for the Bundeswehr to expand the scale of its contact with the NVA, and vice versa. According to Admiral Wellershoff, the Bundeswehr Inspector General, "*the attention paid*" by the German public to contacts between these two German forces was "*great and partly critical*". But although Stoltenberg intended to meet his counterpart as soon as possible, it was clear that the Bundeswehr did not have an organised plan for the future: Wellershoff indicated that guidelines on forms of interactions between these two forces would be

³¹¹ Porteous, Tom *East Germany's Old Soldier Looks At a Bleak Future*, Guardian, 27 February 1990, LexisNexis

³¹² Hoffmann was later forced to retract his position by members of the GDR Round Table Meeting though his statement on 22 February already acknowledged prior understanding from the Modrow government. See Hoffmann, 1993, Chinese translation, 2001, Op Cit., pp.204-205 and 216

given later.³¹³ Though Hoffmann proposed a joint force after reunification, he was reluctant to have immediate dialogue, stating that contacts with Bonn should not begin until after the GDR's first democratic election, though he assumed there would be discussions with his FRG counterpart in the future.³¹⁴ This was consistent with the statement endorsed by Eppelmann after his first visit to the GDR Defence Ministry on 18 February 1990.³¹⁵ In reality, nothing could happen before the GDR democratic election in March.

But in early March 1990, the Defence and Security Committee of the North Atlantic Assembly invited both Stoltenberg and Hoffmann to explain their concepts of security policy concerning intra-German developments on 11 May, within the framework of the North Atlantic Assembly spring conference.³¹⁶ Ostensibly, it seemed that Stoltenberg and Hoffmann would meet on this occasion, but in reality, after the GDR election on 18 March, it was highly unlikely that Hoffmann would still be Defence Minister in May, i.e., Hoffmann could not attend in the capacity of GDR Defence Minister in May, even though the invitation was in his name. No one knew for sure whether this error was deliberate or not.

After the GDR democratic election and the Kohl-Gorbachev summit, the active involvement and engagement between the two German forces, in line with the political developments of two German states, became an essential task. The concern of wrongly reinforcing Eppelmann's legitimacy no longer existed. Actually, the legitimacy of the GDR democratically elected government was later seriously weakened by its own internal political turmoil and corruption, which led to a drastic fall of popular support and confidence right before reunification.³¹⁷

³¹³ *More Contact Between Bundeswehr, NVA Desired*, Die Welt, 21 March, p.4, FBIS-WEU-90-055, 21 March 1990, p.4.

³¹⁴ Reuter-AP *East Germany Proposes Joint Armed Forces*, Toronto Star, 23 February 1990, p. A14, LexisNexis

³¹⁵ *Eppelmann Defends 'Necessity' of Army*, ADN, 19 February, FBIS-EEU-90-035, 21 February 1990, p.27

³¹⁶ *ADN Invitation to Defence Ministers*, Neues Deutschland, 7 March, p.1, "NATO Affiliate Invites FRG, GDR Officials", FBIS-EEU-90-047, 9 March 1990, p.39

³¹⁷ According to an FRG poll, GDR confidence in their government slumped from 56% in May to 27% in August 1990. See Fisher, Marc *East Germany's Coalition Collapse As Unification Picks Up Momentum*, Washington Post, 20 August 1990, p. A1, LexisNexis. Another report also indicated that, three months before reunification, the creditability of the GDR parliament was almost nonexistent. A survey by the Leipzig Research Institute revealed that 70% could not name their legislative representative and 90% believed that they were irrelevant. McElvoy, Anne *Marking Time in Berlin's*

Eppelmann never had the capacity to control all interactions between the NVA and the Bundeswehr. Even before he took office, communications between the high ranking military professionals of these two forces were already well established. Some sensitive issues were discussed directly through these connections. The denial of NVA deserters' application to join the Bundeswehr reflected contacts between GDR Deputy Defence Minister General Manfred Grätz and the Bundeswehr Inspector General Admiral Wellershoff.³¹⁸

Interactions between the Bundeswehr and the NVA military professionals, which began in December 1989, were another channel for conveying messages.³¹⁹ Yet, as none of the military professionals on either side had the final say about policies, no substantial settlement or breakthrough could be reached without political authorisation. For instance, during his private discussions with Wellershoff, Grätz could only repeat existing plans on future disarmament agreements.³²⁰

Neither Stoltenberg nor Eppelmann, nor Hoffmann, could decide defence affairs alone, although they were nominally the heads of defence. Stoltenberg's influence in FRG domestic politics had deteriorated. Apart from the political damages caused by scandals in Stoltenberg's constituency in Schleswig-Holstein, he had also mismanaged some tax reforms in his days as the FRG Finance Minister immediately before he was re-appointed as the Defence Minister. He could no longer shape Kohl's policy, not even matters relating to security after reunification.³²¹

Kohl's arbitration on the dispute between Stoltenberg and Genscher in February 1990, discussed in Chapter two, left no possibility of Stoltenberg settling the future of the NVA all by himself. The scope of discussion in the two FRG-GDR defence summits could only be very limited. Moreover, given Eppelmann's relatively weak position and

'Mickey Mouse' Parliament, Times, 14 July 1990, Overseas News, LexisNexis

³¹⁸ *Defence Ministry Confirmed Applications to Bundeswehr by Former NVA Members*, ADN, 6 February, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 2 Eastern Europe, 8 February 1990, EE/0683/B/1, LexisNexis

³¹⁹ *Information From the NVA*, Der Morgen, 22 Dec 1989, FBIS-EEU-90-002, 3 January 1990, p.53

³²⁰ Smith, Jeffrey R. *Warsaw Pact - Endgame; In Eastern Europe, the Military Alliance Is Dead*, Op Cit.

³²¹ Szabo, 1992, Op Cit., p.29

influence in GDR politics, the scope of issues attainable in these two defence summits was limited to purely military affairs and could not decide anything about security arrangements without prior authorisation or understanding from other parts of the GDR government.³²² Consequently, Eppelmann's expectations of the FRG-GDR defence summits were unrealistic. In addition to overestimating the significance of the FRG-GDR defence summit, Eppelmann also misjudged the attainability of establishing security arrangements with neighbouring states because he did not understand the essence of international power politics - military functions should always be subordinate to political directives and must follow other diplomatic efforts.

Political Miscalculations

After officially taking office as the GDR Disarmament and Defence Minister, Eppelmann made great effort to seek a proper position for the NVA to ensure its existence after reunification. Proposals made by Eppelmann himself to neighbouring countries always got negative responses. It was natural for foreign governments to decline to express any positive response to his proposals, based on any kind of rational strategic calculation. First, given Eppelmann's relatively weak political influence in the GDR's new coalition government, the likelihood of his ideas being transformed into a collective policy supported by other key members in the GDR administration was extremely low.³²³ Second, the GDR was uncertain about its own future, therefore, so was the NVA. The future of the GDR had to be settled first; military relationships needed to be subordinate to political arrangements. The wider picture indicated that the overall security structure around the Central and Eastern Europe would be reshuffled in the near future. Before the final outcome could be determined, any reckless manoeuvre could add to the complexity of the future security formula. A typical example was Eppelmann's enthusiastic proposal of establishing a German-Polish joint brigade, which he first discussed with the Polish government during his visit to Poland in late May 1990.

³²² Eppelmann was the chairman and the only cabinet member of the Democratic Awakening Party in the GDR democratically elected coalition government. See Fisher, Marc *New East German Legislature Asks Forgiveness for Holocaust; Cabinet Voted In, Unity Terms Set*, Op Cit

³²³ Ibid.

The Chairman of the Sejm, the Polish Lower House of parliament, Bronislaw Geremek said in reply to the same proposal made by Oskar Lafontaine in his early-April visit to Poland, "Plans to set up such a joint brigade can be discussed in the same categories in which the German-French rapprochement took place. The joint German-French brigade is a consequence of the removal of cause of deep-rooted historical conflicts between France and Germany. As long as anybody who can influence the German policies still raises the question of the Polish-German border, this means we have not overcome the obstacles on this road yet". This made the clear connection between politics and military cooperation.³²⁴ Eppelmann should have known that the Polish President Wojciech Jaruzelski would inevitably reject his proposal and alternatively question how the NVA could assure its further existence if Eppelmann believed that the Warsaw Pact would be disbanded in two years time.³²⁵

Hoffmann suggested that the Bundeswehr and the NVA could form a bridge between NATO and the WTO to transform their military characteristics into more political ones and "shaping a new pan-European security system".³²⁶ It was not however necessary to use the NVA as a bridge to establish this connection, especially after Stoltenberg clearly expressed his intention to develop direct contacts with the armed forces of WTO states.³²⁷ Stoltenberg treated the relationship with the NVA the same way as other armed forces around Eastern Europe. No expectation of a special relationship with the NVA ever existed in the Bundeswehr's calculation.³²⁸

The NVA was by then in a sorry state. Given the turmoil already existing in its discipline and internal management and the poor economic conditions in the GDR, any major plan for enhancing military relationships was unlikely to be possible in East Germany. Eppelmann's proposals were not practical enough to attract any promising response from his counterparts. Worse than that, two days after he led the GDR concession of NATO membership of a unified Germany, Eppelmann encountered a very negative response from Soviet Defence Minister Marshal Dmitry

³²⁴ *Geremek on Polish-German Brigade Concept*, PAP, 5 April, FBIS-EEU-90-067, 6 April 1990, p.41

³²⁵ Hoffmann, 1993, Chinese translation, 2001, Op Cit., pp.330-333

³²⁶ *Army Chief Favours Warsaw Pact - NATO 'Bridge'*, ADN, 21 April, FBIS-EEU-90-079, 24 April 1990, p.28

³²⁷ *GDR and FRG Defence Ministers' Meeting on Military Co-operation*, Op Cit

³²⁸ *Stoltenberg Notes 'Good Spirit'*, Op Cit.

Yazov, in the visit of Moscow.³²⁹ All these indications proved that Eppelmann's political manoeuvres were not directed by a comprehensive political strategy. It was particularly evident that Eppelmann did not consider the response of other parties concerned when he made any proposal to his political counterparts. There was no indication that Eppelmann was ever authorised by the GDR political leadership to make these proposals. For, whatever the character of the state is, defence leaders can never decide military and security affairs without consulting other governmental agencies.

In mid-November, 1990, Admiral Hoffmann's appointment as the GDR Defence Minister and subsequent defence leadership replacements within the Defence Ministry formally symbolise the beginning of the Hoffmann era in the NVA. During the initial stage of this period, less than a month after Hoffmann's inauguration, the GDR National Military Council was abolished.³³⁰ This was seen to imply that the control of the armed forces would move into the hands of the government and the Defence Minister alone.³³¹ Yet, institution evolution such as this would not necessarily guarantee that the Defence Ministry could have more freedom in deciding policies. In practice, the defence minister was still subordinate to the GDR political leadership. The demands of reconciling policies with other governmental departments would also be unchanged. Parliamentary control by both the Volkskammer Budgetary Committee and the Disarmament and Defence Committee still existed. The GDR defence authority still needed to prepare a report covering the status of armed forces and the direction of future policies during the Volkskammer Disarmament and Defence Committee members' visit in Strausberg.³³² The GDR Defence Ministry's room for manoeuvre was, however, constrained. Those factors outside the defence bureaucratic system or military chain of command that still conditioned defence decision-making in the final days of GDR era and after reunification will be considered in the following paragraphs.

³²⁹ Moskovsky, Oleg *Soviet, East German Defence Ministers Meet*, Tass, 29 April 1990, LexisNexis

³³⁰ *GDR National Defence Council Resigns*, Tass, 6 December, FBIS-SOV-89-234, 7 December 1989, p.28

³³¹ Schmemmann, Serge *Upheaval in the East; East German Out as Chief of State; Party in Disarray*, New York Times, 7 December 1989, Section A, p.1, LexisNexis

³³² *Changes Planned in NVA Size, Structure*, ADN, 6 June, FBIS-EEU-90-109, 6 June 1990, p.34

Veto by Budget

Not all defence decisions are solely made by the defence authority or the military organisation: parliament may play an influential role in determining the defence policies because its control of the defence budget. Freedom of manoeuvre over GDR defence policies approaching reunification day was severely limited by insufficient budget from the Volkskammer. The GDR was virtually bankrupt already. Daily governmental expense was subsidised by the FRG. East Germany lost part of its sovereignty after the currency union with West Germany on 1 July 1990.³³³ Without the support of indigenous financial resources, no independent policy was possible any more. Simply terminating the budget could easily veto all Eppelmann's policies. General Manfred Grätz, the NVA Chief of Staff, had even taken a proverb, "*He who is rich is powerful*"; confessing that the GDR was under the FRG economic support thus it would naturally hold the power. The Bundeswehr, therefore, would indirectly but inevitably dictate the structure of the united force.³³⁴

Resolutions made by the Budget Committee of the Bundestag also played an important role in the defence decision-making process concerning the NVA after reunification. For instance, soon after reunification the Bundestag Budget Committee resolved that the total Bundeswehr manpower in eastern Germany should be reduced to 50,000 by the end of 1991 instead of by the end of 1993 as originally proposed. Also the 47,500 former NVA civilian employees would be reduced to 15,000 by the end of 1991. Later Stoltenberg argued that more than 50,000 soldiers were needed in eastern Germany by 1994 for safeguarding the remaining weapons and ammunition there.³³⁵ We may notice that the Bundestag did not unconditionally support the FRG defence authority while the Bundeswehr managed the NVA legacies after reunification. Yet Stoltenberg's request to retain more personnel, at least for the time being, could not alter the existing resolution but only reached some minor concessions. The resources available would ultimately dictate all the operations in the administrative branch.

³³³ Murray, Ian *Berlin to Spend £1.3bn in Military Update*, Op Cit.

³³⁴ Caligaris, Luigi *Interview With General Manfred Grätz*, Op Cit

³³⁵ Feldmeyer, Karl *Soldiers Should Not Stand on the Street: The Bundeswehr in the New States*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 30 November 1990, Anxiety Among Ex-NVA Soldiers in Bundeswehr,

A German general viewing the chaotic situation caused by the force reduction programme after reunification wryly stated "At the present time, the security policy is not determined by the defence minister, but by a senior official in the Finance Ministry".³³⁶ This comment reveals how severely the defence authority was limited by the budget around the time of reunification. Ten years later, the Bundeswehr was still faltering toward reform, constrained by insufficient and ill-located defence funding.³³⁷ The analysis, "*The German defence review: Security according to the budget?*", published around the same period further proves the point.³³⁸

Apart from the Budget Committee, other committees, especially the Defence Committee, existing in both the Volkskammer and the Bundestag could also exercise parliamentary supervision. Either denying the resources or providing supports are their legitimate means of limiting or guiding policies to be implemented by the defence authorities. For instance, the Volkskammer Disarmament and Defence Committee promoted the concept of 'citizen in uniform' as a part of the NVA military reform by assuring its support.³³⁹ Nevertheless, all parliamentary supervision of the defence authority was exercised either by controlling the budgets or establishing legitimate institutions whose mandates the administrative branch had to follow. But given the resource held by Volkskammer Disarmament and Defence Committee, its pronouncements were mere words because none of its subsequent action could change reality. What really constrained Eppelmann's manoeuvres as GDR Disarmament and Defence Minister was the insufficient budget, which made many of Eppelmann's plans impossible. Nominal approval or ostensible endorsements from the Volkskammer without budgetary support could not make any difference in GDR defence decision-making.

Who Cared?

FBIS-WEU-91-004, 7 January 1991, pp. 21- 22.

³³⁶ *No Army Can Survive This*, Der Spiegel, Volume 47, No. 12, 22 March, pp.84-93, Bundeswehr Morale, Discipline Seen at Risk, FBIS-WEU-93-063, 5 April 1993, pp.29-31

³³⁷ *German Paper Views Defence Minister, Budget Problems*, Frankfurter Rundschau website, 7 March 2001, BBC Monitoring Europe - Political, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 7 March 2001, LexisNexis

³³⁸ Mathiopoulos, Margarita *The German defence review: Security according to the Budget?*, Military Technology, Bonn, Volume 24, Issue 10, October 2000, p.4, ProQuest

³³⁹ *Changes Planned in NVA Size, Structure*, Op Cit

Demands from members of the NVA were also important to GDR defence decision-making. These demands could be abstract principles associated with the efforts of democratisation, de-politicisation, military doctrines and transparency to the local communities, as shown by a Volksmarine protest demonstration in Sassnitz.³⁴⁰ Or, as seen in the March 1990 demonstration of the 'Friedrich Engels' Guards Regiment in Berlin, the appeals could target welfare, quality of life, daily disciplinary codes and personal employment security after completing compulsory military service. The NVA members who participated in this demonstration, supported by their direct commanders, proclaimed that their petitions were previously ignored as their requests were delivered through official channels.³⁴¹

Generally speaking, the applicants' expectations of the NVA would decide the nature of the pleas. The requirements of the regular NVA military professionals were quite different from those of the conscripts. Various ad hoc mechanisms were established by the NVA to accommodate opinions from subordinates. All NVA protest demonstrations were caused by poor communications via the chain of command. Partially these resulted from lack of appropriate resources to solve the problems of the poor quality of life in the barracks but there was also a failure of institutionalised administrative functions. Some demonstrations by subordinate commands could alleviate tensions with local communities, but all this unrest damaged the credibility of the NVA leadership. Whether the opinions expressed by the NVA members were important to Eppelmann would depend on his political aspirations, which will be examined later.

With regards to its reform policies, social endorsement was one of the key factors in the NVA decision-making system: the NVA acquired support from GDR society. Public consent is necessary to eliminate resistance to altering existing institutions. Depoliticising the armed forces was vital to both the NVA itself and the German people. In December 1989, Manfred Scheler from the Military Academy was applauded when he spoke at the SED special congress on behalf of NVA members,

³⁴⁰ *Army Members Protest Slowness of Reforms*, ADN, 17 December, FBIS-EEU-89-243, 20 December 1989, pp.33-34

³⁴¹ *Berlin Regiment Soldiers on 'Token Strike'*, ADN, 14 March, FBIS-EEU-90-051, 15 March 1990,

expressing their unwillingness to be the army of the party but not of the people.³⁴² The Chairman of the SED Party, Dr. Gregor Gysi, had to declare his personal support of military reform, even though it implied that the NVA would separate from the SED party in order to secure a new role in society.³⁴³ Hoffmann recognised the importance of acquiring support from the Volkskammer, the political organ that theoretically represented all GDR citizens. He led a delegation to promote military reform and thus secured unreserved support of the Volkskammer President Dr. Günter Maleuda.³⁴⁴

The support of intellectuals and academics was useful because of their influence on society. In military matters, military professionals were influential and were most willing to express their opinions.³⁴⁵ Internal discussions amongst NVA professionals on current issues and future programmes such as military reform were made public. These media reports increased the transparency of military activities and the process of formulating policies.³⁴⁶ Hoffmann also emphasised the necessity of engaging the press, subordinates and people openly. Opening the barracks and sharing military facilities with local communities to promote public understanding of the soldiers' life and training were another part of his way of implementing military reform.³⁴⁷

Admiral Hoffmann also used the media to make his appeals frankly to various groups that could influence GDR politics. But his fundamental aim was to secure support of the GDR citizens. Soon after he took office as Defence Minister, he emphasised that the NVA and the Border Troops shared the same "anger and indignation about the unscrupulous, disgraceful policy of the leading party and state leadership that is

p.28

³⁴² *Army Official Speech*, East Berlin Domestic Broadcasting Service, 8 December, FBIS-EEU-89-236, 11 December 1989, p.51

³⁴³ Tomforde, *Anna Stasi Secret Police to Disband*, Guardian, 18 December 1989, LexisNexis. The only significant negative concern about depoliticising the NVA was voiced by Walter Romberg, Minister without Portfolio of the GDR Social Democratic Party. Romberg was genuinely worried that an ideological vacuum created by depoliticising the NVA would be filled by reactionary German nationalism. See *Romberg Addresses Congress*, ADN, 24 February, FBIS-EEU-90-038, 26 February 1990, p.28

³⁴⁴ *Maleuda Expresses Confidence in People's Army*, ADN, 8 December, FBIS-EEU-89-236, 11 December 1989, pp.58-59

³⁴⁵ *Academics, Officers Call for Military Reforms*, ADN, 19 November, FBIS-EEU-89-230, 1 December 1989, p.64

³⁴⁶ Funke, Rainer *Military Reform in the Armed Forces*, Neues Deutschland, 20 November, p.2, *Military Party Actively Supports Reforms*, FBIS-EEU-89-223, 6 December 1989, pp.49-50

³⁴⁷ *A Defence Minister to Whom You Can Talk*, Op Cit.

deeply contrary to the interests of the people".³⁴⁸ Regarding military reform, he insisted, "special emphasis must be put on newly shaping the relations between the people and the Army".³⁴⁹ Aligning with the people was essential for the survival of the NVA.

The consultative council of the GDR Defence Ministry, the so-called Defence Ministry Round Table, was an ad hoc mechanism to secure public support and political endorsement. It formed a medium for mutual communication. The GDR defence authority acquired many constructive opinions and reconciled differences through its discussions. But it was also a suitable channel to deliver statements clarifying important standpoints of the NVA. For instance, after the fourth session of the council in February 1990 Hoffmann used this arena to emphasise that the NVA had never planned or undertaken any armed operation during the demonstrations in October 1989. Except when some units were asked to provide constabulary gadgets for protecting governmental installations, accessing firearms by all other NVA members was totally excluded.³⁵⁰ Military reforms were also brought to the Round Table for further discussions to acquire endorsement.³⁵¹ The perspectives drawn from this consultative council were important inputs to the GDR defence decision-making system. Nevertheless, these could only be fulfilled via official institutions and practices to guarantee their legitimacy and legality. Public consensus through a non-institutionalised body could not be interpreted as authorisation to ignore existing legitimate institutions.

The Institutionalisation of Change

Some decisions were taken solely by Hoffmann in response to requests from the NVA, such as the promise to remove unreasonable daily routines in the barracks in response to the soldiers' demonstration in Beelitz. But these were contingency measures and

³⁴⁸ *Defence Minister Describes Problems of Troops*, ADN, 5 December, FBIS-EEU-89-223, 6 December 1989, p.49

³⁴⁹ *ADN GDR Defence Minister: NATO Should Also Disarm*, Neues Deutschland, 30 November, p.5, GDR's Hoffmann: NATO Must Also Disarm, FBIS-EEU-89-240, 15 December 1989, p.1

³⁵⁰ *Council Reaches Accord on Military Doctrine*, East Berlin Voice - GDR domestic broadcasting service, 7 February, FBIS-EEU-90-028, 9 February 1990, pp.51-52

³⁵¹ *National Roundtable Opens 14th Session*, ADN, 26 February, FBIS-EEU-90-038, 26 February 1990, p.44

did not mean that he could make all the decisions alone. The structure of the military codes, workloads, training programmes, combat readiness, alert status, regulations of routines in barracks as well as alterations to the compulsory military service laws were reportedly adopted to thwart rapid NVA disintegration.³⁵² Any policy that fundamentally changed the NVA internal institutions, including necessary subsequent institutionalised endorsements after prior contingent actions, could only be decided through the NVA's formal decision-making mechanism, thus assuring its legitimacy through Hoffmann in his role as Defence Minister. Furthermore, in Hoffman's view, the NVA should follow existing laws, regulations and codes until they were legally amended, no matter how their legitimacy or appropriateness was challenged politically.

For instance, on various occasions Gregor Gysi, Chairman of the GDR Party of Democratic Socialism, advocated abolishing conscription in the two German states, even if it meant the GDR doing so unilaterally. By so doing, the NVA could convert into a volunteer / professional army with civil servant status, and so solve the personnel difficulties of the NVA.³⁵³ Based on his convictions, Hoffmann defended compulsory military service in the GDR because GDR military service law that male GDR citizens must serve in the armed forces remained applicable, although the need to sustain a functional NVA and to assure the security of military installations were also substantial reasons.³⁵⁴

It was very important to sustain the existing institutions because, if these institutions were totally abandoned, then there was no track to follow. The most dangerous thing, that might worsen the chaotic situation, was creating a vacuum of law and order. The NVA made great efforts to maintain existing institutions and practices, unless they were legitimately revised, till the last day of its existence.³⁵⁵ Eppelmann fully

³⁵² Schmemmann, Serge *Upheaval in the East; In East German Army Ranks, A Headlong Farewell to Arms*, Op Cit

³⁵³ Gysi on Military Service, ADN, 24 February, FBIS-EEU-90-038, 26 February 1990, p.33 and *Party of Democratic Socialism for a GDR Without Compulsory Military Service*, Neues Deutschland, 8 March, p.5, PDS Position on Compulsory Military Service, FBIS-EEU-90-047, 9 March 1990, p.49

³⁵⁴ *Defence Minister on Army Strength, Policy*, ADN, 9 March, FBIS-EEU-90-048, 12 March 1990, p.29

³⁵⁵ The best example is the last Order of the Day given by the GDR defence authority before being disbanded. This document shows staff work of relatively high quality. See *Tagesbefehl des Ministers für Abrüstung und Verteidigung zur Eingliederung der Nationale Volksarmee in die Bundeswehr*

supported and respected such efforts after his inauguration. His personal insistence on establishing a new oath for NVA members also followed the same practice, though it was purely a top-down political decision. How the NVA sustained a level of order until its last days can be attributed to its leadership making such an effort to preserve the institutionalised process as it met challenges. Any contingency and ad hoc measure, though actually *fait accompli*, would not automatically be accepted as general norm unless some legitimisation and institutionalisation processes were later executed. Tackling challenges with organised and articulated measures enhanced the NVA members' confidence in the subordinated commands and thus maintained discipline, as illustrated below.

Systematically Engaged

The effectiveness and governance of a decision-making system can be verified by scrutinising the context of its outputs. From the measures and policies set up to cope with potential threats to storm the NVA barracks and to loot weapons and ammunitions, it is apparent that the GDR Defence Ministry followed plans that effectively prevented disastrous consequences. In early December 1989 there were numerous indications that the NVA barracks or depots could be invaded by mobs. There was no particular reason for the protestors to attack the NVA installations; preventing the possible disappearance of unlawful items or implicating documents was the excuse adopted when attacking the Stasi headquarters. Nevertheless, a clear and firm instruction prohibiting any NVA member using any weapon and, at worst, soldiers' physical bodies, when safeguarding the barracks was made by Hoffmann after a ministerial contingency meeting on December 6.³⁵⁶

In addition, an open letter to the entire NVA and the general public reaffirmed the decision to protect NVA installations and block illegal entry to weapons, munitions

anlässlich des Beitritts der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland vom 2. Oktober 1990 (Order of the Day from the Ministry of Disarmament and Defence regarding the integration of the NVA into the Bundeswehr on the accession day of the GDR to the FRG from 2 October 1990), Armee ohne Zukunft, pp.517-518

³⁵⁶ Admiral Hoffmann has a consistent attitude of opposing adopting forces against popular movement reflected by his later statement condemning such actions by Ceausescu's Romanian security forces. He provided medical relief to the Romanian people from NVA medical supplies. See *NVA Expresses Solidarity With Romanian Army*, ADN, 23 December, FBIS-EEU-89-246, 26 December 1989, p.27

and fuel. The directive concerning excluding the use of weapons was issued later.³⁵⁷ This open letter, published via the GDR press agency ADN (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Nachrichtendienst*), was a key output of the NVA decision-making system. According to later media reports quoting this open letter, the only phrase implying the NVA would not use weapons was "dangers to the lives of citizens and soldiers should be excluded". This phrase was very flexible and could be interpreted in many ways. Nevertheless, it did show the NVA's determination and sincerity but preserved some deterrence to any adventurer. It was consistent with the GDR government's stance because it "*emphatically appeals*" to the people to refrain from attacks against the NVA premises and facilities but in a conciliatory tongue.³⁵⁸ Nevertheless, according to the ADN, some international news agencies still described the NVA's stance as "tough".³⁵⁹

The Lutheran Church in Saxony immediately expressed its support and defended the role of the NVA as simply protecting the GDR from external powers and not threatening East German citizens.³⁶⁰ A few international media reports focusing on the situation in East Germany noticed that it was Hans Modrow, the new GDR leader succeeding Egon Krenz, who first acknowledged the possibility of crowds attacking the NVA installations.³⁶¹ The NVA open letter should be also viewed as a response and an endorsement of its higher authority. But Hoffmann also sought political backing from the Volkskammer. He led a delegation of members of the NVA and Border Troops to the Volkskammer President, Dr. Günter Maleuda. Maleuda, on behalf of the GDR citizens, released a statement firmly supporting the NVA in order to "help ensure the achievement of the necessary calm, level-headedness and order"

³⁵⁷ Hoffmann, 1993, Chinese translation, 2001, Op Cit., pp. 68-70. Before Hoffmann became Defence Minister, Krenz confirmed that the NVA had ordered its troops to stop using weapons to prevent illegal border crossings. See Whitney, Craig R. *Clamor in the East: A Contrite Government; Contrite Deputies Say Party Failed The East Germans*, New York Times, 14 November 1989, Section A, p.1, LexisNexis. Under such circumstances, it seemed that, nothing could justify adopting deadly force against German citizens.

³⁵⁸ Schmemmann, Serge *Upheaval in the East; East German Out as Chief of State; Party in Disarray*, Op Cit

³⁵⁹ Reuters and AP *East German Army Talks Tough as Krenz Steps Down from Post*, Financial Post (Toronto), Daily Edition, 7 December 1989, Section 1, p.6, LexisNexis

³⁶⁰ Slevin, Peter *Reformer Takes and Political Turmoil in East Germany*, Toronto Star, 7 December 1989, p.A1, LexisNexis

³⁶¹ *Army Warns East German*, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Missouri, 7 December 1989, p.1A; Goodhart, David *Non-Communist Ousts Krenz; People Warned Not to Attack Military Bases Government Appeals for Calm*, Financial Times, 7 December 1989, p.1; Tomforde, Anna *Krenz Quits as Unrest Fears Grow: Non-Communist Becomes Acting Head of State*, Guardian, 7 December 1989, LexisNexis

immediately after the meeting. Hoffmann also used this opportunity to re-emphasise that nothing on NVA premises was intended for use against the people, and his concern that the weapons and ammunition might fall into the wrong hands.³⁶² After receiving an unconfirmed report of an intrusion at an NVA base, manoeuvres of the Soviet forces in the GDR were intensively monitored by the U.S. but no indication of military intervention was detected, only a higher alert status was identified.³⁶³

It is very important to notice that, during this period, the NVA did not suspend its subordinate commands to engage with the demonstrators who targeted some military activities but acted in a non-violent way. Representatives of the demonstrators requested the NVA to change the Kranskamp airfield in the Rostock area into a civilian airport. Genuine exchanges of opinion as well as honest explanations of NVA policies were smoothly conducted.³⁶⁴ After releasing the open letter about thwarting possible invasion of its installations, the NVA authority kept a very conservative attitude and low profile. Before the crisis was totally defused, its spokesman declined to respond to speculation of an attack on a military depot in Saxony.³⁶⁵ Two days after the situation was fully stabilised, the NVA spokesman clarified that no attack had taken place though some groups had gathered around the depots.³⁶⁶

The NVA soon started a media campaign, directed by the defence authority, after the crisis. Representatives were dispatched to television programmes to express soldiers' outrages at the previous political leaders' corruption, officers' statements of internal meetings were released, barracks were opened for media and public visits and NVA members were encouraging to express their disapproval of governmental dishonesty. This indicated that the NVA leadership fully understood that assuring public support should be the only right approach to alleviate tension and to eliminate the possibility of clashes in the future.³⁶⁷ All these efforts at different times reflect the effective governance of the NVA leadership. Whether all the efforts aimed at specific incidents

³⁶² *Maleuda Expresses Confidence in People's Army*, Op Cit

³⁶³ Smith, Jeffery R. *Soviet Union Raises Readiness of Forces in East Germany*, Washington Post, 8 December 1989, p.A21, LexisNexis

³⁶⁴ *At Military Airfield*, ADN, 10 December, FBIS-EEU-89-236, 11 December 1989, p.57

³⁶⁵ Binder, David *Upheaval in the East; Party Sees East German on Precipice*, Op Cit.

³⁶⁶ *Upheaval in the East; Attack on Depots Discounted*, New York Times, 9 December 1989, Section 1, p.8, LexisNexis

³⁶⁷ Tomforde, Anna *Berlin Army Joins People's Cause*, Guardian, 9 December 1989, LexisNexis

were well organised or were chaotic and self-contradictory help to expose the degree of rationality in its decision-making.

Serving The Political Agenda

But media reports could also trigger internal tensions within the decision-making system and erode politico-military relationships. Two incidents that happened after Eppelmann became the Disarmament and Defence Minister show the impact of the media on the major actors and the subsequent responses and output from the system. On 23 April 1990 a popular GDR newspaper, *Junge Welt*, published a report about a three-point plan regarding the future of the NVA proposed by its officers, in a letter sent to the FRG Defence Minister Stoltenberg, which including dissolving the NVA, placing its installations under the Bundeswehr's control, and to begin preparations for the possible stationing of Bundeswehr troops in East Germany.³⁶⁸ The letter was jointly written by three NVA officers and claimed that it also represented many other officers who shared the consensus. This stimulated a strong response from Eppelmann and made him question the loyalty of the NVA members immediately after he had assumed GDR defence leadership. Besides denying the accuracy of the report, the NVA authorities also announced that disciplinary actions would be taken against the three officers who signed the letter.³⁶⁹

The GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry received prior warning of the *Junge Welt* report. Top military professionals were ordered to return to Strausberg during the weekend in order to manage this incident. Eppelmann not only questioned the truthfulness of the letter but also attempted to stop the report, which was firmly rejected by the editor of the *Junge Welt*. On the contrary, after receiving the initial report from General Grätz, Admiral Hoffmann immediately believed that such a letter was quite possible because he had already received similar appeals. In the contemporary political and social climate, Hoffmann correctly assessed that it was

³⁶⁸ *Junge Welt* was one of the GDR's most popular newspapers that not only was a positive catalyst in late 1989 GDR political upheaval but also led the trend of media reform in former GDR after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, even though it was an organ of the Free German Youth (FDJ) Central Council, i.e., a subdivision of the SED Party. See *New Editor of GDR's Junge Welt Interviewed*, *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, 25 November, p.1, FBIS-SOV-89-228, 29 November 1989, pp.42-43

³⁶⁹ Mangasarian, Leon *East German Officers Welcome Bonn Troops*, United Press International, 24

unlikely the report could be censored as the SED party had done previously.³⁷⁰ Although it is very hard to judge the fairness of the disciplinary actions against the three NVA officers, it is worth exploring the leadership, mindset and crisis-responding skills of the NVA leadership displayed by this incident. First, the civilian leadership did not exclude the military professionals' involvement in deciding on contingency measures. But whether the political leadership took their perspectives into account was arguable. Nonetheless, the service chiefs and key military professionals of the NVA were requested to flank Eppelmann in the media conference in order to signify their endorsement of civilian leadership.

Second, from the decision to actively intervene with a media report, it indicated that the democratically elected GDR civilian defence leadership could not manage its media relations in relation to governmental officials and underestimated the power of the press. As long as reporting does not adopt any unlawful means to acquire the confidential information, it cannot be blocked by any government organisation. Before taking action to silence the press, the decision-making system should weigh the benefits of action and, most importantly, the potential price of unsuccessful intervention. According to the *Berliner Zeitung*, the NVA had originally tried to prevent the delivery of the *Junge Welt* issue containing the letter on the day after the GDR Defence Ministry challenged the content of the letter. The credibility of the GDR defence authority was further undermined.³⁷¹

Third, the minister took this letter as a personal attack because of its timing. Eppelmann was also concerned that relations with the Soviet Armed Forces might be disturbed.³⁷² The letter also implied an intention to negate his initial plans for the future of the NVA, which might affect his judgement and cause him to overreact before a full survey. Three facts relate to Eppelmann's position vis a vis this letter: it was drafted long before Eppelmann actually took office, staff of the FRG Defence Ministry confirmed that no such a letter had in fact been received and, most importantly, all the demands in the letter did not explicitly demand to be fulfilled

April 1990, LexisNexis

³⁷⁰ Hoffmann, 1993, Chinese translation, 2001, Op Cit., pp.280-283

³⁷¹ Mangasarian, Op Cit

³⁷² Radio report by Hans-Juergen Fink *Eppelmann, Hoffmann on NVA Dissolution Letter*, Cologne Deutschlandfunk Network, 23 April, FBIS-EEU-90-079, 24 April 1990, pp.27-28

"immediately".

Fourth, the letter was not anonymous. The NVA officers who drafted the letter had clearly shown their willingness to take responsibility for its contents. Compare the administrative penalty that could be subjectively decided by the chain of command with an indictment through the courts martial system. Which kind of disciplinary action against these three officers would have the greater effect in convincing other NVA members on the rightness or otherwise of their actions? Eppelmann did not punish these officers or expel them from military service just because they had written this letter because it would be unconstitutional, but all of them were subsequently relieved of their posts. It is always very sensitive for the leadership to punish anyone who openly and directly challenges existing policy. If impartiality of penalty does not convince all parties concerned, then the one who receives the punishment becomes a martyr and reinforces the power of his conviction.

One factor that might explain why Eppelmann reacted so strongly to this letter was that one of the signatories was a newly assigned senior member of staff in his office. The chain of causation was not, however, clear. A personal aide with close connections might reveal the genuine intent of his superior. If a message leaked from this kind of channel was contradictory, it would attract attention and create speculation. Eppelmann's firm actions, therefore, were especially important before his first meeting with Stoltenberg, although the letter was never used against Eppelmann himself. A month later, Eppelmann expressed no regret about taking disciplinary action against those who had "contemplated an invasion by the Bundeswehr".³⁷³

All these reactions to the letter might unintentionally reduce the NVA professionals' willingness to submit any possible constructive proposal to their new civilian leaders. The honeymoon between the new civilian defence leadership and the NVA members ended earlier than everyone would expect because Eppelmann clearly showed his authoritarian attitude and unwillingness to consider any opinion other than his own. Professor Herspring's research concluded, "the swiftness and sternness of the response suggested that the level of concern over the stability and cohesion of the NVA was

³⁷³ *Eppelmann on German Military Status, Pact*, ADN, 25 May, FBIS-EEU-90-103, 29 May 1990, pp.

even greater than it appeared on the surface".³⁷⁴

The case of the controversial speech by Frank Marczinek, State Secretary for Disarmament (Staatssekretär für Abrüstung) of the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry, (the only civilian defence leader with eight years NVA service experience), to the Bundeswehr Führungsakademie in Hamburg on 22 June, demonstrated different standards in the GDR defence decision-making system to deal with politico-military tensions triggered by the press. The NVA military professionals strongly protested about Marczinek's statements that Eppelmann would take more severe measures to clean the Stalinist elements from the NVA but Eppelmann did not respond to their grievances. On 5 July Admiral Hoffmann delivered a furious letter to Eppelmann, requesting an open response from Marczinek. The next day Eppelmann's personal reply noted that he also would like Marczinek to do so and added that he had never expressed any views claimed by Marczinek. Eppelmann tried to distance himself from Marczinek although Marczinek had mentioned his name in this case. More significantly, Eppelmann's month-long annual holiday was not disrupted by this incident; it started as scheduled on the day he replied to Admiral Hoffman's protest.

In spite of numerous protests by different NVA subordinates and *Verband der Berufssoldaten*, the Union of the NVA Military Professionals, in the following days, without the civilian leadership's active intervention, measures for managing this incident were conducted peculiarly slowly. Hoffmann finally discussed the matter with Marczinek on 2 August. Marczinek eventually apologised and Admiral Hoffmann immediately announced it in the NVA Commanders' Meeting on the same day.³⁷⁵ But the crisis of distrust was not completely defused by Marczinek's apology. A statement to the Volkskammer and the Bundestag, presented by the Leipzig Branch Office of the *Verband der Berufssoldaten* on 6 August, still insisted that Marczinek should resign.³⁷⁶ Herspring observed that it seemed that "the civilian authorities that NVA officers were so loyally serving had stabbed them in the back".³⁷⁷

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³⁷⁴ Herspring, 1998, Op Cit., p.125

³⁷⁵ Hoffmann, 1993, Chinese translation, 2001, Op Cit., pp.360-361

³⁷⁶ Ibid, pp.451-452, Appendix 13

³⁷⁷ Herspring, 1998, Op Cit., p.137

These two cases demonstrated how certain features of the GDR defence decision-making system's responses to contentious reports could potentially weaken politico-military relationships. The system output on this aspect was not proportional to the seriousness of the input. The FRG Defence Ministry never responded directly to the letter written by the three NVA officers in the first case. This kind of appeal could never become a factor that would substantially influence the Bundeswehr in formulating policies concerning the NVA after reunification, but it was responded to, because Eppelmann believed it could happen. Meanwhile, according to strong responses at various levels of the NVA, which should be viewed as inputs to the GDR defence decision-making system, Marczynek's remarks did cause severe damage, but the GDR civilian defence leadership paid less attention to it. The potential of media reports to obstruct decision-makers in pursuit of their objectives would decide the scale of response. Eppelmann was not enthusiastic to appease Marczynek simply because no matter how grave the reaction of the NVA professionals, he calculated that none of the ongoing developments could be reversed.

Media Relations

Eppelmann's personal attitude toward the media is worth further study since he was the primary actor in the GDR defence decision-making system that dominated the media during the final days before reunification. Eppelmann frankly admitted that he had failed to maintain a positive relationship with the press. He complained that the media misreported reality³⁷⁸ and used terms like "*Halbwahrheiten*", (half truth), or "*Wahrheit*", (the so-called truth), to describe the inaccuracies of some reports.³⁷⁹ A few features may be concluded from Eppelmann's interactions with the media.

First, Eppelmann did not treat all media equally. Eppelmann acted cautiously with two East German newspapers, *Neues Deutschland* and *Junge Welt*, because of their previous connections with the SED Party. He also thought these two newspapers had unfairly reported and criticised the NVA.³⁸⁰ Eppelmann also wanted to prove that he had no bias towards the media by saying that he was closely associated with several

³⁷⁸ Eppelmann, 1992, Op Cit., pp.132-134, 140-147

³⁷⁹ Ibid, pp.79 and 147

³⁸⁰ Ibid, pp.79

reports and had receiving assistance from them before.³⁸¹ Second, Eppelmann's attitudes were more positive when the media gave prior notice of an investigation or tried to verify the facts with the GDR defence authority before publishing its reports, since by so doing, the NVA could conduct some measures of damage control.³⁸² The GDR defence authority co-operated with the media, though political directives sometimes limited responses and elaboration.

These two features are common among political actors and governmental institutions. But a third feature caused Eppelmann real concern: how media reports might affect other actors in formulating and deciding their policies. It is obvious that the media influences public opinion. But public concerns could only be converted into substantial policies by the appropriate mechanism, the arena where major political actors exercise their political ideals. Eppelmann, therefore, commented on how Stoltenberg as well as officials in the FRG Defence Ministry could be stirred by the media. But Eppelmann also eagerly tried to prove that Stoltenberg had not been influenced by these reports.³⁸³ Nevertheless, Eppelmann suspected that some members of the FRG Defence Ministry either had prior understanding or were closely associated with media reports attacking the NVA and himself.³⁸⁴ Eppelmann also had concerns about other actors' perspectives towards his personal aims. A typical example is Stoltenberg's criticisms of the NVA's new oath, which appeared in a newspaper on 13 July 1990.³⁸⁵ Eppelmann viewed his relationship with Stoltenberg as a vital political asset and therefore emphasised that Stoltenberg had personally delivered two photos of Hans Alexander von Voss to him in order to prove that Stoltenberg supported his decision to rename the NVA headquarters.³⁸⁶ Moreover, Eppelmann was deeply concerned about his place in history.³⁸⁷ He was unhappy when his speech at the ceremony establishing the BKO was totally ignored by the media. In contrast, speeches given by Stoltenberg and General Schönbohm at the same occasion were widely reported by the press.³⁸⁸

³⁸¹ Ibid, pp.139

³⁸² Ibid, pp.140-147, Eppelmann used several different reports that appeared in the newspaper *Welt am Sonntag* to explain his stance.

³⁸³ Ibid, pp.146-147

³⁸⁴ Ibid, pp.132-134

³⁸⁵ Ibid, pp.112

³⁸⁶ Ibid, pp.130

³⁸⁷ Ibid, pp.179

³⁸⁸ Ibid, pp.184

It is unfair to say that Eppelmann was totally unconcerned about the NVA members' attitudes. More than once Eppelmann talked about how to convey his perspectives to them and how to manage their responses. Nevertheless, it seemed he was not particularly concerned about how the media might influence the NVA members' attitudes, at least, far less concerned than about the responses from the FRG political and defence actors towards him and his policies. The only reasonable interpretation is that Eppelmann was very confident that the existing mechanism through the chain of command within the NVA could eliminate any misunderstandings stirred by the press. Yet, NVA members' perceptions of Eppelmann and his leadership proved that the media reports did cause serious damage to Eppelmann's credibility.

First to Know

The timing of unveiling policies or decisions to the media was important. Former NVA career soldiers complained about Eppelmann's information policy before reunification. Eppelmann always announced important decisions to the press first and to his subordinates later even though they were the people that actually needed these directives most. Eppelmann's leadership was notably weakened by such policy. As the conscripts learned that the press had provided the information direct from the GDR defence civilian leadership and their superiors failed to either confirm it or deny it, then it would naturally cause confusion and possibly friction.³⁸⁹ Similar situations, which undermined the commanders' leadership and authority, also occurred in the Bundeswehr after reunification, during the significant force reduction period. Rash decisions were made then constantly changed. In many cases, decisions were revealed to the media before being delivered to the subordinate commands, often conflicting with prior directives. Members of the Deutsche Marine Olpenitz base in Scheleswig-Holstein got to know that their base was going to be disbanded through the media, which totally contradicted what their commander, Captain Claus-Heinrich Solterbeck, had told them to few days before.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁹ Michalsky, Oliver *From Lieutenant to Sergeant Without Grumbling: Second MORGEN Visit to the Eggesin Army Base; the Greatest Difference Between the NVA and the Bundeswehr*, Der Morgen, 14 March, FBIS-WEU-91-068, 9 April 1991, pp.22-24

³⁹⁰ *No Army Can Survive This*, Op Cit

The same criticism also extended to the German defence political leadership's modus operandi of decision-making and media communication. Similar to the "media first to know" information policy seemingly always followed by Eppelmann, Stoltenberg insisted that the Bundestag should be notified first. Furthermore, since the Bundeswehr redeployment plan was such a sensitive issue that might conflict with many regional interests, some decisions were made in a covert way as if it was a "secret command matter". The consequence of doing so was the media had the opportunities to acquire information, far earlier, and sometimes in greater detail, than the Bundeswehr members received through the chain of command, thus seriously undermining the leadership of the subordinate commanders as well as the morale of the military personnel.³⁹¹

Personal Image

The personal image of the major actor in the decision-making system is important because it may affect his credibility, which is an essential element in leadership. General Manfred Grätz, the NVA Chief of Staff, confessed that the arrest of the former GDR Defence Minister Heinz Kessler for abuse of his office had deeply damaged the NVA public image.³⁹² Therefore, keeping the personal image complying with the expectations of both the general public and the subordinates could reduce resistance to policies. Eppelmann paid less attention to this aspect, proven by the fact that he moved into his predecessor's luxury home in the military enclave of Strausberg after he became the GDR Defence Minister. When criticised by Katya Havemann, Eppelmann's former colleague, in a public petition, "Rainer Eppelmann, we are ashamed of you", he commented indifferently that times change.³⁹³

Given his background as a dissident, a conscientious objector, a pacifist and a Lutheran pastor, Eppelmann acted very inconsistently by encouraging young GDR citizens to undertake compulsory military service even when its demise seemed

³⁹¹ Clement, Rolf *Internal Condition Confused; Low Morale in the Bundeswehr*, LOYAL, No. 5, May, pp.4-8, Article Analysed Declining Bundeswehr Morale, FBIS-WEU-92-117, 17 June 1992, pp.17-20

³⁹² Smith, Jeffrey R. *Warsaw Pact - Endgame; In Eastern Europe, the Military Alliance Is Dead*, Op Cit.

foreseeable. He also supported the coalition government's policy of reinforcing prison terms for draft dodgers; as a result, he suffered criticisms from members of the anti-draft groups in eastern Germany.³⁹⁴ Even in the oath-taking ceremony of Eppelmann's new NVA oath, protesters who were allegedly Eppelmann's old pacifist acquaintances appeared on the scene demanding 'total demilitarisation instead of the formation of a united German Army'.³⁹⁵ Whether the criticism added obstacles to other decisions being made by Eppelmann at the time is unknown, but it would inevitably weaken his credibility in front of the NVA members.

Sometimes, Eppelmann made some surprising comments that were very different from general perceptions of his known identity, such as "In the past, we allowed a little more time between getting to know one another and jumping into bed than we do today" when objecting to the accelerated pace of reunification.³⁹⁶ Moreover, some of Eppelmann's analogies and views, such as "The USSR lost the NVA" and "The German unification process becoming a Versailles for the Soviet Union", could be counter-productive because they were very distant from general expectations.³⁹⁷ Sensational comment is a two-edged sword. It could comfort some passionate people but it would also reduce trust because it demonstrated less rationality and self-temperance.

Void Statements

Some of Eppelmann's personal statements had devastating effects on his leadership. For instance, he made a passionate statement, recalling the efforts and contributions made by the NVA from the political upheaval of the GDR to reunification, in the last NVA Order of the Day issued as the NVA was about to be absorbed by the Bundeswehr. He appealed to the remaining NVA members to fulfil the tasks assigned to them with honour and dignity as well wholeheartedly to contribute to the protection

³⁹³ McElvoy, *Anne Marking Time in Berlin's 'Mickey Mouse' Parliament*, Op Cit.

³⁹⁴ John, *Ian Reforms Take the Fight Out of East German Army*, Toronto Star, 14 May 1990, p.A15, LexisNexis

³⁹⁵ Tomforde, *Anna East German Officers Switch Their Oath*, Guardian, 21 July 1990, LexisNexis

³⁹⁶ *Eppelmann Says Unification Needs More Time*, DPA, 21 July, FBIS-EEU-90-141, 21 July 1990, p.32; Fisher, *Marc E. German Balking at Unity Pace; Election Rules, Army Are Disputed Issues*, Op Cit.

³⁹⁷ *Against Disbanding NVA After Unification*, Op Cit.

of freedom and democracy.³⁹⁸ But for the NVA members, whether they had decided to extend their military career in the Bundeswehr or to withdraw from the service, they all knew that this statement would not lessen the coming unknown challenges and difficulties. Of course, Eppelmann's statement would also have news value but the NVA members would be less likely to value it.³⁹⁹ Such a statement, therefore, could only be political posturing, leaving a footprint in records but having no substantial meaning. Early on, Eppelmann's objection to NVA involvement in the Gulf crisis had a similar result. In mid-August 1990, Eppelmann declared that NVA soldiers would not be used in Saudi Arabia, though some rumours indicated the opposite. A commentator immediately pointed out the validity of Eppelmann's denial would be extremely short-lived because the coming reunification would reshuffle the politico-military command authority.⁴⁰⁰

Some deliberate NVA decision-making system outputs that originated from Eppelmann's personal convictions, such as the new NVA oath, could be the same. Eppelmann was very enthusiastic to link the swearing-in ceremony of the new NVA oath to an incident in 1944 when German officers and politicians tried to assassinate Hitler. He believed that could be a gesture signifying the NVA's awareness of military traditions, therefore he sent a personal letter to the media asking for public comment.⁴⁰¹ According to the response, the new oath did not substantially change the existing oath of the NVA. Moreover, a sentence in the new oath, "do everything to preserve peace and protect the GDR", had been criticised as unrelated to the reality of the coming demise of the GDR. The continuing existence of the NVA was still being asserted.⁴⁰² Although the date for taking the new NVA oath was confirmed by Egon Bahr as a goodwill gesture towards two existing German forces, yet, the whole framework of managing the NVA seemed unrelated to this ceremony.⁴⁰³ It was

³⁹⁸ *Defence Minister's Appeal to NVA After Unification*, ADN, 1 October, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 2 Eastern Europe, 3 October 1990, EE/0885/B/1, LexisNexis

³⁹⁹ Sherwell, Philip *German Celebrate Rebirth as 'One People', 'One State'*, Washington Times, 3 October 1990, p.A1, LexisNexis

⁴⁰⁰ Quiring, Manfred *Short-Lived Denial*, Berliner Zeitung, 15 August, p.1, Commentary Views NVA Soldiers to Saudi Denial, FBIS-EEU-90-160, 17 August 1990, p.11

⁴⁰¹ "A New Image of Military Traditions - Correct Or Not?" - *Letter From Disarmament and Defence Minister Rainer Eppelmann to Neues Deutschland*, Neues Deutschland, 20 July, p.1, FBIS-EEU-90-143, 25 July 1990, p.25

⁴⁰² *The NVA Cleansing Oath*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 21 July, p.8, New NVA Oath Criticised as 'Mass Baptism', FBIS-WEU-90-142, 24 July 1990, p.4

⁴⁰³ Michalsky, Oliver "United German Armies?" - *Interview With Egon Bahr*, Der Morgen, 23 July, p.1,

impossible to erase the old legacies simply by a new oath but Eppelmann still insisted it should be undertaken as formally as possible. Taking pragmatic actions will enhance credibility, which subsequently secures leadership. Fulfilling a personal conviction can only prove the will of the leadership is still attainable. Nevertheless, obedience in appearance does not guarantee sincere support. Information needed by leadership for decision-making can neither be warranted by superficial compliance. Whether that was the case will subsequently be examined in this chapter.

Internal Unity

According to a media report, two features that Schönbohm demanded of his subordinates in the BKO may have had significant impact on the BKO's decision-making outputs to the media and its subordinate commanders. First, internal unity, especially around the core members of the BKO, could only be achieved through frank communication and unselfish reconciliation. As Deputy Commander of the BKO, General Werner von Scheven fully supported the viewpoints of his superior and good friend, General Schönbohm, and the BKO leadership jointly expounded the perspectives reflected by the subordinate commanders, "so that people will see that we are a team". Second, taking initiatives was viewed as a virtue because the previous Bundeswehr regulations might not all be applicable. Schönbohm clearly encouraged his subordinates to use common sense to solve problems encountered by saying, "If someone reports to me that he did not carry out directive so-and-so because it was not appropriate in the given situation, then I would say that is exactly what I expect of my co-workers". The media and General Schönbohm himself expected the possibility of improvising some code of action in order to achieve the best results.⁴⁰⁴ Military leadership is like conducting an orchestra: to reach an accord and to build a consensus that ensures that participants play the same melody is certainly better than always excluding or stopping any of them playing their own tune. Especially, as in this case, it was an ad hoc joint force under General Schönbohm's command. It needed to break the existing culture of service and branch rivalries in order to assure instant responses to the challenges. Bureaucracy was a luxury for members of the BKO. Therefore, to

FBIS-EEU-90-143, 25 July 1990, p.25

⁴⁰⁴ Bertram, Christoph *"With a Fervid Heart and Cool Head": General Jörg Schönbohm To Integrate Remnants of the NVA Into the Bundeswehr*, Op Cit.

forge an atmosphere that facilitated unity of effort was essential.

General Schönbohm needed to consolidate the core members of the BKO in order to overcome the indifference caused by banality in Bonn. Creative solo performance by subordinates was also encouraged as long as it did not undermine the co-operative spirit. These two attitudes coexisted although they seemed contradictory. It partly reflects the traditional German military philosophy, *Auftragstaktik*. Leaving some space to manoeuvre for subordinates preserved the flexibility for them to conduct contingency measures that might better serve the collective interests. In addition, a similar leadership concept, *Auftragsführung*, existed in Bundeswehr military culture; "a commitment to delegate authority to such an extent that all soldiers feel able to make their own decisions".⁴⁰⁵ This may also explain why Schönbohm liked to encourage his BKO subordinates to cope creatively with realities beyond the imagination of the Defence Ministry. How to manage them optimally would rely on a commander's wisdom and, as the media described, a fervent heart and cool head.

Unlike Schönbohm, Eppelmann failed to establish an atmosphere of mutual-trust in the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry under his leadership. Eppelmann confessed that his immediate colleagues, the core political appointees of the GDR civilian defence leadership, had serious differences. His deputy, GDR Defence State Secretary Werner Ablass, would even not allow Dietmar Herbst, chief of Eppelmann's advisory committee who came from the FRG, to access classified information or to attend any meeting involving confidential matters.⁴⁰⁶ When Eppelmann originally took office, he thought he had brought eight trustworthy people with him to face almost five thousand NVA military professionals in Strausberg.⁴⁰⁷ After reunification, Eppelmann concluded that his associates had come to distrust him during their final days in Strausberg. He also accused "the same State Secretary who did not allow my advisor to attend confidential meetings" of faxing records of confidential meetings to FRG Defence Ministry without his knowledge. Eppelmann also complained that two Secretaries of State directly subordinated to him had more

⁴⁰⁵ Fisher, Marc *East German Army Does About-Face; Officers, Steeped in Soviet Doctrine, Learning the Western Way*, Washington Post, 28 October 1990, p.A20, LexisNexis

⁴⁰⁶ Eppelmann, 1992, Op Cit, pp.90-91

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, pp.19

personal staff than he had, furnished with better office equipment.⁴⁰⁸ Competency of leadership is primarily decided by reconciliation skills in eliminating animosities amongst subordinates, which assures internal consolidation. Eppelmann's failure in this severely undermined his efforts to manage the NVA according to his ideals.

No Genuine Trust

Eppelmann admitted that he encountered a positive attitude from the NVA officers during his February visit to the GDR Defence Ministry as Minister Without Portfolio.⁴⁰⁹ But Eppelmann also had reservations about NVA officers after he became the Disarmament and Defence Minister. Although the NVA officers had supported his policy in the initial stages, Eppelmann still believed that some of them were only acting as they had done in the SED era, cheating and lying to their superiors. He questioned the integrity of his subordinate NVA officers in his private correspondence and believed they might only be pretending to embrace disarmament policies.⁴¹⁰ Eppelmann never explained how he established the fact or on what basis he made such a judgement. By the same token, Eppelmann also declined to accept some daily situation reports submitted by the NVA professionals. Eppelmann suspected these reports might overstate reality. Some negative responses from the NVA members near the reunification day were seen as empty threats because Eppelmann believed the real situation was not so serious. He complained that people could be misguided by these reports into believing that NVA tanks would soon appear on the streets. Ironically, Eppelmann still sent copies of these reports to Stoltenberg by messengers despite discounting their assessments.⁴¹¹

In his book, Eppelmann only named a few civilian officials in the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry plus those personal assistants that had worked with him long before he took charge of GDR defence affairs.⁴¹² Instead, Eppelmann accused his immediate military personal staffs of acting inappropriately to "filter" some NVA

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid, pp.171

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid, pp.18

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, pp.75

⁴¹¹ Ibid, pp.185

⁴¹² Ibid, pp.172-173

members.⁴¹³ In all likelihood this judgement is mere hyperbole because his personal staff could never totally control the information flow. Furthermore, receiving visitors is a part of personal staffs' daily routine as long as the purposes of the visit were well managed; by doing so the high level official these staff served could invest time in more valuable tasks. If these NVA military personnel had acted improperly, then, why had Eppelmann's civilian henchmen never mentioned it to him? Failure of perception was partially caused by insufficient or distorted information; but prejudices that limited the vision would seem to be the prominent reason.

Reliable Situation Reports

Situation reporting was an important institutionalised mechanism in GDR defence decision-making. Both the leaders of the GDR Defence Ministry and the BKO relied on these situation reports to secure awareness of the internal situation of their subordinates as well as responses from their personnel. Sub-commands could issue individual situation reports prepared for their own commanders but the content and scope would be different. Some features common to both the NVA and the Bundeswehr affected these situation reports. First, the situation was a result of staff engineering. As Schönbohm noted, "Whoever prepared and selected information had a decisive influence on leadership decisions".⁴¹⁴ Hence, it is by no means neutral or undistorted. Objective information acquired by the staff had been organised and some subjective analyses attached to them. In another word, information was selectively presented according to judgements made by every party involved through the chain of command.

Second, the coverage of the reports was limited. Mainly the situation reports focused on responses and issues within the subordinate units. Only those incidents or public statements that caused significant responses within the subordinate commands would be addressed. Nevertheless, it was an effective tool for collecting feedback from the subordinates about any declared policy or order. Third, the quality of these situation reports could only be assessed and justified by examining whether they were in line

⁴¹³ Ibid, pp.170

⁴¹⁴ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit, p.100

with commonly recognised facts as well as standard perspectives. The possibility of subordinate staff that followed directives, therefore, manipulating the contents of a situation reports to satisfy a certain agenda defined by the leadership could not be totally excluded though it was not likely. Furthermore, their influence could be identified by the measures taken by the leaders based on these situation reports. Nevertheless, leaders may still snub these situation reports. For instance, once Eppelmann was not convinced by an internal assessment of a possible drastic reaction by NVA members.⁴¹⁵

Immediately before reunification, from April to September 1990, the mechanism of preparing routine situation reports for the leadership within the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry was assigned to a Military-Political Analysis Group (Militärpolitischen Analysegruppe) led by General Merkel. Each situation report was presented through the chain of command overseen by the Chief of the NVA, Admiral Hoffmann, and delivered to important civilian officials and military personnel, including Eppelmann himself.⁴¹⁶ This mechanism was in line with the internal organisational adjustments following Eppelmann's inauguration.

According to the contents of these reports, several key inputs were provided by this mechanism to the NVA leadership during this period. First, it was clear that Eppelmann had an organised and systematic channel through which to acquire responses from NVA personnel about his policies, statements and directives, regardless of whether they were expressed in internal meetings or outside the NVA.⁴¹⁷ Responses to statements given by other figures amongst the GDR defence leadership, such as Secretary of State Dr. Wiczorek's request for a socially acceptable force reduction, to which NVA personnel responded positively, were also collected in these situation reports.⁴¹⁸ Survey of the responses towards specific GDR Disarmament

⁴¹⁵ Eppelmann, 1992, Op Cit, p.185

⁴¹⁶ *Armee ohne Zukunft*, p.395, Note 4.

⁴¹⁷ For instance, responses to Eppelmann's speech in the Volkskammer and his first speech in the NVA Commanders' Meeting were separately reported as positive. Ibid, pp.395-396 and pp.396-397, *Meldung zur Lage in der NVA am 2. (und 4.) Mai 1990 (Auszug)*, (The NVA Situation Report for 2 (and 4) May 1990 - excerpt), (hereafter SR/NVA-day/month/year). Alternatively, according to a report in *Berliner Morgenpost*, Eppelmann mentioned withdrawal from the WTO, which many NVA members could not understand, was also noted without reservation. See Ibid, pp.407-408, SR/NVA-(12/June/90)

⁴¹⁸ Ibid, pp.453-454, SR/NVA-(28/July-3/August/90)

and Defence Ministry orders was also a vital part of the situation reports.⁴¹⁹

Second, the coverage of the sources that could stimulate significant responses from the NVA personnel was not merely confined to the statements made by their own leaders. Perspectives expressed by the members of the FRG Bundestag Defence Committee later quoted in the NVA internal periodical "*Trend*" created grave concern. Comments made by some mid-rank commanders were collected into the routine situation reports, which reflected a loss of confidence in the NVA leadership.⁴²⁰ Deteriorating trust of the NVA leadership was further revealed in the routine NVA situation report after Stoltenberg's speech in the Bundeswehr Commanders' Meeting and Lothar Rühl's commentary article in FRG newspaper *Die Welt* both warned that the future of the NVA was not consistent with previous assurances given by its own minister.⁴²¹ Another example was the 21-27 July situation report on the responses to the statements made by FRG Chancellery Minister Teltschik disclosed by *Bild am Sonntag* indicating that decisions about the future of NVA personnel had been made.⁴²² From the content of these situation reports, the NVA leadership had a clear picture of their subordinates' perceptions and concerns as well as the origins of their thinking, especially from sources other than their own chain of command.

Third, apart from general descriptions of NVA members' responses, detailed analyses were also included. Some NVA members' perceptions were formulated by FRG media reports, which believed the policies for disbanding the NVA were already secretly being made by the FRG and future reduction of German forces would be achieved at the expense of the NVA: this was also noted in a situation report.⁴²³ Another high quality analysis of NVA members' responses to the outcomes of the Caucasus summit was presented in the NVA situation reports dated 18 July 1990. Not only were the typical NVA members' opinions after the Caucasus summit summarised but also several speculations appeared such as allowing non-NATO Bundeswehr units to station in eastern Germany, which would eventually lead to the disbandment of the NVA. Criticisms directly against Eppelmann's personal perspectives were also

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, pp.466-467, SR/NVA-(21/August/90)

⁴²⁰ Ibid, pp.405, SR/NVA-(6/June/90)

⁴²¹ Ibid, pp.422-423, SR/NVA-(22/June/90)

⁴²² Ibid, pp.451-452, SR/NVA-(21/July-27/July/90)

⁴²³ Ibid, pp.427, SR/NVA-(2/July/90)

conspicuously noted.⁴²⁴ The NVA members' concerns about their career security as well as employment security, should they need to leave military service and adjust to the civilian society, were frequently analysed and noted in situation reports.⁴²⁵

In summary, the NVA military professionals who drafted these situation reports faithfully conducted their duties. More than once, serious criticisms specifically targeted on Eppelmann personally appeared in these situation reports, such as the NVA members believed that Eppelmann only cared about his own future.⁴²⁶ The GDR defence leadership had genuine insights into how credible their policies and statements were in NVA eyes as well as what urgent tasks needed to be tackled.

Apart from routine situation reports, high-ranking military professionals according to their areas of responsibility could also submit individual situation reports. General Klaus Baarss, who headed the military reforms, submitted a situation report in June 1990 to unspecified superiors that warned that the status of the NVA was in danger and that firm leadership was needed. The poor leadership being shown by the Disarmament and Defence Ministry would cause the failure of military reform.⁴²⁷ Baarss submitted another report specifically for Minister Eppelmann a month later that addressed the crisis of trust within the NVA. General Baarss concluded that frequently fluctuating and inconsistent leadership had led to a collapse of trust. NVA personnel did not believe that the current leadership was capable of leading them. Moreover, no clear information came from the high command; most was gathered from the media. Baarss, therefore, asked Eppelmann to face reality until reunification day.⁴²⁸

Likewise, the NVA Chief of Staff General Grätz also sent a report to Eppelmann himself that included general questions that concerned NVA personnel. Grätz tried his

⁴²⁴ Ibid, pp.442-443, SR/NVA-(18/July/90)

⁴²⁵ Ibid, pp.396-397, SR/NVA-(4/May/90) and pp.453-454, SR/NVA-(28/July-3/August/90)

⁴²⁶ Ibid, pp.466-467, SR/NVA-(21/August/90) and pp.479-480, SR/NVA-(7/September/90)

⁴²⁷ Ibid, pp.421-422, *Meldung des Bevollmächtigten für Militärreform Generalleutnant Klaus Baarß zur Weiterführung der Militärreform in der DDR vom 22. Juni 1990 (Auszug)*, (Situation Report of the Military Reform submitted by Lieutenant General Klaus Baarß, Head of the DDR Military Reform Affairs, on 22 June 1990 - excerpt)

⁴²⁸ Ibid, pp.450-451, *Schreiben des Bevollmächtigten für Militärreform im MfAV, Generalleutnant Klaus Baarß, an den Minister für Abrüstung und Verteidigung der DDR, Rainer Eppelmann, vom 26. Juli 1990 (Auszug)*, (Special Report for the Disarmament and Defence Minister Rainer Eppelmann by

best to formulate constructive suggestions for Eppelmann, mainly reminding Eppelmann that he should deliver more comprehensive information to NVA members.⁴²⁹ The information provided to Eppelmann by the institutionalised mechanisms should have been sufficient. In addition to this raw information, some responsible and sensible analyses were also prepared by Eppelmann's subordinates. It is hard to find any evidence indicating that Eppelmann was denied access to any information needed for making key decisions. Frankly speaking, despite what had supposedly been read nothing proves that any concern was actually stimulated. Likewise, it cannot be proved that the contents of the reports had ever been well perceived. After all, the influence created by any known input becomes a matter of judgement. Unless the actors themselves explicitly quoted certain inputs as the grounds of their political judgements and publicly expressed propositions or actual decisions, it is hard to establish any links between them.

Rationality vs. Subjectivity

The rationality of decision-making can be judged from the following three aspects: whether undistorted and completed, or at least sufficient, information was available to the decision-makers; what are the criteria for the major actors conducting the decision-making process, based on the legitimate obligations to serve the group's welfare or merely to satisfy individual political preferences, or even worse to serve a personal career; and, can the decisions made by the major actors later be executed faithfully by their subordinates. From the two previous chapters, all indications for judging political developments were in essence available to Eppelmann. Some diplomatic reconciliation between the FRG and the Soviet Union was not totally clear before it was eventually settled but neither was such diplomacy conducted completely covertly. Systematic and institutionalised efforts including appropriate analysis functions were already established within the GDR defence authority to provide information for decision-making. Decisions made by Eppelmann were faithfully

Lieutenant General Klaus Baarß, Head of the DDR Military Reform Affairs, on 26 July 1990 - excerpt)
⁴²⁹ Ibid, pp.481-482, *Meldung des Chefs des Hauptstabes der NVA, Generalleutnant Manfred Grätz, im Auftrag der Führung der Nationalen Volksarmee an den Minister für Abrüstung und Verteidigung vom 7. September 1990 (Auszug)*, (Report for the Disarmament and Defence Minister by Lieutenant General Manfred Grätz, Chief of the Main Staff in the NVA, on behalf of the leadership of the NVA, on 7 September 1990 - excerpt)

followed by the NVA members through its administrative hierarchy and command systems and though some disagreements and criticisms did exist no insubordination ever occurred.

Was Eppelmann's decision-making process rational? Did his judgements as GDR Disarmament and Defence Minister stem from serving the interests of the NVA members, as they should have done? Answers to these questions must be circumstantial and perfect fairness is impossible. But no politician is a saint that never considers serving personal interest in decision-making. Eppelmann inevitably considered his own political future and preferences as he made some decisions. Yet, no indication could prove that Eppelmann totally ignored the NVA members' welfare either. Given the fact that Eppelmann's annual summer holiday was not disrupted by the outcome of the Kohl-Gorbachev summit and follow-on political negotiations on the FRG-GDR Reunification Treaty, it was clear that Eppelmann himself had already been marginalised in GDR politics. Also, in Eppelmann's political calculation, regardless of the NVA members' anger, staying on holiday would not significantly erode his post-reunification power basis. The fundamental fact was that the fate of the NVA was not, at this time, that significant an issue. Only later would it be elevated to a factor that promoted the whole process of national unity. Eppelmann was probably right to stay on holiday.

Whether Eppelmann was competent to be the Minister of Disarmament and Defence in the final days of the GDR might be the core of the matter. Given Eppelmann's background, it is hard to believe that Eppelmann could administer such a military organisation with no difficulty. Eppelmann had no experience in defence management; mastering the existing administrative culture within the GDR defence authority was a huge challenge. Furthermore, Eppelmann also wanted to substantiate several ideals, making the task even more difficult. Setting too many tasks in his agenda when only having very limited resources proves Eppelmann's poor judgement and inexperience in administration. Moreover, making subjective and over-optimistic pledges that later proved unviable totally undermined Eppelmann's leadership. Eppelmann, as the leading decision-maker within the GDR defence authority, inevitably bears more blame than others but he should not shoulder all criticism alone because decisions were made collectively. The resources of the NVA that could change the course of

history were very poor. The space to manoeuvre left for the GDR defence authority to decide its own fate was extremely limited.

Political decision-making is not as rigid as mechanical manoeuvres or chemical reactions. Hitting keys in identical sequence on the same piano produces indistinguishable music, but this is not true of decision-making in the politico-military arena. It is a function of multiple stochastic variables; therefore, no decision in such a field can be deterministic or repeatable. Although some counterfactual analyses argue that some decisions can be improved and by so doing history could have been changed, this was not the case with the NVA because fundamentally it had no position in GDR internal politics. Given its weak political influence, insufficient material resources and pitiable social status then, no matter who became the Minister of the GDR defence authority after the GDR democratic election, it would have been impossible to alter the mega-trend. On the other hand, given that the order and discipline were common interests as well as the consensus of the NVA professionals during those chaotic days before reunification, no matter how poor the leadership was, no one who became the new Defence Minister could cause the total collapse of the NVA within a short time.

Chapter Four

Absorption, Demolition and Conversion

In addition to integrating former NVA personnel into the Bundeswehr or converting them into civilians, the other challenge was the disposal of massive assets inherited from the NVA. Given the force structure of the NVA, the amount of ammunition, equipment, weapons and installations on reunification day was excessive. It was partly caused by transfers from the Ministry of State Security, workers' militia, border troops and other paramilitary organizations, because the GDR government used the NVA as its dumping ground. The NVA also intentionally concealed its real strength and size of armament, especially the five so-called training centres located in Eggesin, Weisswasser, Schneeberg, Delitzsch and Burg. These were actually five reserve divisions that could be easily mobilised and augmented during any confrontation. For instance, Training Centre 19 at Burg, which was really Motorised Reserve Division 19, had 299 tanks and armoured personnel vehicles, 531 wheeled armoured vehicles, 399 howitzers, mortars and rocket launchers as well as 5,767 tonnes of ammunitions and explosives when it was opened to the Bundeswehr after reunification.⁴³⁰

Weapons and ammunition from NVA stocks caused serious security and social concerns both in Germany itself and internationally in Europe and other corners of the world. For instance, on Easter Sunday in April 1998, a forest fire in Colorado, USA, was caused by an NVA military flare.⁴³¹ Theoretically, the destruction of all NVA ammunition should have been completed long before then. Actually, no one could know how long these NVA legacies would last and how far they could eventually spread. Other influences are also hard to assess. Indonesia purchased 39 former Volksmarine warships; for the FRG it was a simple way to dispose of these NVA Cold War legacies, but it meant the Indonesian Navy expanded by 40%. NVA disposal was therefore a significant factor in regional security calculations.⁴³²

⁴³⁰ *Bonn: NVA Had 11 Rather Than 6 Divisions - Five 'Training Centres' Were Cadre-Strength Major Formations*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 30 November 1990, p.4, FBIS-WEU-91-001, 2 January 1991, pp.9-10

⁴³¹ *Military Flare Sparks Fire*, Denver Post, 14 April 1998, p.B-02, LexisNexis

⁴³² Nickerson, Colin *The Arms Race Comes to Asia; Militaries Grow as Economics Do*, Boston Globe, 18 July 1993, p.53, LexisNexis

Whether some previous comments can be unambiguously justified will also be the focus of the following three chapters. Only the direct and immediate consequences of disposing of the NVA legacies will be examined. Unpremeditated effects, unless caused by apparent negligence, will not be considered. This chapter will mainly focus on measures taken by the GDR defence authority prior to reunification and decisions made by the Bundeswehr concerning the retaining and scrapping the former NVA systems and ammunition. Efforts to convert the GDR defence industry as well as NVA equipment will also be discussed. Theoretically, the handling of these military assets was not relevant to recruiting NVA members into service in the Bundeswehr. But personnel with expertise related to specific military hardware seemingly benefit because it could potentially justify their remaining in military service.

Coordination before Reunification

The FRG Foreign Ministry officials introduced West German arms export guidelines to their GDR counterparts in mid 1990 and requested the de Maiziere government take appropriate measures before reunification, such as modifying the judicial regulations and terminating some ongoing activities that would be outside FRG laws: Bonn had foreseen that GDR arms exports could lead to future embarrassment.⁴³³ Later in early September 1990, the FRG gave the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry a list of states to which no weapons could be exported, including Cameroon, Uganda, Nicaragua, Mozambique, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Iraq and India. It was already known that orders for submachine guns, ammunitions, spare parts for T-55 tanks, training equipment for infantry weapons, component parts for anti-tank guided missiles, test instruments, bore sights for artillery systems and other miscellaneous items from the NVA inventory had been received from sensitive states such as Egypt, Ghana, Cuba, India and North Korea. Frank Marczinek, Secretary of State for Disarmament in the GDR, stated that the FRG list would be honoured by the GDR defence authority. Moreover, all future activities of arms exports or maintenance services within the NVA would be in line with UN resolutions of boycotts and

⁴³³ *Under Salvage Value*, Der Spiegel, 22 October, pp.66-74, Old Stasi Groups Sell Off NVA Equipment, FBIS-WEU-90-206, 24 October 1990, pp.8-10

embargoes. The Bundeswehr also gave the GDR defence authority a list of future technical equipment, which including submachine guns, certain vehicles, all radio equipment, field kitchens and medical equipment, which could not be exported. Thus all the GDR ongoing exports were coordinated with the Bundeswehr Office for Military Technology and Procurement. Secretary Marczinek emphasised that no decision would be made without the cooperation of the FRG government. Responding to an inquiry concerning exporting submachine guns to India, Marczinek decisively confirmed that the contract would not be implemented.⁴³⁴

Arms export was a part of the former GDR's foreign policy. Apart from acquiring revenues from these exports, arms sales were also a diplomatic tool supporting other communist states, friendly nations, and sometimes so-called "progressive liberation movements". Two organisations were specifically established for GDR military equipment and arms exports. According to Foreign Trade Department guidelines, the ITA (Ingenieur-Technischer Aussenhandel / Engineering and Technical Foreign Trade GmbH) handled military exports supposedly originating from surplus NVA and other paramilitary forces' stock, under the command of the Ministry for State Security (MfS) and Ministry of the Interior (MDI). The other organisation was called Commercial Coordination (KoKo). Under its guidance, the IMES GmbH was founded in 1982 for arms sale to Iran during the Iraq-Iran War; meanwhile the ITA was selling arms to Iraq.⁴³⁵ The relationship between KoKo and IMES GmbH was first defined by Heinz Schulz, the director of the Lübben Spree Works, a dispatch department of the IMES GmbH, after the GDR Cottbus Bezirk (district) state prosecutor and criminal investigators confiscated correspondence and documentation.⁴³⁶

These events indicate that it was unusual for the GDR Defence Ministry to be directly involved in arms sales. Nevertheless, it was known that, from August to October 1990,

⁴³⁴ Kazimirski, Klaus and Klaus-Dieter Stefan *Going, Going, Gone* - Interview With Frank Marczinek, State Secretary for Disarmament in the GDR Ministry of Disarmament and Defence, HORIZONT, Issue No: 28/90, 17 September, pp.16-19, GDR Official on Sale of NVA Equipment, FBIS-WEU-90-199, 15 October 1990, pp.13-16

⁴³⁵ *Former Revenue From Arms Sales Noted*, DPA, 15 July, FBIS-WEU-91-136, 16 July 1991, p.11. A report indicated that the GDR-Iran arms trade relation extended at least to 1988. Fifty tanks reconditioned and constructed in the Teterow Repair Works were delivered to Iran then. See *Official Confirmed Tanks Sent to Iran in '88*, ADN, 9 December, FBIS-EEU-89-236, 11 December 1989, pp.60-61

⁴³⁶ *Documents Confiscated on Arms Dealing*, ADN, 9 December, FBIS-EEU-89-236, 11 December

the GDR signed 44 contracts with foreign governments and international arms traders for exceptionally low prices. The Bundeswehr later successfully halted the execution of these contracts by order of the united German armed forces.⁴³⁷ According to the GDR's second implementing pronouncement of the Trust Agency Law enacted on 30 August 1990, there was a legal basis for nullifying these contracts: the law specified, "the Trust Agency was entitled to dispose of selected military equipment of the NVA". Furthermore, after the Unification Treaty was formally signed on 31 August 1990, a written reminder given by the FRG Defence State Secretary Holger Pfahls to his counterpart in the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry, State Secretary Werner Ablass, on 3 September 1990, stated that "decisions on the sale and the surrender of resources are to be coordinated with the defence minister in the future through our liaison group at the Ministry of Disarmament and Defence in Strausberg".⁴³⁸ Therefore, the contracts entered into by the GDR defence authority would not be binding.

But a media report after reunification indicated that some transactions were executed after the notifications delivered by the FRG Defence Ministry. Minister Eppelmann was accused of selling the NVA materials below salvage value, in order to acquire revenue to pay NVA members' wages in August and September 1990. At that period, so near reunification, only the FRG government could legally authorise the export of the NVA equipments. All these transactions, therefore, were conducted without the issue of end-user certificates. Some evidence indicated that former Stasi members involved in exporting GDR military materials temporarily transferred NVA stocks to WTO membership states in order to evade investigation and to prepare for further transactions in the arms market. A case in India proved that these Stasi members were attempting to use their former connections, such as the GDR semi-official arms export agency ITA, during the confusing period between the demise of the NVA and the Bundeswehr takeover to establish an international illegal arms transfer network that

1989, p.60

⁴³⁷ Nassauer, Otfried *An Army Surplus - The NVA's Heritage* in Laurance, Edward J. and Herbert Wulf (ed.) *Coping with Surplus Weapons: A Priority for Conversion Research and Policy*, Brief 3, Bonn, BICC: Bonn International Centre for Conversion, June 1995 (hereafter: Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*),

p.37

⁴³⁸ Weckbach-Mara, F. *Pastor Eppelmann Squandered Millions of Marks*, Bild am Sonntag, 29 July, pp.2-3, *Illegal Sales Detailed*, FBIS-WEU-91-146, 30 July 1991, pp.11-12

included some FRG arms dealers.⁴³⁹ One FRG defence official confessed that the exact amount of NVA assets was unknown at the beginning of reunification. Surveys specifically targeting these intensive GDR arms transactions immediately before reunification needed time to be analysed. Several trading companies associated with reselling NVA equipments and linked with this network were discovered in India, Berlin and the United States. One in the U.S., established by former GDR officers, had already resold NVA gas masks to the Far East.⁴⁴⁰

Given so many indications of possibly illegal transactions of properties, equipments and buildings, Stoltenberg made a hard decision in 1991 March: to permit the Department for Investigation of Special Cases in the FRG Defence Ministry to explore the details of these allegations. The proposed investigation covered approximately 300 cases included illegal arms transfers to Arab states as well as leasing the Volksmarine Officers' School in Rostock to a newly established association, whose core members were former NVA cadres, as a vocational training institution for 50 years with an impressively low price. All these cases occurred a few days before reunification. According to a media report, Ablass was not willing to unconditionally cooperate with these investigations, particularly concerning some relatively official documents, because he believed that these involved sovereign GDR governmental decisions. Nevertheless, the media report concluded that these alleged transaction unquestionably conflicted with the interests of the FRG, the legal successor of the GDR for public properties.⁴⁴¹ Actually, the investigation of these former NVA properties and arms transactions had begun immediately after reunification. The initial report submitted at the end of 1990, by the Department for Investigation of Special Cases to Stoltenberg had acknowledged that the scope of investigation was vast. Stoltenberg requested the investigation should remain covert in order to prevent any outcry.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ Later, further investigations discovered that the collaboration between the GDR and the Western arms dealers were long existed before reunification. It was a mechanism that allowed the GDR access to western arms technology. See *GDR Employed Western Arms Dealers for Purchases*, ADN, 20 June, FBIS-WEU-92-120, 22 June 1992, p.11

⁴⁴⁰ *Under Salvage Value*, Op Cit

⁴⁴¹ *Dubious Events Surrounding Buildings and Equipment of the National People's Army*, Welt am Sonntag, 3 March, Minister To Decide on Investigating NVA Sales, FBIS-WEU-91-044, 6 March 1991,

p.9

⁴⁴² Weckbach-Mara, F. *Pastor Eppelmann Squandered Millions of Marks*, Op Cit

A few months later, public concern further escalated. The FRG Defence Ministry openly confirmed that possible judiciary prosecution was implied, but emphasised that "agreements concluded before 3 October 1990 must be judged as invalid". An internal interim report disclosed by the media indicated that 164 cases of military material sales from the NVA inventory were worth investigating. Inquiries aimed at General Ehrenfried Ullmann, who headed the former NVA Procurement Office under Eppelmann and managed the sale of weapons and material, including some advanced aircrafts, for DM 730 million at almost fire-sale prices, became the centre of the investigation. Eppelmann personally also had to face similar investigations.⁴⁴³ Evidence indicated that Eppelmann was involved in agreeing some contracts. At least, from his signature on the documentation and his visit on 2 October 1990 to the office of the notary and lawyer Henning Voscherau who arranged the contract of leasing the Volksmarine Officers' School, it could be proven that the deal was taken care of by Eppelmann himself. This would force the Bundeswehr to invest DM250 million in order to establish a new facility at the same level.⁴⁴⁴ It was a clear indication that Eppelmann ignored the FRG Defence Ministry notice and relative codes established and agreed by both German governments immediately prior to reunification. During the investigation it was reported that the FRG Finance Minister Theo Waigel advocated revising the existing contracts of leased properties, on better terms, to the German government. But there were many legal restrictions on transferring weapons and other military materials. The same scheme, therefore, could not be adopted for contracts other than property leases. Nevertheless, the consequence of cancelling these contracts of arms transfer was an increase in the budget for demolishing the NVA legacies.⁴⁴⁵

Eppelmann defended himself in print about contracts of arms transactions signed just before reunification. Eppelmann said he was fully aware of the legal restrictions on arms transfers, which included a GDR act prohibiting weapon delivery passed on 7 March 1990 during the Modrow regime as well as other laws and codes that his State Secretary Frank Marczinek had reported to him in every detail. Eppelmann, therefore,

⁴⁴³ *NVA Reportedly Sold Weapons, Arms Illegally - Eppelmann Inquiry Confirmed*, DPA, 27 July, FBIS-WEU-91-146, 30 July 1991, p.10

⁴⁴⁴ Weckbach-Mara, F. *Pastor Eppelmann Squandered Millions of Marks*, Op Cit

⁴⁴⁵ Vielain, Heinz *Dubious Deals by Officers of the National People's Army*, Die Welt, 28 July, p.4, 'Dubious Deals' Revealed, FBIS-WEU-91-146, 30 July 1991, pp.10-11

claimed in his book that no law had been violated. Second, he insisted the FRG government had been informed, including Foreign Minister Genscher, BKO Commanding General Schönbohm, former Defence Minister Rupert Scholz, Defence Minister Stoltenberg and Gunner Simon, a senior civilian FRG defence official who was dispatched to GDR Defence Ministry to address these issues. Contracts had only been concluded after close consultations with the liaison group sent by the Bundeswehr. Many states had expressed their interest in procuring NVA military materials. Nevertheless, according to the proposal list submitted by the GDR Defence Ministry, the FRG Defence Ministry eventually agreed only to transfers to Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Third, although the contracts were negotiated and signed by the GDR Defence Ministry, yet, the actual fulfilment could only be executed by the FRG after reunification. Eppelmann stated that all existing contracts contained a "*Vorbehaltsklausel*", a withdrawal clause, explicitly stating that these contracts could only be fulfilled in agreement with the FRG government.⁴⁴⁶ Nevertheless, Eppelmann never explained about contracts of leasing former NVA properties. Stoltenberg initially only assigned ten investigators for these transactions, but more were soon needed because the scale of the cases was far beyond expectation. Another fifteen investigators were dispatched in July 1991 and the expense of investigation reportedly became DM 200,000 per month.⁴⁴⁷

No one was ever actually prosecuted though many dubious circumstances were revealed in media reports. Those accused of misconduct, including Eppelmann himself, remained very active in German domestic politics. Ablast also kept his office within FRG defence. Although indictments appeared in sensational media reports, formal verdicts denied misconduct. An air of sleaze however surrounded participants and process. While the accusations towards the former GDR defence civilian leadership of selling the NVA assets at unreasonably low prices was still under investigation, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) politician Johann Scheringer in the Schwerin Landtag raised similar outrageous allegations. These concerned the decisions made by the FRG government to authorise two German private companies,

⁴⁴⁶ Eppelmann, 1992, Op Cit., pp.136-138. Eppelmann noted the phrases of the withdrawal clause in two forms, "*vorbehaltlich der Zustimmung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*" (contract can only be enforced with agreement of the FRG) and "*Dieses Geschäft ist nur rechtsgültig, wenn eine zuständige staatliche Stelle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland ihre Zustimmung gegeben hat*" (the execution of the contract should be approved by authorities with legitimate rights within the FRG government).

VEBEG in Frankfurt and MDSG in Berlin, to get the exclusive rights to sell NVA surplus stock, at prices way below their value.⁴⁴⁸

All doubtful contracts or transactions disclosed by various sources were:

Contracts Settled or Discussed by the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry Before Reunification			
Contractor / Buyer	Content / Amount	Price / Expenditure (Total / Unit Price)	Remark (See Note)
Repair Works Neubrandenburg (RNW)	360 tanks and tractors	DM7.986 million - (Expenditure)	[DR], [CS], [UN]
Repair Works Neubrandenburg (RNW)	230 Self-propelled gun mounts/ armed vehicles	Unknown	[DR], [CS], [UN]
USSR (government)	120 vehicles	Unknown	Re-export - [CS], [UN]
Spain (government)	62 mobile workshops	DM7 million	Export - [CS], [UN]
FRG (government)	Spare parts / components - quantity unknown	Unknown	Export - [CS], [UN]
World Hunger Aid	65 trucks	Free	Charity Aid
World Hunger Aid	2 workshop vehicles	Free	Charity Aid
VEBEG GmbH	170 vehicles	Unknown	For re-sale - [CS], [UN]
Interflug	6 AN-2 aircrafts	DM54,000	[CS], [UN]
Strausberg Aviation School	1 AN-2 aircraft	Unknown	[CN/FSU]
Märkische Falken Aviation School	1 AN-2 aircraft	Unknown	[CN/FSU]
Dresden Military History Museum	1 AN-2 aircraft	Free	[EAR]
Concord Air Lines, Munich	1 AN-2 aircraft	Unknown	[CN/FSU]
Koch Company, Munich	1 AN-2 aircraft	Unknown	[CN/FSU]
Speyer Museum	1 AN-2 aircraft	Unknown	[CN/FSU]
NVA military personnel, founding of private companies	15 AN-2 aircrafts	Unknown	[CN/FSU]
Unknown	5 L-39 aircrafts	Unknown	[CN/FSU]
Saarbrücken Aero-tech GmbH	1 TL-39 flight simulator	Unknown	[CN/FSU]
Vietnam (government)	6 Tu-134 aircrafts	DM12.1 million	[CS], [UN]
USSR (government)	1 Tu-134 aircraft	DM7 million	[CS], [UN]
Matami & Co., trading company, FRG	1 Il-62 aircraft (3 possible order)	Unknown	[CN/FSU]
Minol Petroleum Trade	83,000 tonnes normal motor gasoline	Unknown	[CS], [UN]
Minol Petroleum Trade	114,300 tonnes diesel fuel	DM59.98 million	[CS], [UN]
Minol Petroleum Trade	1,200 tonnes oils/grease	Unknown	[CS], [UN]
VEBEG GmbH	Various tank technology	Unknown	[CN/FSU]
VEMIG GmbH, Tangermünde	850,000 military clothes	DM1.5 million in 1990	[CN/FSU]
VEMIG GmbH, Tangermünde	720,000 unknown items, possibly military clothes	DM3 - 4 million in 1990 - 1994	[CN/FSU]
VEBEGT GmbH	Various military clothes	Unknown	[CN/FSU]

⁴⁴⁷ Weckbach-Mara, F. *Pastor Eppelmann Squandered Millions of Marks*, Op Cit

⁴⁴⁸ ADN/DPP *Shady Deals With War Material of the National People's Army*, Berliner Zeitung, 14 November, p.1, Former NVA Armament Reportedly Sold Secretly, FBIS-WEU-91-221, 15 November 1991, p.8

Dresden Pharmaceutical Works; Lieselotte Marx Company / Erfurt	200,000 medical protection packets	DM2 per unit - (Expenditure)	[CR], [CS], [UN]
Thuringian Plastic Processing	250,000 medical plastic disposable syringes	DM0.75 per unit - (Expenditure)	[CR], [CS], [UN]
Unknown contractors in Belgium and Poland	Various submachine guns, pistol and carbines, amount unknown	Unknown	[CR], [CN/FSU]
Ministry of Defence, Poland	11 MIG-29s, 2,700 Fagott AT-missiles, 152mm ammunitions, air-to-air missiles, etc.	DM207.9 million	[CS], [I&CAR]
Ministry of Defence, Hungary	200 T-72 MBTs, 130,000 AT mines, 50,000 AK-74 submachine guns, spar parts, etc.	DM100 - 120 million	[CS], [I&CAR]
CIC International Ltd. (USA)	Vessels: 3 Project 151 - Balcom 10 class, 12 Project 205 - Osa I class; Fighters: MIG-21s, MIG-23s amount unknown; Rocket Launchers: 58 BM-21, 100 RM-70; Tanks: 1,200 T-55s, 200 T-72s; 5,000 Sagger AT missiles	DM275.5 million or \$349 million	[CS], [I&CAR]
BeiJ-MA (alternatively known as BEJ-MA or BAIJ-MA in German) Military Department (Belgium)	32 Mi-24 Helicopters, 100 T-72 tanks, 100,000 anti-personnel mines, unknown amount of light machine guns, RPG-18 rockets, 9mm pistols (including ammunitions)	DM41.5 - 62.5 million	[CS], [I&CAR]
OEG SUMER Handels- und Service Gesellschaft (alternatively known as Sumer GmbH)	420,000 sets of protective equipments and other decontamination materials	DM77.4 million	[CS], Investigated but later export to Saudi Arabia licensed by the FRG government after reunification
Harlacher small arms and ammunition	Guns, carbines; pistol and ammunitions	DM317,746 for guns and carbines; DM1.9 million for pistol and ammunitions	[CS], [I&PCAR]
Heckler & Koch ammunition	Ammunitions	DM144,698.83	[CS], [I&PCAR]
ALT-KAM (USSR)	Second-hand vehicles	DM498,420	[CS], [I&PCAR]
MAWIA GmbH	One demilitarised vessel	Unknown	Contracted settled and executed, later this vessel was reportedly illegally exported to Guinea-Bissau, also investigated
Königsberg Foundation	3 L-410 transport aircrafts	DM1.491 million	[CS], [I&PCAR]
Berlin Yacht GmbH	82 Volksmarine vessels and 2 border protection boats	DM882,057 for 82 Volksmarine vessels and DM51,300 for 2 border protection boats	[CS], [I&CAR]
Baltica GmbH	6 landing ships	DM3 million	[CS], [I&CAR]
Dresden Shipyard	Various MIG aircrafts, amount unknown	DM100,890	[CS], [I&CAR]

Saxony Air Service GmbH	10 AN-2 aircrafts and 11 Z-43 aircrafts	DM85,000 for 10 AN-2 aircrafts and DM68,400 for 11 Z-43 aircrafts	[CS], [I&CAR]
A company in Plauen established by a former commander of the Border Troops before reunification	Land lease contract of properties around Plauen area for 66 years	Unknown	[CS], [I&PCRAR]
An association formed by the NVA members few days before reunification	Land and properties lease contract of Volksmarine Officers' School in Stralsund, Rostock for 50 years	Maximum monthly lease fee of DM1,000	[CS], [I&PCRAR]
Selected persons and groups of the NVA	Single-family and two-family homes, 263 preliminary contracts and 364 settled contracts by 1 July 1990	Unknown	[CS], [I&PCRAR]

Key:

[DR]: Dismantling / Recycling

[CR]: Cannibalising / Recycling

[CS]: Contract settled

[CN/FSU]: Contract negotiated, final settlement unknown

[EAR]: Executed after Reunification

[I&CAR]: Investigated and cancelled after reunification

[I&PCAR]: Investigated and possibly cancelled after reunification

[UN]: Unknown whether executed or cancelled

[I&PCRAR]: Investigated and possibly contract revised after reunification

Source: Kazimirski, Klaus and Klaus-Dieter Stefan *Going, Going, Gone*, Op Cit; Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, p.38; Giessmann, Hans-Joachim *Das unliebsame Erbe - Die Auflösung der Militäarastruktur der DDR (The Unwanted Heritage - The dissolution of the DDR military structure)*, Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992, pp.233-234; *NVA Reportedly Sold Weapons, Arms Illegally - Eppelmann Inquiry Confirmed*, Op Cit; Vielain, Heinz *Dubious Deals by Officers of the National People's Army*, Op Cit; and Weckbach-Mara, F. *Pastor Eppelmann Squandered Millions of Marks*, Op Cit.

Note:

1. The list is incomplete. Some contracts may not have been revealed to the public or the press by the German government.
2. Some contents in this table could be repeated because the information was collected from various sources and the same items could have been negotiated with different buyers on various occasions. Nevertheless, some clarifications and re-categorisation has been made, if sufficient information was available.
3. Not all contracts generated income. In some cases, it was purely for disposing of military wastes, specified as expenditure in the table.
4. It seemed that no one was actually prosecuted by the FRG government through formulating and signing these contracts though investigations were conducted and most contracts were invalidated or revised after reunification.

Farewell to Moscow

When the GDR Prime Minister Lothar de Maiziere visited Washington, D.C., in June 1990, on-going negotiations concerning returning weapon systems to the Soviet Union, especially the SCUD-B surface-to-surface missiles was raised by the press. He

confirmed that was a major issue and that the decline of the NVA would mean the return of weapons to the Soviet Union. The NVA having no technology to undertake conversion for specific weapon systems was the major reason for such decision.⁴⁴⁹ The technical bottleneck can also be proved by a GDR decision of refusing Russian experts to demolish 10 Soviet missiles originally stationed in the GDR on its soil.⁴⁵⁰

According to Matthias Gehler, the GDR government spokesman, the core issue of this negotiation was the cost of safe disposal of weapons originally ordered by the NVA but no longer required. Neither of these sides, the GDR nor the USSR, wanted to receive these weapons then conduct the disposal task in the future. Therefore, only suitable compensation would release the deadlock.⁴⁵¹ But when the GDR withdrew from the Warsaw Pact, some cipher machines were returned by the NVA.⁴⁵² In this case, security concerns went far beyond the cost of demolishing the hardware. The Soviets were also concerned about advanced military hardware falling under FRG control. But returning sensitive equipment was not only conducted in one direction: Eppelmann insisted that the Soviet Union should hand over military hardware.⁴⁵³

Some weapons returned to the Soviet Union reduced combat effectiveness. The *Shturm*, AT-6 Spiral, anti-tank missile systems of the Mi-24P gunship helicopters, handed back in 1990, affected the German Defence Ministry's decision to accept or maintain the overall system or platform.⁴⁵⁴ It is unclear whether the Balcom 10 class missile corvette, which was originally equipped with most advanced Russian-made SS-N-25 anti-ship missile, was a similar case. Because of the unbelievable similarity between the SS-N-25 and the American RGM-84 Harpoon, the nickname "Harpoonski" was given to this Russian anti-ship missile by western intelligence.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁴⁹ *National Press Club Luncheon Speaker: Lothar de Maiziere, Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic*, National Press Club Ballroom, News Makers & Policy Makers, Federal News Service, Washington, D.C., 12 June 1990

⁴⁵⁰ *Eppelmann Says Soviet Troop Withdrawal possible by the End of 1992*, Op Cit.

⁴⁵¹ Goodhart, David and Leslie Colitt *East Germany to spend nearly DM one billion on new weapons*, European News, *Financial Times*, 31 July 1990, p.2

⁴⁵² *East Germany Ends 35 Years in Warsaw Pact* Toronto Star, 25 September 1990, p. A13, LexisNexis

⁴⁵³ *Eppelmann Says Soviet Troop Withdrawal possible by the End of 1992*, Op Cit.

⁴⁵⁴ *Germany intends to scrap Mil helicopters*, Flight International, 9 March 1994. This was confirmed by another report based on the same source, a German Defence Ministerial Report. See, Schulte, Heinz *Germans Seek 269 NH 905, 75 UHUS*, Jane's Defence Weekly, Volume 21, Issue 7, 19 February 1994, p.37

⁴⁵⁵ Preston, Antony (ed) *Russian Naval Weapons Marketed*, NAVINT - International Naval Newsletter, Surrey: Tileprint Ltd. (hereafter: NAVINT), Volume 4, No. 24, 4 December 1992, p.1

However, just before German reunification, the SS-N-25 missiles were removed from the only vessel of this class serving in the Volksmarine at that time. The Deutsche Marine immediately expressed no desire for this vessel without SS-N-25 missiles. One media report revealed Soviet military personnel had stripped the communications gear and missile launching systems from the MIG-29 and other advanced combat fighters, thus making them unsaleable.⁴⁵⁶ However, Soviet-made military hardware possessed by the NVA was not necessarily identical to those of the same type operated by the Soviet forces, because they were export versions. The MIG-29 Fulcrum fighter's engines in the former East Germany were downgraded to 90% maximum power and the detection range of the radar system was reduced to 40km.⁴⁵⁷ Even so, these MIG-29s were enormously valuable to western engineering and intelligence analysts.

A month later, a situation arose that conflicted with de Maiziere's stance of negotiating the return of excessive military assets to Soviet Union. The FRG authority was outraged to learn that the GDR Minister of Defence and Disarmament, Eppelmann, still planned to spend nearly DM1 billion to purchase advance weapons, including Soviet anti-tank defence systems, machine guns, and a few small missile-equipped attack boats, which would need to be dismantled immediately after delivery. There had also been an attempt to procure a further 32 MIG-29 fighters to join the Luftstreitkräfte, the GDR air force. Colonel Uwe Hempel, spokesman of the GDR Defence and Disarmament Ministry, defended this embarrassing situation by arguing that NVA needed to fulfil its "contractual obligation" concerning arms procurement. The GDR government spokesman, Matthias Gehler, supported this by stating that part of the payment was a *quid pro quo* for the cancellation of DM2.3 billion arms order previously made by the NVA. He believed that comparing the quantity of arms acquired, the misunderstanding could be easily eliminated. Nevertheless, this incident strengthened the FRG Defence Ministry's long-held belief that Eppelmann was incapable of maintaining leadership of the GDR Ministry of Defence and Disarmament and the NVA. After the cancellation of further orders, Eppelmann was thought to have given up the effort to retain an independent NVA

⁴⁵⁶ Knight, Robin, June Erlick and Michael Farr *Taps for an Unloved East German Army - Unification Disbands a Force that Never Fight*, US News & World Report, Volume 109, Issue 13, 1 October 1990, p.48.

after reunification.⁴⁵⁸

But another media report on the same issue, showing different figures and contents of the procurement order, indicated the opposite. Hempel insisted on this procurement because "the army still exists and will exist for some time to come". He argued that outdated equipment needed to be modified, but this was adjustment not rearmament. Nevertheless, due to the diminution of the NVA, the Volkskammer resisted granting more budgets to defence affairs, which further limited Eppelmann.⁴⁵⁹ This inconsistency revealed by different media reports, reflected Eppelmann's two co-existing convictions, the inevitable need for a drastic NVA force reduction but also an expectation of its continuing existence.

According to the GDR Disarmament State Secretary Frank Marczinek, the cancellation of the military contracts with the Soviet Union also caused a negative consequence to the GDR defence industry because the Russians terminated reciprocal orders from the GDR arms contractors.⁴⁶⁰ The FRG tried to overcome Soviet reluctance by returning every possible item acquired, as scrapping them would cost another \$100 million.⁴⁶¹ Nevertheless, the GDR Ministry of Disarmament and Defence resolved all NVA procurement contracts for Soviet military hardware before reunification. Immediately after, Ablass, former GDR Deputy Minister of Disarmament and Defence, strongly rejected speculations of any unfinished contractual obligations of the FRG government. Soviet Defence Minister Marshal Yazov also released a formal announcement, which fully endorsed Ablass' claims.⁴⁶²

Predictions for Absorption

Initially, there were many different assessments about what NVA hardware would eventually be accommodated into a united German defence force. The general

⁴⁵⁷ *Top Gun Trains to Fight MiGs*, <http://www.navaljips.org/aviation.html>

⁴⁵⁸ Goodhart, David and Leslie Colitt *East Germany to spend nearly DM one billion on new weapons*, European News, *Financial Times*, Op Cit

⁴⁵⁹ Murray, Ian *Berlin to Spend £1.3bn in Military Update*, Op Cit.

⁴⁶⁰ Kazimirski, Klaus and Klaus-Dieter Stefan *Going, Going, Gone*, Op Cit

⁴⁶¹ Knight, Robin, et al. *Taps for an Unloved East German Army - Unification Disbands a Force that Never Fight*, Op Cit

⁴⁶² *ADN NVA Aircraft Purchases Were Stopped*, *Neue Zeit*, 13 October, p.2, Officials Says NVA

expectation was that the Bundeswehr would absorb the most capable weapons and equipment.⁴⁶³ A media report revealed the dilemma of the Bundeswehr planners concerning NVA military equipment. The foreseeable defence budget reduction meant it would be very difficult to scrap equipment; yet there would also be difficulties integrating NVA systems into a unified German armed force.⁴⁶⁴ Given the differences of military specifications, military doctrines and concepts for designing military hardware between the Bundeswehr and the Nationale Volksarmee, further investment would certainly be unavoidable, should any decision involving the retention of NVA assets within the German armed forces be made.

Lieutenant-Colonel Helmut Fischer, a Bundeswehr weapons expert, said that only the MIG-29 fighters and some transport helicopters would be retained after his first glimpse of the NVA inventory. But he also stated that a further survey was needed. No quick decision could be reasonably made.⁴⁶⁵ Before reunification, Stoltenburg emphasised to the media that a future unified German military would not contain any NVA weapons and equipment.⁴⁶⁶ This diametrically opposed Egon Bahr's expectation that, as the NVA was technically the best-equipped military force in the WTO outside the Soviet Union, its military hardware could not be ignored.⁴⁶⁷ But very soon after reunification, Stoltenburg specifically focused on retaining the MIG-29 fighters in service.⁴⁶⁸

Another media report predicted that, alongside the MIG-29 fighters, Soviet-made 122mm and 152mm artillery would also be retained because they were more advanced than most NATO equivalents and ample ammunition for these guns was held. Moreover, five modern Volksmarine Tarantul I class missile corvettes seemed likely to serve in the German Navy for at least a few years.⁴⁶⁹ Some flaws in the NVA

Aircraft Purchase Cancelled, FBIS-WEU-90-201, 12 October 1990, p.14

⁴⁶³ March, David *Germany Unities; Economic Strength Irresistible - Strong Bonds Weld Germany's Disparate States Together Once More*, Financial Times, 2 October 1990, p.6, LexisNexis

⁴⁶⁴ Goodhart, David and Leslie Colitt *East Germany to spend nearly DM one billion on new weapons*, European News, *Financial Times*, Op Cit

⁴⁶⁵ Kallenbach, Michael *Wanted*, Sunday Times Overseas News, 7 October 1990, LexisNexis

⁴⁶⁶ Goodhart, David and Leslie Colitt *SPD to Block Early Voting in Germany*, Financial Times, 6 August 1990, Section I, p.3, LexisNexis

⁴⁶⁷ *Bahr Rejects Immediate Bundeswehr, NVA Fusion*, ADN, 18 July, FBIS-EEU-90-137, 18 July 1990, p.27

⁴⁶⁸ Tomforde, Anna *Slimming Cure for E. German Forces*, Guardian, 15 November 1990, LexisNexis

⁴⁶⁹ Bellamy, Christopher *E. German Army Goes, But Some Soviet Arms Stay*, Independent, 4 October

equipment caused doubts, such as the MIG-29 fighters only being equipped with a very basic weapon systems and self-propelled artillery failing to reach western safety standards.⁴⁷⁰ Therefore it was suggested that only the MIG-29 fighters could possibly survive.⁴⁷¹ Another media report even predicted that no NVA equipment would be retained because, according to a source in the FRG defence authority, it was unimaginable to have to rely on Russian spares. No NVA platform, especially fighters and naval vessels, would be operational after reunification. The only two reasonable solutions suggested were either totally scrapping them or reselling to Warsaw Pact member states.⁴⁷² The baseline of the policy left no place for most of the Soviet-made weapons in the Bundeswehr arsenal.⁴⁷³ A Bundeswehr officer made the strongest statement, "We have no use for Soviet equipment in our armed forces. The Soviets can have it back and we may even pay them for it", because trying to integrate systems originated from different sources and specifications would be a logistical nightmare.⁴⁷⁴

Nevertheless, these reports must not lead us to underestimate the complexity of this issue. According to Giessmann's research, it took nine months' effort post reunification for the Bundeswehr to choose roughly 350 items from the NVA inventory to retain for a limited period and another 400 from a total of 1,200 NVA pieces of equipment to dispose of by various approaches. Four principles were established for determining the future of NVA equipment: compatibility to Bundeswehr missions and organisations; cost-effectiveness purely based on economic criteria; conformability of corresponding regulations and codes such as personnel safety and environmental standards; logistical affordability including the dependency on maintenance technologies and parts from foreign suppliers.⁴⁷⁵ Yet, the actual

1990, p.11, LexisNexis

⁴⁷⁰ Fairhall, David *East German Officer Corps Troops Back to College: The Uniforms Have Changed, But Will the Man?*, Guardian, 8 October 1990, LexisNexis

⁴⁷¹ Epstein, Edward *Old Foes Merging East German Army Full of Surprises*, San Francisco Chronicle, 14 December 1990, p.A1, LexisNexis

⁴⁷² Eisenhammer, John *Germany's Two Armies to March as One*, Independent, 20 August 1990, p.9, LexisNexis

⁴⁷³ Fisher, Marc E. *Germany Drops Out Of Soviet-Led Alliance*, Washington Post, 25 September 1990, p.A14, LexisNexis

⁴⁷⁴ Knight, Robin, et al. *Taps for an Unloved East German Army - Unification Disbands a Force that Never Fought*, Op Cit

⁴⁷⁵ Giessmann, Hans-Joachim *Das unliebsame Erbe - Die Auflösung der Militästruktur der DDR (The Unwanted Heritage - The dissolution of the DDR military structure)*, Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1992, pp.229-230

selecting and modifying of NVA assets in order to integrate them with the existing Bundeswehr systems was far more problematical than was originally expected. The reality was not always in line with these principles.

Influential Factors

The following factors deciding whether the Bundeswehr would integrate the NVA systems into its arsenal are partially concluded from a report submitted by the German parliamentary auditing committee in 1993 that proposed the decommission of all the NVA helicopters received after reunification.⁴⁷⁶ First, if there were existing systems in FRG forces that were more advanced than the NVA equivalents, then these assets would be scrapped immediately after unification. An example based on this criterion were the Mi-14 ASW helicopters, which were scrapped because their capability could not compete with the Lynx Mk 88 helicopters already serving in the German Marineflieger.

Second, inherited systems or equipments from the NVA should match the restructured missions of the Bundeswehr. Also their service functions should be justified by their effectiveness and readiness. By this standard, the Ilyushin and Tupolev transport planes provided the highest performance platforms of all the NVA legacies. They could immediately be used as commuter planes to take German federal public service officials, including military personnel, from Bonn to Berlin up to three times a day. Their reputation was much better than the Bundeswehr Transall troop carriers.⁴⁷⁷ Three Ilyushin transports were withdrawn from service in the Bundeswehr in 1993 but they maintained their market value: they were later successfully resold to an Egyptian businessman. Tupolev transports were always kept in high readiness. No negative report ever appeared in public. At least one Tupolev was retained to serve its original function until it crashed into the Atlantic in September 1997 as it carried Bundeswehr members to South Africa.⁴⁷⁸ If it could not be effectively operated, it was impossible for it to undertake such a flight. But it may not have been operated by the original

⁴⁷⁶ *Germany intends to scrap Mil helicopters*, Op Cit

⁴⁷⁷ Eisenhammer, John *Out of Germany; Civil Servant Bombers Zero in on Berlin*, Independent, 7 January 1991, p.10, LexisNexis

⁴⁷⁸ *24 Killed in Plane Crash*, Daily Telegraph, 15 September 1997, p.27, LexisNexis

NVA crew simply because it was still in service: there was no obstacle to training other crews to continue its operations.

Third, all the systems preserved and used by the Bundeswehr should fulfil Western safety standards and acquire related certificates. For instance, the original MIG-29 laser ranger system was removed because it posed an airborne safety hazard to pilots and ground personnel. Modifications to avionics equipment were made to meet German national and international air traffic standards.⁴⁷⁹ All such improvements were technologically attainable, legally approachable and fiscally affordable. Several examples exist to illustrate the dilemma of existing valuable assets and the need for further investments. The 122mm 2S1 self-propelled howitzers were abandoned because the ammunition arming device did not meet German regulations and the expense of modification was far beyond the Bundeswehr's capacity. Also the BMP-1 infantry combat vehicles, requiring only a few minor improvements to transmission and brake systems to satisfy German legal requirements, were limited by budgetary constraints and several modifications were cancelled. Instead of replacing their tracks to comply with German traffic rules, the vehicle was limited to 20 km/h as they manoeuvred on public roads. Likewise, the AT-3 'Sagger' anti-tank missile system was also removed because its automatic loader risked causing injury.⁴⁸⁰

As the first converted BMP-1 armoured personnel carrier was delivered to the 101st Mechanised Infantry Battalion in Hagenow near Neubrandenburg, Elmar Goebel, vice president of the Federal Office for Defence Technology and Acquisition (BWB - Bundesamt für Wehrtechnik und Beschaffung), openly emphasised that environmental protection was another mandatory criterion for the conversion process.⁴⁸¹ Similar limitations occurred to the Mi-24 helicopters. The cost of improving their weak points, such as exposure in observation and attack missions, poor night-attack and air-to-air

⁴⁷⁹ Tartar, Easy *The German Luftwaffe MIG-29 Experience*, <http://www.sci.fi/~fta/MiG-29-2b.htm>. This was a serious matter to military personnel. The safety reputation of the Soviet-made weapon systems was poor. In late 2001, an influential magazine, *Stern*, and other German media exposed over 800 cases of former military personnel suffering from illness caused by either inappropriate-designed military equipment or negligence. Ironically, the list contained the retired members both from the former NVA and the Bundeswehr. See Scally, Derek *A Race Between Death and Justice*, Irish Times, 24 July 2002, p.11, LexisNexis

⁴⁸⁰ Marx, Stefan *The Vanished Army - The Liquidation of the NVA*, Jane's Intelligence Review, Volume 6, Issue 8, 10 August 1994, p.350.

⁴⁸¹ *Bundeswehr Incorporates BMP's in Infantry Unit*, DPA, 15 May, FBIS-WEU-91-095, 16 May 1991,

capability, plus operating costs, the expense for adapting to Western safety standards and acquiring relative certification, made further use of these helicopters seemingly impractical.⁴⁸²

Fourth, NVA systems had to be compatible with other systems within the FRG forces. This was of the utmost importance for systems naturally needed to coordinate with other platforms or forces in joint operations. However, some minor modifications were acceptable, if these NVA assets were to repay investment. The MiG-29s cost half a million US dollars for an electronic retrofit, for example, but this was still far cheaper than buying new warplanes.⁴⁸³ The Luftwaffe also successfully achieved an extension, from 350 to 1200 hours, for the MiG-29's engine overhaul.⁴⁸⁴

Fifth, given the reduced German defence budget after the Cold War, the operational costs of these systems had to be fiscally viable, especially when compared with other alternatives, such as equivalent western systems, or by using civilian services which could serve the same function. Nevertheless, this evaluation could not be made immediately upon reunification: it would take a few years to draw conclusions from daily statistics. For instance, initially BMP-1 infantry combat vehicles were retained to serve in the Bundeswehr. 764 vehicles were brought into service on 15 May 1991 but in April 1994 had to be decommissioned. For only three years service in the Bundeswehr, investments in modifications were certainly not cost-effective.⁴⁸⁵ A media report in early 1993 revealed that BMP-1 vehicles were unreliable. They had already become a burden to the Bundeswehr.⁴⁸⁶ Initial under-investment in or poor assessment of the BMP-1 led to this catastrophic consequence.

Conversely, a report on the Mi-24 Hind combat helicopter indicated that they were too

pp.5.

⁴⁸² *Germany intends to scrap Mil helicopters*, Op Cit. and Schulte, Heinz *Germans Seek 269 NH 905, 75 UHUS*, Op Cit.

⁴⁸³ *The Military today: NATO's MiG-29 jet fighters*, <http://www.german-way.com/german/mil.html>, based on an article by Joseph Fitchett in *International Herald Tribune*, 22 August 1997.

⁴⁸⁴ Schulte, Heinz *The Jane's Interview of Lt. Gen. Bernhard Mende, Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe*, *Jane's Defence Weekly*, Volume 23, Issue 3, 21 January 1995, p.32. For more detail information about modifications to the MiG-29s by the Luftwaffe, see Willis, David (ed) *Aerospace Encyclopedia of World Air Forces*, London: Aerospace Publishing, 1999, p.188 and Tartar, Easy *The German Luftwaffe MiG-29 Experience*, <http://www.sci.fi/~fta/MiG-29-2b.htm>

⁴⁸⁵ Marx, Stefan *The Vanished Army - The Liquidation of the NVA*, Op Cit

⁴⁸⁶ Petty, Terrence *Bundeswehr Searches for New Mission As It Absorbs Old Enemy*, Associated Press,

expensive to sustain operationally. Many believed that totally ruled out the possibility of absorbing them into service.⁴⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the Bundeswehr retained some Mi-24 attack helicopters. It was estimated that the cost of sustaining 49 Mi-24s for ten years would be DM1 billion. In 1992, Minister R uhe eventually decided to remove a number of Mi-24 attack helicopters and Mi-8 transports from service, although assessments of these helicopters by the Bundeswehr test authorities and the U.S. Army were all very positive.⁴⁸⁸ People believed that to adopt existing NVA assets would eradicate initial procurement costs, but operational costs might totally offset their value. The Mi-8 helicopter was a typical example. The storage costs of the former Mi-8 were three times that of the UH-1Ds that served in the Bundeswehr. Moreover, the operational costs for 50 Mi-8s, compared with the same number of UH-1Ds, would need DM24 million more a year.⁴⁸⁹ But the Mig-29 fighters were an exception: the Luftwaffe eventually retained them despite their very high operating costs.⁴⁹⁰

Sixth, no matter how advanced the NVA systems might be, sustainability and reliable logistic support would be crucial in the decision-making process. The reluctance to retain the Mig-29 was primarily because of the uncertainty in follow-on logistic support.⁴⁹¹ The same reason also ruled against suggesting the Mig-29 fighter as a successor for the Luftwaffe's aging F-4 Phantom because, even for the Soviet MIG-29 fighters taken over from the NVA, the Bundeswehr could not be sure of an uninterrupted supply of parts.⁴⁹²

Last but not least, all decisions about retaining the NVA assets had to comply with treaty obligations accepted by the FRG, especially the CFE-I Treaty (Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe). The disarmament process under the CFE I treaty was not something that could be solely decided by the Defence Ministry. A

1 March 1993

⁴⁸⁷ Sch nbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit, p.161

⁴⁸⁸ *Precipitately Mustered Out*, Der Spiegel, 27 September 1993, p.16, R uhe Reconsiders Decision on NVA Helicopters, FBIS-WEU-93-188, 30 September 1993, p.32

⁴⁸⁹ *Germany intends to scrap Mil helicopters*, Op Cit

⁴⁹⁰ *Bundeswehr To Use Former GDR Mig-29 Aircraft*, ADN, 31 January, FBIS-WEU-91-022, 1 February 1991, p.14

⁴⁹¹ Ibid.

⁴⁹² Gillessen, *G nther Not Without Air Superiority: On the Debate Over the "EFA"*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 29 June, FBIS-WEU-92-126, Debate Over Fighter-90 Becoming "Thoughtless", 30 June

steering committee directed two expert groups (100 Bundeswehr officers for the military aspects and 30 Foreign Ministry diplomats for the political aspects) to manage this inter-agency task.⁴⁹³ Having considered the financial difficulties following the expense of German reunification, the Bundeswehr never attempted to hold assets above what had been agreed in the arms reduction treaties. The CFE I Treaty was signed on 19 November 1990 and the expected TLEs (Treaty Limited Equipments) reductions were shown (see below). Yet, the actual execution of the TLE process became far more complicated because some factors later emerged, such as the ordering of substitute equipment, causing a "cascade system" which transferred surplus TLEs to other treaty signatory states and successfully re-exported items to other countries outside Europe. Unquestionably, massive amounts of military hardware inherited from the NVA dramatically reshaped the Bundeswehr's TLE reduction programme.⁴⁹⁴ A media report in 1993 indicated that the actual numbers of weapon systems to be disposed of were 2,726 tanks, 5,171 armoured vehicles, 1,904 artillery guns and 123 combat aircrafts.⁴⁹⁵

Expected German TLEs Reduction Followed by the CFE I Commitment				
Category	Quantity Actually Possessed	TLEs Quantity	Expected Reduction	Quantity inherited from NVA
Main Battle Tank	7,093	4,166	2,927	2,342
Armour Personnel Carrier	9,598	3,466	6,152	6,639
Artillery	4,644	2,689	1,955	2,465
Fighter Aircraft	1,064	900	164	394
Attack Helicopter	357	306	51	87

This table was edited by the author from "Defence Ministry Outlines New Tank Levels", DPA, 19 November, FBIS-WEU-90-224, 20 November 1990, pp.15-16, except the last column "Quantity inherited from NVA" which was based on *Deutscher Bundestag*, 11 May 1992, pp.5+, taken from Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, p.39. Different figures, such as 2,967 tanks, 1,939 artillery cannons and the same number of armoured vehicles, appeared in other media reports. See "300,000 Tonnes of Ammunition To Be Destroyed Despite Gulf War", *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 13 February, p.16, NVA Military Material To Be Destroyed, FBIS-WEU-91-034, 20 February 1991, pp.12-13.

According to Giessmann's survey, items shown in the following table were initially retained and used by the Bundeswehr until summer 1991.

Category	Note
24 MiG-29 Fighters	One was delivered to the U.S. for intelligence analysis but later returned

1992, pp.22-23

⁴⁹³ Seher, Dietmar *Genscher Wants To Present Ratification Law Before the End of June*, *Berliner Zeitung*, 5 June, FBIS-WEU-91-111, 10 June 1991, p.17

⁴⁹⁴ Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, pp.47-49

⁴⁹⁵ *Bundeswehr Reported to Reduce W. Länder Arsenal*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 18 March, in FBIS-WEU-93-055, 24 March 1993, p.19

50 Mi-24 Attack Fighters and 6 to 8 Mi-8 transportation helicopters	Mi-8 for VIP transportation missions
14 Transport Aircrafts	Also involved in CBM Verification Operations
763 BMP-1/2 APCs in various configurations	Only served in new länder, including munitions
220 Large-scale Calibre Self-propelled Howitzers	Including 440,000 rounds of ammunitions
Approximately 20,000 Commercial Vehicles	Wheeled vehicles of various types
150,000 Small Arms and Infantry Weapon (AK-47)	Including 250 million rounds of ammunitions
SA-5 Anti-Air Missile Systems	Amount unknown
Auxiliary Vessels and Tugs from Volksmarine	
Standardised Transportation Containers	With air-conditioned fittings, amount unknown
Simulators and other Training Equipments	Amount and types unknown
NBC Protection and Decontamination Equipments	Amount Unknown

Source: Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit., pp.230-231, some modifications were made by the author

Utilisation of helicopters from the NVA remained a complex and difficult issue. The following table provides a better understanding of the situation.

Situation of further utilising NVA helicopters after unification		
Type	Quantity	Remark
Mi-14	14	Anti-submarine helicopter taken over from the Volksmarine, included 8 Mi-14 PL and 6 Mi-14 BT, scrapped after unification except two, transferred to USA for intelligence analysis in 1991
Mi-9	8	Transport helicopter, dismantled after unification and scrapped later
Mi-24	51	Initially, the Bundeswehr kept 49 Mi-24s operational after reunification: 38 Mi-24Ds mothballed before 1994, although they stayed in service until between 1998 to 2003; 11 Mi-24S mothballed before 1994 through lack of compatible anti-tank missile system, AT-6 Spiral, removed and returned to Russia in 1990; all Mi-24s failed to fulfil the requirements of safety and combat effectiveness and the Bundeswehr could not afford to upgrade them. 3 Mi-24s were sent to USA for training purposes, possibly also for intelligence analysis, 2 in 1991 and 1 in 1992, only 1 Mi-24 was returned before 1994. 20 Mi-24D/P together with 20 L-39ZO fixed-wing trainers were given to the Hungarian Air Force as a gift in 1994.
Mi-2	25	Transport helicopter, believed scrapped directly after unification
Mi-8	93	Only 6 Mi-8S as the VIP transport and 28 Mi-8T were in service till 1994

Edited by the author from the following sources: *Germany intends to scrap Mil helicopters*, Op Cit.; Willis, David (ed) *Aerospace Encyclopaedia of World Air Forces*, Op Cit.; Schulte, Heinz *Germans Seek 269 NH 905, 75 UHUS*, Op Cit.; Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, pp.37-67.

Hardware and Employment

Would the Bundeswehr's use of former NVA military hardware increase the employment prospects for appropriate NVA specialists? Individual expertise and political flawlessness remained the determining factors for acceptance by the Bundeswehr. As General Schönbohm noted, some members from the Volksmarine only got contracts for a very short period, even those who had faithfully devoted themselves to sustaining the functionality of their vessels after unification. Once ships had been sold or scrapped, those members were dismissed since the Deutsche Marine

had very little interest in retaining vessels from the Volksmarine.⁴⁹⁶

NVA members from the air defence units recruited by the MAEWTF (Multinational Aircrew Electronic Warfare Training Facility, a tripartite non-NATO structure providing the training programme for NATO allies' air forces established by the US, Germany and France) should have benefited from the retention of the NVA military hardware. Many fully operational and well-maintained air defence systems of Soviet origin used in the NVA, such as SA-6, SA-8 and the ZSU-23/4, were transferred to MAEWTF and former NVA personnel who operated these systems were incorporated into its staff. The experiences, working methods and the "Soviet-like" procedures of the former NVA members were extremely valuable assets that significantly increased the quality of the training given by the MAEWTF.⁴⁹⁷ The core element was their expertise. The acceptance of the NVA personnel was not merely based on the military hardware used in training. But the hope that advanced weapon systems could only be operated by NVA experts, thus increasing the likelihood of them being absorbed within the Bundeswehr, was proved to be incorrect. For instance, members of the Volksmarine coastal defence missile force received the newest anti-ship missile systems from Soviet Union immediately before reunification but this did not increase their chance of a career in the Bundeswehr although they believed otherwise.⁴⁹⁸

When he was inspecting an elite regiment, the most modern anti-aircraft missile unit or the Hind combat helicopter test flight, former NVA members eagerly demonstrated their war-fighting skills or the excellence of their equipment to General Schönbohm.⁴⁹⁹ Their optimism was not groundless. The wrong signals and implications had been delivered to them from the beginning. The expectations of the former NVA career military personnel were driven by the perception of their fates being determined by the future of the organisations or units to which they were

⁴⁹⁶ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit., p.195

⁴⁹⁷ Wodka-Gallien, Philippe *Train as you fight, fight as you train*, Journal of Electronic Defence, Volume 24, Issue 6, June 2001, pp.63-65.

⁴⁹⁸ Kunze, Martin *Buchbesprechung: Eine Elite-Einheit der NVA rüstet ab (Book Remark: One Elite of the NVA is Dismissing)* in Deutscher BundeswehrVerband Publication, *Aarbeitsgruppe Geschichte der NVA und integration ehemaliger NVA - Angehöriger in Gesellschaft und Bundeswehr beim Landesvorstand Ost des DBwV Information Nr. 8(Workgroup Paper No. 8 on NVA History and the Integration of former NVA Members into Bundeswehr and Society, for the Landesvorstand Ost des DBwV)*, Berlin: Landesverband Ost, Deutscher BundeswehrVerband, 2000, pp.88-89

⁴⁹⁹ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit., pp. 89, 148 and 161

assigned. Former NVA members believed that whether their units were deactivated or retained would be an important factor in their future. The morale of the members in former NVA Military Academy in Dresden and Officers' School in Zittau was therefore low because these organisations would be disbanded. Members of the NVA Air Force Technology School in Bad Dueben and the flying school in Kamenz were relatively confident because they knew that much of the assets in their hands would be retained, which made them believe that instructors would continue to be needed.⁵⁰⁰ Pilots and maintenance personnel attached to the Mig-29 fighters had the opportunity to serve in the Luftwaffe because of their specific expertise.⁵⁰¹ Nonetheless, according to West German pilots, it took six years to bring former East German Mig-29 pilots up to western standards.⁵⁰²

The professionalism possessed by former NVA officers and soldiers in mine clearance and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) was invaluable in Kosovo. The FRG defence authority decided to deploy former NVA members serving in the Bundeswehr because they understood the former Warsaw Pact mines being used which reduced the training expense of the German military engineer force.⁵⁰³ In 1991, Repert Neudeck, the Chairman of the German emergency relief non-governmental organisation "Cap Anamur", specifically requested the FRG government to provide former NVA experts then serving in the Bundeswehr and de-mining equipment from the NVA in order to conduct humanitarian operations in Cambodia.⁵⁰⁴ From these examples we can see that unique military expertise, which did not expire overnight after reunification, was a good rationale to justify these former NVA members continuing their military career although the relative military hardware, the mine itself, was not used in the Bundeswehr.

According to Dr. Zilian's research, one of the key elements when managing NVA personnel was "no transfer of NVA tradition".⁵⁰⁵ But one NVA establishment totally

⁵⁰⁰ Feldmeyer, Karl *Soldiers Should Not Stand on the Street: The Bundeswehr in the New States*, Op Cit.

⁵⁰¹ Tartar, Easy *The German Luftwaffe MiG-29 Experience*, <http://www.sci.fi/~fta/MiG-29-2b.htm>

⁵⁰² *The Military today: NATO's MiG-29 jet fighters*, Op Cit.

⁵⁰³ Beaver, Paul *Special Report, The Challenge of Mine Clearance and Explosive Ordnance Disposal*, Jane's Defence Weekly, Volume 32, Issue 2, 14 July 1999

⁵⁰⁴ Jaura, Ramesh *Cambodia: Germany to Resume Official Ties Next Month*, Inter Press Service, 12 December 1991, LexisNexis

⁵⁰⁵ Zilian, 1999, Op. Cit, pp.122-124

irrelevant to military hardware but representing a unique military tradition, was the military choir. This was retained because it acquired the political support of the FRG former chancellor Helmut Schmidt and Berlin Mayor Eberhard Diepgen, both of whom were music enthusiasts. Initially, retaining the NVA ballet, orchestra, cabaret and ensemble after reunification consumed huge amounts of money. Later, only the choir survived but its name had to be changed from a communist poet, Erich Weinert, to a famous German composer, Carl Maria von Weber. The German Defence Ministry wanted to preserve this NVA legacy and convert it into a Bundeswehr choir but the military professionals in the Bundeswehr were not interested in establishing a unit that had never existed in its own military structure. In spite of some negative criticisms from the politicians and population in eastern Germany, the German defence authority retained this unit as a tradition worth keeping.⁵⁰⁶ The newly named Carl Maria von Weber choir eventually became a regular Bundeswehr unit stationed in Biesdorf near Berlin.⁵⁰⁷ In addition, a former NVA satire performance group of worldwide fame called "*Kneiffrange*" (Pincers) was also absorbed by the Bundeswehr and became part of its military establishment.⁵⁰⁸

The Volksmarine coastal defence missile brigade, whose professionalism was acknowledged, could not extend their military careers because the Bundeswehr took none of their systems or weapons. All the members of these units were disbanded after the disposal of their hardware. Nevertheless, some of them remained involved in the missile firing tests held in April 1995 at the US Navy's Malibu test site in California, though they did not serve in the Bundeswehr. This involvement clearly justified the value of their expertise even after five years of German reunification.⁵⁰⁹ A former NVA member also proved his expertise by helping the Gauck agency in Berlin break the secret code of the Stasi electronic files.⁵¹⁰ His expertise was not related to any NVA hardware retained by the Bundeswehr.

⁵⁰⁶ McElvoy, Anne *Army Choir Hits Capitalist Note*, Times Overseas News, 27 December 1991, LexisNexis

⁵⁰⁷ Koop, Volker *Homogen und Remontisch (Homogenous and Romantic)* in Koop, Volker and Dietmar Schössler *Erbe NVA - Eindrücke aus ihrer Geschichte und den Tagen der Wende (NVA Legacy - Impressions from its history and the days of the great transition)*, Waldbröl: Akademie der Bundeswehr für Information und Kommunikation, 1992 (hereafter: *Erbe NVA*), pp.65-66

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid, pp.66-68, Koop, Volker *Die Kneiffrange: Weltweit einzigartig (The Pincers: Worldwide Excellent)*

⁵⁰⁹ Kunze, Martin *Buchbesprechung: Eine Elite-Einheit der NVA rüstet ab (Book Remark: One Elite of the NVA is Dismissing)*, Op Cit.

Some former NVA members acquired their future careers simply because of their expertise in Russian and in monitoring manoeuvres. Criticism of the money paid for original Bundeswehr officers to receive expensive language training courses to cope with work at the Bundeswehr Centre for Verification Missions, based at a former Pershing missile base in Geilenkirchen, led to former NVA officers who had been discharged from the Bundeswehr after reunification to be later hired again as civilian employees. The rationale behind this decision was to reduce the expense of language training.⁵¹¹ The criticism of the personnel policy of the Bundeswehr Centre for Verification Missions was understandable because the basic structure of this institution served arms control functions, including its manpower and the necessity to sustain a branch office previously operated in former GDR territory.⁵¹² Regarding arms control operations, some former NVA members were indirectly involved in the verification process who might relate to specific former NVA military hardware inherited by the Bundeswehr: two Tupolev transport aircrafts were converted into platforms for executing the "Open Skies" missions. Former NVA personnel with the expertise to operate and maintain these aircrafts, if they continued to serve in the unified German armed forces, would certainly participate in corresponding operations.⁵¹³

It was also reported that there were some former NVA officers, also because of their linguistic capabilities, asked to participate in some "mobile observation units" associated with the Bundeswehr to conduct covert surveillance immediately after reunification. General Siegfried Storbeck, Deputy Inspector General of the German Army, initiated and directed this highly confidential operation on 17 October 1990, without informing the defence civilian leadership, to undertake Allied military intelligence-gathering missions in former GDR territory. Later, General Henning von Ondarza, the German Army Inspector, was also involved in the task of establishing

⁵¹⁰ *Cold War Espionage Secret Code Broken*, Courier-Mail, 18 January 1999, p.8, LexisNexis

⁵¹¹ Gillessen, Günther *Bundeswehr Officers Practice Soviet Inspections With Interpreters in British Units*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 30 July, p.4, Bundeswehr Practices for Soviet Inspections, FBIS-WEU-91-147, 31 July 1991, pp.8-9; and *Fire When Ready! Is Defence Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg at the End of His Road? Coalition Delegates Cut Into His Authority*, Der Spiegel, 10 June, pp.31-32, Bundestag Action Threatens Force Planning, FBIS-WEU-91-115, 14 June 1991, p.20

⁵¹² *Disarmament Control Centre To Open 1 April*, ADN, 13 December, FBIS-WEU-90-241, 14 December 1990, p. 8

twenty observation units. These activities were exposed after two consecutive shooting incidents happened on 9th and 19th April 1991, in the Soviet Altengrabow depot. The German defence civilian leadership claimed that they only learned about the second incident from the media, which led to an embarrassing situation. It also exposed that these activities were being conducted before the Two-Plus-Four Treaty was formally ratified by the Soviet Union. A Bundeswehr Major, a former NVA officer of the mobile observation unit, was injured in the second shooting incident.⁵¹⁴ Again, the former NVA officers involved in these operations were simply used for their military expertise or language skills, which was totally irrelevant to any military hardware likely to be used by the Bundeswehr. Yet another media report indicated that the German army directly recruited these former NVA members for these covert operations. The order directing the intelligence collecting operations that led to these two shooting incidents was issued by the German Army Command Staff on 18 February with a classification - Confidential / For Official Use Only. The media report specifically pointed out that the Defence Ministry in Bonn was ignored and the BKO was by-passed.⁵¹⁵

Case Study: the MIG-29 Fighter

The most significant but controversial case of NVA systems seeing further service in the Bundeswehr is the MIG-29 fighters. From the beginning, having the MIG-29 fighters in the Luftwaffe was a highly politicised issue. The civilian leadership in the German Defence Ministry started to intervene in the decision-making process immediately after reunification. According to General Schönbohm, the military leadership wanted to reject the MIG-29 fighters because of high costs and no mission role for them, but the Defence Minister overruled this. A directive ordered tests under the pretext of eventually retaining the MIG-29 fighters because of concerns of "considerable public disquiet" that these modern fighters might be scrapped for no

⁵¹³ Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, p.40

⁵¹⁴ *Bundeswehr General Ordered Observation of Soviets*, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 10 May, FBIS-WEU-91-092, 13 May 1991, pp.17-18

⁵¹⁵ *Soviet Soldiers Shoot at Bundeswehr Officers*, *Die Welt*, 22 April, FBIS-WEU-91-077, 22 April 1991, pp.12-13

convincing reason.⁵¹⁶

Another indication that the directive to retain the Mig-29 fighters came directly from Stoltenberg himself was that he had told the press that the Bundeswehr will "not only test but also use until further notice" Mig-29 fighters inherited from the NVA, before the tests had been concluded.⁵¹⁷ Lt. General Bernard Monde, the Luftwaffe ranking officer directly involved in managing the NVA after reunification and later the Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe, stated "The transfer of parts of a West German Wing and merging it with the MIG-29 assets at Laage is symbolic of the contribution of the German forces to the process of unification".⁵¹⁸ It is very clear that to preserve the MIG-29 fighters in service was definitely not a decision based purely on operational requirements or military rationale. Nevertheless, the test flight of the MIG-29 was taken very seriously. It seemed that the Luftwaffe pilots put their professional pride before a predetermined political decision. The Luftwaffe F-4 Phantom pilots needed to complete their training in a two-seater MIG-29, then proceed with further test flight solely flown by Luftwaffe-originated pilots. The test flight conclusions were not only based on observations by passengers but also on the pilots' experiences. Basically, very positive responses came from the Luftwaffe pilots, but opposition still appeared in the German media.⁵¹⁹

Before MIG-29 fighters could be formally taken into service, the Luftwaffe needed to make an assessment of their capability in order to verify whether these fighters could fulfil the planned missions. The compatibility between mission requirements and actual capabilities is the core element in any military procurement project. Continued logistic support must be assured and operational expenses must also be cost-effective. There was another factor behind the reluctance of the Luftwaffe to accept the MIG-29 as an important element of its force. They were concerned that once the MIG-29 fighters were retained this might deprive the budget of a new generation of fighters. The final selection phase of the "Fighter 90" procurement project was happening at the same time. According to Major General Uwe Vieth, Deputy Chief of the Luftwaffe

⁵¹⁶ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit., p.80

⁵¹⁷ *Bundeswehr To Use Former GDR Mig-29 Aircraft*, Op Cit

⁵¹⁸ Schulte, Heinz *The Jane's Interview of Lt. Gen. Bernhard Mende, Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe*, Op Cit

⁵¹⁹ *German Pilots Get to Test-Fly Moscow's Top Jet Interceptor*, Toronto Star, 16 November 1990,

Air Fleet Command in 1991, though the formal decision about the MIG-29 would be published within the month, the Luftwaffe had great interest in these fighters as long as they did not put the future of the "Fighter 90" in danger. He firmly objected to taking the MIG-29 as an alternative to the planned "Fighter 90". Yet it is interesting to note that the MIG-29s' role as envisaged by General Vieth was not merely confined to Germany's needs but extended to NATO as well. Nevertheless, for political reasons, Vieth believed that the Luftwaffe should accept the Mig-29s at any cost.⁵²⁰

Seeing the MIG-29s as a potential threat to the new generation fighters was not groundless speculation.⁵²¹ Once, when asked by the press whether it was possible to purchase more MIG-29s to supplement the existing MIG-29 squadron inherited from the NVA as a substitute for the Eurofighter, German Defence Ministry Spokesman Karlheinz Max Reichert did not deny the possibility but said, "Nothing is known about such alternatives that can be made public yet." From this reply, the media concluded that the Bundeswehr was considering the MIG-29 as a replacement for the planned Eurofighter.⁵²²

Inquiries made by FRG military specialists and politicians of the Soviets on the possibility of a sustainable supply of MIG-29 fighters in the future indicated the possibility of using MIG-29s as surrogate "fighter 90"s, which conflicted with the interests of the German aviation industry.⁵²³ Concurrently, Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher openly stated that the new generation fighter development programme would not survive the forthcoming budget debates on defence expenditure reductions.⁵²⁴ All these moves politicised the decisions about retaining the MIG-29 fighters after reunification. Nevertheless, Stoltenberg responded to this concern about retaining the MIG-29 fighters at the expense of new generation fighters, and by so

p.A21, LexisNexis

⁵²⁰ Preissler, Ingo *Bundeswehr Insists on "Fighter 90"*, Berliner Zeitung, 6 June, p.2, Preferred Successor to Phantom Aircraft Viewed, FBIS-WEU-91-115, 14 June 1991, pp.20-21

⁵²¹ A similar situation occurred in 1993 when R uhe considered reversing his previous decision to decommission Mi-24 attack helicopters and maintain them in operation. Many believed that would undermine the German-French 'Tiger' attack helicopter development and production project. See *Precipitately Mustered Out*, Op Cit

⁵²² *Ministry Considers Dropping Eurofighter for MiG*, ADN International Service, 19 November, FBIS-WEU-90-224, 20 November 1990, pp.11-12

⁵²³ Bovkun, Ye. *MIG-29 Best Plane in German Air Force*, Izvestiya, Moscow, 20 April, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, Part 1 The USSR, SU/1363/C2/1, 24 April 1992, LexisNexis

⁵²⁴ *Genscher: "Fighter 90" Is Dead*, Frankfurter Rundschau, 19 November, Genscher Believes Budget

doing, reduced resistances from the Luftwaffe. He pointed out that it was highly unlikely that the Bundeswehr would focus on a system "which leaves us dependent as far as logistics and spare parts are concerned on a state which is not a member of NATO".⁵²⁵

There were political considerations not only about retaining the MIG-29 fighters but also of them becoming a replacement for the European fighter programme. Egon Bahr rebuffed the idea of returning the NVA MIG-29 fighters to the USSR by highlighting one of the reasons for developing the "Fighter 90" - the need to balance the USSR's fabulous MIG-29s. Thus there was no reason to abandon the NVA MIG-29s since the Luftwaffe could have these superlative fighters for nothing.⁵²⁶ Although the actual expense of maintaining these fighters was beyond Bahr's expectation, yet, ironically, after these MIG-29s joined the Luftwaffe, they remained a threat to the survival of the "Fighter 90" but for another reason.

The Soviet Union watched to see if the Bundeswehr would retain the MIG-29 fighters after reunification. When the final decision to integrate the MIG-29 fighters into the Luftwaffe was announced, the Russian media immediately reported the announcement. The Russians believed this to be proof of the flight and combat capabilities of Soviet military hardware as western experts had tested these fighters intensively.⁵²⁷ To the many different parties concerned, the political significance of retaining the MIG-29 fighters to serve in the Luftwaffe was great. Long before the formal decision was made, the German media reported that the MIG-29 fighters had passed the trials and would most likely join the German Armed Force.⁵²⁸ The Russian paper Pravda emphasised that the specialists involved in the tests unanimously confirmed MIG-29 fighters' high qualities.⁵²⁹ The US test pilots who were involved in testing the MIG-29s were responsible for their continuing service in Luftwaffe. The final assessment of the MIG-29s also concluded that their maximum service life could be

Will Cut Fighter 90, FBIS-WEU-90-224, 20 November 1990, p.11

⁵²⁵ *Bundeswehr To Use Former GDR Mig-29 Aircraft*, Op Cit

⁵²⁶ Staecker, Dieter *We Get the MIG-29 For Nothing - Interview With Egon Bahr*, Op Cit.

⁵²⁷ *Bundeswehr To Use Ex-GDR MiG-29s*, Moscow Central Television First Programme Network, 25 July, FBIS-SOV-91-148, 1 August 1991, p.34

⁵²⁸ *Mig-29s Accepted for Service in Bundeswehr*, DPA, 18 June, FBIS-WEU-91-119, 20 June 1991, p.17

⁵²⁹ *Ex-GDR MiG-29's Likely to Enter Service With Bundeswehr*, Pravda, 2nd edition, 20 June, BBC Summary of World Broadcast, Part 1 The USSR, SU/1107/A1/125, June 1991, LexisNexis

until 2010, which was beyond Stoltenberg's expectations.⁵³⁰ Nevertheless, it took almost two more years for the Luftwaffe to establish the MIG-29's operational readiness for their main mission, border patrol. The Luftwaffe Fighter Squadron 73, equipped with MIG-29s, was officially inaugurated on 1 June 1993.⁵³¹ Nonetheless, four years later, including upgrades, the logistic problems of the MIG-29s could not be completely solved by the Luftwaffe. General Monde concluded that the MIG-29 was "quite robust in terms of maintenance but expensive in terms of repairs". The readiness of MIG-29, therefore, did not fully meet its expected requirement.⁵³²

Facilitating Cooperation

The follow-on logistic support for the Soviet-made NVA equipments retained by the unified German forces became a solid foundation for promoting cooperation between the defence industries of the FRG and the Russian Federation though this cooperation later turned into commercial competition for upgrading MIG-29s around Eastern Europe. In 1993, the MIG Aircraft Product Support GmbH (MAPS) was established in Manching, Germany. German Daimler Chrysler Aerospace AG (DASA) held half shares in this company. MAPO, the major Russian MIG fighter producer, with Rosvooruzhenie, another major Russian aerospace enterprise, funded the rest. All the former MIG-29 fighters inherited from the NVA have been modernised by MAPS since then. Based on the experiences gained from this successful programme, MAPS also hoped to expand its service to the Soviet-made fighters in Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary. A further cooperative venture between DASA and MAPO was finally announced in August 1999.⁵³³

Nevertheless, hopes of future commercial opportunities from Russian military hardware scattered around Eastern Europe were hard to achieve when a joint enterprise involving Russian and Bulgarian defence contractors was established in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. A contract to upgrade the Bulgarian MiG-29 fighters was finally

⁵³⁰ Bovkun, Ye. *MIG-29 Best Plane in German Air Force*, Op Cit

⁵³¹ *Germany Inaugurates MIG-29 Squadron*, Agence France Presse, 1 June 1993, LexisNexis

⁵³² Schulte, Heinz *The Jane's Interview of Lt. Gen. Bernhard Mende, Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe*, Op Cit

⁵³³ Kukushkin, Mikhail *Our Success Is Directly Linked to Our Previous Achievements*, translated by Tatyana Araslanova, *Vremya MN*, Russian, 19 August 1999, p.4.

settled in March 2002 after serious competition between MAPS, Baronovici of Belarus, Elbit Systems of Israel, Israel Aircraft Industry - IAI and RSK/MIG - the Russian Aircraft Corporation. It transpired that the Russian defence contractors held some leverage, probably never shared with any foreign associates, for securing contracts relating to Russian weapon systems. Originally, the Bulgarian government took 'improper documentation' as the excuse to reject any competitor except the RSK/MIG. But the RSK/MIG needed to solve any conflict of interest because it was also a partner in MAPS. After the diplomatic and political pressure from the European states, the contract was revised. MAPS was eventually subcontracted to upgrade many avionics systems for the Bulgarian MiG-29s.⁵³⁴ MAPS also extended its operations to the Polish Air Force after Germany started to decommission and transfer all its MiG-29s to Poland in 2003. A contract worth about twenty million euros for modernising ten of these fighters looked likely to be awarded to MAPS.⁵³⁵

DASA, a shareholder in MAPS, became successful in exploiting the system upgrade market for MiG-29 fighters in Eastern Europe. After acquiring a contract from the Polish government to modify their MiG-29s in 1999, Romania and Hungary started to discuss similar programmes for their MiG-29 fighters with DASA. During contract negotiations, the US wanted to promote the sale of its F-16s by emphasising their compatibility with MiG-29s in NATO operations. But because of the success of the Luftwaffe-operated MiG-29s, the German defence firm won the contract. Nevertheless, modification could only be made after DASA teamed up with local defence contractors in customer states.⁵³⁶

The same commercial tactics were played by RSK/MIG in Bulgaria. Defence cooperation between the FRG and the Russian Federation also extended to military hardware built by the former GDR defence contractors. The Russian Navy retained all twelve Parchim II class corvettes built specifically for the Soviet Union. Although all

⁵³⁴ *Procurement, Bulgaria*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans, posted at Jane's website <http://www4.janes.com> (hereafter: Jane's website) on 11 February 2003

⁵³⁵ *Procurement, Poland*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Central Europe & The Baltic States, Issue 11, 2003, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, p.350

⁵³⁶ *Procurement, Hungary*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans, December 2001 - May 2002, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, p.386 and *Procurement, Romania*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans, December 2001 - May 2002, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, pp.511-512

sixteen Volksmarine Parchim I class corvettes, the predecessors of the Parchim II class corvettes, were sold to Indonesia in the early 1990s, the FRG inherited and preserved the shipyards that built these vessels, Peenewerft at Wolgast. The Russian sent all these vessels to Rostock for refitting in 1994 to 1995.⁵³⁷

Swords into Ploughshares

Peenewerft at Wolgast is the most important military shipbuilder in the former GDR. After German reunification, its industrial capacity was intentionally retained in anticipation that it could continue to construct fast patrol boats equipped with anti-ship missiles, for the Deutsch Marine, under the guidance of the original FRG shipbuilder.⁵³⁸ But its labour force suffered from the rationalisation following German reunification and many became unemployed, making the local unemployment rate 25 to 30% as Peenewerft was the biggest local employer.⁵³⁹ Initially it undertook refits of ex-Volksmarine vessels prior to delivery to foreign buyers. Among them was the sale of the thirty-nine vessels to the Indonesian Navy. It was also heavily involved in a contract to complete the Sassnitz class patrol boats, the ex-Volksmarine Balcom 10 class missile corvettes, for the BGS.⁵⁴⁰

The biggest disappointment to the former GDR shipbuilding industry around Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania area occurred in 1992 when the FRG government rejected a preliminary inquiry for contracts estimated at over DM17 billion to build corvettes and submarines for Taiwan. The project implied employment opportunities in eastern Germany, as an incentive to the FRG government. At that time, these capital-thirsty shipyards received only vague promises for merchant vessels but no orders materialised. Yet the Taiwanese deal was firmly vetoed by Foreign Minister Genscher and Economics Minister Möllemann.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁷ *Parchim, Corvettes*, Jane's Major Warships 1997, p.1284; Jane's website

⁵³⁸ Högerebe, Volker *Bound for the Future - New Structure for the Navy*, Schiff & Hafen / Seewirtschaft, No.6, June 1991, pp.14-18, Future Naval Structure, Deployment Surveyed, FBIS-WEU-91-147, 31 July 1991, p.20

⁵³⁹ Feldmeyer, Karl *Soldiers Should Not Stand on the Street: The Bundeswehr in the New States*, Op Cit.

⁵⁴⁰ Preston, Antony (ed) *Updates*, NAVINT, Volume 3, No.16, 16 August 1991, p.4

⁵⁴¹ *Government Prohibits Arms Deal With Taiwan*, Der Spiegel, 3 February, p.16, FBIS-WEU-92-023,

Later Peenewerft won two contracts to build four Vosper QAF-designed *Grajaú* class 46.5-meter patrol craft, each for two vessels, awarded in November 1993 and in August 1994, for the Brazilian Navy.⁵⁴² The construction project had met with difficulties with the Brazilian shipyards after the first four vessels of this class were completed and shifted the following construction project to the Peenewerft. Subsequently follow-on contracts for another two craft of this class were issued by the Brazilian Navy in 1998 and the punctuality of completing the contract, compared with the delays of other shipbuilders on a similar order, proved the Peenewerft's capability.⁵⁴³ Nevertheless, shipbuilding capability in eastern Germany did not benefit from the unified Deutsche Marine as much as originally hoped.

Compared with shipbuilding, conditions for converting other former GDR defence contractors were less successful. It was originally predicted that some 100,000 workers in 2,000 East German enterprises would become unemployed before reunification because of the cancellation of GDR Defence contracts.⁵⁴⁴ To convert the GDR defence industry into "an effective industry for raising the quality of life and an industry for cleaning up the environment" was Eppelmann's political aim, reflected by his insistence of changing the name of the Defence Ministry to the Disarmament and Defence Ministry.⁵⁴⁵

But Eppelmann ignored the simple fact that investment was the most important factor in converting and demobilising the defence industry. Given the GDR's poor financial condition before reunification, it was quite natural that no positive outcome was achieved. An assessment, made by the FRG Economics Ministry Parliamentary State

4 February 1992, p.14

⁵⁴² Preston, Antony (ed) *News in Brief*, NAVINT, Vol.7, No.14, 14 July 1995, p.4; Preston, Antony (ed) *News in Brief*, NAVINT, Vol.7, No.22, 3 November 1995, p.4 and Preston, Antony (ed) *World Naval Construction*, NAVINT, Volume 8, No.4, 23 February 1996, p.2

⁵⁴³ Sharpe, Richard (ed) *Patrol Forces/Brazil*, Jane's Fighting Ships 2000-2001, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, p.65

⁵⁴⁴ Goodhart, David and Leslie Colitt *SPD to Block Early Voting in Germany*, Op Cit.; Same estimation, which included workers in GDR defence subcontractors, was made by Frank Marczinek, State Secretary for Disarmament in the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry. See Kazimirski, Klaus and Klaus-Dieter Stefan *Going, Going, Gone*, Op Cit. The defence industry sector represented only 1% of overall GDR industrial production in 1989, according to General Hans-Werner Deim who challenged NVA combat readiness and operational affairs at the Vienna CSCE seminar on military doctrines in January 1990. See ADN *NVA Structures Published in Vienna*, National-Zeitung, 26 January, p.4, NVA Structure Noted at Vienna Talks, FBIS-EEU-90-027, 8 February 1990, p.34

⁵⁴⁵ *Defence Minister Eppelmann Addresses DA Congress*, ADN, 22 April, FBIS-EEU-90-079, 24 April 1990, p.28

Secretary Erich Riedl, of converting the defence industries to produce civilian commodities after reunification reflected two fundamental difficulties. First, the demands of the future market would be the core driving force; therefore a growth in demand for specific commodities was essential. Given existing competition for contracts, post-reunification defence contractors with appropriate technological capacity would find the challenge severe.⁵⁴⁶

According to an analysis by a former GDR defence contractor, VEB Instandsetzungsbetrieb Pinnow (State-Owned Repair Plant Pinnow), once a major producer of the 9M113 anti-tank guided missiles and later converted into INPAR Pinnow GmbH, a few general problems were encountered during the painful transition process. First, after the Cold War, the likelihood for the former GDR defence contractors producing arms was extremely low because the defence market shrank drastically and former commercial relationships with foreign customers could not be sustained after the political alignment changed. More importantly, their biggest customer, the Nationale Volksarmee, vanished. Secondly, any conversion of former defence works needed to be a joint-task between local government and the enterprises themselves and appropriate funds were not always available. After all, employment of defence contractors' employees was a crucial issue to the local government. The Landtag, the local council, was aware that the conversion of the former GDR defence works would be a serious social challenge to local communities if a quick and socially acceptable solution was not reached. Third, given the high quality achieved by these defence firms, their potential to manufacture commercial merchandise was extremely high. In fact, INPAR Pinnow GmbH exhibited a successful product at a trade fair in Ulm only few months after reunification. Nevertheless, the crucial issue that could hinder conversion was not their productive capability but the adaptability of these enterprises. A governmental defence contractor was very different from a producer of civilian goods in the market economic system. New concepts of management and cost control needed to be introduced. Again, market demand was the core factor. It was not how good the product was, but whether these enterprises could successfully adapt themselves to the new market in order to justify their survival. The INPAR head, Helmut Daniel, said "there is nothing of which we cannot conceive - short of fashion

⁵⁴⁶ Hennemann, Gerhard *Bundeswehr Requires One-Third Fewer Weapons*, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 27

designing or slaughtering pigs", implying that these former defence contractors were desperate to show their willingness and flexibility.⁵⁴⁷ INPAR later merged with Buck Technologies and were heavily involved in the disposal of NVA ammunition. But it also built pre-fabricated houses as a revitalisation strategy of its operations. Part of this revitalisation included employment training for the local population.⁵⁴⁸

Integrating with Western Technology

By integrating western technology with the existing NVA systems, the Bundeswehr's operational requirements could also bring export opportunities for German defence contractors. Leguan, a BLG-60 series scissors bridge, designed in the former East Germany, mounted on a former West German Leopard 1 main battle tank was developed by the NFW (Neubrandenburger Fahrzeugwerke GmbH), now a part of Diehl group. Originally, the BLG series was built on modified Russian T-55 MBT chassis and deployed by the NVA and many other East European armies, such as Poland, Bulgaria, as well as India and Iraq. The rationale for developing this Armoured Vehicle Launched Bridge (AVLB) on Leopard 1 chassis, replacing T-55 chassis, was mainly based on logistic concerns, but also on ease of operation and maintenance. German defence companies, MAN Technologie AG as the major contractor with Krauss-Maffei Wegmann supplying the Leopard 1 series MBT chassis, successfully sold nine Leopard 1 chassis and sixteen Leguan bridges to Belgium plus another nine Leopard 1 chassis and thirteen Leguan bridges to Norway.⁵⁴⁹

Two former NVA Tupolev transport aircrafts converted into platforms for the "Open Skies" missions post reunification also needed to be integrated with western surveillance and detection systems.⁵⁵⁰ Krauss-Maffei Wegmann Munich also modified former NVA MUNGO 4 x 4 light cross-country vehicles for the German Army. The MUNGO was originally designed and built by Multicar, a former East

November, p.23, FBIS-WEU-90-229, 28 November 1990, pp.9-10

⁵⁴⁷ Pries, Kunt *Build Beds, Not Missiles: Difficulties Encountered by Largest GDR Armament Plant in Converting to Civilian Production*, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, 20 February, FBIS-WEU-91-068, 9 April 1991, pp.24-25

⁵⁴⁸ Hodges, Jill *Economic Challenges; Germany Strives to Sustain Economic Plus Keep Pace in Global Competition*, Star Tribune, Minneapolis, Metro Edition, 3 October 1995, p.1D, LexisNexis

⁵⁴⁹ Foss, Christopher F. *Eastern bridge meets Western Tank*, Jane's Defence Upgrade, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, 10 October 2000

German company. 300 MUNGOS were supplied to the NVA then. Some were sold off after unification, but the Bundeswehr kept a number and planned to modify them for use by the Bundeswehr Krisenreaktionskräfte - KRK, Crisis Reaction Corps. Western weapon systems, such as the Euromissile MILAN, were designed to be installed on former NVA vehicles. Two MUNGOS were intended to be carried by each Western transport helicopter CH-53G.⁵⁵¹

German defence contractors were also involved in some refitting tasks for a former NVA system that was never retained by the Bundeswehr. 150 RM-70, 122mm Czech-made Multiple Rocket Launchers (MRL), were transferred to Greece from the NVA inventory after reunification. The German Diehl Group established an international consortium comprising Konstrukta-Defence, BGT (Bodenseewerk Geratetechnik GmbH), Junghans Geratetechnik GmbH plus the French Celerg to provide modifications and upgrades for the Czech RM-70s and the Russian BM-21 MRL systems. Greece naturally became potential customer since it also needed spare parts and new fuses provided by this consortium.⁵⁵² A similar situation also fitted to the surface combatants transferred to other country though it might not be necessarily implied as a profitable opportunity. In 1993, two former Volksmarine Kondor II class minesweepers, originally built by Peenewerft at Wolgast, with Russian minesweeping equipment, were transferred to the Latvian Navy.⁵⁵³ A German assessment team visited these two ships in April 1996 to survey the compatibility of surplus mine-clearance equipment released by the Deutsche Marine. It was highly doubtful that the Latvian Navy could afford the renovation of the minesweeping gear since the fund to sustain its operations was already insufficient at the time.⁵⁵⁴ Eventually, the refitting task literally integrating the East German maritime platform with the West German minesweeping equipment, cannibalised from the decommissioned Schütze class minesweeper, was achieved in 1997.⁵⁵⁵ Ironically, this task was made to serve

⁵⁵⁰ Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, p.40.

⁵⁵¹ Foss, Christopher F. *KMW promotes military MUNGO*, Jane's Defence Weekly, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, 18 October 2000

⁵⁵² Marx, Stefan *Technology Insertion, European Input into RM-70 and BM-21 MRL Systems*, Jane's Defence Upgrade, Volume 3, Issue 6, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, 12 March 1999

⁵⁵³ *Kondor II (Type 89.200), Mine Countermeasures Vessels (MCMV)*, Jane's Major Warship 1997, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, p.1750

⁵⁵⁴ Marx, Stefan *Signals, Latvia's Navy Suffers Growing Pains*, Jane's Navy International, Volume 101, Issue 7, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, 1 September 1994, pp.4

⁵⁵⁵ Sharpe, Richard (ed) *Patrol Forces - Mine Warfare Forces/Latvia*, Jane's Fighting Ships 2000-2001,

Latvian Navy but not the Deutsche Marine after reunification.

Realigning Cooperation

Due to the decision to keep some Soviet-made equipment after reunification, cooperation increased between the FRG and the Soviet Union, including its successor, the CIS. Nevertheless, the FRG wanted to terminate defence cooperation though it intended to honour all existing contracts between the former GDR and the Soviet Union during the negotiation process of reunification. This would bring revenue to eastern Germany and alleviate the economic burden post reunification.⁵⁵⁶ Thus western technology might fall into the Russian's hands via former GDR defence contractors merged with the FRG defence industries.

When the Soviet Union expressed its intention to bring the most sensitive facility in the GDR, Carl Zeiss, to relocate in Russian soil, the FRG government responded positively because it defused a potential embarrassing situation.⁵⁵⁷ Carl Zeiss in Jena was the mother company originally founded in 1846. In June 1945 many Zeiss senior scientists were removed to Oberkochen by the US leading to a highly successful offshoot being established in the FRG. The defence section of the mother company left in Jena also became a leading high tech contractor on optical electronics, which were essential to missile guidance systems. There were several other defence contracts with East German manufacturers. The German government provided grants to the Soviet Union to bail these contractors out of their obligations. Otherwise, no

Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, p.423. The German 'Shultz' class minesweeper there should be the 'Schütze' class minesweeper that served in the Bundesmarine.

⁵⁵⁶ In his visit to Moscow, the FRG Economics Minister Helmut Haussmann expressed its willingness to preserve the existing economic obligations between the GDR and the Soviet Union, to which Moscow positively responded, particularly concerning corresponding terms being guaranteed under the FRG-GDR Reunification Treaty. Nevertheless, a FRG statement, "*to provided advice on specific issues in case of need*", suggested that the promise was not totally unconditional. See Hennemann, Gerhard *Moscow Expects Equalisation of Burdens From Bonn*, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, 23 May, p.6, Haussmann Concludes Economic Talks in Moscow, FBIS-WEU-90-101, 24 May 1990, pp.2-3

⁵⁵⁷ The same principle was adopted to terminate an embarrassing NVA training programme for the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Eppelmann admitted that approximately 200 guerillas from Palestine, Libyan and Yemeni were still trained at a Baltic coast NVA base and feared this programme could last for another few years because contractual obligations existed. But the FRG decisively opposed him and asked the GDR government to terminate the programme immediately and forbade its continuation after reunification. See Fisher, Marc *East Germany's Coalition Collapse As Unification Picks Up Momentum*, Op Cit

western technology for modernisation could have been available to them.⁵⁵⁸

On 16th February 1990 COCOM decided to shorten the duration of examining export contracts as well as reviewing the embargo list to Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.⁵⁵⁹ Entrepreneurs in Western countries initiated some easing of COCOM export control to Eastern Europe. Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze openly promised that if COCOM lifted export controls, the USSR would admit military inspectors to its territory as *quid pro quo*.⁵⁶⁰ Nevertheless, controls on any defence contractor directly linked with the Soviet Union remained in place. The FRG Foreign Ministry spokesman denied the media report about transferring Zeiss technology to the Soviet Union and called it a "newspaper canard".⁵⁶¹ The final outcome of contracts between Zeiss in Jena and the Soviet Union was never publicly disclosed after reunification. Yet in December 1989, orders for military products from Carl Zeiss Jena, once the major supplier of fire direction systems for battle tanks and anti-tank systems as well as measurement apparatus for engineer units in the WTO armed forces, was predicted to be scaled down to 50 million East German Marks before 1991: conversion projects for producing civilian commodities were already planned.⁵⁶²

Furthermore, according to Eppelmann's memoirs, the Soviet Union was attempting to sell its weapon technology and production licenses to some east European states in a WTO annual meeting in 1990 but ultimately was cold shouldered by them.⁵⁶³ The future of the arms trade in Eastern Europe was definitely not promising. Therefore, based on the case of Carl Zeiss Jena, it seemed unlikely that the FRG would lose the possibility of accessing western technology, an essential element for conversions, as the price of keeping the diminishing arms market in the USSR or Eastern Europe. The Soviet German expert Professor Abdulkhan Akhtamzian admitted that one-fifth of

⁵⁵⁸ Goodhart, David *Moscow to Reclaim Sensitive E German Technology*, Financial Times, 11 May 1990, p.24, LexisNexis

⁵⁵⁹ *COCOM Controls on Technology Relaxed*, PAP, 16 February, FBIS-EEU-90-036, 22 February 1990, p.71

⁵⁶⁰ *Export Controls*, Tass, 14 February, FBIS-SOV-90-032, 15 February 1990, pp.11-12

⁵⁶¹ *Bonn Denies Report Soviets Removing GDR Works*, DPA, 11 May, FBIS-WEU-90-093, 14 May 1990, p.6

⁵⁶² *Enterprise Scaling Down Military Production*, DPA, 14 Dec, FBIS-EEU-89-240, 15 December 1989, p.46

⁵⁶³ Eppelmann, 1992, Op Cit., p.22

machines imported by the USSR were from the GDR and the other one-fifth from the FRG; Soviet industry relied on German equipment.⁵⁶⁴ Yet, the FRG needed to balance the dilemma between immediate interests and a long-term working relationship. Commitment to the international arms control mechanism and domestic demands based on economic concerns limited their freedom of action.

Another embarrassing case which happened in the GDR defence industry was a repair and service contract for ten Iraqi MIG-21 fighters planned to be conducted at the Dresden aircraft repair yard, which the FRG desperately wanted the GDR defence authority to terminate it before the reunification. After the eruption of the Gulf War, the contract became an issue that could cause diplomatic mortification. The GDR defence spokesman announced that the contract was cancelled a week before it was exposed by the media. Eppelmann announced that these fighters would not be returned to Iraq without an export licence. Furthermore, according to the original contract, work on these fighters would not be completed before 1992.⁵⁶⁵ GDR Disarmament State Secretary Frank Marczinek openly admitted that the engines of these ten fighters were already repaired but he repeatedly stated that the fighters would not be returned to Iraq. Marczinek admitted to U.S. diplomatic pressure but he specified that the existing service contract for two Polish MIG-23 fighters would not be affected by this incident.⁵⁶⁶

All ten MIG-21 fighters were never returned to Iraq and were reportedly scrapped in Dresden after reunification.⁵⁶⁷ The GDR defence authority maintained a consistently strong line on arms sales to Iraq, carried over from the previous socialist government. Eppelmann unveiled another case involving transferring armed bridge-laying vehicles to Iraq but it was too late to stop the delivery. Twenty-four tanks and seven bridges, built by an international production project between the GDR and Czechoslovakia, were delivered in two batches through the Polish harbour of Gdynia in March and late June 1990.⁵⁶⁸ Eppelmann personally ordered disciplinary actions against the four

⁵⁶⁴ *Scholar Views German Unification Issues*, Tass, 14 May, FBIS-SOV-90-097, 18 May 1990, p.5

⁵⁶⁵ *GDR Reportedly Updating 10 Iraqi MiGs*, ADN, 25 August; *Delivery of Aircraft 'Ruled Out'*, DPA, 25 August, and *Defence Ministry Spokesman on Aircraft*, ADN, 25 August; all in FBIS-EEU-90-166, 27 August 1990, p.16

⁵⁶⁶ Kazimirski, Klaus and Klaus-Dieter Stefan *Going, Going, Gone*, Op Cit

⁵⁶⁷ <http://www.mig-21.de/English/Iraq.htm>

⁵⁶⁸ *Eppelmann Reports Arms Shipment En Route to Iraq*, DPA, 15 August 1990, FBIS-EEU-90-159,

NVA officers involved in this transfer. An investigation team comprising officials from the Ministries of Disarmament and Defence, Finance and Economic Affairs was established. The GDR defence authority declared that the NVA would not conduct any kind of arms export or import activity in the future though the end of the NVA was less than two months away.⁵⁶⁹

Demolition: An Expected Task

The problem of managing massive NVA ammunition supplies could have been foreseen long before reunification. To be more precise, a certain amount of the ammunition in NVA possession was actually originated from the Ministry of State Security, workers' militia, border troops and other paramilitary organisations. It was reported that the GDR Disarmament and Defence Ministry invited the representatives of the FRG industrial firms to address this issue in mid-August 1990. A briefing on the types and quantity of ammunition stocked by the NVA was provided in this meeting, held in Strausberg. FRG defence contractors with appropriate experience and technology, such as Buck Technologies, Fraunhofer Institute, Messerschmitt-Boelkow-Blohm (MBB) and Rheinmetall, attended this briefing. Some key issues were discussed, including applicable technology for fulfilling ecological and environment requirements and conditions for acquiring legal approval of munitions disposal facilities and operations. Most importantly, GDR enterprises, mainly ammunition plants and munitions facilities serving the NVA, established a joint venture for disposal operations, since most of the 300 kilotons of ammunition were to be destroyed in eastern Germany. One of the GDR defence contractors, Inpar Pinnow GmbH (Instandsetzungs und Lizenzproduktionswerk von Lenkwaffen Pinnow GmbH - Pinnow Repair and Licensed Production Plant for Guided Weapons), seemed the most appropriate for the disposal task because of its existing capacities and the need of the enterprise to survive after future contracts had been cancelled.⁵⁷⁰

According to an assessment made by Erich Riedl, the FRG Ministry of Economics

p.18

⁵⁶⁹ *Army Officers Suspended for Iraqi Arms Deal*, ADN, 15 August, FBIS-EEU-90-160, 17 August 1990, p.11

⁵⁷⁰ Heckmann, *Erhard Munitions Disposal in the NVA*, Wehrtechnik, October 1990, pp.76-77, Scale of

Parliamentary State Secretary, about a quarter of all FRG defence contractors would have conversion problems and suffer significant reductions of manpower because of the anticipated drop in arms procurement by the Bundeswehr in the future. Apart from adapting to produce civilian merchandise, these enterprises assumed that the upcoming disposal and demolition of weapons, ammunition and military production facilities could be an opportunity for income generation.⁵⁷¹ FRG defence enterprises entering eastern Germany hoped the disposal of military surplus would bring much-needed capital and technologies to the former GDR defence. But in the process of forming joint ventures it was necessary to consolidate excessive manpower to assure cost-effectiveness, a philosophy totally different from that of the GDR state-owned defence contractors. Eventually, Pinnow GmbH was sold to Buck Technologies for the dismantling of missiles but its workforce was halved.⁵⁷²

The plastic explosive, Semtex, produced by Czechoslovakia and exported to East Germany in tens of tons every year in the 1980s was not specified in the statistics. After the 1988 Lockerbie PanAm terrorist attack, concern about Semtex, which is almost undetectable by any security check, was predictable. In late February 1990, the British Foreign Office Minister William Waldegrave appealed to Czechoslovakia for information concerning the export of Semtex in "as much detail as possible" during his visit to Prague.⁵⁷³ A few days later, Waldegrave assured the House of Commons that the Czechoslovakian government had stopped exporting Semtex in 1982 but a significant amount had since been delivered to other Warsaw Pact armed forces under the heading of 'special deliveries'. A year later, Vaclav Braunstein of the Czech Ministry of Industry specified which East European armed forces possessed Semtex in order to alleviate foreign concerns; by then these countries all faced domestic political instability. He emphasised that strict NVA military material control would exclude any possibility of unauthorized use or illegal transfer of Semtex; if any such case did exist it would undoubtedly be exposed with reunification.⁵⁷⁴ This was one of

Ex-NVA Munitions Disposal Detailed, FBIS-WEU-90-241, 14 December 1990, pp.8-11

⁵⁷¹ Hennemann, Gerhard *Bundeswehr Requires One-Third Fewer Weapons*, Op Cit

⁵⁷² Hodges, Jill *Economic Challenges; Germany Strives to Sustain Economic Plus Keep Pace in Global Competition*, Op Cit

⁵⁷³ Harris, Francis *Waldegrave Asks for Czech Help in Tracing Semtex*, Daily Telegraph, 1 March, p.10, FBIS-WEU-90-044, 6 March 1990, pp.11-12

⁵⁷⁴ Lucas, Edward *Czechs sold Semtex despite assurances*, Independent, 8 March 1990, p.12, LexisNexis

the key issues raised in the interview with Werner Ablass, the former GDR Deputy Defence Minister. Ablass acknowledged the existence of Semtex in the NVA stock but confirmed that the NVA transferred all Semtex to the Bundeswehr after reunification. Based on this, Mr. Ablass confirmed that the NVA was a well-trained military organisation. The members of the NVA were very cooperative in handling ammunition.⁵⁷⁵

Munitions Stock of the NVA before Reunification [Note 1]		
Munitions Category	Numbers of Munitions Types	Total Quantity (in tons)
Infantry Weapons	92	58,600
Artillery and Mortars	87	52,900
Rocket Launchers	6	23,600
Air Defence Artillery & Self-Propelled Anti-aircraft Artillery	17	21,800
Tanks, APC's [Armoured Personnel Carriers], Infantry Combat Vehicles	63	66,000
Anti-tank Weapons	12	18,000
Anti-tank Guided Weapons	8	1,500
Short-Range Air Defence Guided Missiles	4	500
Hand Grenades	9	8,000
Other Munitions Components	25	3,000
Surface-to-Air Missiles [Note 2]	3	4,378
Air-to-Air Guided Missiles (total of 17, 564 rounds)	10	2,429
Air-to-Surface Guided Missiles (total of 711 rounds)	7	406
Unguided Rockets (177,346 small and 473 large)	8	1,656
Bombs	15	1,290
Onboard Munitions	5	886
Ship's Artillery and Air Defence Systems	5	2,909
Naval Mines	6	2,208
Depth Charges	2	1,785
Large-Capacity Charges / Components (850,000 Anti-Tank Mines) [Note 3]	5	685
Combat Engineer Munitions (500,000 Off-Route Anti-Tank Missiles, 100,000 Cutting and Shaped Charges)	66	16,000
Flare Set: Illumination and Signal Means	68	6,000
Flare Set: Smoke Generating Units	3	760
Flare Set: Other Smoke Units	6	138
Total [Note 4]	532	295,430

Source: Heckmann, Erhard *Munitions Disposal in the NVA*, Op Cit. and Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, p.50.

Notes:

1. Includes ammunition from the Ministry of State Security, workers' militia, border troops and other paramilitary organisations later under NVA supervision.
2. 750 short-range missiles with 900 kg of explosives, 200 medium-range missiles with 1,700 kg of explosives and 130 long-range missiles with 7,000 kg of explosives.
3. Statistics from Heckmann's research in *Wehrtechnik* was also in Nassauer's paper. There were a few minor differences between information acquired from FBIS and Nassauer's paper, e.g. the category "Large explosives / Torpedoes / Parts" and 850,000 Anti-Tank Mines were placed in the next column as part of combat engineer munitions. Information presented here follows the FBIS translation with a few minor modifications by the author.

⁵⁷⁵ Interview, Werner E. Ablass, Staatssekretär (Deputy Minister), GDR Ministry of Disarmament and Defence, March 1990 - October 1990, Date of Interview: 30 September 2003

4. The statistical sharpness of different munitions categories reflects the reliability of individual figures in this table. Whether or not the quantity included packing materials is unknown. No matter whether the torpedoes mentioned in Nassauer's statistics were true or not, some ammunition, such as anti-ship missiles, ship-based or land-based, were missing from this statistics. Therefore, other statistics mentioned in Nassauer's research, though inconsistent, might also be reasonable because of factors mentioned above.

Muster Before Disposal

Former NVA weapons and ammunition were collected and stored in a few specified sites before decisions about their final disposal were made. The reasoning behind this storage arrangement was thus. First, the safety of the local community, especially for depots near densely populated centres, was the foremost concern. Second, safeguarding these assets hindered other BKO tasks and consumed huge amounts of budget.⁵⁷⁶ Third, any future disposal of this NVA legacy, either by destruction or refitting before re-exporting or absorbing them into Bundeswehr, was likely to involve moving them to other appropriate sites. General Schönbohm and his direct subordinate in the BKO, General Mende, the Commander of the Fifth Luftwaffe Division, were extremely anxious to gather all NVA aircraft because of the deadline of the pilots' licenses and technical condition of the aircraft. Less than a month after reunification, both of them realised that timing was crucial. Even so, they still excluded the possibility of mustering these aircrafts by road transportation and insisted they were flown in by existing NVA pilots.⁵⁷⁷ According to Schönbohm, the mustering instructions given by the Defence Ministry was a vague directive "*that left everything open and decided nothing*".⁵⁷⁸

Therefore, the principle of this policy was fixed but initially implementation was not. More specific directives gradually emerged as more information became available to the German defence authority. In fact, the need for a greater centralization of ammunition was foreseen before reunification day. Yet, two major reasons, lack of available storage space and corresponding security and safety regulations, increased the problems of mustering this ammunition before final disposal could occur.

⁵⁷⁶ Seher, Dietmar *300,000 Tonnes of Ammunition of the National People's Army in Major Deposits*, Berliner Zeitung, 6 May, Bundeswehr Plans to Centrally Store Ammunition, FBIS-WEU-91-092, 13 May 1991, p.18

⁵⁷⁷ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit., pp.85

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 95

Pyrotechnic munitions were especially sensitive because of their relatively short storage life and the possibility of spontaneous explosions. But surface-to-air missiles were much easier to store and relatively safe to transport and handle, therefore they had lower priority on the disposal list.⁵⁷⁹ Furthermore, comprehensive planning takes time before ammunition can be mustered. Resources such as manpower, transportation vehicles and budget, are needed. The contractors and facilities for ultimately demolishing ammunition must be decided in advance. The centralization of NVA ammunition, therefore, was not achieved quickly. It was reported that approximately 70% of the NVA ammunition in the VII Military District Command headquartered in Leipzig had been gathered into 16 depots a year after reunification.⁵⁸⁰

Influential Factors

Disposing of the massive stockpiles of old ammunition left by the NVA was a serious problem for the FRG. Unless the ammunition could be transferred along with corresponding weapon systems to other states, the FRG needed to decommission and destroy it. At least 70,000 tonnes of ammunition, a significant amount, was disposed of via arms transfers to other states.⁵⁸¹ The German government needed to demonstrate concern both for the safety of the personnel involved in the destruction process as well as the environmental damage that might be caused by the residues or other by-products.

Additionally, there were other factors to consider for the task. First, scale: the enormous categories and gigantic quantity of this ammunition meant a huge amount of labour was required to manage it. This would also increase the complexity of the scrap operations. Therefore, the capacity of the disposal operations needed to be very versatile and flexible. Second, deterioration of their explosive and toxic content as well as the instability of safety devices caused by inappropriate storage conditions

⁵⁷⁹ Heckmann, Erhard *Munitions Disposal in the NVA*, Op Cit

⁵⁸⁰ *Former NVA Structure Dissolved in Southeast*, ADN, 2 October, FBIS-WEU-91-192, 3 October 1991, pp.10-11

⁵⁸¹ *70,000 Tonnes of Ammunition from the National People's Army in Other Hands*, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, 23 June, p.6, Bonn Reportedly Gave NVA Arms to Other Countries, FBIS-WEU-94-122, 24 June 1994, p.15

during the chaotic period before German reunification increased the danger. Thirdly, inspections conducted by German experts after receiving these munitions revealed that many of them were not manufactured to uniform standards. Facts revealed later in the disposal process also concluded that Soviet-made ammunition was very unreliable: most of the munitions could not reach NATO safety standards. The difficulties of demolition increased because in many cases there was no technical documentation for the ammunition.⁵⁸² This was especially true for the surface-to-air missiles imported from the Soviet Union. No appropriate technical documentation existed nor had any been requested from the original manufacturers since no licensed production plan was ever considered.⁵⁸³ NVA ammunition from the 1940s increased the complexity of the disposal process.⁵⁸⁴

Fourthly, cost was a central issue. It would be necessary to comply with FRG environmental regulations and reassure neighbouring communities during the disposal process. All these factors would add to the cost. To dispose of expired ammunition is virtually a day-to-day practice for almost every defence authority. Some conventional approaches, such as dumping at sea, burying in underground pits as landfill, or detonating them within the disposal site, became less acceptable to the general public because of lethality problems with the chemicals contained in the ammunition, either as explosives originally stored in the warhead or post-destruction residues. Some direct approaches, such as detonation at firing ranges, combustion of explosive charges in projectiles, firing munitions from weapon systems and open-air combustion were totally excluded after discussion with the GDR defence authority because of ecological considerations.⁵⁸⁵ Toxic substances in military equipment and weapons, particularly electronic devices, caused even greater damage to the environment.⁵⁸⁶

The FRG government swore to conduct demolition operations to the highest standard,

⁵⁸² Zaloga, Steven and David Markov *Europe, Deleting the DDR's Conventional Arsenal*, Jane's Intelligence Review, Volume 11, Issue 6, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, 1 June 1999

⁵⁸³ Heckmann, Erhard *Munitions Disposal in the NVA*, Op Cit

⁵⁸⁴ Seher, Dietmar *300,000 Tonnes of Ammunition of the National People's Army in Major Deposits*, Op Cit

⁵⁸⁵ Heckmann, Erhard *Munitions Disposal in the NVA*, Op Cit

⁵⁸⁶ A typical case is the Radar vehicle "Pork Trough", which contained radioactive material, therefore had to be disassembled and disposed of separately. See Marx, Stefan *The Vanished Army - The Liquidation of the NVA*, Op Cit.

but public doubts still existed. When evidence indicated that explosives from shells was being burned in the open without filters, Dr. Michael Mehnert, a military waste expert of the environmental activist group Bund, urged the FRG government to establish a firm specifically to dispose of chemical military waste. Nitrogen oxides that cause acid rain and produce other highly toxic dioxides and some heavy metals such as mercury were a major concern. Nevertheless, the German defence authority refuted allegations by enumerating efforts that had already been made.⁵⁸⁷

It was reported that the Bundeswehr leadership only expected ten thousand tonnes of NVA munitions could be destroyed in 1991, which may indicate that the German defence authority did not wish to make any hasty decisions about ammunition disposal at the expense of the environment.⁵⁸⁸ Nevertheless, after specific facilities for demolishing ammunition were established, efficiency increased. It was reported in 1994 that some 3,000 tonnes could be destroyed per month. 100,000 tonnes had already been demolished but there were still 111,000 tonnes in depots.⁵⁸⁹

In addition to ammunition left by the NVA, the Bundeswehr also needed to manage approximately 4,500 tonnes of highly toxic missile propellant and 6,000 tonnes of hazardous materials; in part of them the composition was not even known. All needed to be disposed of within German environmental codes.⁵⁹⁰ Some sensitive radioactive substances taken from the NVA, Ministry for State Security as well as the Institute for Applied Animal Hygiene also became the responsibility of the Bundeswehr. 800,000 sources came from the NVA. Some plutonium suitable for producing nuclear devices was discovered but most of the NVA radioactive material was used for medical work. 300 significant sources of radiation were specifically assigned to NVA military exercises and some materials were used in scientific research. The Bundeswehr assumed the safe storage of these materials when it took control of the NVA Storkow training ground after reunification.⁵⁹¹ After studying the origin of some radioactive

⁵⁸⁷ Tomforde, Anna *Environment: Army That Waged War on the Land; The Former Soviet Forces in East Germany Have Left a Terrible Legacy*, Guardian, 13 March 1992, p.27, LexisNexis

⁵⁸⁸ Seher, Dietmar *300,000 Tonnes of Ammunition of the National People's Army in Major Deposits*, Op Cit

⁵⁸⁹ *70,000 Tonnes of Ammunition from the National People's Army in Other Hands*, Op Cit

⁵⁹⁰ *Concern for 'Dangerous Materials' Left by NVA*, ADN, 1 January, FBIS-WEU-92-001, 2 January 1992, p.5

⁵⁹¹ *NVA Troops' Exposure to Radiation Confirmed*, DPA, 1 February, FBIS-WEU-92-023, 4 February 1992, pp.13-14

materials in Storkow, it was discovered that the GDR had secretly used Cesium-137 as the radioactive source of some detectors at border checkpoints without public knowledge.⁵⁹² All these radioactive materials were collected in Storkow after reunification, before disposal.⁵⁹³

Technology Developed

The necessity of disposing of former NVA military equipment proved a positive dynamic for the German recycling industry. In fact, recycling is the most suitable way to tackle the challenge since it reduces environmental contamination and potentially creates profits from collecting reusable materials and thus reduces the cost. Subsidies needed for these plants and demolition expenditure could be reduced; so the German Defence Ministry kept the degree of recycling as high as possible.⁵⁹⁴ Recycling missiles was beneficial since their circuit boards produced a modest amount of precious metals.⁵⁹⁵ These benefits were highlighted by the GDR defence authority to the FRG industrial representatives before reunification. In addition to the internal components and materials that might be extracted from the disposal process, further utilisation of packing materials attached to ammunition was also mentioned.⁵⁹⁶

Recycling steel and other scrap metals was already well established. But the technology to cope with toxic heavy metals contained in military electronic devices was not available immediately after reunification. Also, facilities for scrapping electronic devices were unsuitable. The SI Logistics (SI LOG) of Siemens AG, a leading German company in this field, spoke of scrapping electronic devices from the NVA and developing technology for recycling military electronics and managing the after-products in an environmentally acceptable way. The difficulties of precisely grasping the characteristics of these electronics was a significant challenge encountered by the SI Logistics since some of them needed to be traced back to

⁵⁹² Koop, Volker *Strahlende Stasi: PKE-Durchleuchtung (Radioactive Stasi: Radioactivity from PKE - General Border Control)*, *Erbe NVA*, pp.127-129

⁵⁹³ *Concern for 'Dangerous Materials' Left by NVA*, Op Cit

⁵⁹⁴ *300,000 Tonnes of Ammunition To Be Destroyed Despite Gulf War*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 13 February, pp.16, *NVA Military Material To Be Destroyed*, FBIS-WEU-91-034, 20 February 1991, pp.12-13

⁵⁹⁵ Zaloga, Steven and David Markov *Europe, Deleting the DDR's Conventional Arsenal*, Op Cit

⁵⁹⁶ Heckmann, Erhard *Munitions Disposal in the NVA*, Op Cit

former Soviet technology employed more than twenty years before. Similar experiences acquired from scrapping electronic products in the civilian sector were introduced for establishing a standard procedure for recycling military electronics.⁵⁹⁷

The German firm of Buck Technologies, a leading defence contractor with expertise in ammunition production, was also successfully involved in managing the surplus NVA munitions. Most of the tasks contracted to Buck Technologies by the German government in 1991 were conducted at a former NVA installation at Pinnow. The NVA facility there undertook missile overhaul and maintenance as well as the production of AT-4 Fagot and AT-5 Konkurs anti-tank missiles. This facility was chosen for handling the scrap operations for two reasons: a suitable location away from urban areas and many experienced technicians familiar with the weapons concerned. In addition, the facilities around Pinnow also provided sufficient space to handle large amounts of ammunition for temporarily safe storage before disposal. This also helped alleviate local unemployment caused by the collapse of the GDR defence industry. Buck Technologies also conducted NVA dismantling operations at other sites with similar conditions.⁵⁹⁸ Another successful case was a facility converted from a GDR state-owned company called Entsorgungs-Betriebsgesellschaft Vogelgesang (EBV) formerly charged with maintaining NVA ammunition located in Vogelgesang near Torgau. A media report in January 1991 indicated that 3,000 tonnes of artillery projectiles of calibres from 57mm to 152mm were demolished within six months, which proved that its operations had already started before reunification day. Many parts were collected from the demolishing process for further use to comply with recycling policies.⁵⁹⁹

Buck Technologies had considerably improved three categories of demolition expertise; remote handling equipment, automated disassembly processes for avoiding personnel hazards and technologies for disassembling small arms ammunition by removing propellant from the metal casing. This was done in order to cope with substantial demands happening in the process of disposing of NVA surpluses. It was

⁵⁹⁷ *Depot and Industrial Activities - Waste Reduction and Recycling*, Defence and the Environment - 2nd Ed, Jane's website, 1 November 1997

⁵⁹⁸ Zaloga, Steven and David Markov *Europe, Deleting the DDR's Conventional Arsenal*, Op Cit

⁵⁹⁹ Koop, Volker *Vogelgesang: Von Idylle keine Spur (Vogelgesang: From A Country Scene With No Trace)*, *Erbe NVA*, pp.73-74

reported that Buck Technologies demolished 416,000 rockets and missiles, half a billion rounds of small arms ammunition, 300,000 artillery shells, 12,000 tons of bulk high explosives, 1,200,000 anti-tank mines and 5,400,000 anti-personnel mines. A museum-like installation to display the equipment employed in the disposal and dismantling process was established at Pinnow that not only became a valuable technical archive but also a training centre for any future ammunition disposal tasks.⁶⁰⁰ It unquestionably reflected the pride Buck Technologies gained from this task.

Although German industry seemed very successful in this field for which there are potential markets all over the world, yet there are issues that must be noted. First, there were some kinds of weapons, such as torpedoes, from the NVA arsenal that were not dismantled in Germany. They were exported and destroyed by Swedish Ordnance. The high cost needed to comply with German environmental regulations prevented domestic disposal.⁶⁰¹ Second, the Bundeswehr originally had no intention of allowing any other country to dismantle surplus ammunition at the disposal facilities located in former GDR territory despite of the mature and advanced expertise already established. Instead of demolishing foreign ammunition on German territory, the FRG government would rather help German defence contractors to seek opportunities in the worldwide ammunition disposal market and conduct demolition operations in other countries.⁶⁰²

This stance, however, could not be sustained as expected. A case in 2002 proved that exporting ammunition disposal technology, even a fully automatic processing line designed by Buck Technologies, the leading enterprise in this field, could end in disaster. In Taiwan the Buck computer-controlled disassembling and demolition line did not reach the requested specifications and only operated for 265 days before total breakdown occurred. This incident also led to a commercial dispute because Buck Technologies did not fulfil its contractual obligations. By then, Buck Technologies was already bankrupt and had been taken over by its creditor bank. The demolition task was later re-contracted to another Germany company, ILS, to import and dispose

⁶⁰⁰ Zaloga, Steven and David Markov *Europe, Deleting the DDR's Conventional Arsenal*, Op Cit

⁶⁰¹ *Wehrtechnik*, 21 October 1991, pp.1-3, in Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, pp.48 and 50

⁶⁰² Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, p.50.

of ammunition in Germany. But in November 2002, an accident causing four employees' death in Germany shows that ammunition disposal technology was not as perfect as German industries claimed. Meanwhile, the German government was still importing foreign ammunition for demolition.⁶⁰³

Impacts

The disposal of excessive NVA materials contributed to the local economy in the former GDR. Private contractors could create over 4,000 employment opportunities for dismantling and discarding 15,000 tanks and artillery pieces as well as 223,000 tons of ammunition. A budget of about \$250 million was estimated for this task for 1992-3.⁶⁰⁴ Such operations benefited those military personnel or civilian defence employees who had expertise with specific systems to acquire employment.⁶⁰⁵ Demolition operations temporarily alleviated the pressure of unemployment. Furthermore, in 1994 1,500 employees were still needed to safeguard NVA assets before their demolition or disposal. Their jobs looked likely to last until the end of 1995.⁶⁰⁶ A press report in 1992 indicated that construction industry in eastern Germany also received billions of German Marks to rebuild NVA accommodation, which was already "decrepit".⁶⁰⁷

Fundamentally, safety concern within the process, total cost and potential environmental damage of the overall disposal operations were given equal weight. And it was also a race against time. The deterioration of ammunition caused by poor storage conditions and vacillating decisions would only increase the safety risks. As soon as the decision to dispose of any specific ammunition was made, the subsequent operations could be relatively easily managed. Decisions concerning some categories of the ammunition could be made quickly because their relate weapon systems had poor market value or were restricted from export. For systems suitable for exporting,

⁶⁰³ <http://udn.com/NEWS/NATIONAL/NAT1/1645830.shtml>

⁶⁰⁴ Fisher, Marc *Dismantling of East German Army Brings Deals on Military Wheels*, Washington Post, 19 April 1992, p. A17.

⁶⁰⁵ McElvoy, Anne *East German Tanks Heading for the Scrapyard*, Times, 29 April 1989, Issue 63381, LexisNexis

⁶⁰⁶ Marx, Stefan *The Vanished Army - The Liquidation of the NVA*, Op Cit

⁶⁰⁷ *Ruehe on Bundeswehr Buildup in East Länder*, DPA, 2 October, FBIS-WEU-92-192, 2 October 1992, p.14-15

ammunition would not be disposed of with higher priority. Nonetheless, the Bundeswehr was very determined to deal with surplus NVA ammunition as soon as possible because of the insufficient defence budget after Cold War. The sooner disposal operations were completed, the more expense and manpower safeguarding and managing the NVA stockpile could be saved. In 1994, German Defence Ministry accelerated the disposal operations. More civilian industries were invited to scrap remaining NVA equipment and clean up the storage sites. The FRG government subsidised safeguards and infrastructures of the operations as incentives.⁶⁰⁸

One of the main reasons for speeding up the disposal operation was the high cost of leasing premises as storage depots.⁶⁰⁹ According to a media report in June 1994, 956 MBTs, 2,074 armoured combat vehicles, 814 artillery guns and 140 fighter aircraft had already been destroyed. Equal numbers of tanks and combat vehicles as well as 290 artillery guns were still awaiting future demolition due to treaty obligations.⁶¹⁰ Technology was never an obstacle to demolishing military armoured vehicles. Only a few difficulties caused by tanks' special steel was mentioned. The Soviet-made T-72 tank covered with asbestos was a challenge but not an insoluble one.⁶¹¹

According to the CSCE and CFE treaties, NATO needed to demolish approximately 16,000 weapon systems; the majority of these items exceeding the TLEs (Treaty Limited Equipments) were the responsibility of the FRG. In total, the Bundeswehr needed to lose 2,726 tanks, 5,171 armed vehicles, 1,904 artillery guns and 123 combat aircrafts by the end of 1995, forty months after the treaty came into force. Unquestionably, items inherited from the NVA would become burdens rather than assets. If these weapons could not be transferred to other states, then they would have to be demolished by the FRG. Before mid-1993, all efforts were focused on the former NVA surplus. Any system originally in the Bundeswehr arsenal was reportedly not to be destroyed before NVA equipment. In August 1992 a ceremony hosted by the German Defence Minister Volker Rühle and Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel at Rockensussra of Thuringia heralded this massive demolition task that was mainly contracted to private companies in the new länder. Two Eastern German towns,

⁶⁰⁸ Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, pp.50-51

⁶⁰⁹ Marx, Stefan *The Vanished Army - The Liquidation of the NVA*, Op Cit

⁶¹⁰ *70,000 Tonnes of Ammunition from the National People's Army in Other Hands*, Op Cit

Rockensussra and Ostritz, were selected to conduct the task. Several hundred foreign diplomats, arms experts, journalists and politicians were invited to witness the event. The FRG openly expressed its ambition to be the first NATO member state to fulfil its treaty obligation. A requirement of DM 220 million for the removal and destruction of military material was listed in the 1993 FRG federal budget. The entire operation for scrapping these systems would cost around DM 100 million. According to estimates made by the FRG Defence Ministry, the cost would be \$3,530 for each military transport vehicle and \$8,330 per tank. In appearance, though NATO might subsidise up to \$1,000 per piece of these armaments for demolition, yet, actually, 27 percent of this fund was still contributed by the FRG government.⁶¹²

The facilities of a former NVA army camp in Ostritz were used for demolishing T-55A tanks as part of a GDR self-imposed conventional arms reduction programme unilaterally executed in mid-1989. At that time, all 600 tanks targeted would muster in Charlottenhof military depot before being sent to the neighbouring newly established process line in Ostritz.⁶¹³ Experience gained from demolishing these tanks at this stage facilitated similar operations after reunification. The Bundeswehr was committed to maintaining a high environmental standard in disposing the weapon systems that may match with the yardstick of demolishing surplus ammunition. The whole platform, if the weapons on it needed to be dismantled, would be completely destroyed although the CSCE rules only required the destruction of the weapon itself. By doing so, not only did costs increase but also the possibility of adapting these platforms for other non-military functions after conversion was lost. For example, when the T-55 tanks were demolished at Charlottenhof depot they were cut into small pieces rather than converting them for further civilian functions, such as for bulldozers or cranes.⁶¹⁴

By contrast, this was very different from similar operations in the GDR when "conversion to industrial application" was one of the attributes emphasised by the

⁶¹¹ *300,000 Tonnes of Ammunition To Be Destroyed Despite Gulf War*, Op Cit

⁶¹² *Bundeswehr Reported to Reduce W. Länder Arsenal*, Op Cit. and *Germany: Two East German Town Host Initial Scrapping of Arms*, Inter Press Service, 23 July 1992, LexisNexis

⁶¹³ Moncur, Andrew *Eyewitness: Panzerverschrottung Means Tanks for the Memory*, Guardian, 23 June 1989, LexisNexis

⁶¹⁴ Marx, Stefan *The Vanished Army - The Liquidation of the NVA*, Op Cit

NVA when demolishing its tanks in early 1989.⁶¹⁵ But demolishing these platforms totally without seeking any possibility of conversion was not the initial intention of the FRG defence authority. Exactly a year after reunification, a newspaper reported that former NVA equipment mustered into certain depots in eastern Germany included "1,100 combat tanks, 5,600 armoured and 15,500 other vehicles waiting there to be reallocated for industrial use". Apparently the cancellation of plans to convert these assets for other purposes was decided later, due to the public pressure.⁶¹⁶

Case Study: the SS-23 Missile System

The case study of the demolition of the former East German SS-23 missile system will illustrate the sensitivity of disposing of NVA military assets. SS-23 missile systems inherited from the NVA were well safeguarded within the German territory and the Bundeswehr unambiguously declared the policy of total demolition but it still caused serious concern. Therefore, it may also help readers to comprehend the focus of the next chapter, namely why, regardless the nature of the transfer, the consequences of delivering the NVA legacies to other states could be so devastating to the parties concerned.

The Soviet-made SS-23 missile system in the NVA, publicised by the media in April 1990, stimulated the U.S. to link it with the ongoing dispute over fulfilling the INF Treaty obligations. The cargo-scan process at the Soviet Votkinsk missile factory during the INF negotiation failed and the Soviets never declared the existence of these missiles in the NVA. From U.S. Senator McClure's point of view, these SS-23 missile systems secretly held by Czechoslovakia and the GDR were an "apparent violation and irreversible material breach of the INF Treaty", although the nuclear warheads were still controlled by the Soviets. Yet the U.S. State Department reacted moderately by accusing the Soviets of "a serious breach of good faith".⁶¹⁷ But the responses from the executive branch of the US government to the exposure of these GDR missiles were much more cautious. After full verification of the existence of the launchers by a

⁶¹⁵ McElvoy, Anne *East German Tanks Heading for the Scrapyard*, Op Cit

⁶¹⁶ *Former NVA Structure Dissolved in Southeast*, Op Cit

⁶¹⁷ *Reports of Three New Soviet Violations of the INF Treaty Show a Continuous Need for a United States Compliance Policy for Proportionate Response*, U.S. Congressional Record - Senate, 101st

spy satellite, Undersecretary of State Reginald Bartholomew insisted that a further enquiry aimed at the Soviet government was needed in order to clarify whether the system was transferred to the GDR before the implementation of the INF treaty. If that was the case, then its legality was in line with the INF accord. US State Department spokeswoman, Margaret Tutweiler, also stated that these missiles in the GDR were possibly covered by the INF Treaty.⁶¹⁸

The next day, Colonel Uwe Hempel, the GDR Defence Ministry spokesman, confirmed the existence of these missiles but also clearly asserted that the missiles in the NVA were not subject to the INF Treaty. Furthermore, the destruction of these missiles had already begun on 1 February 1990 in Demen near Schwerin, according to orders approved by GDR Premier Modrow on 14 December 1989. Two launch pads had been publicly destroyed since then, reported by *Schweriner Volkszeitung* on 3 March 1990. Colonel Hempel further indicated that this GDR media report was probably the original source of information for the State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutweiler and the U.S. press.⁶¹⁹ Almost ten months after reunification, Soviet Defence Minister Dmitriy Yazov finally confirmed that the intermediate range missiles, believed to be the SS-23 "Spiders" missile systems but without nuclear warheads, had been sold to the GDR three or four years before negotiations on reducing these systems began.⁶²⁰

The FRG government did not take decisive measures to totally eliminate the SS-23 medium-range missile systems immediately after German reunification because many important factors were beyond its control. Demolishing these missiles continued efforts started in the GDR era. Although the SS-23 missiles possessed by the GDR did not violate any international treaty, they had gradually lost their military significance and become a political burden by 1990. After Eppelmann became the GDR Disarmament and Defence Minister, the decision to demolish these missiles was never

Cong. 2nd Sess., 136 Cong Rec S4165, Vol. 136, No. 41, 5 April 1990, LexisNexis

⁶¹⁸ Smith, Jeffrey R. *Soviets Questioned After U.S. Spots Apparent Tactical Missile Launcher*, Washington Post, 7 March 1990, p.A28, LexisNexis

⁶¹⁹ Heiling, Rene *Interview With Defence Ministry Spokesman Colonel Uwe Hempel - No Secret Surrounding the Missiles of the National People's Army*, Neues Deutschland, 8 March, p.3, Defence Ministry Spokesman on SS-23 Destruction, FBIS-EEU-90-047, 9 March 1990, p.39

⁶²⁰ *Defence Minister Confirmed Missiles Sold to Europe*, Moscow Radio World Service, 31 July, FBIS-SOV-91-148, 1 August 1991, p.1

altered. Nevertheless, technological factors and environmental concerns mainly originating from the toxic chemicals that would be released in the demolition process of these rocket motors hindered the progress of disposing of the SS-23 missiles before reunification.⁶²¹

Originally, the GDR government appealed to the USSR to destroy them in Soviet facilities but the request was declined because the facilities for demolishing this kind of missile were already closed and de-commissioned. The Soviets persuaded the GDR to request assistance from the USA although there was a possibility of giving confidential information to the Americans, which was strongly opposed by the Soviet military. But the situation in the United States was similarly difficult because the deadline for treaty compliance on scrapping intermediate range missiles was November 1990. And there was no appropriate facility within the FRG then capable of disposing of these missiles without causing environmental damage at that time. Therefore, a new round of negotiation with the USSR in early 1991 was undertaken by the FRG when the missiles were formally taken over by the Bundeswehr. The cost would be high because the USSR needed to re-establish its facilities. Furthermore, there was concern that the Soviets might retain the SS-23s, which would be a violation of the INF Treaty. Should the Soviets accept the task, the German inspectors would have to supervise the whole destruction operation.⁶²² It seemed that no substantial conclusion could be reached in these new negotiations.

But the continued existence of these missiles triggered serious public criticism after they were again seen in the Potsdam area in mid-1991. A defence expert, Ulrich Adam of the German Christian Democratic Union, said to the German newspaper, *Bild am Sonntag*, that he believed the whole system was intact and "in working order".⁶²³ Public assumption of mismanagement of weapons in the former GDR territory still existed. Less than a month later, another explosive report appeared in '*Berliner Zeitung*' and '*Tagesspiegel*' with pictures taken by photographer Jan Bauer accusing the Soviet force of leaving some 100 surface-to-air missiles in a forest without

⁶²¹ Eppelmann, 1992, Op Cit., p.23

⁶²² *Bundeswehr Has Soviet Missiles*, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 22-23 December, p.6, FBIS-WEU-90-248, 26 December 1990, p.10

⁶²³ *Missiles in Former GDR still "in Working Order"*, *ADN*, 9 June, FBIS-WEU-91-111, 19 June 1991, p.12

appropriate guards. The Soviet force immediately declared its innocence and later it became an embarrassment to the Bundeswehr because these missiles were found to be NVA legacies under its supervision. Lieutenant Colonel Wolfgang Hoppe, the Commander of the Bundeswehr 41st Air Defence Brigade who was in charge of these missiles insisted that these missiles were well protected with barbed wire and guarded all the time.⁶²⁴ Furthermore, the Bundeswehr emphasised that the missiles would soon be destroyed, in order to defuse public concern.⁶²⁵

Since the INF Treaty required the abolition of the SS-23 missile system and both the signatory states, the USA and the Soviet Union, had already started to destroy their missiles according to the treaty, media reports revealing the existence of these missiles put the German Defence Minister Stoltenberg under massive political pressure. If the SS-23 missile system inherited from the NVA was not demolished, the FRG would be the only country in Central Europe having this type of weapon system. The German politicians viewed this as an embarrassing situation and called for speedy action to destroy the SS-23s.⁶²⁶ The spokesman of the German Defence Ministry, Karlheinz Reichert, quickly denied the media report that the missile systems were operational by arguing that of the four mobile launchers, which were fundamental to the missiles, three had already been destroyed and one was in a museum. Nevertheless, besides confirming the disposal of the launchers, he did confess that the Bundeswehr still held twenty-four SS-23s but none had nuclear warheads. The German defence authority stressed that the destruction plan was already in existence but had been delayed by the need for an environment-friendly demolition process. The German Defence Ministry vowed unequivocally that these missiles systems would definitely be destroyed before 1994.⁶²⁷ However, this statement still failed to defuse public outrage.

A month later, therefore, the German Defence Ministry needed to repeat its assurance that none of the warheads originally attached to these missiles remained in

⁶²⁴ Osinkey, Igor *Missiles in German Forest Turn Out to Be Bundeswehr-Owned*, Tass, 29 June 1991, LexisNexis

⁶²⁵ Osinkey, Igor *Soviet Command in FRG Rejects Missile Dumping Story*, Tass reports in English and Russian, 29 June, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 1 July 1991, Part 1 The USSR, SU/1112/ A1/1, LexisNexis

⁶²⁶ *Missiles in Former GDR still "in Working Order"*, Op Cit

⁶²⁷ *Ministry Denies Report*, ADN, 9 June, FBIS-WEU-91-111, 19 June 1991, pp. 12

existence.⁶²⁸ Unlike when the Pershing 1A systems were being destroyed, the German defence authority did not trumpet the disposal of the SS-23 missiles. The FRG Defence Ministry made loud proclamations when German Pershing 1A missiles were totally destroyed. There were two reasons that caused the differences in attitude. First, there was a clear treaty obligation for the FRG to destroy Pershing missiles but the demand for scrapping the SS-23 missiles was not so pressing. Second, there was no technical obstacle to the demolition of the Pershing missiles. The Bundeswehr simply delivered these missiles to the manufacturer in Longhorn, Texas, and no further steps were needed other than the payment of demolition operations.⁶²⁹

But since the Soviet Union declined to take these missiles back and undertake their final disposal, the German Defence Ministry needed to establish the industrial capacity for disposing of these missiles in a way that would satisfy German environmental protection regulations. Yet, when the Bundeswehr announced the successful scrapping of the German Pershing missiles on 14 November 1991, its spokesman also stated that the SS-23 missiles in its possession were completely de-militarised and brought forward the deadline of their complete liquidation to the middle of 1993.⁶³⁰ All former NVA SS-23 missile systems were eventually demolished as planned, except for one mobile launcher retained as the museum exhibit.

Undiminished Legacies

Although most of the ammunition inherited from the NVA was supposedly scrapped, according to one report some sophisticated weapons were still possibly covertly kept by the Bundeswehr. In 1998, as the Bundestag Defence Procurement Approvals Committee granted permission for production of the STN-Atlas Elektronik Light Anti-aircraft System (LeFlaSys), a modification of European-produced Raytheon Stinger infrared-guided short range surface-to-air missile system, STN-Atlas mentioned that the German Defence Ministry also planned to adapt the system for use

⁶²⁸ *Germany to Destroy Missiles*, The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, 27 July 1991, p. 8, LexisNexis

⁶²⁹ Semenov, Aleksander *Germany Has Destroyed "Pershing 1A" Rockets*, Tass, 14 November 1991, LexisNexis

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*

with Russian built Igla missiles procured by the NVA before unification.⁶³¹ If there were not a significant amount of such weapons in the Bundeswehr arsenal, then it would certainly not be cost-effective to prepare a system compatible with this type of missile.

There was also another kind of ammunition left by the NVA that had never been demolished and possibly remained in existence along the former FRG-GDR border. In March 1991 a report indicated that 160 technicians were trained for de-mining operations. The local governments along the former GDR-FRG borderline considered sharing the expenses.⁶³² In October 1992, the FRG Defence Minister Volker Rühle decided not to remove the 18,000 contact mines, originally deployed along the so-called "Death Strip" by the GDR Border Troops to stop escapees. These PDM-6 wood box landmines were already rotten according to the Bundeswehr Military Technology Office for Explosives and Special Technical Equipment. A German Free Democratic Party (FDP) military expert, Juergen Koppelin, accused the FRG Defence Ministry of disgusting negligence. Rühle, he said, should be personally responsible for any accident or damage caused by these landmines.⁶³³ It was a dramatic alteration of previously existing de-mining policy. Nevertheless, retaining the landmines along the border strip might unexpectedly preserve the natural environment along this previously highly guarded land strip.⁶³⁴

Lesson Concluded

Massive arms reduction was inevitable with the end of the Cold War. The Bundeswehr unpremeditatedly acquired a huge amount of NVA military hardware, which might not necessarily benefit its military planning or reduce its procurement expenses. Different military organisations have different philosophies of force planning and military procurement, which originate from operational requirements and prescribed battle environments. Therefore, all military systems are designed to fit some specific

⁶³¹ O'Toole, Kevin *News in Brief*, Defence News, p.20, *Flight International*, 22 April 1998

⁶³² Koop, Volker *Minen: Die Suche geht weiter (Mine: The Search Will Continue)*, *Erbe NVA*, pp.98-100

⁶³³ Hören, Dirk *18,000 Contact Land Mines Are Rotting Along the Death Strip*, *Bild*, 28 October, pp.1, FBIS-WEU-92-209, 29 October 1992, pp.23

⁶³⁴ Koop, Volker *Mauer: Schutz von Flora und Fauna (The Wall: Shelter for Plants and Animals)*,

demands. Although military forces do procure many on-the-shelf commodities, yet some customisation efforts are still needed.

The excellence of the NVA equipments or systems alone could not establish any objective value. Their compatibility or convertibility to the Bundeswehr operational requirements basically decided their fate. Factors such as the reliability and the availability of follow-on logistic support were vital. Nevertheless, a military acquisition process in any state is never purely militarily rational. It can be influenced by various political concerns. Likewise, decisions of retaining some NVA equipments serving in the Bundeswehr had also been influenced by many factors other than military requirements.

The need to convert defence industries and demolish military surpluses was also foreseen before the end of the Cold War. All such tasks originating from the demise of the NVA had been managed better by the FRG government, because more resources were available and investments were actually acquired. Many promising consequences indicated the commercial potential of these tasks. New technologies had been developed. Nevertheless, it was not the original aim of military conversion, nor was it a reasonable expectation.

Chapter Five

Transfer, Donation and Analysis

The military hardware from the former Nationale Volksarmee was transferred to many countries for different reasons and by various arrangements. The U.S. media saw the NVA legacy as "a white elephant that Germany must get rid of", also "a political hot potato, one that has burned the German in the past" because, as a German military professional explained, "many German weapons that were sold elsewhere were wrongly used".⁶³⁵

The security of weapons left by the NVA was another serious matter. But security incidents had arisen before reunification. Once forty-kilograms of explosives were stolen from the NVA underground depot in Grosseutersdorf near Kahla. Since the criminal investigation agency revealed that the stolen explosives were suitable for serious terrorist attacks, the incident caused grave public concern in eastern Germany.⁶³⁶ On 19 December 1992, two years after German reunification, four masked criminals speaking perfect German, stormed a Bundeswehr barracks in Geltow near Potsdam after midnight and grabbed a large amount of small arms, included a Russian Kalashnikov rifle and three bazookas, after overpowering and chained three guards. This incident triggered a nationwide search as well as raising public concern again.⁶³⁷

General Schönbohm told the media that, in a few cases, the Bundeswehr guards needed to use firearms to thwart attempts to enter military depots.⁶³⁸ Concerning manpower needed to guard the ammunition; different figures appeared in different sources, varying between 11,000 and 6,000 extra men.⁶³⁹ It was well known since the beginning of reunification that garrison duty absorbed huge personnel resources and

⁶³⁵ *World News Tonight With Peter Jennings*, ABC News, 29 November 1991, LexisNexis

⁶³⁶ *Intensive Investigations of the Criminal Police: Indications - But No Hot Trail*, Berliner Allgemeine, 30 May, p.2, FBIS-EEU-90-107, 4 June 1990, pp.31-32

⁶³⁷ *Arms Stolen From Bundeswehr Territorial Command*, Die Welt, 21 December, FBIS-WEU-92-246, 22 December 1992, pp.20-21

⁶³⁸ *Bundeswehr To Be Stationed in Berlin as of 1991*, Berliner Zeitung, 13 December, FBIS-WEU-90-241, 14 December 1990, p.7

⁶³⁹ Tomforde, *Anna Slimming Cure for E. German Forces*, Op Cit.; and Fairhall, *David East German*

substantially interfered with other urgent tasks. A survey indicated that 25% of the Bundeswehr manpower in eastern Germany was assigned to safeguard the ammunition and weapons there. Alternatively, the same function only took 4% in western Germany.⁶⁴⁰

In response to a parliamentary inquiry submitted by the German Social Democratic Party member of the Bundestag Defence Committee Gernot Erler, the FRG Defence Ministry revealed that 27 countries had either requested or actually acquired military materials from the NVA after reunification in October 1991. Nevertheless, some confidential information, such as NVA equipment provided to Israel for intelligence analysis, had not been released then. After the provision of NVA surplus to Israel was exposed, a more accurate list was finally confessed to the Bundestag. Eleven NATO states, five European non-NATO states, six Central and Eastern European states including the Soviet Union, and another 22 non-European non-NATO states had expressed their willingness to acquire NVA military surplus. In addition to the states mentioned above, there were another 26 states that received contributions in the form of humanitarian assistance from the NVA inventory. Some states acquired NVA armaments as FRG contributions during the Gulf War. At that time, only Finland, Sweden and Uruguay had explicitly settled the procurement contracts for NVA legacies.⁶⁴¹

In 1994, another survey indicated that NVA equipment was delivered, either by successful contract or concessionary transfer, to Algeria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Egypt, Ecuador, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Kuwait, Latvia, Lithuania, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Sweden, Singapore, Slovakia, South Korea, Thailand, Uruguay, the USA, the United Nations and Vietnam, as well as to all NATO countries.⁶⁴² Nevertheless, not all countries listed could be verified in German governmental reports because, in some cases, transfers were not conducted through official channels. Since initial buyers often resold equipment, end users could not be easily traced, therefore, the actual list of buyers was certainly longer than estimated.

Officer Corps Troops Back to College: The Uniforms Have Changed, But Will the Man?, Op Cit.

⁶⁴⁰ Defence Official on Decisions Affecting East, ADN, 23 October, FBIS-WEU-90-206, 24 October 1990, pp.11-12

⁶⁴¹ Winter, Martin *Even NVA Missiles for Israel*, Frankfurter Rundschau, 27 November, p.1, Government Sold NVA Materials to 70 States, FBIS-WEU-91-229, 27 November 1991, pp.14-15

The Federal Republic of Germany government put limits on sensitive items such as weapons and ammunition. Yet, according to statements which appeared in media reports like "We have no way to control who will be the end-users after delivery" and "Basically, the Bundeswehr was only with concerned items it needed to retain for further use. Where other items might flow to did not matter to us",⁶⁴³ it seemed that unexpected situations might happen because of bureaucratic negligence. But it is necessary to know that officials who were not actually in charge of the military materials export policies gave such statements; therefore, their view could not represent the whole reality and possibly be misleading.

Likewise, non-weapon equipment and accessories were sold on the open market before reunification and auction activities became even more intense after reunification. Apart from ammunition, weapons and military platforms noted by military and security observers, some items including clothing, sanitary material, NBC protective material, vehicles, accommodation, fire-fighting material, tents, mattresses, spare parts and tank tracks were also transferred to foreign states.⁶⁴⁴ The buyers and end-users might not necessarily be the armed forces of the state governments. Local governments in different countries, private collectors, enterprises, international organisations, non-governmental organisations, museums and paramilitary agencies were all potential customers. Nevertheless, this chapter will not cover all the transfers: detailed statistics have been published by the FRG government and surveyed by previous researchers. Only cases from which important lessons can be deduced will be studied in depth.

No Volksmarine Vessels Wanted

Evidence indicates that the Deutsche Marine was very reluctant to integrate ex-Volksmarine vessels into its arsenal. Massive discharge of Volksmarine members as well as almost total refusal to absorb its vessels was an issue that annoyed General Schönbohm though he only implicitly expressed it in his memoir.⁶⁴⁵ One point should

⁶⁴² Marx, Stefan *The Vanished Army - The Liquidation of the NVA*, Op Cit

⁶⁴³ Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit. p.233, Note 60

⁶⁴⁴ Winter, Martin *Even NVA Missiles for Israel*, Op Cit

⁶⁴⁵ Krause-Brewer, Fides *Book Review of "Zwei Armeen und Ein Vaterland: Das Ende der Nationalen*

be noted here, there is no restriction on maritime forces in the CFE I Treaty (Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe).⁶⁴⁶ Whatever the reason for the unwillingness to integrate Volksmarine vessels into a unified German maritime force, the international obligation of force reduction was not the excuse. Before reunification, it was a well-known tendency for the Deutsche Marine, the then Bundesmarine, to have limited funds for investment, which implied a scaled-down force in the future.⁶⁴⁷ Therefore, it is understandable that the Deutsche Marine would be reluctant to absorb any vessels from the Volksmarine because it would not only disrupt the previously programmed investment plan but also would require resources for disposing of them in a situation of limited budgetary support.

The decision to dispose of a few specific types of vessels was made even before reunification. Among them was the newest ex-Volksmarine Balcom 10 class missile corvette, re-categorised as Sassnitz class *Kleines Rocketenschiff* (small missile craft) after reunification. The FRG defence contractor Bremer Vulkan, on behalf of Peenewerft, the original shipbuilder of the Balcom 10s, had put them for sale in the international weapon market immediately after German reunification. Some were still under construction at the Peenewerft Shipyard. They were unlikely to acquire the same armament as the prototype ship which first appeared in the Baltic two years before reunification. Their presence was a surprise to international arms customers in early October 1990 at the Athens "Defendory 1990" arms exhibition.⁶⁴⁸ By offering to sell the most advanced ex-Volksmarine platform, it demonstrated that hopes of the former Volksmarine leadership, including the ex-Volksmarine C-in-C, Admiral Bonn, and the ex-NVA Chief, Admiral Hoffmann, to integrate ex-GDR naval vessels into the unified German maritime force had been clearly rebuffed.

The decision to terminate the follow-on construction plan of the Balcom 10s gave a

Volksarmee", Rheinischer Markur, No. 40, 2 October, p.45, Reports Views Integration of NVA Under Schönbohm, FBIS-WEU-92-209, 28 October 1992, pp.22-23

⁶⁴⁶ Hardenbergh, Charlmers (ed) *"Outline of the Treaty Provisions, Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe"*, Arms Control Reporter-1991, Brookline: Institute for Defence and Disarmament Studies, 1992, p.407.A.4 - 407.A.8.

⁶⁴⁷ Heckmann, Erhard and Juergen Rhades *Interview with Vice Admiral Hans-Joachim Mann, naval Chief of Staff: Fewer Funds for Investment - A Shrinking Fleet*, Wehrtechnik, December 1989, pp.22-26, FBIS-WEU-90-028, 9 February 1990, pp.14-17

⁶⁴⁸ Preston, Antony (ed) *Germany Marketing ex-DDR Warship Designs*, NAVINT, Volume 2, No.21, 26 October 1990, p.6

symbolic meaning to the disposal policy regarding ex-Volksmarine assets. The once ambitious shipbuilding project of the Balcom 10 class missile corvettes, possibly up to fifty vessels for the USSR, Poland and GDR, was decisively abandoned just before German reunification. The eight SS-N-25 missiles installed by two quadruple launchers for trial were removed by summer 1990.⁶⁴⁹ According to the information available, these missiles were returned to the Soviet Union.⁶⁵⁰ The SS-N-25 missile, designed by the Russian Zverda OKB, later designated X-35 or Kh-35 and shown regularly at defence exhibitions, played a role in deciding the fate of these vessels.⁶⁵¹ After the missiles were removed, it was necessary to re-engineer the construction and reorganise the whole production programme.

Before reunification, the FRG defence contractor Thyssen Rheinstahl Technik GmbH in Düsseldorf expressed an interest to the GDR defence authority in reselling two unarmed Balcom 10 class vessels, after completion, to other states that could comply with the FRG war materials control law.⁶⁵² The task of reselling these vessels after reunification was eventually assigned to another FRG defence contractor, Bremer Vulkan.⁶⁵³ Finally, persistent marketing of these semi-completed vessels at the Peenewerft shipyard paid off. Three of them were initially renamed Sassnitz class missile craft and eventually became Sassnitz class patrol craft in German BGS. Another three became Orkan class missile patrol craft, serving in the Polish Navy. The original weapons system and armament designed for the Balcom 10 class were retained in the Orkan class missile patrol craft, except for the SS-N-25 missiles and combat data system. But the German BGS totally abandoned the Russian systems and re-engineered these vessels according to their new operational requirements. Only one, believed to be the *Sellin*, ex-BGS BG 24 or ex-592, retained its unconverted Russian designed systems. According to a photo taken in June 1996 at Eckernförde, its old

⁶⁴⁹ *Patrol Craft / Germany*, in Baker, A.D. III (ed) *Combat Fleets of the World, 1998 - 1999 ~ Their Ship, Aircraft and Systems*, Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, p.283.

⁶⁵⁰ Three types of anti-ship missiles, P15, P21 and P22, different variants of the "Styx" series, acquired from the ex-GDR arsenal were given by the FRG government to Israel, the UK, the Netherlands and the United States for intelligence analysis. There was no solid evidence to prove that any of the SS-N-25 missiles were held by western states after German reunification. Another batch of various but unspecified type of guided missiles, 182 in total, were delivered to United States for training purposes. See Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, pp.62-65

⁶⁵¹ Preston, Antony (ed) *Germany Marketing ex-DDR Warship Designs*, Op Cit. Also see Preston, Antony (ed) *Russian Naval Weapons Marketed*, Op Cit. and Preston, Antony (ed) *New Russian Anti-Ship Missile*, NAVINT, Volume 4, No.18, 11 September 1992, p.4

⁶⁵² Kazimirski, Klaus and Klaus-Dieter Stefan *Going, Going, Gone*, Op Cit

pennant number, 592, and major weapon system components remained intact.⁶⁵⁴ In 1993 or 1994, it was loaned to the German Navy Test Centre, WTD 71, for weapons trials and was finally sold in 1999.⁶⁵⁵

All revenues acquired from the modifications of propulsion systems, electronic equipment and accommodation on the BGS Sassnitz class patrol craft as well as from transferring the hulls of the Orkan class missile patrol craft, which were later completed in the Gdansk Northern Shipyard, substantially supported the Peenewerft Shipyard at Wolgast after reunification. The cooperation between the Peenewerft Shipyard and the Polish shipbuilder Stoeznia Polnocna (Northern Shipyard) was managed very smoothly. The first Polish Orkan class missile patrol craft was commissioned on September 18 after successful sea trials.⁶⁵⁶ No criticism of the transfer or operational readiness of the Polish Orkan class missile patrol craft has ever been made. Nevertheless, even if the SS-N-25 missiles were not removed and follow-on supply and logistic support assured, it was still unlikely that the Deutsche Marine would retain these vessels. It was pointless to increase the logistic support for an unfamiliar missile system that may only possibly be compatible with the Harpoon missiles used in the Deutsch Marine.

Immediately after reunification it was also reported that the initial decision made by the Bundesmarine was to keep only twelve ex-Volksmarine vessels for up to three years, including the newly commissioned Sassnitz class missile corvette that already put up for sale.⁶⁵⁷ There was considerable interest in the Volksmarine vessels in the international arms market. Saudi Arabia and Egypt enthusiastically approached the GDR defence authority to procure some Volksmarine vessels around reunification time.⁶⁵⁸ However, the exact details of ex-Volksmarine vessels for disposal varied after the Deutsche Marine took over these assets. A detailed assessment of the condition of the vessels, potential of reselling them in the international market and the legal

⁶⁵³ Preston, Antony (ed) *Germany Marketing ex-DDR Warship Designs*, Op Cit

⁶⁵⁴ *Patrol Craft / Germany*, in Baker, A.D. III (ed), Op Cit, p.283

⁶⁵⁵ Sharpe, Richard (ed) *Coast Guard/Germany*, Jane's Fighting Ships 1995-1996, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, pp.258 and 263

⁶⁵⁶ Preston, Antony (ed) *News in Brief*, NAVINT, Vol.4, No.20, 9 October 1992, p.5

⁶⁵⁷ Preston, Antony (ed) *Discount Sale of East German Corvettes*, NAVINT, Vol.2, No.21, 26 October 1990, p.7

⁶⁵⁸ Kazimirski, Klaus and Klaus-Dieter Stefan *Going, Going, Gone*, Op Cit

constraints and political directives involved in exporting these vessels, was inevitably needed before a final decision could be made. A more explicit surplus list, as shown below, of ex-GDR vessels to be sold by VELEG, a defence contractor that specifically managed ex-NVA stock, emerged in late 1991 though some deals were already settled.⁶⁵⁹

Ex-GDR warships openly for sale in late 1991	
Classification of the Vessels	Quantity
Koni class frigate	3
Parchim class corvette	16
Tarantul I class missile boat	5
OSA II class missile boat	12
Kondor II class minesweeper	21
Frosch I class tank landing ship	12
Frosch II class armed cargo ship	2
Kondor I class experimental vessel	3
Wodnik class Training Ship ex-Volksmarine <i>Wilhelm Pieck</i>	1
Tanker	4
Harbour tanker	4
Salvage Tug	4
Harbour launch	3
Customs patrol craft	12

Source: Preston, Antony (ed) *German Warship Disposals*, NAVINT, Vol.3, No.23, 22 November 1991, p.4. A few minor clarifications and corrections have been made.

Apparently the Deutsche Marine had no interest in integrating ex-Volksmarine vessels at the expense of its existing procurement and force planning programmes. Nevertheless, given the comprehensive force reduction and defence budget retraction after German reunification, the impact was evident in the 1993 procurement plan announced by FRG defence Minister Stoltenberg in early 1992.⁶⁶⁰ And the procurement and force planning programmes of the Bundeswehr were by no means smooth in the early 1990s. New requirements, such as the *Mehrzweckschiff (MZW)*, a through-deck, helicopter-carrying Landing Platform Dock (LPD), were stimulated by the deployment experiences with the newly developed UN missions enthusiastically initiated by the political leadership. But later the same political leaders shelved this project due to financial constraints in the mid 1990s.⁶⁶¹ Resources allocated to absorb

⁶⁵⁹ Preston, Antony (ed) *German Warship Disposals*, NAVINT, Vol.3, No.23, 22 November 1991, p.4

⁶⁶⁰ Preston, Antony (ed) *Bundeswehr Outlines Navy Procurement Plans*, NAVINT, Vol.4, No.9, 8 May 1992, p.4

⁶⁶¹ Preston, Antony (ed) *Germany Shelves Assault Ship Plan*, NAVINT, Vol.7, No.10, 19 May 1995, p.4

the ex-GDR vessels would undermine existing procurement and force planning programmes. There was apparently no intention of integrating ex-Volksmarine members. The value of the ex-Volksmarine military hardware was almost totally denied and only a few vessels were temporarily retained, and those unwillingly. The rationale for integrating only a very small number of ex-Volksmarine personnel into the unified German armed forces was to avoid problems in the Deutsche Marine's own personnel structure.⁶⁶²

All the Volksmarine vessels were eventually sold all over the world except for a very few barges and utility vessels still retained by the Deutsche Marine today. The buyers of these vessels might not necessarily be other foreign maritime forces. Local governments in Germany, museums and foreign private enterprises became the new owners. Some of them were studied intensively by the FRG or by other foreign governments. Many were scrapped or expended as target ships.⁶⁶³ There is no way of knowing the opportunity cost of totally disbanding the Volksmarine without any integration and whether the savings were transferred to the Deutsche Marine procurement programmes as originally intended.

From the types of the former Volksmarine and Grenzebrigade Küste (GBK) major surface combatants acquired by other states, it is noticeable that most of the vessels successfully resold were those constructed in the former GDR shipyards, mainly by Peenewerft at Wolgast.⁶⁶⁴ The list includes Parchim I class corvettes, Frosch I class amphibious ships, Frosch II class armed re-supply ships (HochseeverSORger), Bremse class Patrol crafts, Kondor I class patrol crafts and Kondor II class mine countermeasure vessels (MCMV). Three Koni I class frigates, categorised as the 'Rostock' class in the Volksmarine, made by the former Soviet Union shipbuilder at

⁶⁶² Ehle, Jurgen "The German Navy after the Cold War and Reunification", *Naval War College Review*, Newport: US Naval War College, Autumn 1998, pp.63-84

⁶⁶³ Elchlepp, Friedrich, et al. *Volksmarine der DDR - Deutsche Seestreitkräfte im Kalten Krieg (The People's Navy of the GDR - German Maritime Forces in the Cold War)*, Hamburg: Verlag E. S. Mittler & Sohn GmbH, 2000, pp.231-235, *Anlage VI.7 Verleib der Schiffe und Boote nach Auflösung der VM (Appendix VI.7 The Final Destinations of the East German People's Navy's Ships and Boats after its dissolution)*. Information in this reference needs some modifications but the author will not note here since it is beyond the scope of this research.

⁶⁶⁴ Grenzebrigade Küste (GBK) is the maritime division of the GDR border forces, with 4,100 personnel. Although this unit only operated small craft, their outer appearance was very similar to Volksmarine vessels, except the pennant numbers were prefixed by a capital 'G'. They were highly armed with mobile coast defence anti-ship missiles in two missile battalions and five coastal gun

the Zelenodolsk Shipyard in the Black Sea area, were not resold but decommissioned after reunification.

The first attempt to sell two out of the three former Volksmarine frigates was believed to have been to Algeria as fishery protection vessels, after being partly disarmed and reengineered. The Polish Navy reportedly targeted the other frigate, which was decommissioned by the end of 1991, in its future procurement list. Neither of these two transfer efforts reached any final settlement.⁶⁶⁵ An offer of two of these ships, *Berlin* and *Halle*, to Lithuania made by the Federal Republic of Germany government in mid-1993 was declined because the Lithuanian Navy could not afford to operate them.⁶⁶⁶ Long before this offer, around October 1992, these two frigates had been towed to Pulschow in Kiel-Holtenau awaited scrapping and were scrapped shortly afterwards. The only other frigate of this class, ex-Volksmarine *Rostock*, after short service in the Deutsche Marine, was converted to a target at the Kiel Shipyard and used by Test Centre 71 at Eckernförde for a series of shock trials.⁶⁶⁷ Subsequently, it was transferred to the Royal Navy for conducting trials and intelligence analysis until 1998 and finally towed from Portsmouth on 14 July 1998 for demolition at Aliaga.⁶⁶⁸

The Russian-made Osa class guided missile boats transferred to the Baltic States as free gifts were in poor shape. Some of them were scrapped before actual delivery and some became the source of spare parts after arrival in order to sustain operational readiness. Interestingly, five modern Tarantul I class missile corvettes made by the Soviet Union were never offered to the international arms market. Four of these vessels were decommissioned and scrapped in 1990 immediately after reunification.⁶⁶⁹ The only one left, ex-Volksmarine *Rudolf Egelhofer*, was transferred to the US Navy for intelligence analysis in 1992.⁶⁷⁰ The expected market for the former Volksmarine vessels in which the Deutsche Marine had no interest was other

batteries.

⁶⁶⁵ Preston, Antony (ed) *Eastern European Naval Changes*, NAVINT, Vol.3, No.11, 7 June 1991, p.4

⁶⁶⁶ *Lithuanian Republic Naval Flotilla*, in Baker, A.D. III (ed), *Op Cit.*, p.489.

⁶⁶⁷ Preston, Antony (ed) *News in Brief*, NAVINT, Vol.4, No.21, 23 October 1992, p.6

⁶⁶⁸ Preston, Antony (ed) *News in Brief*, NAVINT, Vol.10, No.18, 1 October 1998, p.4

⁶⁶⁹ Sharpe, Richard (ed) *Deletions/Germany*, Jane's Fighting Ships 1993-1994, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, p.231.

⁶⁷⁰ Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, p.64. Also see Preston, Antony (ed) *News in Brief*, NAVINT, Vol.4, No.2, 31 January 1992, p.4

ex-Warsaw Pact navies.⁶⁷¹ But later developments were very different from initial anticipation, maybe because of no suitable buyers, lack of market competitiveness, the poor condition of the ships, no guarantee of follow-on logistic support, and restrictions for re-exporting set by the Soviet Union.

Case Study I: Indonesia

Thirty-nine former Volksmarine surface combatants, including sixteen Parchim I class corvettes, twelve Frosch I class tank landing ships, two Frosch II class armed cargo ships and nine Kondor II class mine countermeasures vessels, were procured by the Indonesian Navy for anti-drug and anti-piracy missions, in the most successful resale of NVA military hardware after German reunification. The decision was initially publicised on 23 July 1992, when most of the vessels were already classified as "Category C" vessels, which meant they were decommissioned and awaiting scrapping by the Deutsche Marine.⁶⁷² The details of the agreement were finalised in December 1992. According to a statement made by the German defence authority, all these naval vessels have been completely disarmed. The German defence contractor, Ferrostaal AG, was the prime contractor for refits and modernisation for some of these ships at their home shipyard, Peenewerft, in former GDR territory.⁶⁷³ The contract included dismantling the weapons, namely the 57mm and 30mm guns, plus the associated fire control radar, such as the Muff Cob aboard the Frosch I and Frosch II class amphibious ships and the High pole B type IFF system.⁶⁷⁴ Although an SA-N-5 surface-to-air missile launcher was installed on Kondor II class mine countermeasures vessels in late 1980s, it was removed before being sent to the Indonesian Navy.⁶⁷⁵

It is highly unlikely that the rationale for disarming these vessels before delivery was

⁶⁷¹ Preston, Antony (ed) *Factfile 4: DDR Navy Units Retained in Federal German Navy*, NAVINT, Vol.3, No.10, 24 May 1991, p.4

⁶⁷² Preston, Antony (ed) *Acquisitions Boost Indonesian Fleet*, Vol.4, No.18, 11 September 1992, p.4

⁶⁷³ Bickers, Charles and Joris Janssen Lok *Headline News Indonesia Continues Its Naval Build-up*, Jane's Defence Weekly, Vol.19, Issue 5, 30 January 1993, p.4. Another source suggested that Neptun Industrie located at Rostock were also involved in overhauling the Frosch I class tank landing ships before their delivery to Indonesia. See Preston, Antony (ed) *News in Brief*, NAVINT, Vol.5, No.17, 27 August 1993, p.4

⁶⁷⁴ *Teluk Gilimanuk (Frosch I/II), Amphibious Warfare Ships*, Jane's Major Warships 1997, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, p.1524

⁶⁷⁵ *Kondor II (Type 89.200), Mine Countermeasures Vessels (MCMV)*, Op Cit., p.1749

simply to comply with the German restrictions on re-exporting. The Indonesia Navy's specific operational requirement and logistically sustainability seemed the dominant factors of selecting systems and equipments because some weapons, such as the 57 mm ZIF-72 guns, 30mm AK 230 guns, the associated Muff Cob fire control director and High pole B type IFF system, were preserved on the Parchim I class corvettes. In contrast, the same weapons and systems were all removed from the Frosch I and Frosch II class amphibious ships.⁶⁷⁶ Requests to convert the voids into additional fuel tanks to increase cruising range and adding air conditioning to cope with the Indonesian weather were suggested.⁶⁷⁷ One Parchim I class corvette, KRI (Kapal di Republik Indonesia) *Lambung Mangkurat* (ex-Volksmarine *Angermunde*), and two Frosch I class tank landing ships, KRI *Teluk Gilimanuk* (ex-Volksmarine *Hoyerswerda*) and KRI *Teluk Hading* (ex-Volksmarine *Cottbus*) were noticed in the Spanish port of Malaga, highly possibly replenishing, on 30 July 1994. As these vessels were en route to Indonesia, apparently the cruise range of the Parchim I class corvette was not significantly increased after conversion.⁶⁷⁸

Basically, the German Government Security Council did not hold a rigid position on disarming vessels before delivery. An argument which supported the Parchim I class corvettes retaining their existing armament was that the weapons aboard were largely defensive in nature. Yet, this interpretation was extended to the weapons installed on the Frosch I class tank landing ships, Frosch II class armed cargo ships and Kondor II class mine countermeasures vessels.⁶⁷⁹ No matter how inconsistent this disarmament principle was, final approval was still granted. According to a regional security expert's observation that the future mission role assigned to the Parchim I class corvettes was supporting frigates, the Indonesian navy's core surface combatants, it is

⁶⁷⁶ In addition to this case, another report indicated that the pre-export disarmament process was not conducted as well as the FRG claimed. A covert pattern was found in delivering the NVA armoured NBC detection vehicles, which were approved by the FRG and sold to Egypt after the Gulf war. In daytime, the tanks were disarmed but the armaments were loaded at night. Once the case was exposed, German officials argued that the Federal Security Council approved the items and the armaments attached to the transfer were purely for self-defence. See Hoffmann, Wolfgang *Germany at the Foremost Front: Arms Exports, Bonn Dumping Armoured Vehicles and Frigates All Around Globe - To the Distress of the Industry*, Die Zeit, 12 March, FBIS-WEU-93-055, Nations Ranks Third in World Among Arms Exporters, 24 March 1993, p.23

⁶⁷⁷ *Kapitan Patimura (Parchim I), Corvettes*, Jane's Major Warships-1997, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, p.1284

⁶⁷⁸ Preston, Antony (ed) *News in Brief*, NAVINT, Vol.6, No.6, 12 August 1994, p.4

⁶⁷⁹ Preston, Antony (ed) *Acquisitions Boost Indonesian Fleet*, Op Cit

not surprising that most of the weapons and equipments were retained.⁶⁸⁰ The organisational arrangements of the Indonesian Navy's Western Command - two corvette squadrons, two amphibious squadrons and one mine warfare squadron - all assigned to the headquarterd at Teluk Ratai, plus the area of their deployment was disclosed when the procurement decision was made.⁶⁸¹

This procurement project was very controversial and caused political conflict between the military professionals and civilian officials. It was believed that the procurement project was not initiated by the Indonesia armed forces but the Minister of Science and Technology, B. J. Habibie, who ran the Indonesia state-owned defence industrial complex at that time.⁶⁸² Habibie was very confident that the Indonesia PT PAL shipyard could manage the logistic support of these combatants, and by doing so, provide jobs and revenue to the shipyard and its workers. Although the initial price for selling these vessels, which included five years of spare parts and five thousand tons of ammunition, was extremely cheap, only \$12.7 million, there was an immediate renovation and refitting contract sponsored by the Germans that cost \$230 million, issued to the German shipyard prior to the delivery of these ships.⁶⁸³

According to Nassauer, the cost paid by Indonesia would be even more horrifying. Though the price of procuring these vessels was remarkably low at \$13 million, there was a commitment attached to the procurement contract that would cost \$314 million for partial demilitarisation and refits in German shipyard as well as the training service for 1660 Indonesia naval personnel provided by the German contractor, Ferrostahl. Nonetheless, the Indonesian defence contractors also acquired a \$339 million contract for remilitarising these vessels after delivery. In addition, there was a supplementary investment of \$119 million to enhance the capacity of the Indonesian shipyard to accommodate these vessels and \$179 million to improve the harbour facilities.⁶⁸⁴ The Indonesian Navy also planned to construct two new naval bases, one

⁶⁸⁰ For the role of the Parchim I class corvettes after delivery, see Bateman, Sam *Features, ASEAN's Tiger Navies - Catching Up or Building Up?*, Jane's Navy International, Vol.102, Issue 3, 1 April 1997, p.18

⁶⁸¹ Preston, Antony (ed) *Acquisitions Boost Indonesian Fleet*, Op Cit

⁶⁸² Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesian Concerns over Ex-NVA Ships*, NAVINT, Vol.6, No.11, 3 June 1994, p.3

⁶⁸³ Haseman, John *Indonesia to Scrutinise Weapons Purchases*, Jane's Defence Weekly, 24 July 2002, Jane's website, 17 July 2002

⁶⁸⁴ Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, p.46. Another source indicated that the procurement price for these

at Sibolga on the northern coast of Sumatra and the other at Aru Island of Irian Jaya, as an integral part of this procurement project.⁶⁸⁵ Leaders of the Indonesian armed forces tried to resist Habibie's intervention in military procurement matters by appealing to President Suharto but were eventually defeated by Habibie.⁶⁸⁶

Arms sales are an important part of the FRG-Indonesian relationship. Numerous arms exports to Indonesia have been approved by the FRG since 1986.⁶⁸⁷ Therefore, as well as financial implications, there was also a political bargain attached to the procurement of the former Volksmarine assets. To prevent Chancellor Kohl succumbing to opposition from the Portuguese government, who feared these vessels would be deployed to suppress resistance in East Timor, Indonesian President Suharto, as president of the non-aligned states, personally promised to support Germany's bid to gain a seat at the United Nations Security Council.⁶⁸⁸ If the Indonesian military read these signs correctly, they would realise that Suharto had made his decision already.

Controversy about the procurement of these former East German naval vessels started immediately the deal was settled and became even more intense after the Indonesian Navy actually received and operated some of them.⁶⁸⁹ But the Indonesian Navy responded positively to their procurement when the decision was first made in 1992. Admiral Tanto Koeswanto, Commander of the Eastern Naval Fleet, believed that these vessels were still in good condition and therefore depicted them as a gift from President Suharto to the Indonesian Navy.⁶⁹⁰ Traditionally, TNI-AL (Tentara Nasional Indonesia - Angkatan Lau; the Indonesian Navy) was viewed as the "*poor relative*" of ANI-AD (Tentara Nasional Indonesia - Angkatan Darat; the Indonesian Army). TNI-AL was poorly equipped and inadequately trained and subsequently unable to

vessels themselves was \$319 million but a budget of \$1.1 billion was expected to meet the cost of upgrading them. See Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesia's Naval Plans*, NAVINT, Vol.7, No.22, 3 November 1995, p.4

⁶⁸⁵ Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesia to Build Bases*, NAVINT, Vol.4, No.23, 20 November 1992, p.3

⁶⁸⁶ Haseman, John *Indonesia to Scrutinise Weapons Purchases*, Op Cit

⁶⁸⁷ *Military Aid To Indonesia*, Middle East News Items, 22 September 1999. This report was based on material originally printed in the German media *Die Woche*, 17 September 1999, LexisNexis

⁶⁸⁸ Hoffmann, Wolfgang *Germany at the Foremost Front: Arms Exports, Bonn Dumping Armoured Vehicles and Frigates All Around Globe - To the Distress of the Industry*, Op Cit.

⁶⁸⁹ Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesian Concerns over Ex-NVA Ships*, Op Cit

⁶⁹⁰ *Indonesia to buy 39 used warships from Germany*, Straits Times, 5 September 1992, p.19, LexisNexis

deal with piracy problems in Indonesian waters. Neither could it protect Indonesian waters from neighbouring illegal fishing fleets.⁶⁹¹ The procurement of 39 ex-Volksmarine vessels hugely enhanced the TNL-AL's ability to protect Indonesian maritime interests.

It also indicates that these vessels' mission was not for defence or security but predominantly constabulary functions. General Feisal, Chief of the Indonesian Armed Forces (Abri), also firmly denied rumours that the Indonesian military were unhappy about the ships' procurement. He told the press that reports of controversy were untrue and that the ships from the Volksmarine were most suitable for the Indonesian archipelago. Feisal also declared that the Abri would purchase an undisclosed number of troop transporters and other vehicles from the former NVA.⁶⁹² However, no further procurement of major weapon systems from the former NVA stock other than the Volksmarine vessels has occurred.⁶⁹³

There were reasons for the Indonesian armed forces to oppose this naval procurement. First, it would inevitably divert resources originally allocated for other items. One report even argued that the increase of naval combat forces was hampered, though the amphibious and mine warfare capabilities were enhanced, by this massive procurement of Volksmarine vessels because of their specific manpower and maintenance demands.⁶⁹⁴ An attempt in early 1990s to purchase two so-called air defence surface combatants, Dutch *Tromp* class destroyers, to enhance its blue water capability was never substantiated though well-placed Indonesian sources insisted that plans were underway. But the procurement of the ex-Volksmarine vessels had absorbed all the available funds.⁶⁹⁵

Second, existing force planning and manpower management was affected by these acquisitions. The Indonesian Navy was forced to mothball other assets and the cost of

⁶⁹¹ Zhou, William Y. *Indonesia: Military Reform and Modernisation*, Military Technology, Volume 24, Issue 12 (December 2000), pp.36-41, ProQuest

⁶⁹² Jacob, Paul *Abri to buy 50 British light tanks, East German transport vehicles*, Straits Times, Singapore, 20 November 1994.

⁶⁹³ *Procurement, Indonesia*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Southeast Asia, Jane's website, 10 January 2003

⁶⁹⁴ Bateman, Sam *Features, ASEAN's Tiger Navies - Catching Up or Building Up?*, Op Cit

⁶⁹⁵ Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesia Buy Dutch DDGs?*, NAVINT, Vol.5, No.6, 26 March 1993, p.4

training and manpower management increased in order to operate these vessels.⁶⁹⁶ The building of a badly needed new naval base on the southern tip of Sumatra was also suspended.⁶⁹⁷

Third, the operational cost of acquiring a great amount of military hardware with no clear and reliable back-up logistic support could cause problems in the future. Apparently the condition of these vessels as well as the lack of supporting documentation caused serious concern among senior Indonesian naval officers.⁶⁹⁸ Without sufficient documentation, the logistic functions could not be properly operated. According to another report, only few years after delivery the Parchim I class corvettes needed to re-engine, so the concern expressed by the Indonesia armed forces about procurement issues were not groundless. Interestingly, the \$35 million re-engine programme was again rewarded to the German defence supplier Deutz in 2001 after defeating a Ukrainian shipyard in the bid and conducted at the PT PAL shipyard in Surabaya.⁶⁹⁹

Besides the re-engine programme for the Parchim I class corvettes, the Australian defence contractor ADI provided Dyad minesweeping gear to install on the Kondor II class mine countermeasures vessels.⁷⁰⁰ The ADI Minesweeping And Surveillance System AMASS was first introduced to Indonesian Navy in August 1993 and the contract was soon settled.⁷⁰¹ Early on, US defence contractor Bendix had already provided AN/AQS-17 variable depth mine-hunting sonar for the Kondor II class mine countermeasures vessels prior to their delivery to Indonesia.⁷⁰² This procurement project for retrofitting eight of the nine Kondor II class minesweepers with the AN/AQS-17 (V) sonar system was revealed in early 1992. These two procurement projects substantially enhanced the capability of these Kondor II class mine countermeasures vessels, which indicated that their missions were expanded again

⁶⁹⁶ Haseman, John *Indonesia to Scrutinise Weapons Purchases*, Op Cit

⁶⁹⁷ Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesian Navy has Funding Difficulties*, NAVINT, Vol.6, No.20, 7 October 1994, p.6

⁶⁹⁸ Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesian Concerns over Ex-NVA Ships*, Op Cit

⁶⁹⁹ Karniol, Robert *Indonesian Navy reveals patrol boat prototype*, Jane's Navy International, 1 March 2003, Jane's website, 28 January 2003

⁷⁰⁰ *Signals, Indonesia Receives last 'Parchims'*, Jane's Navy International, Vol.101, Issue 7, 1 September 1996, p.6

⁷⁰¹ Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesian MCM Plans*, NAVINT, Vol.5, No.18, 10 September 1993, p.7

⁷⁰² *Kondor II (Type 89.200), Mine Countermeasures Vessels (MCMV)*, Op Cit., p.1749

from purely patrol to mine counter measurement.⁷⁰³

The last two ships of the thirty-nine former Volksmarine vessels were delivered to the Indonesian Navy at Neustadt on 12 July 1996.⁷⁰⁴ A serious incident which occurred while these vessels were en route from Europe to Indonesia reflected the effectiveness of the training programme attached to the procurement project. Indonesian Navy KRI (Kapal di Republik Indonesia) *Teluk Lampung*, ex-Volksmarine *Schwedt*, met heavy seas off the northeast coast of Spain in June 1994. The bow door was damaged and flooding caused the Indonesian crew to believe that their vessel was about to capsize. The decision to abandon ship was made and the international distress code transmitted on 3 June. Spanish search and rescue helicopters rescued all fifty-two crews. Amazingly, a Spanish salvage tug found this damaged vessel the next day and towed it back to Gijon.⁷⁰⁵ KRI *Teluk Lampung* was repaired and later joined the Indonesian Navy.⁷⁰⁶ What happened on KRI *Teluk Lampung* was not unique. It was reported that some of these ex-Volksmarine ships also suffered problems in transit from Europe to Indonesia because funds were insufficient to refit and modernise them.⁷⁰⁷

Given the difficulties encountered during delivery, the effectiveness and readiness of the former Volksmarine vessels operated by the Indonesian Navy must be questioned.⁷⁰⁸ One commentator even concluded that "the block purchase of 39 ex-GDR vessels back in 1992 did little to change the Indonesian Navy's traditional low-level status and capabilities".⁷⁰⁹ Interestingly, provision for another two Parchim class corvettes, probably from the only source left – Russia - was in the Indonesian Naval budget for year 2000. No further purchases were made, but it could be an indication of improved effectiveness using the Parchim I class corvettes that stimulated thoughts of additional procurement.⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰³ Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesia Orders Minehunting Sonars*, NAVINT, Vol.4, No.24, 4 December 1992, p.6

⁷⁰⁴ *Signals, Indonesia Receives last 'Parchims'*, Op Cit

⁷⁰⁵ Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesian Landing Ship Damaged*, NAVINT, Vol.6, No.14, 15 July 1994, p.3

⁷⁰⁶ *Frosch I class (Type 108) (LSM), Amphibious Forces, Indonesia*, Jane's Fighting Ships, Jane's website, 20 February 2003

⁷⁰⁷ Preston, Antony (ed) *Indonesian Navy has Funding Difficulties*, Op Cit

⁷⁰⁸ Haseman, John *Indonesia to Scrutinise Weapons Purchases*, Op Cit. See also *Procurement, Indonesia*, Op Cit. and *Kapitan Patimura (Parchim I), Corvettes*, Op Cit

⁷⁰⁹ Zhou, William Y. *Indonesia: Military Reform and Modernisation*, Op Cit

Case Study II: Turkey

The first indication that the Turkish military might have misused weapons from the NVA, transferred by the FRG, was revealed in a report from the German NGO, the Society for Threatened Peoples, in Göttingen. In February 1992, it accused the Turkish government of secretly re-delivering 200,000 Kalashnikov rifles, surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles from NVA stock to some Turkish Azeris around Nagorno-Karabakh, a closed community in Azerbaijan inhibited by Armenians.⁷¹¹ It seemed that no action was being taken by the FRG in response to this accusation. Before it was known that any of the former NVA military hardware resold to Turkey was involved in these operations, a strong diplomatic message was sent by the German Foreign Minister Genscher in August 1991 when the Turkish troops fought the civilian population in the Kurdish region.⁷¹² In October the FRG Parliamentary State Secretary of the Defence Ministry Otfried Henning harshly criticised the Turkish government for attacking the Kurdish people in northern Iraq and announced that the FRG would re-examine its policy of sending military aid to Turkey.⁷¹³

But a more serious scandal relating to the former NVA assets supposedly in Turkish possession was exposed. On 27 March 1992, the FRG government spokesperson, Dieter Vogel, told the press that the Turkish government had confirmed that former NVA armoured personnel carriers armed with machine guns, transferred by the FRG government after unification, were being used against the Kurdish people in Anatolia region "for monitoring, surveillance and observation". The FRG condemned the Turkish government for employing German weapons against civilians and immediately suspended all arms sales to Turkey. The Turkish Prime Minister, Suleyman Demiral, defended Turkish policy by arguing that all measures against Kurdish rebels were no different from those Germany had taken against its urban guerrillas.⁷¹⁴ Nevertheless, besides arms exports and armament technology

⁷¹⁰ *Procurement, Indonesia*, Op Cit

⁷¹¹ *FRG Weapons Allegedly Used in Nagorno-Karabakh*, DPA, 3 February, FBIS-WEU-92-023, 4 February 1992, p.14

⁷¹² *Genscher Condemns Turkish Operations in Iraq*, ADA, 9 August, FBIS-WEU-91-155, 12 August 1991, p.10

⁷¹³ *Defence Official Criticises Turkey on Attacks*, ADN, 14 October, FBIS-WEU-91-199, 15 October 1991, p.13

⁷¹⁴ *German Armour used against Kurds*, Financial Times, 28 March 1992, p.2

cooperation, the ban had serious impact on German civilian exports, joint technological development and production projects. A German Defence Ministry assessment report delivered to the FRG Foreign Ministry clarified its position and requested appropriate measures be taken to manage increasing expenses. It was later disclosed that the cost of this embargo would be billions of German Marks, possibly as many as fifteen billion, if it included the loss by the private sectors and defence industry. Additionally, several hundred million Marks would be needed to destroy weapons, material and ammunitions left by the NVA, that otherwise should have been delivered to Turkey.⁷¹⁵

According to Stoltenburg, the transfer of former NVA equipment to Turkey started as Germany's contribution to the Gulf conflict.⁷¹⁶ According to a report in *Der Spiegel*, the value of this initial transfer of NVA tanks, fighters and artillery was allegedly \$1.3 billion (DM 6.5 billion)⁷¹⁷ as "special arms aid" to this NATO partner for the Gulf crisis. In this transaction, the NVA contribution was only DM2.1 billion. Most of the Turkish "aid" was from the Bundeswehr, and would otherwise have been demolished because of the coming arms reduction in Europe.⁷¹⁸ But according to Nassauer, the actual quantity transferred was not so great as initially reported.⁷¹⁹ Nevertheless, once the FRG started to deliver NVA surplus to Turkey, it led to some unavoidable consequences that caused great embarrassment later. First, since the FRG maintained a carefully balanced arms sale policy between Turkey and Greece, the FRG needed to supply some NVA surplus to Greece. Second, although the Turkish government had promised that all the arms acquired from the FRG would only be used in conducting NATO defence policy, fighting the Kurdish guerrillas was a grey area since NATO states had agreed to cooperate in fighting terrorism. Third, Turkey was allegedly supplying Iraqi Kurds with small arms from the NVA although the treaties between the FRG and Turkey clearly restricted arms re-exports from Turkey without the written approval of the FRG. Eventually, the entire NVA surplus exported to Turkey

⁷¹⁵ *Embargo Against Ankara Costs Bonn Billions*, Die Welt, 14 May, Cost of Arms Embargo Against Turkey Estimated, FBIS-WEU-92-094, 14 May 1992, pp.7-8

⁷¹⁶ Tomforde, Anna *Slimming Cure for E. German Forces*, Op Cit

⁷¹⁷ Fisher, Marc E. *Germany Drops Out Of Soviet-Led Alliance*, Op Cit

⁷¹⁸ *A Chiseller's Package from Bonn*, Der Spiegel, 24 September, p.16, Further on NVA Supplies, FBIS-WEU-90-186, 25 September 1990, p.4

⁷¹⁹ Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, p.58

went beyond the context of the Gulf War but served FRG interests.⁷²⁰

The supply of NVA surplus stock to Turkey was only temporarily disrupted. Delivery was soon resumed until the mid-1990s. Compared with the diplomatic embarrassment, the substantial profits triumphed again in the calculus of politics. Nevertheless, the Turkish controversy fundamentally impacted on German disarmament and conversion policy. In 2001, when the Bundeswehr replaced 400,000 G3 assault rifles by the new Heckler and Koch G36, instead of selling or giving away the redundant rifles, the FRG destroyed all G3 rifles, starting in 2002. The FRG wanted to avoid repeating the blunder of transferring Kalashnikov assault rifles and suitable ammunition from the NVA inventory to Turkey. The FRG also adopted a stricter policy for exporting small arms from government surplus stock.⁷²¹

Case Study III: Croatia

A criminal investigation conducted by the German and legal authority on arms smuggling by immigrant workers from the former Yugoslavia showed how hard it was to stop NVA military hardware being illegally resold by German entrepreneurs. In February 1992, the Munich Customs authority warned the Bonn officials about the purchase by a Croatian arms dealer of 1,500 former NVA military vehicles from VEBEG GmbH, a Frankfurt-based company that resold used military equipments acquired from the Bundeswehr. Two months later, thirty-three trucks were intercepted at the German-Austrian border as they headed for Croatia. Later, another thirty-one vehicles were discovered near the frontier. Evidence suggests all these military vehicles would eventually go to Croatia, and that more than 1,400 military vehicles had already passed through the border and reached their destination.⁷²²

Smuggling military assets became very complicated. Two days after being arrested,

⁷²⁰ Ibid, pp. 42, 45, 58 and 59. Proliferation of small arms to Third World states has always been criticised by the arms control movement activists. German officials stated that 256,000 of 731,000 7.62mm sub-machines guns from the former NVA arsenal were re-exported to other countries after reunification. See *End of Cold War Produced a New Cascade of Light Arms*, DPA, 5 April 1995.

⁷²¹ Davidson-Seger, Moira (ed) *Box U.19: Germany to destroy 400,000 assault rifles*, BICC Conversion Survey 2003 - Global Disarmament, Demilitarisation and Demobilisation, Bonn, Bonn International Centre for Conversion, Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2003, pp.86-87

⁷²² Tomforde, Anna *Germans deny Croatia is using their tanks*, Guardian, 5 August 1992, p.7

thirty-one of these trucks, painted with Red Cross symbols, were released because Bavarian prosecutors claimed that there was insufficient evidence to prove the trucks were being illegally exported. Only two trucks, including one fitted with machine-gun mounts, were confiscated. The drivers were indicted for violating export laws. Responding to this incident, the German Defence Minister Volker R  he accelerated the progress of scrapping former NVA military assets and reducing the distribution of sensitive weapons, vehicles and ammunition. He stressed the importance of preventing these weapon systems falling into the wrong hands.⁷²³ According to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), even after few months after reunification, it was suspected that some former Stasi employees held weapons from NVA stocks.⁷²⁴ Ironically, this stance was almost identical to that of Admiral Hoffmann, the GDR Defence Minister, long before German reunification when he anticipated the difficulties of managing excessive NVA military properties in the uncertain future.⁷²⁵

Since Germany was Croatia's traditional European ally, firmly supporting its independence and promoting EU recognition of Croatia in 1991, some accused the FRG of providing significant amounts of military material and equipment to Croatia and giving tacit consent to illegal arms transfers that did not comply with the United Nations embargo. Illegal deliveries of military equipment, notably combat aircraft, helicopter and armoured vehicles were believed to come from former NVA stock acquired at German reunification. The Hungarian government was also involved in transferring arms acquired from the former NVA to the Croatian Armed Forces.⁷²⁶ The covert Mig-21bis fighter deliveries, which could equip two full-strength fighter interceptor squadrons, reached Croatia via Hungary and the Ukraine. According to UN personnel at Zagreb-Pleso airport, German pilots' voices were heard on the Croatian Air Traffic Control channel on daily basis as the Croatian Air Force conducted intensive training programmes of MiG-21 fighters and Mi-24 attack

⁷²³ Fisher, Marc *Dismantling of East German Army Brings Deals on Military Wheels*, Op Cit

⁷²⁴ *Former Stasis May Still Have Arms, Money*, ADN, 19 May, FBIS-WEU-91-092, 13 May 1991, p.14

⁷²⁵ Hoffmann, 1993, Chinese translation, 2001, Op Cit., p.424, Appendix 3, the Defence Minister's speech on 26 February 1990, in the GDR 14th Round Table Meeting. The GDR defence authority before reunification also persistently emphasised the same concern. See Heckmann, Erhard *Munitions Disposal in the NVA*, Op Cit

⁷²⁶ *External Affairs, Croatia*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans, Jane's website, 11 February 2003. See also *External Affairs, Croatia*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans - UPDATE 2

helicopters before its offensive manoeuvres towards western Slovenia in early May 1995. Not only German mercenaries but also the Ukrainians were believed to have been involved in training. All these phenomena reinforced speculation about the transfer of former NVA assets to Croatia.⁷²⁷

In late 1991, during the severe fighting between Croats and Serbs around Vukovar, Croatian troops were seen wearing former NVA uniforms, but it was believed that these uniforms were surplus acquired after the Cold War. No evidence appeared proving the uniforms were acquired through official channels.⁷²⁸ An assessment report indicated that all these alleged arms transfers were conducted at a cost below market value. Furthermore, some financial measures, such as fake loans, were employed to cover Croatia's weapon procurement project.⁷²⁹ A report compiled from information provided by reporters, including the Yugoslav government, to the United Nations concluded that the following NVA military hardware was held by Croatia's Armed Forces.

List of Possible Former NVA Military Equipment held by Croatia			
Designation	Equipment Type	Quantity	Delivery Time
SY (AT-6)	Anti-Tank Missile	50	1994
AT-7	Anti-Tank Missile	100	1994
Mi-24V	Attack Helicopter	4	1993 - 1994
MiG-21bis	Combat Aircraft	20	1993 - 1994
MiG-21U	Combat Trainer	8	1993 - 1994
L-39ZA	Combat Trainer	12	1993 - 1994
PT-76	Light Tank	6	1993
2S1	SP Howitzer	12	1993
MiG-21*	Combat Aircraft	2	1992
RPG-7*	Anti-Tank Rocket	2,550	1992
122mm*	Battlefield Mortar	20	1991
152mm*	Towed Howitzer	6	1991
T-55*	Main Battle Tank	60	1991

Source: *Procurement, Croatia*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans - UPDATE 2, Jane's website, 27 April 1998. * Items from Milivojevic, Mark *Croatia's Intelligence Services*, Jane's Intelligence Review, Vol.6, Issue 9, 1 September 1994, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, p.404.

Without solid evidence to identify the supply channel, it was cautiously noted "*that the country of origin and manufacturer of the equipment is listed above should not be*

⁷²⁷ *Air Force, Croatia*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans, December 2001-May 2002, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, pp.237-240

⁷²⁸ Gay, Lance *Both Sides Find Myths Die Hard*, Ottawa Citizen, 19 November 1991, p.A6, LexisNexis

⁷²⁹ *Defence Spending, Croatia*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans - UPDATE 2, Jane's

taken to mean that either party is directly or indirectly aware that the equipment was procured for Croatia, or that the specific government was involved in the transaction". Likewise, the assessment of the value of Croatia's arms from January 1992 to April 1994 concluded "*it is presumed that countries of origin have not necessarily permitted the export of equipment but that this equipment has been procured on the open market*", though the assessment was based on data from reliable sources. Procurement from NVA surplus was believed to be worth nearly \$300,000,000 during this period. Only two batches of MILAN anti-tank missiles, 25 delivered in 1991 and another 24 in 1994, from Germany, were not former NVA stock.⁷³⁰ Although there were rumours that Russian-made MIG fighter aircraft from the former NVA were transferred to Croatia, in August 1992 the FRG government officially denied these reports.⁷³¹

Croatia's Security Information Service, SIS - Sigurnosno Izvestajna Sluzba, was the most likely agency to manage illegal arms transfer of former NVA military equipment to Croatia armed forces, HV - Hrvatska Vojska. The SIS handled large amounts of funds for covert purchase of foreign weapons and equipments required by the Croatia's armed forces using overseas banks and Croatian-owned commercial agencies in many different countries. Based on the close relationship between Croatia's National Security Office, UNS - Ured za Nacionalnu Sigurnost, and Germany's BfV, Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz - Federal Office of the Protection of the Constitution, it was believed that SIS conducted its undisclosed armament procurement tasks intensively in Germany by using this main external intelligence service connection in West Europe. As many believed and criticised, the BfV and other German intelligence services intentionally kept a passive attitude or simply ignored the unlawful arms transactions conducted by SIS in German territory, notably those concerning the weapons from the NVA inventory, though they were clear violations of the UN arms embargo. But no hard evidence exists to prove either the FRG government or German intelligence services were ever directly involved in assisting illegitimate exports of NVA military hardware.⁷³² Furthermore, arms transfers from former NVA stockpiles to Croatia were never officially disclosed in any German governmental documentation. Yet, to accept all these weapons and

website, 27 April 1998

⁷³⁰ *Procurement, Croatia, Op Cit*

⁷³¹ Tomforde, *Anna Germans deny Croatia is using their tanks, Op Cit*

equipments were simply acquired through a so-called open market but not the official channel is hard to believe.

Was it possible that some military hardware, notably the MiG fighters and T-55 MBTs, actually originated from other East European states, namely, Hungary, were mistakenly seen as NVA surplus? Several indications listed next ought not to be thoughtlessly ignored. First, regardless of an unconfirmed media report indicated that some NVA weapons transferred to Hungary before reunification were later actually delivered to the battlefield in former Yugoslavia, the FRG government in 1991 did decline to transfer any NVA surplus to Hungary because of the concern of further flowing into the Balkans that would certainly violate the UN embargo resolution.⁷³³ It was a clear stance explicitly and repeatedly made by the FRG which subsequently hindered the sale of NVA arms to Hungary. Second, according to a "shopping list" devised by the Hungarian government based on FRG stock, illegal items never appeared in it.

Third, on the contrary, items such as MiG-21 fighters, T-55, T-52 and T-54 MBTs were already declared military surplus by the Hungarian government and were released to the open market in February 1990. According to an unidentified speaker from one Hungarian government agency, any sale would be unbelievably "flexible" to "any" potential buyer. Price was negotiable, customised services were available and prospective customer including private persons were free to choose any specific item from stock. No restriction of demilitarisation before transfer, such as taking off the gun turret from MBTs, existed, though the Hungarians emphasised the potential of these military platforms for non-military functions.⁷³⁴ The possibility of misjudging the origin of some major Croatian weapon platforms, therefore, does exist. But neither does any solid evidence prove that those platforms originated from Hungary despite much speculation of Hungarian involvement. Furthermore, in early 1992, a media report noted that the Hungarian government had kept 300,000 infantry weapons for delivery to Croatian forces. Again, neither the truth of this report nor the origin of

⁷³² Milivojevic, Mark *Croatia's Intelligence Services*, Op. Cit

⁷³³ Seher, Dietmar *NVA Weapons Will Not Be Sold*, Berliner Zeitung, 9 August, FBIS- WEU-91-155, Bundeswehr Decides Not To Sell Ex-NVA Weapons, 12 August 1991, p.13

⁷³⁴ *People's Army Selling Decommissioned Tanks*, Budapest Television Service, 16 February, FBIS-EEU-90-029, 20 February 1990, p.44. The People's Army here is the Hungarian People's Army,

these weapons can be clearly identified.⁷³⁵

Some NVA equipment with an estimated street value of under \$9,000,000 was delivered to Bosnia-Herzegovina during and after the UN embargo period. But this does not imply that the FRG violated the ban on exporting weapons to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Bosnia-Herzegovina government could acquire arms on the open market despite the UN arms embargo. Many Muslim countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan and Turkey were suppliers and financiers of weapons for Bosnia-Herzegovina. Weapons and equipment from these countries could also have originated from other nations. Therefore, it is very hard to prove that the countries of origin made the official decision to deliver these weapons.⁷³⁶ German CDU Party Bundestag members, including Wolfgang V. Geldern, once advocated delivering German weapons to Croatia via Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁷³⁷ First, we should notice that the German weapons mentioned here might not be necessarily from the NVA surplus. Second, the FRG Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel had firmly declined the proposal of providing arms to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Kinkel addressed in official stance that such transfers were not only legally impossible because of the arms embargo set by the United Nations but also politically incorrect.⁷³⁸ The existence of the weapons from the NVA inventory in Bosnia-Herzegovina, therefore, is not proof that any delivery was officially made by the German government.

Humanitarian Donations

Besides transferring assets to other governments, contributing NVA military hardware to humanitarian organisations started before reunification. Through an arrangement initiated by the GDR development organisation OIKOS, the NVA provided 65 military trucks, the GDR Ministry of Economic Cooperation paid for repainting and spare parts, and the corresponding FRG ministry shouldered the expense of transferring these vehicles to Africa, where the trucks were delivered to the Church

not the East German Nationale Volksarmee.

⁷³⁵ *Neue Presse*, 10 January 1992, in Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit., p.233, Note 59

⁷³⁶ *Procurement, Bosnia-Herzegovina*, Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - The Balkans - 08, Jane's website, 11 April 2001

⁷³⁷ *Berliner Zeitung*, 4 August 1992, p.4, in Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit., p.233, Note 59

⁷³⁸ *Kinkel Rejects Supplying Arms to Bosnia*, ADN, 4 August, FBIS-WEU-92-150, 4 August 1992,

Joint Relief Programme in Ethiopia and the German World Hunger Aid in Angola and Mozambique. Moreover, three mechanics were also sent by the GDR to service these trucks.⁷³⁹ After reunification, more NVA equipment, including converted high-tech land-sweeping gear, tanks and trucks, were donated to a German humanitarian organisation called Cap Anamur for supporting humanitarian assistance and de-mining operations in Angola.⁷⁴⁰ Similar support was given to the humanitarian operation of Cap Anamur in Cambodia.⁷⁴¹

The Bundeswehr also sent ninety-two trucks, tow trucks, water transporters and ambulances from the NVA to support United Nations peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia.⁷⁴² Some military trucks from NVA stock were also given to the road and construction departments of the local governments in eastern Germany.⁷⁴³ Also a huge amount of field kitchens, engineering equipment, power generators, sanitation apparatuses and accommodation was delivered to civilian establishments, charitable organisations and local communities, in former GDR territory.⁷⁴⁴

9,000 of the 85,000 ex-NVA military trucks, after being temporarily stored on the main runway of a former East German air force base at Peenemünde for reselling by the civilian firm MDSG (Materialdepot Servicegesellschaft mbH, Material Depot Service Company), were given to former Soviet republics, including Russia, for civilian use.⁷⁴⁵ Massive amounts of the combat rations were donated to the Soviet Union when it asked the FRG to provide foodstuffs in the first winter after German reunification.⁷⁴⁶ A month later, 150 Soviet-made Kamaz and Ural trucks and buses that originally belonged to the NVA participated in a cross-nation convoy delivering

pp.4

⁷³⁹ *NVA Helps in Africa*, Frankfurter Rundschau, 30 August, p.4, NVA Reportedly Sending Army Trucks to Africa, FBIS-EEU-90-171, 4 September 1990, p.22

⁷⁴⁰ Dias, Fernando and Xangongo *Doctors in Tanks*, Africa News, 15 and 28 March 1994

⁷⁴¹ Jaura, Ramesh *Cambodia: Germany to Resume Official Ties Next Month*, Op Cit

⁷⁴² *Equipment Donated to UN Peacekeeping Force*, DPA, 14 May, FBIS-WEU-92-094, 14 May 1992,

p.7

⁷⁴³ Fisher, Marc *Dismantling of East German Army Brings Deals on Military Wheels*, Op Cit

⁷⁴⁴ *Ruehe on Bundeswehr Buildup in East Länder*, Op. Cit.; Atkinson, Rick and Steven Taylor E. *German Army Meets Its End - A Clearance Sale; Thousands Flock to Warehouse Daily to Buy Everything From Binoculars to Buckets*, Washington Post, 5 February 1994, p. A14, LexisNexis

⁷⁴⁵ Fisher, Marc *Dismantling of East German Army Brings Deals on Military Wheels*, Op Cit; Atkinson, Rick and Steven Taylor E. *German Army Meets Its End - A Clearance Sale; Thousands Flock to Warehouse Daily to Buy Everything From Binoculars to Buckets*, Op Cit

⁷⁴⁶ *More on German Aid to USSR*, DPA, 29 November, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 1 December 1990, Part 1 The USSR, SU/0936/A1/1, LexisNexis

Bundeswehr charitable donations to the Russian Orthodox Church, including food, medical instruments and tools for repairing buildings.⁷⁴⁷

No Guarantee of Diplomatic Return

The FRG delivered massive amounts of former NVA equipment, mainly engineering equipment, transportation vehicles and NBC protection gear, to Gulf-War allies in the early 1990s, as a part of their contribution in burden sharing. Major beneficiaries of these donations were the United States, France, Czechoslovakia, Israel and Egypt.⁷⁴⁸ The FRG promised to donate DM470 million worth of NVA equipment as a part of its DM3.3 billion contribution to the Gulf War allies. Chancellor Kohl used these military assets to reduce Germany's financial contribution when he bargained with the US Secretary of State James Baker on 15 September 1990. James Baker responded positively to these free gifts of former NVA equipment.⁷⁴⁹ It was an unexpected political manoeuvre. The previous week, when the FRG was occupied with the agenda of the coming reunification as well as the reluctance of military involvement in the Gulf crisis, media expected that Kohl would only offer financial aid and some Bundeswehr chemical weapon-detection vehicles in return for US support of German reunification.⁷⁵⁰

When *Der Spiegel* and *Die Welt* disclosed the agreement, the reports were confirmed by FRG spokesman Hans Klein, but carefully phrased to imply that the equipment would not contain any weapons but might include NBC protective gear and vehicles. Some American negative responses mentioned in media reports were firmly denied by U.S. Foreign Service officers in Bonn. American diplomats expected the contribution made by the FRG to include NVA items.⁷⁵¹ But US Congress Democratic

⁷⁴⁷ *Aid Convoy for Russian Orthodox Church Enters Poland*, PAP News Wire - Polish Press Agency, 8 February 1991, LexisNexis

⁷⁴⁸ Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, pp.42-43

⁷⁴⁹ March, David *Crisis in the Gulf; E German Army Stock Included in Bonn's Offer*, Financial Times, 25 September 1990, p. 2, LexisNexis. Different source indicated that the value of the NVA equipment was DM760 million. Bundeswehr equipment worth DM240 million was also included in Kohl's offer. See *Spokesman Rejects Criticism*, DPA, 24 September, FBIS-WEU-90-186, 25 September 1990, p.4

⁷⁵⁰ Eisenhammer, John *Crisis in the Gulf; Gulf Disturbs German Unification Reverie*, Independent, 7 September 1990, p.9, LexisNexis

⁷⁵¹ Schmemmann, Serge *Confrontation in the Gulf; East Germans to Supply Equipment to Gulf Force*, New York Times, 25 September 1990, p.13, LexisNexis

Representative Charles E. Schumer said "I think 43 percent of their pledge was East German military equipment, which is virtually unusable, whether it be on the plains of Prussia or in the deserts of Saudi Arabia" and "43 percent of that should be in East German military equipment that they don't want and we don't really want is appalling": transferring NVA stock to the allies in the Gulf War was not so successful as originally anticipated by the FRG⁷⁵² Both the U.S. and foreign media accepted these negative perspectives from the U.S. Federal lawmakers.⁷⁵³ Perhaps from pressures from these media reports as well as the U.S. government, Kohl promised an additional \$5.5 billion to the United States and about \$550 million to the United Kingdom on 30 January 1991. Therefore, German economic aid to the Gulf War coalition may have reached \$1 billion in 1990 and \$11 billion in 1991, which would make the NVA hardware a relatively small portion of its contribution.⁷⁵⁴

Were the comments made by the US congressmen groundless? A Bundeswehr spokesman had called much of the NVA equipment "useless" and the FRG had already decided that it would not accommodate "most of the NVA Russian-made jet fighters and other obsolescent weapons", so a negative response is understandable.⁷⁵⁵ It was known that the FRG Defence Ministry initiated the proposal of giving the NVA surplus to offset the scale of the German financial contribution requested by the United States. A confidential document from the FRG Defence Ministry stating, "(we) must counter the accusation of inactivity and insufficient support, which comes mainly

⁷⁵² *Press Conference*, Richard A Gephardt (D-MO) and Charles E. Schumer (D-NY), News Maker & Policy Makers; The Middle-East, Federal News Service, 15 December 1990; Press Availability with Leon E. Panetta (D-CA) and Charles E. Schumer (D-NY), *Subject: Allied Burden Sharing*, Commerce and Trade Speeches or Conferences, Federal News Service, 22 January 1991, LexisNexis; and *Time for Allies To Live Up With Their Responsibilities*, U.S. Congressional Record - House, 102nd Cong. 1st Sess., 137 Cong Rec H 691, Vol.137, No.16, 24 January 1991, LexisNexis. U.S. Senator Metzenbaum of Ohio State expressed similar views about the FRG using East German military equipment as a part of its contribution to the Gulf War. See *The Persian Gulf Crisis*, U.S. Congressional Record - Senate, 102nd Cong. 1st Sess., 137 Cong Rec S183, Vol.137, No.7, 11 January 1991, LexisNexis

⁷⁵³ *Allies paying too little, politicians say*, The Toronto Star, December 16, 1990, p.H6, LexisNexis; Grier, Peter and George D. Moffett III *U.S. Paying Lion's Share of Gulf Bill*, Christian Science Monitor, 24 December 1990, p.8, LexisNexis; Johnson, Daniel *Old Fires Lick at Germany*, Times, 24 January 1991, Features Section, LexisNexis; Johnson, Sharen Shaw *Allies' Contributions Under Scrutiny*, USA Today, 25 January 1991, p.6A, LexisNexis; and Stone, Norman *War Brings Out the Mouse in the Continent's Wealthy Giant*, Sunday Times, 27 January 1991, Features Section, LexisNexis

⁷⁵⁴ Goshko, John M. *Germany to Complete Contribution Toward Gulf War Costs Thursday*, Washington Post, 27 March 1991, p.A26, in Bennett, Andrew, Joseph Leppgold and Danny Unger "Burden-Sharing in the Persian Gulf War", *International Organisation*, Volume 48, Issue 1 (Winter 1994), p.66

⁷⁵⁵ Fisher, Marc E. *Germany Drops Out Of Soviet-Led Alliance*, Op Cit

from the United States", proves that the Bundeswehr expected resistance.⁷⁵⁶ Different views of NVA equipment also existed between the U.S. administration and congressional members, but amounted to the following. The effectiveness of the equipment itself did not justify the value. It was decided by the interaction of supply and demand. Therefore, the actual monetary value of the equipment could not be reasonably assessed: should it be measured by their initial procurement price or by the market price at the time of the transaction? But one German Defence Ministry official claimed that the value of the NVA equipment was calculated on the basis of '*bargain basement prices*'.⁷⁵⁷

Indeed, the contribution of these NVA legacies for the Gulf War is hard to measure. Some cost would not even appear in official statistics: for instance, the contract for airlifting 100 tonnes of former NVA gas masks to Saudi Arabia was worth several million Marks.⁷⁵⁸ Therefore, the value of the equipment itself only reflected part of the cost. Unquestionably, delivering these freely was "*part of Bonn's efforts to clean out the attic*" and helped to manage the NVA as well as preventing equipment from entering the black market by illegal means thus causing further embarrassment. Also, it requires training to ensure full utilisation of these donations.⁷⁵⁹ In the 1990 Gulf War, the Czech and Bulgarian Forces would have the best chance amongst all beneficiaries to exploit the sophisticated NVA systems whose technical manuals were in Russian.⁷⁶⁰ Many commentators misperceived that the FRG merely gave the equipment and left no further assistance. In reality, the German government was never so irresponsible. Some NVA members significantly contributed to the training of U.S. soldiers in mid-November 1990 and delivered vehicles from eastern Germany to Bremerhaven whilst still facing an uncertain future themselves.⁷⁶¹

⁷⁵⁶ *A Chiseller's Package from Bonn*, Op Cit

⁷⁵⁷ Marsh, David *The Gulf War; Germany Supplies US with 1,000 Vehicles*, Financial Times, 21 January 1991, p.3, LexisNexis

⁷⁵⁸ Oldag, Andreas *Europe: Dogfight Begins - Andreas Oldag Assesses the Chances of Oskar Naske's One-Man Band Picking Up the Former East German State Airline*, Guardian, 1 February 1991, LexisNexis

⁷⁵⁹ Training was needed not only on equipment from the NVA. Some 100 American soldiers also needed training at Bundeswehr facilities when the Bundeswehr contributed ten 'Fuchs' Anti-Chemical Warfare Vehicles to the U.S. forces for the Gulf crisis. See *Anti-CW Vehicles Provided to U.S. Forces*, DPA, 17 August, FBIS-WEU-90-161, 20 August 1990, p.15

⁷⁶⁰ Child, Mary *The Spoils of the Cold War*, Journal Of Commerce, editorial, p.14A, 5 October 1990, LexisNexis

⁷⁶¹ Marsh, David *The Gulf War; German Supply Lines Crucial for War Machine*, Financial Times, 24 January 1991, Section I, p.2, LexisNexis

Nevertheless, delivering NBC protection equipment and vehicles to the Middle East contributed to alleviating the fear of the people in the war zone, though its actual effectiveness has never been verified. General-purpose vehicles such as the trucks and water carriers also performed usefully. Among all the former NVA vehicles used in the Gulf War, the Czech Tatra tank-transporters best suited U.S. operational demands because their eight-wheeled high capacity trailers successfully solved the loading and deploying of U.S. MBTs to battle stations. Some criticism therefore was simply based on the fact that the FRG did not contribute what was originally requested and expected. Yet, despite these criticisms, the German government never publicised the details of the transfer because it wanted to keep a low profile concerning its involvement in this conflict.⁷⁶² Except for the gifts to Turkey, the FRG never delivered any weapons or ammunition from the NVA stocks to support the allied troops in the Gulf.

Facing the challenge of disposing of the massive NVA ammunition surplus, Hermann-Otto Solms, Chairman of the German Free Democratic Party Group in the Bundestag, requested an investigation into the possibility and suitability of contributing some NVA ammunition to the Allied forces for use in the Gulf crisis. The Bundeswehr declined the request in an unusually straightforward way, stating that ammunition could not possibly be used by weapons other than Soviet ones. It was totally unrealistic to adapt these to any western system though some might have the same calibre.⁷⁶³ After the Gulf War, the Bundeswehr received from the allies military materials worth several hundred millions Marks from the aid originally provided by the FRG.⁷⁶⁴ None of them originated from NVA stock. It would be meaningless to take any former NVA military hardware into the Bundeswehr because no compatible system was to be retained.

Third Party Interests

⁷⁶² Marsh, David *The Gulf War; Germany Supplies US with 1,000 Vehicles*, Op Cit

⁷⁶³ *300,000 Tonnes of Ammunition To Be Destroyed Despite Gulf War*, Op Cit

⁷⁶⁴ *Panorama: Bonn Steps Up Armament by Using Returned Weapons From Gulf War*, Frankfurter Rundschau, 2-3 October, p.4, Defence Ministry Said Increasing Arms Budget, FBIS-WEU-91-192, 3

Interestingly, a year later, a dispute between the US administration and Congress focused on another NVA related topic. U.S. Democrat Party Representatives Robert G. Torricelli from New Jersey and John Conyers Jr. from Michigan strongly expressed their disapproval of U.S. Defence Secretary Cheney's request to the FRG to supply military parts from the former NVA to Peru in order to support its Soviet-made helicopters in anti-drug operations. They believed that it was contradictory to U.S. congressional restrictions on arming the Peruvian military because of its bad human rights record. A senior U.S. State Department official immediately responded to the congressional criticism and called it "outrageous". The flame that burned across the Atlantic forced the FRG government to make an official statement assuring the US that arms transactions to Peru were also restricted by Germany.⁷⁶⁵

To use the NVA legacy as foreign aid did not always assure diplomatic leverage. It could also create controversy and cause negative consequences. Third party interests were always in the calculus of transferring former NVA surplus. North Korea was very interested in procuring NVA surplus, including arms, munitions and other equipment.⁷⁶⁶ The FRG never approved any transfer of NVA material that might jeopardise its relationship with the USA. This is evident by the reluctance to sell ammunition and equipments to India and Cuba around reunification time. Both the GDR and the FRG were clearly aware of the diplomatic consequences of such transactions. The GDR intentionally delayed the decision and left it to be decided by the FRG after reunification. Although Bonn played it down as a "matter of economics" seemingly to be solely decided by the FRG Defence Ministry, in reality there were mechanisms within German politics that could implicitly intervene with the final decisions.⁷⁶⁷ Stoltenberg once declined his Hungarian counterpart Lajos Furer's request to transfer NVA arms and ammunition by using the excuse that a coordinating process existed within the German federal government.⁷⁶⁸ In many cases, the transfer of NVA surplus to Eastern Europe would parallel some Bundeswehr

October 1991, pp.9-10

⁷⁶⁵ Isikoff, Michael *German Aid Sought to Fight Drugs; U.S. Bid to Help Peru Stirs Concern on Hill*, Washington Post, 22 February 1992, p. A16, LexisNexis

⁷⁶⁶ *East German Arms Sold to Finland, Paraguay, Interest North Korea*, Agence France Presse, 10 October 1991, LexisNexis

⁷⁶⁷ Kallenbach, Michael *Wanted*, Op Cit

⁷⁶⁸ *Hungarian Defence Minister in Germany*, Hungarian and FRG governmental news, 5-8 May, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 14 May 1991, Part 2 Eastern Europe, EE/1071/A1/1, LexisNexis

military cooperation programmes. Security concerns of the third party, mainly the Soviet Union, would also be an important factor. The FRG was unwilling to antagonise the Soviet Union by delivering German weapons to states that might stimulate Russian displeasure. The politico-military condition of the recipients themselves was also important. The Polish media concluded that the reason why Poland could not acquire NVA surplus stock, a cheap way to solve the financial and technical dilemmas of its armed forces, was because of their unsettled security arrangements, such as the military reform of the Polish armed forces and the governmental security policies after the Cold War.⁷⁶⁹

Analytical Purposes

The German Federal Office for Military Technology and Procurement (BWB - Bundesamt für Wehrtechnik und Beschaffung - also known as The Federal Office for Defence Technology and Acquisition) is responsible for the engineering analysis on the military hardware acquired from the NVA inventory. Western intelligence might acquire details of Soviet military hardware via its NVA connections. FRG intelligence agents apparently obtained technical documentation for the SA-8 and SA-10 air defence missile systems during the chaotic period in the autumn of 1989, when the Soviets collected all its missile systems from its WTO allies but in their haste left the documentation behind.⁷⁷⁰ Although the Bundeswehr later inherited a significant number of intact NVA SA-8 anti-aircraft systems, the timing for acquiring this intelligence considerably influenced its ongoing system development programme then.⁷⁷¹

Germany's allies shared information as well as military hardware for further research. There were also considerable amount of equipment and systems delivered to different beneficiaries who conducted their own analyses. The United States was the biggest

⁷⁶⁹ Szyndzielorz, Karol *Of Arms and Armies*, Polish News Bulletin, Commentaries, 31 March 1992, LexisNexis

⁷⁷⁰ *Pravda* openly accused NATO of expanded intelligence operations in eastern Germany immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall, when it believed that agents successfully infiltrated various GDR political parties, public organisations and armed forces. See Tass *Instead of Aid - Espionage?*, *Pravda*, 27 December, second ed., p.5, NATO 'Galvanizing' 'Espionage' in GDR, FBIS-SOV-89-248, 28 December 1989, p.25

⁷⁷¹ *Pearl in the Safe*, *Der Spiegel*, 7 January, p.16, Bundeswehr Acquired Soviet Military Information,

recipient of all the NATO states. France, the U.K., the Netherlands and Israel also received a significant amount of ex-NVA equipment for intelligence, testing and education purposes.⁷⁷² Many of these analyses did not remain confidential. Not only the recipients but also the contents of transfers were publicised. One of the reasons that these transfers could not be concealed any more was the scandal of the transfer to Israel which happened in November 1991. After that incident, the Bundestag maintained tighter supervision on these activities and was required to provide detailed information to its Defence Committee.⁷⁷³ The analyses conducted by the allies facilitated the task of military conversion. As one American reporter showed, the U.S. Army had acquired Soviet-made former NVA military hardware for intelligence assessment, and the results of the relevant intelligence analysis might also benefit the FRG in disposing of NVA legacies.⁷⁷⁴ In fact, any state that acquired ex-NVA equipment by any means, such as official procurement, grant with no payment, import for demolition and a so-called open market, also had the opportunity to conduct analyses of its own.

Understanding Adversaries

In addition to conducting intelligence analyses, the German defence authority also used the better-preserved NVA military hardware for training purpose. A typical case was that of the air defence systems used by the MAEWTF, Multinational Aircrew Electronic Warfare Training Facility.⁷⁷⁵ Likewise, the MiG-29 jet fighters in the Staffel (squadron) 731 of Jagdgeschwader (JG: airgroup equivalent) 73, Steinhoff, stationed at Laage played a vital role as simulated adversaries in training allied pilots.⁷⁷⁶ Again, merely possessing the military hardware could not fulfil these training functions effectively. The quality of the training was assured by the proficiency of the former NVA members.

FBIS-WEU-91-005, 8 January 1991, p.7

⁷⁷² Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report*, pp.62-65

⁷⁷³ *Britain, U.S. get East German MiGs*, Agence France Presse, 16 January 1992, LexisNexis

⁷⁷⁴ *U.S. gets Soviet Arms, Officials say*, St. Petersburg Times, Florida, 5 May 1991, National Digest, p.5A, LexisNexis. Likewise, analysis that was conducted on the ammunition by the NVA Missile and Weapons Technical Service before reunification was intended to acquire sufficient information for a more ecological demolition operation. See Heckmann, Erhard *Munitions Disposal in the NVA*, Op Cit

⁷⁷⁵ Wodka-Gallien, Philippe *Train as you fight, fight as you train*, Op Cit

During the Gulf War, soon after reunification, the Bundeswehr dispatched a few former NVA officers to the Middle East in order to utilise their expertise to counter the threat of Iraqi Scud missiles.⁷⁷⁷ After the Gulf War, a set of NVA-made Scud missile decoys was displayed to alliance experts. These mock-ups, made from fibreglass and plastic, so perfectly duplicating all the signatures recognisable by any Western reconnaissance measures, shocked everyone. The NVA technicians repeatedly assured the West that the NVA had only built one set of these decoys, though some more were originally planned, and none of them had been sent to Iraq.⁷⁷⁸

The United States acquired numerous categories of the former NVA equipment to analyse.⁷⁷⁹ The only Ex-Volksmarine vessel requested by the U.S. Navy for intelligence analysis was the Soviet-made Tarantul I class missile corvette. The corvette *Rudolf Egelhofer*, which was built in a Soviet shipyard in 1985 and transported by the US Military Sealift Command heavy-lift vessel *American Cormorant*, arrived in Norfolk, Virginia on 3 January 1992. Further trials and evaluation were to be conducted at the testing facility on the Patuxent River, Maryland.⁷⁸⁰ No further information has been released since then. The US Army's Combined Arms Command (CAC) probably established its "capabilities-based" Opposing Forces (OPFOR) model partly based on information acquired when analysing the former NVA military hardware. Interestingly, the Koni class frigate was another major platform owned by the potential adversaries in OPFOR, yet it was never actually tested by the US Navy itself.⁷⁸¹ Apart from the Deutsche Marine, the only navy to intensively study the equivalent of the Koni class frigate, the ex-Volksmarine Rostock class, was the British Royal Navy.

Another Beneficiary: the Defence Contractor

Besides the defence procurement agency, operational forces and intelligence units

⁷⁷⁶ *Top Fun Trains to Fight MiGs*, <http://www.navalajips.org/aviation.html>

⁷⁷⁷ *Dispatched*, Financial Times, 16 December 1992, p.21, LexisNexis

⁷⁷⁸ Koop, Volker *Scud-Attrappe verblüffte Experten (Scud-Decoys Surprise Experts)*, *Erbe NVA*, pp.95-98

⁷⁷⁹ Nassauer *BICC Brief 3 Report* pp.62-65.

⁷⁸⁰ Preston, Antony (ed) *News in Brief*, NAVINT, Vol.4, No.2, 31 January 1992, p.4

⁷⁸¹ Preston, Antony (ed) *US Forces Define "Generic" Opposition*, NAVINT, Vol.6, No.2, 28 January 1994, p.4

acquired information on NVA military hardware through simulated adversary training and engineering analysis; German defence contractors also obtained valuable technological information. Bodenseewerk Geratetechnik GmbH (BGT), a subdivision of the Diehl Group, was involved in the multi-national Short Range Air-to-Air Missile (SRAAM), Infra-Red Improved Sidewinder - Thrust Vector Tail Control (IRIS-T), project and a prime contractor. The Russian-built R-73 missile, the export variant of the AA-11 "Archer", inherited from the NVA, had been studied intensively and finally used as the yardstick for IRIS-T. The BGT engineers were surprised to discover that the R-73 performed better than the latest Sidewinder in almost all areas except Infra-Red Counter-Countermeasure (IRCCM) capability. Since the R-73 was only an export version of the AA-11, all the western engineers assumed the Russians had better versions of this missile. R-73 missile seekers were assessed in the early 1990s by using the Bewertungssystem (BESYS) test installed on RF-4E Phantom fighters from Germany's Manching Air Base. RF-4Es challenged various fighters, including the Tornado and the F-4F Phantom; also the Su-22 and MiG-29 from the NVA, provided by the Luftwaffe and the F-16B from Royal Netherlands Air Force.⁷⁸² The information acquired in these tests benefited the BGT in developing its IIR seeker for IRIS-T.

A similar situation arose for the German defence contractor Rheinmetall Landsysteme, who cooperated with the Polish contractor OBRUM, to modernise the T-72M1 series main battle tanks for the Polish Army.⁷⁸³ A former NVA T-72 MBT, after intensive study, was displayed in the German Military Technology Museum (Wehrtechnische Studiensammlung), a subdivision of the German Federal Office for Military Technology and Procurement (BWB - Bundesamt für Wehrtechnik und Beschaffung), at Koblenz. The information acquired about the T-72 MBT from the BWB facilitated Rheinmetall Landsysteme to integrate technology from the German Leopard-2 MBT with former Russian platforms like the T-72 in order to acquire the Polish defence contract.⁷⁸⁴

⁷⁸² Hewish, Mark and Joris Janssen Lok *Feature, Arming doe Close-in Air Combat*, International Defence Review, Vol.32, Issue 1, 1 January 2000, p.45

⁷⁸³ *Procurement, Poland*, Op Cit., p.349

⁷⁸⁴ Heckmann, Erhard *Munitions Disposal in the NVA*, Op Cit

Extent of Historical Research

One of the NVA legacies often overlooked was the massive amount of archives, documents, maps, intelligence reports and exercise evaluations. These were not only invaluable for historical research but also for intelligence analyses after the Cold War. Western experts tried to verify their intelligence assessments by reviewing the materials seized by the Bundeswehr in October 1990 when they took over the NVA.⁷⁸⁵ All NVA archives were top secret during the GDR era, but were soon opened to researchers after reunification.⁷⁸⁶ An important discovery was that the employment of tactical nuclear weapons was indeed an option in the Warsaw Pact's operational plans for invading Central Europe.⁷⁸⁷

According to these archives, which covered from the 1960s to the mid-1980s, plans made by the Soviet forces and the Nationale Volksarmee for invasion went far beyond the expectation of western intelligence. Even so, initial surveys proved that the Soviet Forces in the former GDR kept their operational plans secret and never shared overall concepts with their NVA colleagues. Instead of genuine coordination, the Soviets preferred having tight control of the NVA at all levels. Since the GDR national command authority was totally ignored, the NVA could not act as a military force of a sovereign state.⁷⁸⁸ Nonetheless, all NVA preparations were regularly updated, down to very trivial details. Vice Admiral Ulrich Weisser, Chief of the Planning Staff for the Bundeswehr, pointed out that the quality of operational planning was far more advanced than anything Bundeswehr intelligence had envisioned.⁷⁸⁹

German historian Alder Fredi in his 1997 book, *Militärische Übungsszenarien und reale militärische pläne*, challenged the significance of the archives inherited from the NVA. He argued that although approximately 25,000 NVA documents fell into

⁷⁸⁵ *Nomination of Strobe Talbott to be Deputy Secretary of State*, U.S. Congressional Record - Senate, 103rd Cong. 2nd Sess., 140 Cong Rec S 1583, Vol.140, No.15, 22 February 1994, LexisNexis

⁷⁸⁶ Mevius, Dietrich *Ahnenforschung und Militärgeschichte (Historical Research and Military History)*, *Erbe NVA*, pp.60-61

⁷⁸⁷ Goldanskii, Vitalii I. *Russia's 'Red-Brown' Hawks*, Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, Vol.49, Issue 5, June 1993, p.24, ProQuest

⁷⁸⁸ Ruchi, Lothar *As late as in 1990 the National People's Army Aimed at Western Germany and the Benelux Countries*, Die Welt, 31 July, p.3, FBIS-WEU-91-149, 2 August 1991, p.2

⁷⁸⁹ Fisher, Marc *Soviet Bloc Had Detailed Plan To Invade W. Germany*, Washington Post, 16 March 1993, p.A11, LexisNexis

Bundeswehr hands, which unquestionably gave much information on operational plans in the WTO, yet many of the documents, the exact amount was unknown, had already been destroyed by the Soviet Union before the reunification. Therefore, it was highly unlikely that the core of WTO operational plans were ever available to the western intelligence community, only those related to some minor NVA operations. Therefore, no document from the NVA archive explicitly stated that the WTO planned a pre-emptive invasion of Western Europe though this might indicate that NVA staff would not have had access to such information or have participated in the planning process of an invasion.⁷⁹⁰ Furthermore, the materials acquired from the NVA archives did not include anything associated with NVA intelligence activities.⁷⁹¹ The significance of these archives for intelligence analyses, therefore, would be diminished because of this missing information. Nevertheless, the historical research possible from the NVA archives was not confined to the GDR era or the NVA itself. Some previous German governmental records and personal details in the NVA military historical research institute covering long before the socialist German state helped researchers fill in some blanks of German history. New perspectives on Germany before the outbreak World War I by Helmuth von Moltke, from these archives, are likely to change the common view of German history.⁷⁹²

Case Study IV: Israel

The next case study, involving sharing NVA hardware with Israel for intelligence analysis, indicates that a straightforward transaction may still cause serious criticism because of mistakes made during the transaction process. It is important to understand that when handling any military surplus not only the ends but also the means should be appropriately managed.

Delivering NVA weapons to Israel for intelligence analysis became controversial. Covert operations, jointly conducted by the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND – the German Federal Intelligence Service) and its counterpart Mosad in Israel, plus some

⁷⁹⁰ http://www.parlament.ch/afs/data/f/gesch/1997/f_gesch_19973325.htm

⁷⁹¹ Mevius, Dietrich *Ahnforschung und Militärgeschichte (Historical Research and Military History)*, *Erbe NVA*, pp.60-61

⁷⁹² Clough, Patricia *Found*, Sunday Times, Overseas News, 14 August 1994, LexisNexis

German military officers, were exposed by the media in 1991, including Israeli transport aircrafts not displaying their national emblem landing in northern Germany to load NVA material and equipment. Combined with the secret delivery of NVA tanks discovered at Hamburg Harbour, this turned out to be a political scandal. Stoltenberg tried to avoid criticism by denying that he had approved any loans to Israel and intended to let the BND take the blame alone. However, according to a document drafted by the German Military Intelligence Service on 31 October 1991, the Bundeswehr had conducted a few transfers of NVA weapons to Israel without any BND involvement. The Deutsche Marine airlifted a considerable number of missiles and torpedoes acquired from the Volksmarine after reunification to the Israeli Navy. Hard evidences, specific dates and contents of the transfer, were accurately recorded. Furthermore, contrary to NATO guidelines, Israeli experts also attended the Mig-29 test flight; the test itself, legitimately covered by NATO regulations, was conducted by Bundeswehr engineers in front of experts from NATO allied states. Far earlier, at the beginning of 1991, Israel already had a fully functional Mig-29 radar system from the Bundeswehr, which they later returned after taking a detailed assessment, without the knowledge of the German Defence authority. All these events made the German public question whether the German military had intentionally defied the orders given by the political leadership concerning the management of the NVA legacy.⁷⁹³

The FRG and Israel have a long-term intelligence cooperation relationship begun in the 1970s. The FRG was the main beneficiary of Soviet-made military hardware captured by Israel. One agreement of 1979 between the Chancellery and the Defence Ministry plus another 1986 internal FRG Defence Ministry directive, indicated that cooperation with the FRG-Israeli intelligence was an institutionalised practice. All information gathered from these analyses helped the FRG armed forces as they faced the Cold War threat from Eastern Europe. These practices had become the rationale for the German political leadership to defend its decision to give NVA surplus to Israel for reciprocal analysis.⁷⁹⁴

Israel requested NVA equipment from the FRG defence authorities for technical

⁷⁹³ *Bundeswehr Reportedly Delivered Arms to Israel*, Der Spiegel, 18 November, FBIS-WEU-91-223, 19 November 1991, pp.14-15

⁷⁹⁴ *Kohl: There Are No Objections to Cooperation With Israel*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 1 November,

assessment immediately after reunification. A co-ordination committee between the BND and the Defence Ministry discussed the delivery of NVA assets to Israel on 19 October 1990, in order to respond to these requests. Further discussions on this matter were held on 5 November 1990, chaired by Brigadier General Georg Bautzmann, the head of the Military Communication Department of the Command Staff of the Bundeswehr. The German Federal Security Council took a political decision on 27 February 1991, deferring Israel's request for NVA materials.⁷⁹⁵ The top FRG military professional, the Bundeswehr Chief of Staff, Admiral Wellershoff, was shown the list of items from the NVA requested by the Israelis approximately a month after the meeting on 5 November 1990.⁷⁹⁶ How Wellershoff reacted to this request was never revealed, but it was not so important because by then all deliveries were tightly controlled by the civilian leadership. Later, requests for heavy NVA weapons from Israel were again formally declined by Defence Secretary Ludwig-Holger Pfahls, in an order to the German Defence Ministry issued on 11 March 1991.⁷⁹⁷

Pfahls, who oversaw armament affairs in the German Defence Ministry, had issued two confidential directives specifically addressing arms transfers to foreign nations. In his first instruction issued on 1 June 1991, Pfahls demanded that the consent of the political leadership should be the precondition of any disposal of military material, particularly to foreign states. Although declaring his trust of the military professionals, in a second instruction issued on 8 July 1991, Pfahls expanded his political stance to reserve the right to make the final decisions if any transfer of NVA stock related to either major items of equipment or extraordinary volume.⁷⁹⁸ Apparently, Pfahls played the central role in the decision-making process concerning providing NVA equipment to Israel for analysis. Pfahls himself represented the FRG defence leadership most closely associated with the BND operations. Before he assumed his post as Secretary of State for armaments in the FRG Defence Ministry in 1987, he was President of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution. Thus Pfahls had been required to understand all German intelligence connections with Israel. He may even have attended an internal discussion held on 15 April 1991 specifically

p.8, Cabinet Debates Arms Shipment Questions, FBIS-WEU-91-221, 15 November 1991, pp.8-9

⁷⁹⁵ *Several Deliveries of Military Equipment to Israel*, Sueddeutsche Zeitung, 1 November, Officials Admit Repeated Arms Supplies to Israel, FBIS-WEU-91-217, 8 November 1991, pp.12-13

⁷⁹⁶ *Kohl: There Are No Objections to Cooperation With Israel*, Op Cit.

⁷⁹⁷ *Bundeswehr Reportedly Delivered Arms to Israel*, Op Cit

aimed at German-Israeli cooperation in joint armaments evaluation. Furthermore, he would have had access to an internal report on armament cooperation with Israel, dated on 23 January 1991. Based on the nature and complexity of the whole process, however, it was likely that the final decision of granting the NVA equipment to Israel was beyond the authority of General Bautzmann.⁷⁹⁹

All these reports indicate that the civilian political leadership sensed that arms transfers to Israel contained political risks; therefore, the transactions required tighter control. Nevertheless, on 28 October 1991 some former NVA tanks, listed as "agricultural equipment" on export papers, were found aboard an Israeli merchant vessel in Hamburg. This became another major controversy about the disposal of GDR military property.⁸⁰⁰ From the beginning, when fourteen containers of Soviet-made arms were discovered aboard the freighter 'Palmah II', the Hamburg State Prosecutor suspected that they might be from the NVA.⁸⁰¹ Later, a few sources indicated that this transfer was under the supervision of the BND, in co-operation with its counterpart, Israel's Mosad.⁸⁰² However, this was not the only case when the BND was reportedly involved in the transfer of the ex-NVA equipment. Similar speculation followed with delivery of ex-NVA equipment to Croatia. Ironically, preventing the infringement of arms export regulations was one of the excuses that the BND used to justify its new functions in order to resist manpower reduction after the Cold War.⁸⁰³

The officials of the BND and the German Defence Ministry involved in delivering the NVA equipment for tests conducted by the Israelis defended their actions by arguing that they were not violating the German Military Material Control Law or decisions

⁷⁹⁸ *Several Deliveries of Military Equipment to Israel*, Op Cit

⁷⁹⁹ Inacker, Michael J. *Stoltenberg's Armament State Secretary Involved in Tank Affair With Israel*, Welt Am Sonntag, 8 December, pp.1-2, State Secretary Implicated in NVA Tank Affair, FBOS-WEU-91-236, 9 December 1991, pp.21-23

⁸⁰⁰ *Trade Brief*, Journal of Commerce, p.4A, 29 October 1991. This is not the only case of allegedly illegal arms exports ever discovered by German customs. A similar case involved twenty tonnes of shot and pistol ammunition on the Jordanian freighter "Novemchu", intercepted at Bremen in February 1991. This was suspected of being a covert action, possibly against the UN arms embargo on Iraq. See *Ammunition on Consignment to Jordan Stopped*, DPA, 26 February, FBIS-WEU-91-039, 27 February 1991, p.27

⁸⁰¹ *Soviet Arms 'Apparently Bound for Israel' Seized*, DPA, 28 October, FBIS-WEU-91-208, 28 October 1991, p.7

⁸⁰² Marx, Stefan *The Vanished Army - The Liquidation of the NVA*, Op Cit. and *Bundeswehr Reportedly Delivered Arms to Israel*, Op Cit

⁸⁰³ *BND Faces Possible Personnel Reduction*, Die Welt, 5 April, FBIS-WEU-91-066, 5 April 1991, p.11

made by the Federal Security Council because these weapons were not eventually exported but only sent on provisional loan.⁸⁰⁴ Indeed, senior German defence officials, included General Bautzmann himself and members of the coordination committee, supported this argument, saying that the political instructions of the Federal Security Council personally given by Pfahls were not violated since only small quantities of equipment were supplied on a loan basis; neither extraordinary quantities nor major items of equipment were involved. They argued that, given the quantity of deliveries, the transfer was not significant enough to be used for military operations. Therefore, they should not be treated as the export of weapons of war but only as hardware for defence research in Israel. A statement from the German Defence Ministry, endorsed by the Justice Ministry, further backed all these arguments by claiming that neither in this case nor in previous ones had any foreign trade regulation been violated.⁸⁰⁵ Later, the Bundeswehr Inspector General, Klaus Naumann, also openly expressed his full support of General Bautzmann at a meeting of the Bundestag Defence Committee.⁸⁰⁶

But Stoltenberg admitted during the cabinet discussion that the FRG defence leadership had not been informed of this transaction, but he also insisted that no judiciary code or political directive had been violated. Chancellor Kohl personally endorsed Stoltenberg's viewpoint and acknowledged FRG-Israeli defence co-operation but at the same time he requested further operations be conducted with stricter legal supervision. Stoltenberg, BND President Porzner and senior staff of the FRG Chancellery Stavenhagen jointly shouldered the task of political damage control by drafting a report of this incident to the Bundestag Defence Committee.⁸⁰⁷ While these transactions happened in the grey zone of the German Arms Export Law, Israel did legitimately acquire some former NVA equipment against potential ABC threats during the Gulf War. It was reported that 440 tonnes of immediate aid, mainly for ABC detection and protection plus medical supplies, from the Bundeswehr and the former NVA inventory, were delivered to Israel from 1 February 1991.⁸⁰⁸ Senior

⁸⁰⁴ *Bundeswehr Reportedly Delivered Arms to Israel*, Op Cit

⁸⁰⁵ *Several Deliveries of Military Equipment to Israel*, Op Cit

⁸⁰⁶ Inacker, Michael J. *Stoltenberg's Armament State Secretary Involved in Tank Affair With Israel*, Op Cit

⁸⁰⁷ *Kohl: There Are No Objections to Cooperation With Israel*, Op Cit.

⁸⁰⁸ *Military Supplies for Israel To Begin 1 Feb.*, ADN, 31 January, FBIS-WEU-91-022, 1 February 1991, p.13

military and intelligence professionals persistently defended their stances though these controversial arms transfers gradually became more and more politically damaging. Their perspectives were still supported by some political key figures within Kohl's government.

When Stoltenberg came under public pressure to resign following this incident, he changed his position and firmly supported his subordinates. Lutz Stavenhagen, senior advisor to Chancellor Kohl and politically responsible for the BND operations in his position of State Secretary in German Chancellery, also argued that the transfers were in the nature of "military co-operation" between the FRG and Israel, though he claimed that he had not been informed of them before they were made public. Stavenhagen was subsequently held responsible for this incident, though it was not the only scandal that caused the end of his political career. His resignation in early November 1991 defused the ensuing political crisis.⁸⁰⁹ Furthermore, the FRG government spokesman, Vogel, admitted that it was a "mistake" that the delivery of NVA hardware to Israel had not been reported to the "leadership". The FRG cabinet immediately decided that from then on all decisions on foreign requests for military hardware, whether in the sphere of defence cooperation or not, "*must involve the political leadership and must be made under the rules governing involvement of the Federal Security Council*".⁸¹⁰ Given the situation described above, we may conclude that the FRG politicians did not fundamentally object to transferring former NVA equipment to Israel for intelligence or engineering analysis. Nevertheless, it became an embarrassing issue simply because of poor administration, as well as lack of understanding between governmental departments and key figures in the Bundestag supervisory mechanism.

Lessons Learned

From the cases discussed in this chapter, six lessons can be learned.

1. The excellence of NVA military hardware itself did not create financial value. Its value was decided by the interaction between supply and demand within the

⁸⁰⁹ Bridge, Adrian *Kohl's Euro-advisor Resigned after Secret Service Scandals*, Independent, 4 December 1991, p.8, LexisNexis

market; therefore, it was not predictable but circumstantial. Furthermore, there were many political and diplomatic interests involved with the economical supply-demand relationship.

2. From the supplier's viewpoint, the FRG government's decisions relating to the disposal of NVA military surpluses to other parties were mainly driven by diplomatic and political concerns. Likewise, decisions concerning retaining items for further utilisation were not made for purely military reasons. Nevertheless, it reminds us that the value of military assets should not be assessed exclusively according to their military effectiveness. From the receivers' viewpoint, the quality and capacity of their logistic systems may decide the use of military hardware after its actual delivery; this also influences the value of these legacies.
3. Third party interests are another factor that may decide the value of transferring sensitive surpluses. The supply-demand relationship as well as the expected diplomatic and political returns can be distorted by active intervention from third parties. If the social, environmental and ecological concerns are added, the value assessment process becomes even more complicated.
4. Given the hostile response from German society about the irresponsible transfers of military technology and hardware in early 1990s, the FRG government was fully aware that the consequences of mismanaging the NVA holdings could be devastating. Therefore, there was no solid evidence to prove that the German government ever risked conducting any improper transfer though some embarrassing cases did occur. Furthermore, no evidence ever indicated that the FRG declined to adjust its policy after an unacceptable incident happened.
5. If all the improper incidents were the immediate consequences of the transfer policies, then the FRG government inevitably needed to shoulder the blame. Nevertheless, there is lack of direct links between the German policy and these embarrassing incidents. At most, accusations of contributory negligence by the FRG could arguably be valid.

⁸¹⁰ Kohl: *There Are No Objections to Cooperation With Israel*, Op Cit.

6. According to the results of actual practices, there were huge gaps between the original predictions, especially, those optimistic assessments of reselling NVA military equipment, and the eventual outcomes. Cost, expenses and other market factors were far beyond anything previously imagined. Moreover, many unique German judicial and social restraints encountered were also unexpected, which denies the applicability of applying the German experience to other cases.

Chapter Six

Land, Properties and Non-weapon Items

This chapter will examine the effects of the disposal of NVA land, properties and other non-weapon items. Several examples of the disposal of such assets may show the difficulties encountered in managing former East German resources. Taking over the NVA installations and further the retaining of the East German military legacy, especially the airspace over eastern Germany, will also be discussed. These military assets of land and other administrative items had very little impact on policies concerning the absorption of former NVA personnel into the Bundeswehr. But their management implicitly influenced the task of managing other NVA legacies after reunification, especially in their impacts on the FRG defence budget and the welfare of the local communities in eastern Germany.

Unambiguous Basic Stance

The Bundeswehr acquired huge amounts of surplus lands and properties in eastern Germany after reunification because of the reduction of the military presence and the withdrawal of the Soviet forces. This NVA surplus included 532 installations and 2,250 buildings that covered 240,000 hectares, mainly concentrated in the northern part of the former GDR. According to an initial assessment, its total value was around 24 billion East German Marks. In addition, the Soviet forces in eastern Germany had occupied 1,026 buildings and 243,000 hectares of land. Approximately 4 to 5% of GDR territory was used for military purposes.⁸¹¹ An outline by the GDR Defence Ministry to its Roundtable members in January 1990 forms the basis for the following table. Nevertheless, figures from various sources noted in this chapter may appear inconsistent because different criteria were adopted for statistical analysis.

Major Items of the NVA Properties	Number
Permanent Military Airports with Regular Facilities or Infrastructure	16
Reserved Airports with Partial Facilities or Only Runways	6
Camps, Sites for Stationing Air-Defence Units	36
Sites for Communication Units and Radar Posts	26

⁸¹¹ Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit., pp.177-178

Depots, Logistic installations and Maintenance Facilities	90
Large Scale Grounds Specifically Designated for Training Purposes	7
On-Site Training Grounds near Barracks	27
Barracks (Accommodated Personnel From 30 to 2,500)	227
General Purpose (Administration, Education and Training) Installations	311
Military / Operational Commands	266
Ports, Harbours and Berths	9
Sanatoria / Convalescent Hospitals	43
Recreation Centres / Sport Facilities	6
Total	1,070

Source: *NVA Properties, Official Information of GDR Defence Ministry for Roundtable members approved by Defence Minister, January 1990, in Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit., p.18.*

This became an important issue in eastern Germany. Local politicians actively persuaded the German Defence Ministry to transfer property that would not be needed by the Bundeswehr to civilian use.⁸¹² The former armed forces properties were an irresistible prize to local politicians. For instance, 5% of the land in Brandenburg, including 324 installations, such as barracks, administrative buildings, training grounds and air bases, would be available after the departure of the Soviet Forces. Furthermore, the FRG Defence Ministry also promised to release another 2.8% of land in Brandenburg and 97 installations originally controlled by the NVA.⁸¹³ Besides the properties, 7,500 miles of road exclusively reserved for the military armoured vehicles, after they were integrated into public road network, could also considerably contribute to the local economics.⁸¹⁴

Immediately after reunification, Stoltenberg personally declared a very clear stance of releasing the former NVA properties and installations to be put at the disposal of local authorities, enterprises willing to establish themselves, and foundations for the protection of nature and the environment.⁸¹⁵ Substantial actions proved his stance was not an empty promise. A year after reunification, more than half of the 2,250 NVA establishments taken over by the Bundeswehr on Reunification day had already been released for development.⁸¹⁶ Another figure about the same time was even more

⁸¹² *Defence Minister Visits Eastern Länder*, ADN, 13 May, FBIS-WEU-92-094, 14 May 1992, p.7

⁸¹³ Pries, *Kunt Build Beds, Not Missiles: Difficulties Encountered by Largest GDR Armament Plant in Converting to Civilian Production*, Op Cit

⁸¹⁴ Tomforde, *Anna Slimming Cure for E. German Forces*, Op Cit

⁸¹⁵ *Stoltenberg on 'Challenge' Facing Military*, ADN, 29 October, FBIS-WEU-90-209, 29 October 1990, p.17

⁸¹⁶ *Defence Minister Calls Bundeswehr 'Indispensable'*, DPA, 2 September, FBIS-WEU-91-192, 3 October 1991, p.10. Another report indicated that, before the end of 1991, the Bundeswehr released 1,500 former NVA installations and 63,000 hectares of land. See Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit, p.183

impressive. According to General Ekkehard Richter, the Commander of the VII Military District in eastern Germany, around 80% of the former NVA establishments in his area of responsibility had already been released from Bundeswehr control.⁸¹⁷ But this process did not proceed as simply as many had initially expected because it was also reported that a year after reunification "most new state and local authorities are desperate for the buildings but lack funds to convert or rebuild on any scale".⁸¹⁸ In June 1992, all the estate files of the former NVA and Soviet forces in eastern Germany stored in the Potsdam branch office of the Federal Property Office were destroyed by a fire, a fact which also increased the complexity of disposing these properties.⁸¹⁹ Some properties that the Bundeswehr would have liked to release did not have any market value, while properties needed by the local community could have been valuable assets that the Bundeswehr would like to retain.

Institutions, Mechanisms and Codes

The conversion of former military installations in Germany after reunification was indeed a giant task that would relate to legality, economic impact, environmental concerns and infrastructure planning. Military properties from different sources in eastern Germany were assigned to different authorities for disposal. Properties used by the Soviet forces initially became government assets under the German Federal Property Office of the Finance Ministry (Liegenschaftsressort Des Bundesfinanzministeriums). All former NVA properties were initially delivered to the Bundeswehr after reunification. If the Bundeswehr did not require them for military usage, then they were transferred to the German Federal Finance Ministry. The Higher Finance Office (Oberfinanzdirektion) of the German Federal Finance Ministry co-ordinated the further disposal of former NVA properties.⁸²⁰

Other governmental agencies and private contractors hired by these agencies were

⁸¹⁷ *Former NVA Structure Dissolved in Southeast*, Op Cit

⁸¹⁸ Kelleher, Catherine McArdle "The New Germany - Unification One Year On", *Brookings Review*, Vol.10, Issue 1, Winter 1992, p.18, ProQuest

⁸¹⁹ *Files on NVA Real Estates Believed Destroyed*, Deutschlandfunk Network, 22 June, FBIS-WEU-92-120, 22 June 1992, p.11

⁸²⁰ *IMI: Status and Analysis of Environmental Remediation of Former Soviet and Former East German Military Properties*, an internal report dated 30 July 1993 prepared at the American Embassy in Bonn later acquired by National Trade Data Bank as the Market Report, 17 August 1993, entitled *Germany -*

also involved in managing military properties for various reasons. The Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (Bundesministerium Für Umwelt, Naturschutz und Reaktorsicherheit) was actively involved in assessment tasks prior to the properties being delivered to other government agencies or onto the open market. The German Federal Office for Military Technology and Procurement (BWB - Bundesamt für Wehrtechnik und Beschaffung) also issued remedial contracts for Bundeswehr properties before any transfer to other agencies. Regional branch offices under the Higher Finance Office (Oberfinanzdirektion) of the German Federal Finance Ministry also issued contracts to private agencies for disposing of military properties. Two significant contracts issued soon after German reunification reflect the complexity and market potential of these consulting services as well as further remedial tasks involving cleaning up contaminated military properties. The Oberfinanzdirektion Hannover awarded a DM10 million contract to Professor Mull und Partner GmbH, an engineering firm in Garbsen, to provide technical consulting, quality control and auditing services to dispose of 170 Bundeswehr bases. A private consulting company, IABG (Industrieanlagen-Betriebsgesellschaft MbH) located in Ottobrunn, was awarded a DM70 million contract to develop a comprehensive programme for assessing the further utilisation of the former Soviet military properties in eastern Germany by the Federal Ministry of the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.⁸²¹ Another report indicated that IABG had also been awarded contracts to survey the degree of contamination as well to assess the market value of NVA properties. Its findings would reveal how any contamination of these assets would influence their market values. Leaking fuel and lubricant pipeline systems, ill-managed dumping, poorly equipped sewage systems, inadequate explosive demolition facilities and untreated animal waste were the major sources of pollution in military facilities.⁸²² It was estimated that it would eventually cost DM 25 billion to complete the remedial work on all Bundeswehr bases. The situation in eastern Germany was far worse; the expenses, therefore, would be even higher.

In addition to the German Federal governmental agencies, local governments at

Soil Decontamination Project, LexisNexis

⁸²¹ Ibid.

⁸²² Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit, pp.203-204

various levels were also involved in managing these former military properties. As stated above, all former military properties from either the Soviet forces or those previous NVA installations released by the Bundeswehr were transferred to the Federal Finance Ministry. These properties were then either retained by the Federal government or delivered to the relevant local government. The properties retained by the German Federal government were to be used by Federal government offices or returned to their previous owners, as long as disputes originating from confiscation by either the Soviet forces or the GDR government were legally settled. But if the Bundeswehr wanted properties originally used by Soviet forces, it was possible to acquire them from the Finance Ministry. Many of these former military properties were transferred to the relevant local governmental body. Basically, the former military properties could be transferred free of charge from the Federal government, but the local government still needed to pay billions of Deutsche Marks to clean up the areas. These local governments either used them as offices or returned them to their original legal owners. Nevertheless, a certain number of these properties were simply sold as real estate in order to acquire financial revenue desperately needed by these local governments at that time.⁸²³

Both the German Defence Minister and the Finance Minister were influential in deciding the transfer of military properties, but the price of the properties was the Finance Minister's exclusive sphere of influence. The transfer of the military properties to local government or the private sector was not necessarily free, though variable discounts, based on the percentage of the market value, were still available. Political bargains, therefore, were inevitably struck among politicians and legislative powers in the German Bundesrat. In some cases, determining the price of property involved not only German Federal code but also EC law. An over reduction of the market value could be interpreted as a subsidy that violated EC law.⁸²⁴

Nevertheless, the Bundestag still passed an act on 9 October 1991 authorising a reduction of prices by either 50% or 30%, in order to facilitate the process of disposing of former military properties. This act provided the legal basis for granting

⁸²³ *IMI: Status and Analysis of Environmental Remediation*, Op Cit.

⁸²⁴ Garding, Christoph *Frankfurt: Fight for Rest Estate*, *Wirtschaftswoche*, 19 July, FBIS-WEU-91-155, *Frankfurt Raises High Hopes*, 12 August 1991, pp.14-15

incentives for German local governments or private contractors to purchase these military properties in order to establish institutions for social benefit, such as universities, kindergartens, sports centres, local government offices, sanatoria for mental patients, churches, employment commissions, residences for low-income citizens, hospitals, convalescent homes for the disabled, labour unions, student dormitories and processing facilities for waste water or rubbish. The buyers of these lands or properties gave guarantees of keeping social services in these facilities for a certain period of time, either fifteen or twenty years, before shifting to other functions. Some low interest rate loans were attached to these transactions to encourage maximum utilisation.⁸²⁵

Trophies for the Politicians

Releasing military properties was essentially a key issue in the political agenda not only for Minister Rühle but also for his predecessor, Stoltenberg. It was quite early foreseen by Stoltenberg, who warned of upcoming Bundeswehr that reductions might bring such a consequence ten months before reunification.⁸²⁶ After German reunification, more military properties could be transferred to the Federal Administration of Properties because of the further expanded reduction of Bundeswehr forces as well as the withdrawal of foreign forces in Germany.⁸²⁷

Many heavyweight politicians sought reconciliations with Stoltenberg. The members of the Bundestag were mobilised to support the views of the local communities.⁸²⁸ Stoltenberg had to resist political pressure in western Germany far more serious than that of his successor, Minister Rühle, had to face a year later in the new länder. Therefore, it took quite a long time for Stoltenberg to resolve the Bundeswehr post-Cold War redeployment plan in order to cope with the manpower reduction of the Bundeswehr required by the international treaty as well as to reconcile the demands of the local politicians. This historic Bundeswehr redeployment plan was

⁸²⁵ Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit, pp.192-193

⁸²⁶ Klement, Rolf *Interview with Defence Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg*, Op Cit.

⁸²⁷ *Stoltenberg Announces Released of Bundeswehr Land*, DPA, 8 November, FBIS-WEU-91-217, 8 November 1991, p.15

⁸²⁸ *Those Affected Do Not Know Anything*, Die Welt, 7 May, Reaction to Stoltenberg Plans to Close Barracks, FBIS-WEU-91-092, 13 May 1991, pp.16-17

finally settled in August 1991, ten months after German reunification. But the announcement of the redeployment plan did not stop further political wrangling. Volker Rühle made more alterations after he took over the Defence Ministry from Stoltenberg. Rühle constantly amended decisions on the armed forces deployment plan. This damaged the morale of the Bundeswehr personnel and was later criticised by Bundestag Defence Commissioner Alfred Biehle in his official report.⁸²⁹

The removal of the military presence meant the reduction of consumption in the local community, which was often a vital pillar of the local economy. Yet local governments also wanted to seize the opportunity to acquire property released by the defence authority that would encourage further investment. Cases differed from place to place. To cope with the withdrawal of military forces originally stationed nearby, local governments and communities needed strategies to manage the dilemma. Nevertheless, the situation in eastern Germany was much more severe than the German old länder. Once the NVA was the primary employer in deprived areas like Torgelow and Eggesin in West Pomerania. If the military presence vanished, then the economic structure of the entire region would also collapse.⁸³⁰ Similar situations arose around the Second Fighter Wing in Trollenhagen in Neubrandenburg, Ninth Fighter Wing in Peenemünde, organisations linked to the three Volksmarine flotillas in Peenemünde, Dranske and Warnemünde, the Ninth Tank Division in Eggesin, the Eighth Tank Division in Schwerin, and the staff of the Military District Eight in Neubrandenburg.⁸³¹ Facing the imminent disappearance of the NVA units, the local population at Marxwalde hoped for economic benefits from the Bundeswehr units that might be established at the same location.⁸³²

As the press inquired about how the defence authority would recompense the economically weak areas when entire military garrisons were disbanded in parts of eastern Germany, besides some compensation or economic stimulation provided by

⁸²⁹ Sottorf, Hans Jörg *In a Fix*, Handelsblatt, 25 March, Commentary Views Problems of Bundeswehr, FBIS-WEU-93-059, 30 March 1993, p.18

⁸³⁰ Michalsky, Oliver *From Lieutenant to Sergeant Without Grumbling: Second Morgen Visit to the Eggesin Army Base; the Greatest Difference Between the NVA and the Bundeswehr*, Op Cit

⁸³¹ Feldmeyer, Karl *Soldiers Should Not Stand on the Street: The Bundeswehr in the New States*, Op Cit.

⁸³² Koop, Volker *Von der NVA nur wenig gehabt (We did not get that much from the NVA)*, *Erbe NVA*, pp.106-108

other governmental agencies as the quid pro quo for military withdrawal, Stoltenberg guaranteed that many more troops units would be withdrawn from major metropolitan areas than from economically vulnerable districts.⁸³³ But Stoltenberg also openly refused to regard the military as an economic factor in local communities.⁸³⁴ The FRG defence leadership were not the only people that faced political pressures. Ten years later, in an academic conference, military professionals who had been actually involved in executing the closure of NVA bases and training facilities revealed the appalling resistance mounted by local communities.⁸³⁵

On the other hand, the potential economic benefits, after suitable conversion of these military properties, were high. A few cases of military installations being converted to civilian usage were exceptionally successful. For instance, a year after German unification, when the EXXON Corporation expanded its service stations into Eastern Europe, former NVA properties were selected because they could be incorporated into the autobahn system. The existing concrete taxiways and ramps of former East German military airstrips became the first two stations, Wolflake West and Wolflake East, to be built, reducing construction time significantly.⁸³⁶ The location of military property is vital in conversion, whether it be located in eastern or western Germany. For instance, the plan to convert the Drake Barracks in Frankfurt into a commercial district was again mainly driven by its location adjacent to the autobahn.⁸³⁷

Barracks released from military purposes were more welcome than training grounds because they could be immediately converted into accommodation for students, nursing staff, police officers, and as an intermediary shelter for asylum seekers lacking money. Local governments often had plans in mind before these barracks were actually released.⁸³⁸ Such interest even extended to the former NVA military

⁸³³ *Stoltenberg on Changes in Bundeswehr East*, Bild, 25 May, FBIS-WEU-91-058, 26 May 1991, pp.9-10

⁸³⁴ *Armed Forces Reduction Plans Arouse Opposition*, DPA, 19 June, FBIS-WEU-91-119, 20 June 1991, p.17

⁸³⁵ Maischak, Lars, et al. *The Bundeswehr Challenges of Democratic Integration ~ Report of a Conference Held at Julius-Leber-Kaserne, Berlin, January 23 - 25, 2000*, Berlin: Aspen Institute, 2000, p.10.

⁸³⁶ *EXXON opens first service station in East Europe*, Financial News, PR Newswire, 21 December 1990

⁸³⁷ Garding, Christoph *Frankfurt: Fight for Real Estate*, Op Cit

⁸³⁸ *Minister-President on U.S. Release of Barracks*, DPA, 30 July, FBIS-WEU-91-147, 31 July 1991, p.14

prisons: the Brandenburg Länder government expressed its willingness to take over the one located at Schwedt.⁸³⁹ Once these properties were transferred to the local government, they could also be used for contingencies. In late 1992, when the conflicts between the asylum seekers and the local population became severe, many former NVA barracks were used by local governments in eastern Germany to house and protect foreign immigrants. The high barbed-wire fences around these barracks not only deterred the radical groups but also prevented the asylum seekers from slipping into the local society before all legal processes had been completed. These former NVA installations became tools for local politicians that could be instantly utilised to thwart social frictions.⁸⁴⁰

A negative consequence of failing to utilise former NVA properties was that they might encourage radical groups to use these deserted barracks as training grounds for practising attacks on asylum seekers.⁸⁴¹ Some neo-Nazi gangsters even slipped into the well-designed NVA urban fighting training ground at Lehnin at weekends to practice their shooting skills, before the Bundeswehr took control of this facility.⁸⁴² Some civilians also invaded a former NVA training ground in Streganz searching World War II memorabilia, which caused serious concern of their safety.⁸⁴³ Furthermore, no matter how hard the decisions of redeploying the Bundeswehr forces might be, since it would inevitably impact upon the local economy, yet to leave it undecided was even worse. The long term political squabbling over the future force structure within the German federal government could stimulate "public guessing games" that ultimately became fiery issues in local politics. Different regional interests were inter-related because a force reduction in one place sometimes implied an increase of military facilities on other sites. This was especially true for the ports where the Deutsche Marine was originally stationed since some installations were

⁸³⁹ Koop, Volker *Im Kittchen waren noch Zimmer frei (Rooms still available in prisons), Erbe NVA*, pp.53-56

⁸⁴⁰ Cohen, Roger *Paying for the Fall of Communism*, New York Times, 27 September 1992, Section 3, p.1; *Refugees? Not in our backyard*, Glasgow Herald, 29 August 1992, p.4; and Kinzer, Stephen *German Mayor Take Steps to Stem Attacks on Foreigners in Eastern Germany*, New York Times, 6 September 1992, Section 1, p.16, LexisNexis

⁸⁴¹ *No 'mastermind' behind violence Germans believe*, The Toronto Star, 22 September 1992, pp.A16, LexisNexis

⁸⁴² Fisher, Marc *Soviet Bloc Had Detailed Plan to Invade W. Germany*, Op Cit

⁸⁴³ Koop, Volker *Schatzsuche: Tödlicher Leichtsin (Fortune-hunting: Fatal Recklessness), Erbe NVA*, pp.108-109

moved to eastern Germany.⁸⁴⁴

There was the risk of excessive costs in the conversion process of these former military properties. Many military sites were reported to be severely contaminated by chemicals. There was a gap between the cost of decontamination and the budget provided initially. And the negotiations for compensation for these contaminated sites became a hard battle.⁸⁴⁵ The decontamination of these former military properties attracted huge commercial interest, which, naturally, attracted not only German local companies but also many foreign contractors.⁸⁴⁶ For German local government, the decontamination task was a pressing challenge, both ecologically and financially. The term, "ecological time-bomb" was adopted by the Green Party Environment Minister for the länder of Brandenburg, Matthias Platzeck, reflecting that it was indeed a grave concern in German local politics. He believed that the expense of managing the issue in Brandenburg alone would be over DM10 billion.⁸⁴⁷

The contamination situation in former NVA properties was pretty awful though there was no evidence to prove that it was caused by any intended action like what the Soviet forces had done before their withdrawal.⁸⁴⁸ But it was stated in a confidential Defence Ministry report that the NVA left 920 so-called suspect areas with environmental risks of varying degrees. In some cases, it might take up to ten years to complete the disposal task and the newest technology would certainly be needed.⁸⁴⁹ Another figure disclosed by media in June 1990 showed that the number of considerably contaminated former NVA sites could be more than 1,400.⁸⁵⁰ Given the lack of funds available to the NVA before reunification and some possible negligence accumulated over the years, this situation was totally predictable.

The European Commission had also funded some of the conversion projects in the former GDR. A ECU 33,000,000 programme was announced on 8 November 1995 to

⁸⁴⁴ Högrefe, Volker *Bound for the Future - New Structure for the Navy*, Op Cit

⁸⁴⁵ *Damage: Billions for Ruins*, Wirtschaftswoche, 19 July, FBIS-WEU-91-155, Environmental Damage, 12 August 1991, pp.15-16

⁸⁴⁶ *IMI: Status and Analysis of Environmental Remediation*, Op Cit.

⁸⁴⁷ Tomforde, Anna *Environment: Army That Waged War on the Land; The Former Soviet Forces in East Germany Have Left a Terrible Legacy*, Op Cit

⁸⁴⁸ *IMI: Status and Analysis of Environmental Remediation*, Op Cit.

⁸⁴⁹ *Concern for 'Dangerous Materials' Left by NVA*, Op Cit

⁸⁵⁰ Berliner Zeitung, 23 June 1990, p.4, in Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit, p.203

convert the former military bases of the NVA and Soviet Forces in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania for civilian use, for which ECU 19,500,000 were granted by the European Commission. The fund was primarily aimed at clearing ground pollution, abandoned ammunition and unusable buildings left from the military withdrawal.⁸⁵¹ Among these conversion projects, Peenemünde, the birthplace of the V2 rocket and later the biggest Volksmarine and Luftstreitkräfte joint base, is a good example. After reunification, Peenemünde was taken over by the Bundeswehr and still used as a major base until 21 May 1996. In early 1991 part of it became a muster ground used by private contractors for storing ex NVA materials before their final disposal. Eventually it became a popular tourist attraction, developing the historical features of the German Baltic coast.⁸⁵²

But NVA members made Peenemünde accessible to visitors three months before reunification. Two NVA officers studied the V-2 test ground and mapped out the hidden ruins surrounded by thick forest. Other ambitious plans were already under discussion by a working group.⁸⁵³ Nevertheless, no matter what kind of vision the NVA had for converting Peenemünde, resources for their implementation were not available. The conversion task of Peenemünde was not completed until ten years after reunification.

Further Investment Needed

Immediately after reunification, the Bundeswehr intended to keep some 500 buildings and 1,500 square kilometres, mainly training grounds, in eastern Germany for military purposes.⁸⁵⁴ Almost two years later, investments of one billion German Marks were still required to improve the living conditions in the Bundeswehr barracks received from the NVA.⁸⁵⁵ Hartwig Kuhnert, of Regional Defence Administration VII in Erfurt, later quoted merely DM155 million needed for improving barracks and other

⁸⁵¹ *ECU 33 Million German Military Conversion Plan Agreed*, European Report No. 2083, Brussels, 11 November 1995

⁸⁵² Bode, Volkhard and Gerhard Kaiser *Roketenspuren Peenemünde 1936 -2000 (The Trace of the Rockets at Peenemünde 1936 -2000)* Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, August 2002, p.203

⁸⁵³ *Reuter V-2 Rocket Site Now Open to Tourists*, Toronto Star, 21 July 1990, p.H19, LexisNexis

⁸⁵⁴ Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit, p.178

⁸⁵⁵ *Defence Minister Cited on Bundeswehr's New Role*, ADN, 13 May, FBIS-WEU-92-094, 14 May 1992, p.7

infrastructures. But the Bundeswehr was an important economic factor in eastern Germany and the contracts, therefore, would be awarded primarily to local enterprises. Thus, former NVA civilian employees who would otherwise have lost their transitional posts in the Bundeswehr had a chance of continued employment.⁸⁵⁶

General Schönbohm had anticipated the need for further investment in the barracks before the BKO was disbanded in 1991, when an infrastructure programme of 435 million German Marks was allocated. As civilian contractors in eastern Germany had not yet been established and the relative administrative agency was not yet properly functional, it was very difficult to settle the contracts in time. According to an assessment made by the BKO, it would be necessary to invest sixteen billion German Marks in order to bring everything up to western standards. Given the proportion of the defence budget allocated to this task at the time, Schönbohm believed that it would take more than thirty years to reach this goal.⁸⁵⁷

In an interview between Stoltenberg and Schönbohm on 25 May 1991, Schönbohm's viewpoint was unquestionably comprehended. Stoltenberg also agreed that further investment would be necessary in the following years though no specific amount was promised.⁸⁵⁸ An immediate investment of DM400 million for improving the barracks in eastern Germany was one of the key issues in the FRG Defence Ministry's official publication "One Year of the Bundeswehr in United Germany".⁸⁵⁹ In 1994, Minister Rühle reported that the Bundeswehr had already invested DM5 billion, directly and indirectly, in the new German länder.⁸⁶⁰ These investments in eastern Germany were viewed as contributions to establishing a unified Germany paid for by the Bundeswehr.

⁸⁵⁶ *Army To Increase Spending on Barracks, Buildings*, ADN, 17 June, FBIS-WEU-92-120, 22 June 1992, p.21

⁸⁵⁷ Kemna, Friedhelm "Our Security Has Never Been in Danger" - *An Interview with Lieutenant General Schönbohm, Commander of the Bundeswehr Command East*, Die Welt, 26 June, Schönbohm Comments on Bundeswehr Integration, FBIS-WEU-91-124, 27 June 1991, pp.11-12. Schönbohm, in an interview 2 months previously, expressed the same viewpoint but said the amount needed was a little different. See *Bundeswehr To Absorb Former GDR Officers*, ADN, 18 April, FBIS-WEU-91-076, 19 April 1991, p.9

⁸⁵⁸ *Stoltenberg on Changes in Bundeswehr East*, Op Cit

⁸⁵⁹ *Defence Minister Calls Bundeswehr 'Indispensable'*, Op Cit

⁸⁶⁰ Staisch, Peter *Interview with Minister Rühle*, German NTV, 6 February, Comments on Change in Armed Forces, FBIS-WEU-94-025, 7 February 1994, pp.18-19

Reconciliation with Local Communities

The NVA had approximately 69,000 - 100,000 hectares of training ground in total, whereas the Bundeswehr had seven times the number of personnel but only held 80,000 hectares for training.⁸⁶¹ Some well-developed NVA training facilities were transferred intact to the Bundeswehr, who conducted NVA style training programmes on the original sites. For instance, a training installation for military operations in urban terrain (MOUT), also known as fighting in built-up areas (FIBUA), at Lehnin near Berlin originally operated by the NVA was taken over by the Bundeswehr. It had 65 purpose-built structures, included a sewage system, airfield, pedestrian subway, railway station, forest fighting range and a canal section for bridge-laying exercises. A street plan, like that of many cities, can accommodate a company-level deployment against a defending platoon-size force. Besides infantry tactics, it also incorporated exercise facilities for tanks and infantry fighting vehicles.⁸⁶² Such battlefield mock-ups were common in NVA training grounds. A section of imitation Berlin Wall was built at New-Zittau for training up for expected operations.⁸⁶³ Simulated casualties or other mock-ups were used in the political and psychological training facility "*Psycho-Kabinett*", at Wriezen, specifically designed to train personnel to cope with such battlefield scenes.⁸⁶⁴ So by integrating these facilities, without huge modifications, the Bundeswehr reduced the cost of managing former NVA sites. Nevertheless, the Bundeswehr retained at most 40% of the 370,000 hectares of military training grounds in eastern Germany.⁸⁶⁵ Even though only twelve of the sixty training areas ever used by Soviet forces and NVA were retained by the Bundeswehr, environmental activists still protested against this decision and this caused criticism of the Bundeswehr in eastern Germany.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶¹ Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit, p.207

⁸⁶² Hewish, Mark and Rupert Pengelley *Feature, Warfare in the Global City*, International Defence Review, Vol.31, Issue 6, 1 June 1998, p.32

⁸⁶³ Koop, Volker *Das Überwinden der Grenze verhindern (Overcome the Border Barrier)*, *Erbe NVA*, pp.106-108

⁸⁶⁴ *Ibid*, pp.20-24, Koop, Volker *Erziehung im "Psycho-Kabinett" (Education in "Psycho-Cabinet")*

⁸⁶⁵ *Ruehe on Bundeswehr Buildup in East Länder*, Op Cit. This statistic, 370,000 hectares, included all training grounds previously possessed by the Soviet forces and the NVA.

⁸⁶⁶ Baum, Karl-Heinz *Bundeswehr Is Trying to Boost Its Prestige*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 29 July 1992, *Bundeswehr Faces Difficulties in East Länder*, FBIS-WEU-92-150, 4 August 1992, p.9. Another report indicated that there were 400 training areas in eastern German before reunification. However, the figure for the total area covered by was consistent, 370,000 hectares. See *Bundeswehr To Close 350 Training Grounds*, DPA, 30 June, FBIS-WEU-92-126, 30 June 1992, pp.13-14

Some compromises were made by the Bundeswehr to reduce the resistance from the local population, including using simulators instead of firing live ammunition, reducing manoeuvres on open land to avoid causing damage to fields and traffic problems. Only a quarter of the 100 firing ranges in the former GDR were allowed to conduct firing exercises using live ammunition. Combat training centres employed laser simulators and other laser technology training aids intensively. Nevertheless, the Bundeswehr did not totally surrender to local oppositions over the training ground issue. A Soviet training area at Colbitz-Letzlinger Heath in northern Saxony-Anhalt was retained despite the disapproval of the local residents. In order to appease the public, the FRG Defence Minister prohibited live ammunition at this training site.⁸⁶⁷ Nevertheless, a massive number of locals, led by environmental activist groups, and supported by influential local politicians, delivered their opposition to retaining Colbitz-Letzlinger Heath as a training ground to the FRG Bundestag President Rita Suessmuth directly. Historically, Colbitz-Letzlinger Heath, the largest uninhabited area in Central Europe, roughly eight hundred square kilometres, has been used for military purposes since 1934. Local opposition was based on the concern about the drinking water supplies for more than six hundred thousand people in the neighbouring community. In many cases, retaining the training grounds in specific areas needed agreement between the German Defence Minister and the local government leaders.⁸⁶⁸

Compared with the East German Air Force, the Luftwaffe was less influential in eastern Germany. Therefore, the Luftwaffe encountered resistance from the local population when it planned to use the same training facilities that had been used previously by the NVA. Most ranges and training areas suitable for air force training in eastern Germany were closed after reunification. Nevertheless, in 1997 the Luftwaffe planned to reopen a range at Wittstock, which could be integrated into the night low-level flying system managed by the Luftwaffe ICAOC (Interim Combined Air Operations Centre) in Kalkar and offers sufficient space for tactical manoeuvres, but this was rejected by a legal ruling.⁸⁶⁹ The Cold War had ended. Germans, even in

⁸⁶⁷ *Bundeswehr To Close 350 Training Grounds*, Op Cit

⁸⁶⁸ *Defence Minister Visits Eastern Länder*, Op Cit

⁸⁶⁹ *Briefing, Eastern Airspace under Control*, Jane's Defence Weekly, Vol.27, Issue 5, Coulsdon: Jane's

the former GDR, were no longer willing to suffer the side effects of military training.

Twelve Major NVA and Soviet Training Grounds Retained After Reunification		
	Location	Länder
1	Jaegerbrueck	Mecklenburg - Western Pomerania
2	Luebtheen	Mecklenburg - Western Pomerania
3	Jueterbog (Wünsdorf)	Brandenburg
4	Lehnin	Brandenburg
5	Lieberose	Brandenburg
6	Wittstock	Brandenburg
7	Altengrabow	Saxony-Anhalt
8	Klietz	Saxony-Anhalt
9	Megdeburg (Colbitz-Letzlinger Heath)	Saxony-Anhalt
10	Ohrdruf	Thuringia
11	Koenigsbrueck	Saxony
12	Nochten	Saxony

Source: *Bundeswehr To Close 350 Training Grounds*, DPA, 30 June, FBIS-WEU-92-126, 30 June 1992, pp.13-14

No Military Rationale

The Deutsche Marine deliberately transferred some facilities to former East German territory in order to create a more balanced force allocation after reunification. Two factors that influenced the Deutsche Marine force structure and deployment in overall German defence restructuring were "the integration of elements of the former East German Navy into the German Navy" and "the stationing of the German military in the new länder". But neither the members nor the vessels of the former Volksmarine were significantly absorbed into the new all-German navy. Most of the Naval Support Command and the Naval Equipment Section were shortly expected to move to Rostock.⁸⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the actual progress was not as promising as originally expected. A totally new naval base accommodating Headquarters Home Command and Naval Office (Marineamt) at Rostock and a new school facility for the Naval Technical School near Stralsund, all within one of the geographical areas, the Warnemünde area in the länder of Mecklenburg - West Pomerania (Mecklenburg - Vorpommern), was finally decided around 1995. The quid pro quo for building the new facilities in new länder acquired after reunification is to abandon some well-established naval bases and well-developed schools in the former FRG area. Nevertheless, the FRG naval attaché in London, Konteradmiral Reichert, frankly

Information Group, 5 February 1997, p.26

admitted that there was a political consideration for shifting Deutsche Marine assets to former GDR territory.⁸⁷¹ All the former Volksmarine facilities related to this base development project need to be renovated intensively or even totally rebuilt. The heritage from the Volksmarine could only reduce the cost of acquiring the land property.

General Schönbohm himself strongly supported more Bundeswehr central facilities to eastern Germany. The German defence authority was reluctant to move well-established facilities to the new länder. At first, only a training school for guard dogs was to be relocated in the former GDR territory. General Schönbohm openly expressed his disapproval of the unenthusiastic attitude on Radio Dutschelandfunk. More Bundeswehr facilities, such as the Akademie der Bundeswehr für Information und Kommunikation and a branch office of the Zentrum Innere Führung, were moved from the western part of Germany to the new länder.⁸⁷² The Bundeswehr needed to respond positively to the people in the new länder. Actually, the German Defence Ministry originally planned to move more installations to eastern Germany than the public thought. Stoltenberg soon focused on this issue and stated that several military administrative centres would be moved to the new länder.⁸⁷³ Eventually, there were fourteen important Bundeswehr facilities, as shown in the attached table, either transferred or newly established in the former GDR territory.⁸⁷⁴ Moving these key facilities was by no means a mere gesture: it was vital for the amalgamation of assets, files, establishments and personnel inherited from the NVA. Some of the agencies may still retain part of their capacities in the old länder.⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷⁰ Högrefe, Volker *Bound for the Future - New Structure for the Navy*, Op Cit

⁸⁷¹ Reichert, K. M. *Armed Forces Briefing, Fewer Ships, more Tasks for the German Navy*, International Defence Review, Vol.028, Issue 08, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, 01 August 1995, pp. 57

⁸⁷² *More Installations to the East; Schönbohm Critical of Pay Scale of Conscripts*, Frankfurter Allgemeine, 10 June, Bundeswehr To Shift More Facilities to East, FBIS-WEU-91-134, 12 July 1991, pp.24

⁸⁷³ *Comments on New Tasks*, DPA, 1 July, FBIS-WEU-91-128, 3 July 1991, pp.13-14

⁸⁷⁴ Information provided by Kapitän zur See, Peter Behrens, Deutsche Marine, 24 November, 2003, in a well-organised briefing, indicating this matter is either a frequently asked question or information that the Bundeswehr wanted to present pre-emptively.

⁸⁷⁵ Militärgeschichtliches Forschungamt, the Bundeswehr Military History Research Institute, at Potsdam is a typical case. Some of its researchers and most of its research files remained in western Germany. Information acquired from the briefing provided by Oberst im Generalstabdienst, Dr. Hans-Joachim Harder, Deputy Chief of Militärgeschichtliches Forschungamt, 11 June 2003. Zentrum Innere Führung, Bereich 5, at Strausberg is only a branch office; its headquarters remains in Koblenz.

Bundeswehr Facilities Established in German New Länder after Reunification	
Name of the Facility	Location
Marineteknikschule (Naval Technical School)	Stralsund
Flugabwehrraketengeschwader (Air Defence Missile Group)	Sanitz
Marineamt (Naval District Command)	Warnemünde-Rostock
Schnellbootflottille (Fast Boat Flotilla)	Warnemünde-Rostock
Jagdgeschwader (Fighter Aircraft Wing)	Laage
Flugabwehrraketengeschwader (Air Defence Missile Group)	Böhlendorf
Luftwaffenmuseum (Air Force Museum)	Berlin
Bundeswehrverwaltungsschule (Bundeswehr Administration School)	Berlin
Bundesakademie für Sicherheitspolitik (Bundeswehr Academy for Security Policy)	Berlin
Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt (Military History Research Institute)	Potsdam
Aufgabenverbund Innere Führung (Zentrum Innere Führung, Bereich 5) (Innere Führung Centre, Division 5)	Strausberg
Akademie der Bundeswehr für Information und Kommunikation (Bundeswehr Academy for Information and Communications)	Strausberg
Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr (Bundeswehr Social Science Research Institute)	Strausberg
Lufttransportgeschwader (Air Transportation Wing)	Holzendorf-Brandis
Offizierschule des Heeres (Army Officers' School)	Dresden

Source: Information Provided in Interview by Kapitän zur See, Peter Behrens, Deutsche Marine, 24 November 2003

The Luftwaffe only took over and sustained operations in a very modest number of former NVA air bases. Only Laage was operated as a main base for MiG-29s originally commanded by the Fifth Luftwaffe Division right after German unification, later replaced by the Third Luftwaffe Division in 1995, with Trollenhagen in Neubrandenburg as a secondary airfield. There is another transport air base of Luftwaffe at Holzdorf in the Berlin Area.⁸⁷⁶ As the Bundeswehr Command East was restructured on April 16, 1991, only twenty-three Luftwaffe units and bases with manpower of eighty-five hundred were to remain in eastern Germany. Compared with the NVA, whose air force comprised 270 units with 20,000 personnel it was definitely a significant reduction.⁸⁷⁷ Initially, only fifteen of twenty-two former NVA airstrips were to be kept for further military operations.⁸⁷⁸ Even one of the largest former Soviet military bases, at Nobitz near Altenburg in Thuringia, was handed over for

⁸⁷⁶ Schulte, Heinz *The Jane's Interview of Lt. Gen. Bernhard Mende, Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe*, Op Cit

⁸⁷⁷ Heinze, Peter *Report on Restructuring Bundeswehr East*, ADN, 3 April, FBIS-WEU-91-066, 5 April 1991, pp.11-12

civilian purpose after a meeting between the FRG Defence Minister and the Thuringian Minister President.⁸⁷⁹

As Defence Minister Rühle openly admitted at a television interview in 1994, the deployment of the Bundeswehr in new länder was not merely for military reasons. It only took three minutes for the Luftwaffe to reach eastern Germany to maintain security; the Luftwaffe could still keep the most modern bases in western Germany and there was no need for any investment in the new länder. But if it that happened, it would never crate a uniformly deployed Luftwaffe, which was against the concepts of the armed forces of a unified state as well as growing together for the whole Germany.⁸⁸⁰ Military deployment was always a political trade-off amongst the substantial military demands, political significance, local community support, cost-effectiveness in further investment and budget available for the German defence authorities.

In summary, several issues concerning the disposal of former East German military land and properties are worth further discussion. Firstly, the value of these assets differed between the original owner and possible recipients. Decisions for releasing military land and properties were not based purely on military concerns or possible wartime defence requirements. Other factors had to be taken into consideration. There was no universal or consistent reason for these decisions. To put requests from the local community into the calculations is not irrational. After all, a well-developed civil-military relationship is essential in any democratic society.

Secondly, the task of disposing of military land and properties and the subsequent conversion processes was an inter-agency effort. Conciliation between different governmental agencies and the forging of an atmosphere for uniting efforts was important. Conflicts of interests were unavoidable. Nevertheless, the whole process needed to meet all the regulations of the different governmental authorities, otherwise any request from one of the agencies involved could hamper the whole task.

⁸⁷⁸ Giessmann, 1992, Op Cit, p.207

⁸⁷⁹ *Bundeswehr Relinquishes Soviet Military Airport*, DPA, 13 May, FBIS-WEU-92-094, 14 May 1992, pp.7

Thirdly, since mainly the Bundeswehr military installations in eastern Germany were chosen from former NVA or Soviet establishments, the degree of freedom to select the most suitable locations to establish the military facilities was actually limited. Another limiting factor was the Bundeswehr's insufficient defence budget after reunification. It would be over-optimistic to expect the revenues acquired through converting military properties to support the military budget; in most cases, decommissioning military bases cost more than retaining them.

Fourthly, disposing of NVA land and properties did not occur separately after the Cold War. It happened alongside the enormous problem of disposing of Bundeswehr properties in western Germany. Some cases were similar; yet, there was no evidence to prove that competition for resources existed. In many cases, investors from other regions provided the capital desperately needed for conversion. Competitiveness of conversion and reuse was not necessarily inferior in eastern Germany, though local economics were indeed worse there.

Last but not least, there was no universal principle suitable for all cases though some general legal codes could be followed. The value of the former military land and properties was decided by the potential beneficiaries who pursued the assets. This is a general rule of market economics. The interactions of supply and demand decided the success of converting military land and properties. Unlike the sensitive items discussed in Chapter Five, there were very few examples of the disposal of land and properties that went against the interests of any third part. Nevertheless, the flexibility of the governmental codes in releasing the properties still substantially facilitated the whole operation.

Non Land Properties

NATO's air defence identification zone (ADIZ) was extended to the Polish border along with the Luftwaffe took over the East German airspace. The Luftwaffe also established air defence and surveillance radar systems in the former GDR territory by inheriting the East German air force radar posts. Two existing Control Report Centres

⁸⁸⁰ Staisch, Peter *Interview with Minister Rühe*, Op Cit

(CRCs) at Schonewalde and Colpin plus five subordinated radar posts (RPs) at Dobern, Elmenhorst, Gleina, Putgarten and Colpin were retained. Yet, all the radar systems later were replaced by Lockheed Martin AN/FPS-117 air surveillance radar, three of which were already in service in the western Germany.⁸⁸¹ Although its area of responsibility (AOR) expanded, the Luftwaffe still retained its operational framework by maintaining two existing ICAOCs (Interim Combined Air Operations Centres) at Kalkar, near the Dutch border, and Messstetten, near the Swiss border, host for NATO's Allied Air Forces Central Europe (AIRCENT).⁸⁸² The national heads of Luftwaffe Commands are also located at these two ICAOCs, Command North at Kalkar and Command South at Messstetten.⁸⁸³ The ICAOC in Kalkar extended its control to include the German night low-level route system, which added more than four thousand kilometres to its route network over the former GDR airspace in May 1995. This expanded the temporary reserved airspaces (TRAs) available for air combat training. After the Russian Air Force totally withdrew from Germany, former GDR airspace started to accommodate NATO combat training flights. However, a maximum of four non-German aircrafts at any time was also established.⁸⁸⁴

Before the Soviet forces completely retracted from Germany, the Two-plus-Four Treaty ruled out any form of the NATO manoeuvre within the former GDR territory.⁸⁸⁵ It was a condition suddenly imposed by the British government the night before the signing ceremony without prior consultation with any other NATO allies that involved in the Two-Plus-Four negotiation. Thus at midnight, the FRG Foreign Minister, Genscher, had to wake the US State Secretary, James Baker, up in order to ask his support to conclude this unexpected demand.⁸⁸⁶ Finally, it became a provision of the treaty that explicitly denied the attempt made by the British and granted the German government the power of final decision on any non-German NATO activity

⁸⁸¹ *Briefing, Eastern Airspace under Control*, Op Cit

⁸⁸² Lok, Joris Janssen *Briefing, Luftwaffe Takes Off for New Horizons*, Jane's Defence Weekly, Vol.027, Issue 05, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, 05 February 1997

⁸⁸³ Schulte, Heinz *The Jane's Interview of Lt. Gen. Bernhard Mende, Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe*, Op Cit

⁸⁸⁴ *Briefing, Eastern Airspace under Control*, Op Cit

⁸⁸⁵ Paragraph 2, Article 5 of "Treaty on the Final Settlement with Respect to Germany, Signed in Moscow on September 12, 1990" in Stares, Paul B. *Allied Rights and Legal Constraints on German Military Power*, Op Cit, pp. 158 - 159.

⁸⁸⁶ Kettenacker, Lothar *Germany Since 1945*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, pp.208

in eastern Germany after reunification.⁸⁸⁷ Nonetheless, any foreign force appearance in former Soviet or NVA training area was still a sensitive issue to the local communities even after the Russian forces withdrew their last military personnel from the GDR territory on 31 August 1994.⁸⁸⁸

After German reunification, the Luftwaffe replaced the tightly military dominated airspace control system previously organised by a combined Russian-GDR headquarters with a new established air traffic control (ATC) centre, "Berlin Radar", at Tempelhof Airport and all the airspace over the former GDR territory was reorganised to be compatible with the FRG system. All the air corridors to West Berlin instituted in the Cold War era were abolished at the same time. Furthermore, the airspace control authority was given to a civilian agency called DFS (Deutsche Flugsicherung GmbH) after privatisation in 1993. Unlike the former East German Air Force, the Luftwaffe has only a secondary role in airspace control by integrating military ATC with the civilian-controlled operations in peacetime. The Luftwaffe can only take control in time of crisis.⁸⁸⁹ Controlling air space is a sensitive issue with sovereignty implications for the FRG. According to an FRG commitment on the 1972 Germany Treaty, the Bonn government needed to consult the three WWII western powers before allowing any flight from the WTO area to its airspace, including traffic across the two-German borderline. Moreover, the FRG itself was totally excluded from providing the air traffic service to West Berlin. In February 1990, FRG Transportation Minister Friedrich Zimmermann firmly expressed his intent to acquire unrestricted inner-German air traffic from Allied control, especially for direct flights over the FRG-GDR border.⁸⁹⁰

⁸⁸⁷ U.S. State Department and Pentagon firmly supported that such power was unquestionably granted to the FRG by the treaty. See US Congressional Hearing Record, *Implications of Treaty on Final German Settlement for NATO Strategy and U.S. Military Presence in Europe*, Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, One Hundred First Congress, Second Session, 4 October 1990, Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1991, pp. 7-13

⁸⁸⁸ Schulte, Heinz *Russian Pull-out Opens up New Bilateral Era*, Jane's Defence Weekly, Vol.022, Issue 10, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, pp.26.

⁸⁸⁹ *Briefing, Eastern Airspace under Control*, Op Cit

⁸⁹⁰ *Zimmermann on Unhindered German Air Traffic*, Die Welt, 8 February, pp.11, FBIS-WEU-90-028, 9 February 1990, p.14. Nevertheless, exceptionally permitted air traffic across the inner-German border including flight conducted by a NVA military aircraft did happen later. On 8 March 1990, a NVA Mi-8 transport helicopter carried a GDR patient from Magdeburg to the Hanover University clinic for treatment that completed the first historical rescue flight between the two German states. See "Army Helicopter Flies Patient to Hanover", ADN, 8 March, FBIS-EEU-90-047, 9 March 1990, pp.39

From Schönbohm's perspective, therefore, the agreement on the use of the airspace over the new Länder, signed with the representative of the Soviet forces on 18 February 1991, was a significant milestone in exercising sovereignty. This task was an inter-agency effort jointly conducted by the members of the German Transport Ministry and the military.⁸⁹¹ In the initial stages, Major Holger Kann, the Bundeswehr representative who perceived himself as the pioneer to take over relative duties in the Tempelhof Airport after reunification, recalled that all safety measures and flight control then were so awful that they could not catch the FRG standard; therefore, the German military still needed the supports provided by their British and American colleagues.⁸⁹² The contribution of the former NVA officers to maintaining air sovereignty over eastern Germany was specifically recognised through their close co-operation with their Bundeswehr colleagues during the transition period.⁸⁹³

Co-ordination between the Bundeswehr and the members of civil aviation agency on the flight traffic control of the new länder was not so smoothly executed. Under the banner of safeguarding air sovereignty, the Bundeswehr insisted on maintaining a higher priority in air space control though this did not comply with the agreement signed by different German political parties in January 1991, in which Stoltenberg promised that "the interests of civil aviation must have precedence over the interests of military aviation in the former GDR territory". But because the Bundeswehr grabbed two thirds of the airspace over the new länder exclusively for military use, conflicts arose over air traffic control between the civil aviation controllers and military personnel co-ordinated with them within the joint manned air traffic control centre in Berlin. Negligence when handling non-routine military air traffic, such as dropping parachutists over the Spandau Lindenufer area, which was assigned to civilian authority by law and required the Bundeswehr to make a prior application, meant tensions between the Bundeswehr and Transportation Ministry were high. At the same time, by introducing similar mechanisms in air traffic control, the frictions between the civil aviation controllers and their military counterparts over the old länder were reduced.⁸⁹⁴ This phenomenon of civil-military tension over airspace most

⁸⁹¹ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit., pp.138

⁸⁹² Koop, Volker *"Pionier" im Tempelhofer Flughafen ("Pioneer" in the Tempelhof Airport)*, *Erbe NVA*, pp.26-27

⁸⁹³ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit., pp.63 and 169

⁸⁹⁴ *Buffer in the Sky*, *Der Spiegel*, 27 May, pp.70-75, Bundeswehr Presence in Former GDR Airspace,

likely originated from the Luftwaffe over-rating the importance of "air sovereignty rights" because it viewed the power of controlling airspace as a privilege taken from the Soviet forces and the NVA.

Another issue also viewed by Schönbohm as exercising German sovereignty was the Bundeswehr being stationed in Berlin. The "visible presence" of the Bundeswehr in Berlin was a symbol of resuming sovereign rights in its capital though at first only one army battalion was planned to be there.⁸⁹⁵ Eight months later, Stoltenberg announced more Bundeswehr installations in Berlin. Many Bundeswehr units, including District Defence Command 100, one fighting battalion, the Volunteer Recruitment Office East, a Bundeswehr Hospital, and a Central Medical Institute of the Bundeswehr would be established in Berlin. But the transfer of the Bundeswehr Guard Battalion and the Staff Music Corps that served the national ceremonial functions was the most important military manoeuvre to the capital city of the FRG.⁸⁹⁶

Reselling Non-Weapon Items - Massive Surplus of Vehicles

After inspecting and realising that some equipment could not be integrated into future unified German armed forces, the Bundeswehr authorised civilian companies to resell the excessive former NVA military vehicles at extremely low prices. Two companies in particular, MDSG (Materialdepot Servicegesellschaft MbH, Material Depot Service Company) in Bonn and VEBEG (Verwertungsgesellschaft Bundeseigenen Materials MbH) at Frankfurt were deeply involved in managing ex-NVA equipment and materials. MDSG was responsible for mustering vehicles and preparing them for auction. VEBEG managed transactions to various customers. The basic principle for conducting deals was speed; revenue was relatively unimportant.⁸⁹⁷ Therefore, the restrictions on customers were relatively nominal. The majority of sales by these two companies were reportedly completed in mid-1994. The Bundeswehr, therefore, was relieved of safeguarding and storing the former NVA military surplus.⁸⁹⁸ But it still

FBIS-WEU-91-105, 31 May 1991, pp.2-3

⁸⁹⁵ *Bundeswehr To Be Stationed in Berlin as of 1991*, Op Cit

⁸⁹⁶ *Bundeswehr Soldiers To Be Stationed in Berlin*, Die Welt, 6 August, FBIS-WEU-91-151, 6 August 1991, pp.14.

⁸⁹⁷ Marx, Stefan *The Vanished Army - The Liquidation of the NVA*, Op Cit

⁸⁹⁸ *70,000 Tonnes of Ammunition from the National People's Army in Other Hands*, Op Cit

took another few years for the FRG government to complete the disposal task.

There were a few difficulties encountered by the MDSG and VEBEG when reselling the ex-NVA equipment. The most significant one was lack of adequate and accurate documentation about the equipment. No technical support was available from the former NVA technicians and specialists: ironically, these experts had been laid off and were receiving financial support as unemployed workers. This disastrous mismanagement severely delayed the reselling task. The conditions set by German regulations could also turn into unexpected obstacles. Some popular vehicles, such as Ural-375D trucks that were fully equipped with a standard maintenance body, Grenztrabant (Border Trabant), and a few other types of vans and trucks in good conditions, were successfully sold at favourable prices, but no guarantee could be given of getting German traffic permit for these vehicles. Items such as maintenance tools did not comply with industrial standards, Deutsche Industrienorm (DIN), and therefore could not be insured and training apprentices to use them was illegal. This also prohibited fire brigades from accepting any specially adapted fire fighting equipment that they desperately needed.⁸⁹⁹ Not only the DIN but also Bundeswehr standards become an obstacle to absorbing NVA stock for further service. The Ural series transport vehicles could not be retained simply "because they were five centimetres wider than prescribed by the Bundeswehr standard".⁹⁰⁰

A variety of items from the NVA inventory were therefore sold to the open market after reunification. All kinds of vehicles, including jeeps, ambulances, dump trucks, radar trucks, personnel carriers, water trucks, amphibious vehicles, even trucks for laying pontoon bridges, could be purchased through the appropriate agencies. For instance, approximately 3,000 of these vehicles had been sold in eight months, August 1991 to April 1992, from just one site at Peenemünde, by MDSG.⁹⁰¹ Another report in 1994 indicated that 110,000 vehicles were available for disposal though the majority of them were not usable and could only be scrapped.⁹⁰²

⁸⁹⁹ Marx, Stefan *The Vanished Army - The Liquidation of the NVA*, Op Cit

⁹⁰⁰ Michalsky, Oliver *From Lieutenant to Sergeant Without Grumbling: Second MORGEN Visit to the Eggesin Army Base; the Greatest Difference Between the NVA and the Bundeswehr*, Op Cit

⁹⁰¹ Another report indicated similar public sale operations also took place at Bautzen. See Atkinson, Rick and Steven Taylor *E. German Army Meets Its End - A Clearance Sale; Thousands Flock to Warehouse Daily to Buy Everything From Binoculars to Buckets*, Op Cit

⁹⁰² 70,000 Tonnes of Ammunition from the National People's Army in Other Hands, Op Cit

There was virtually no restriction on customers; nobody seemed concerned about military proliferation. Buyers and sellers were only concerned about the price, feasibility of traffic safety regulation, spare parts, and performance. Who would be final users of these vehicles and whether they would go to private collectors, the industrial sectors, criminal organisations, or foreign arsenals was not important.⁹⁰³ NVA military equipment had flowed into the open market before the reunification day; East German defence officials reportedly sold off the military vehicles openly at an NVA base near Berlin. The number and prices of the transaction were very impressive. Forty-three trucks were sold within two hours at an unbelievably low DM 57,000. At least 7,000 military vehicles, which made revenue DM 15.7 million, were sold up to two weeks before reunification day.⁹⁰⁴

Everything for Sale

West German wholesalers also seized this opportunity to purchase tons of NVA uniforms and field gear from the GDR government. Before reunification day, an advertisement in an FRG newspaper claimed that a company in Frankfurt could immediately provide 13,000 NVA jackets, parkas, and boots. Most NVA militaria, like flags, uniforms, caps, symbols and signs became highly desirable to souvenir hunters as potential investments, while GDR citizens were glad to see them vanish. Illegal sale of the Soviet and NVA weapons also increased in the last few months before reunification. A substantial amount of explosives, ammunitions and light weapons were confiscated by the law enforcement agencies in West Berlin. The numbers of the crimes linked with the unlawful weapon trade also escalated.⁹⁰⁵ After reunification, the FRG found impressive amount of military materials stored in 80 NVA depots. It took several years to manage these surpluses and gradually put them on the open market. In late-1993, the German government finally decided to authorise a private company to supervise the sale of all remaining NVA items. Warehouses were established in different places in eastern Germany; people came from all over the

⁹⁰³ Fisher, Marc *Dismantling of East German Army Brings Deals on Military Wheels*, Op Cit

⁹⁰⁴ Steichen, Girard C. *For Sale: East German Flags, Uniforms, Spy Suitcases*, Christian Science Monitor, 21 September 1990, pp.3, LexisNexis

⁹⁰⁵ Ibid.

FRG for this "cash-and-carry" clearance sale. Whatever was needed for military operations as well as items for daily life in the barracks all appeared in these warehouses. Binoculars, buckets, tire pumps, shovels, signal flags, sets of tools, leather map cases, pickaxes, barrels of soap, as well as obsolete slide rules, which reflected anachronism in the NVA, were sold in bargain prices. At one warehouse in Fuerstenwalde alone, a typical day's sale of over \$60,000 dollars from 1,500 customers showed their popularity.⁹⁰⁶

Two reasons had promoted the circulation of the military surplus market right after the Cold War: massive surplus released from the suppliers around the east Europe as well as the Gulf crisis increased the demands both from the private orders and also from the government procurements for the Middle East. The NVA legacies are always popular in the military surplus market for the private collectors because the quality is outstanding. Especially when comparing prices and the status, most of them were virtually new as they came on the market. Also, there will be no further supply; therefore increasing the value of the collection.⁹⁰⁷ After the collapse of the Berlin Wall, many NVA soldiers began to sell their own uniforms and accessories at the flea market in West Berlin.⁹⁰⁸ The basic rule in economics - demand would stimulate supply - was evoked. More items were stolen from NVA military logistic depots and flowed onto the surplus market. Some textile companies in eastern Germany even produced military uniforms to satisfy the demands of private collectors.⁹⁰⁹

Sometimes, following the rule of the free market proves to be the best strategy in military conversion operations. Undoubtedly, dual-purpose military hardware is easier to sell in the free market; binoculars once used for enemy surveillance are ideal for bird-watching. Although putting military surplus on the uncontrolled free market contains the risk of items being misused, it could also be creative, for instance infrared light is perfect for keeping hunters' hounds warm.⁹¹⁰ But again, misuse of

⁹⁰⁶ Atkinson, Rick and Steven Taylor E. *German Army Meets Its End - A Clearance Sale; Thousands Flock to Warehouse Daily to Buy Everything From Binoculars to Buckets*, Op Cit

⁹⁰⁷ Flannery, William *Army Surplus Sales Soar; War Sparks Demand for Military Items*, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Missouri, 24 March 1991, Business, p.1E, LexisNexis

⁹⁰⁸ Williams, Carol J. *Reform Hurts Readiness of Once-Fearred Warsaw Pact Frontline Force*, The Associated Press, 3 March 1990, LexisNexis

⁹⁰⁹ Immanuel, Jon *'Wall St.' Is Hottest Business Address in E. Berlin*, The Jerusalem Post, 20 July 1990, Section: Economic, LexisNexis

⁹¹⁰ Atkinson, Rick and Steven Taylor E. *German Army Meets Its End - A Clearance Sale; Thousands*

former military materials is caused by the purchasers and not by the surplus itself.

Hot Sale Item - the Berlin Wall

The most popular merchandise originating from former NVA property was the Berlin Wall. Every tourist visiting Berlin wanted to purchase a piece of it as a souvenir. Some "Wall packers" started using hammers and chisels to chop down the Berlin Wall long before reunification day. These vandals caused serious safety concerns that were voiced in *Volksarmee* by Deputy Commander and Chief of Staff of the GDR Border Troops, General Dieter Teichmann, in February 1990. The situation was so severe that even the feared GDR Border Troops could not halt it and needed to ask for assistance from the West Berlin police authority.⁹¹¹ In January 1990, an FRG newspaper *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* realised the Berlin Wall had potential for the GDR to support charitable purposes.⁹¹² When the GDR Border Troops started to demolish the Berlin Wall at the Brandenburg Gate on 21 December 1989, it was viewed as a joyous event.⁹¹³ Further demolition of a nearby two-kilometre section on 19 February 1990 attracted thousands of citizens from both sides of the wall to greet the engineers' crane and trucks with cheers. People tirelessly chipped away at the wall.⁹¹⁴ No direct financial benefits were expected then.

After reunification, sections of the wall have been sold through direct trading with souvenir retailers or selling to other collectors by regular auctions. Assets associated with the Berlin Wall became available; barbed wire, heat detectors, camouflage nets

Flock to Warehouse Daily to Buy Everything From Binoculars to Buckets, Op Cit

⁹¹¹ *Wall To Be Dismantled at Brandenburg Gate*, ADN, 8 February, FBIS-EEU-90-028, 9 February 1990, p.46. The collapse of the Border Troops was started immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall. They became incapable of stopping their colleagues deserting, including crossing the inner German border that they should guard. See *Border Guards Watch as Soldier Defects*, DPA, 15 November, FBIS-EEU-90-223, 21 November 1989, p.36. The Border Troops also became powerless of managing the hooligans from West Berlin. Cooperation with the West Berlin police authority along the Berlin Wall began about the same time but incidents still happened repeatedly. Some casualties among the Border Troops were reported. See *'Hooligans' Fleeing W. Berlin Police Expelled*, DPA, 15 November, FBIS-EEU-90-223, 21 November 1989, p.36 and *Border Troops Attacked by 'Hooligans' in Berlin*, ADN, 2 April, FBIS-EEU-90-064, 3 April 1990, p.33

⁹¹² *Press Views Future Shape of Inner-German Borders*, Deutschlandfunk Network, 3 January, FBIS-WEU-90-003, 4 January 1990, p.2

⁹¹³ *"Brandenburg Gate Wall Demolition Work Begins"* and *"Wall Breached"*, DPA, 21 December, FBIS-WEU-89-245, 22 December 1989, p.6

⁹¹⁴ *Demolition of Wall at Brandenburg Gate Begins*, DPA, 19 February, FBIS-EEU-90-034, 20 February 1990, p.34

and border marking stones were also sold. Even copper and aluminium from recycling the communication cables along the wall raised a good price. Graffiti on the Wall increased its market value: Asian and South American companies specifically requested several sections of the Berlin Wall with graffiti on it. For the wall itself, much of it would eventually be crushed and converted into construction material. A storage basin of coal, a ramp and foundations of public roads were built entirely from the Wall. Plans for further utilising the wall were quite different. People from eastern Germany wanted to utilise it for substantial works but people from the west only wanted a memorial.⁹¹⁵ The massive revenues from demolishing the Berlin wall led to a political inquiry and a rival claim of ownership in February 1991. The German Defence Ministry considered itself the sole legal owner of the Berlin Wall after reunification day because it inherited all the NVA properties including the Berlin Wall. Therefore, the Defence Ministry claimed entitlement to all the revenue from selling the Berlin Wall, including the rubble sold in plastic bags that it claimed as "mobile property of the federal state".⁹¹⁶ The German Defence Ministry retained the exclusive rights to commercially sell the Berlin Wall but declined to reveal the exact amount of revenue from it.⁹¹⁷

Finally, several straightforward lessons may be concluded from the disposal of NVA non-weapon items. It was much easier to resell non-weapon legacies containing some existing compatible civilian functions or the potential of serving civilian purposes after simple and immediate conversion. But in many cases, reselling non-weapon items was less relevant to their original functions and military potential. The customers themselves could develop new uses for military hardware. Furthermore, disposing of non-weapon items relied totally on the market mechanism. There was no third party other than contractors and retailers to either hinder or facilitate the disposal of non-weapon items. Every case, therefore, was negotiated individually with each client. Although about the same time a significant amount of Bundeswehr non-weapon equipment also appeared on the military surplus market, no indication of

⁹¹⁵ Koop, Volker *Bindedraht und Hundezwinger (Binding Wire and Hound Den)*, *Erbe NVA*, pp.93-95

⁹¹⁶ The Border Troops were transferred from the Disarmament and Defence Ministry to the GDR Interior Ministry in May 1990. See *Interior Ministry Gains Control of Border Troops*, ADN, 2 May, FBIS-EEU-90-086, 3 May 1990, p.25. Nevertheless, the Border Troops including all its assets were General Schönbohm's responsibility after reunification.

⁹¹⁷ Gow, David *Wall Artists Help to Fill State Coffers*, *The Guardian*, London, 6 February 1991, LexisNexis

competition ever appeared amongst similar items from these two different origins. The interactions of supply and demand prevailed for selling non-weapon surpluses. Neither the German legal code nor its administrative intervention substantially interfered with the surplus market. Basically, the NVA non-weapon items put on the open market were purely unwanted surplus and needed almost no decommissioning cost. Without feasible management, these massive assets in hand could turn into a burden that continued to consume money. The more they could sell, the more money could be saved.

The Final Bill

In 1997 July, the Bundeswehr concluded a final report on disposing of former NVA assets. The statistics do not contain expenses and revenues for disposing NVA or Soviet lands and properties since that was the responsibility of the German Finance Ministry. Therefore, the actual cost of managing the NVA legacies was even higher than these figures show.

Balance of Disposing NVA Assets (in Million Deutsche Mark)		
Task or Source of Income	Income	Expense
Income from Governmental/Direct Sale Contracts	214.6	
Income from VEBEG Sale Operations	113.2	
Subtotal of Income	345.1	
Disposal of Munitions, Missile Propellants and Explosives		886.4
MDSG Security and Stock Operations till the end of 1994		238.9
Disposal and Decontamination of Waste and Residua		192.6
Demolition of TLEs according to CFE Treaty		49.0
Subtotal of Expense		1760.9
Balance		1415.8

Another table in the same report listed the military hardware disposed of:

Categories and Items	Amount
Aeroplanes	767
- Fixed-Wing Aircraft	446
- Helicopters	185
- Other already discharged NVA Aeroplanes	136
Tanks	2761
Armoured vehicles	6467
- Armoured fighting vehicles (APCs, AFVs, etc.)	6050
- Other armoured vehicles	3417
Artillery weapons	2199
Major Naval Combatants and Auxiliary Vessels	208

- Major Naval Combatants	82
- Auxiliary Vessels	126
Wheeled Vehicles	c.133900
- Cars	7180
- Trucks (Commercial Specification) and special motor vehicles	86715
- Motorcycles	2160
- Trailers	37845
Munitions	c.303690 tonnes
Fluid critical/dangerous substances	c.62535 tonnes
- Fluid missile fuel and cleaning materials	14335 tonnes
- Fluid dangerous substances	48200 tonnes
Small arms	c.1376650
- Pistols, machine pistols, machine guns, etc.	1304220
- Hunting, sport and signal guns (sport guns)	72430
Cloths and personnel equipment	c.19087 tonnes
Medical equipment	c.15600 tonnes

Source for both tables in this paragraph: *Bericht der Bundesregierung über den Abschluß der Verwertung des überschüssigen Materials der ehemaligen NVA vom 30. Juli 1997 (Auszug)* (Federal government report regarding the disposal of former NVA surplus submitted on July 30, 1997 - extract), *Armee ohne Zukunft*, Op Cit., pp.525-528

Military demobilisation and conversion is never easy. Although the cost of disposing of this "white elephant" was very high, yet it was far less expensive than rebuilding a Germany from ruins caused by the same weapons, had the Cold War and German reunification not been concluded in such a peaceful way. Nevertheless, the heavy economic burden caused by the German reunification still hindered overall national unity. Strong sentiment roused by the appalling expenses of managing GDR legacies and rebuilding the infrastructure in eastern Germany was the fundamental cause of social differentiation and biases toward those Germans from former GDR territory. From facts and cases studied in the previous chapters, it is hard to find any evidence that absorbing, converting, reselling, demolishing or transferring NVA legacies substantially facilitated national unity. On the contrary, judgments on the value of these NVA legacies were conflicting. Apart from the unreasonably low prices, authorising certain private agencies to hold the exclusive right of reselling NVA surplus caused serious criticism in eastern Germany.⁹¹⁸ All these negative criticisms substantially undermined German national unity. The bill in terms of Deutsche Marks can be precisely calculated. But the balance of the passions on these NVA legacies, perhaps, can never be firmly known.

⁹¹⁸ *Shady Deals With War Material of the National People's Army*, Op Cit

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

This chapter will conclude the research by examining the task of accommodating former NVA members into the Bundeswehr to reinforce the view that reality differs from prior predictions and general perceptions. Further study reveals that sometimes facts were partially, or merely instinctively, understood by the general public and there is in essence no solid and objective evidence for certain expectations or judgments. Additionally, the significance of the task including any further potential influence should be better comprehended.

Facilitating Overall Integration?

All armed forces must be ideologically faithful and politically reliable to their political leaders since the military should be the most important tool for preserving national identity and survival. Given the political hostility between these two states in the Cold War era, it is understandable that the Bundeswehr and the NVA should be poles apart at German unification. Yet military integration, theoretically the hardest part to execute successfully, should have a constructive effect on other segments in the overall unification process. The FRG Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker forecast "The unity of the troops promotes the unity of the German people" during his visit to the Eastern Corps and Territorial Command on 29 April 1991.⁹¹⁹ Nevertheless, according to another source, although President von Weizsäcker indisputably commented that "The servicemen of the Bundeswehr have been giving an example of German unity from the first day onwards" and "The Bundeswehr's contribution so far to the growing together of united Germany deserves the respect and recognition of all of us", he still had reservations about the Bundeswehr's eventual influence within society and said during the same visit "You are taking part, with a particularly high degree of responsibility, in the dynamic process of social change, the course of which cannot yet be fully foreseen by anyone".⁹²⁰

⁹¹⁹ von Scheven, Werner "The Merger of Two Formerly Hostile German Armies", Op Cit., p.173

⁹²⁰ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit., p.178

When Stoltenberg officially disbanded the Bundeswehr Command East (BKO) in Strausberg on 1 July 1991, he concluded that the redevelopment of the Bundeswehr in the new German länder was a "remarkable example for the convergence of the nation".⁹²¹ Chancellor Kohl also praised the achievement, saying in the 1994 FRG Defence Ministry White Paper: "The building of the Bundeswehr in eastern Germany is an enormous contribution to the consolidation of the inner unity of our fatherland ". In the same publication, Stoltenberg's successor, Volker Rühle, endorsed Kohl's praise by adding "As the Army of Unity, it has become an example of the growing together of our fatherland".⁹²²

The contribution made by the Bundeswehr was also recognised by researchers such as Catherine Kelleher, the Head of the Aspen Institute, a U.S. inspired think tank in Berlin that had studied German issues since the 1960s. Kelleher concluded that the Bundeswehr had been "the leading national body in integrating former East Germans into the new united Germany".⁹²³ Another commentator agreed that the integration of the former NVA into the Bundeswehr was "one good example of a successful reunification" and also pointed out that the new Bundeswehr was repeatedly seen "upholding the highest civil and democratic standards" from its first overseas mission in Kosovo.⁹²⁴ Jochen Thies, the foreign editor of German newspaper *Die Welt*, was more insightful. He believed that the composition of the elite class in the FRG defence authority, presumably the military professionals, who were "formed according to established pattern", assured a strong "pan-German consciousness" in the Bundeswehr. Based on this unique organisational feature, the Bundeswehr successfully integrated former NVA members into its formation and thus played a key role in the initial phase of German reunification.⁹²⁵ Nevertheless, some German

⁹²¹ *Stoltenberg Disbands Bundeswehr Command East*, DPA, 1 July, FBIS-WEU-91-128, 3 July 1991, p.13

⁹²² *Weißbuch zur Sicherheit der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und zur Lage und der Zukunft der Bundeswehr (White Paper, the Security of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Future Policy of the Bundeswehr, 1994)*, Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, 1994, pp. vii and ix, in Zilian, 1999, Op. Cit, p.191

⁹²³ Fitchett, Joseph *German Army Smoothly Makes Room in the Ranks for Former Foes; Success Story for the Bundeswehr / 10% of Its 30,000 Officers Come from the East*, International Herald Tribune, 11 February 2000, p.2, LexisNexis

⁹²⁴ Mathiopoulos, Margarita *The German defence review: Security according to the Budget?*, Op Cit

⁹²⁵ Thies, Jochen "Observations on the Political Class in Germany", *Daedalus*, Vol.123, Issue 1, Winter 1994, p.263, ProQuest

researchers questioned the commonly held myth that the “the army of unity” played an important role in uniting the societies of the FRG and GDR. Friction in the process and unequal treatment created tensions that did not necessarily lubricate the process of national unification.⁹²⁶

Are these statements actually fair? What was the exact relationship between the task of accommodating former NVA members and the overall integration of the two German states? Did the German citizens, particularly those from the east, happily accept the pardoning of NVA members and giving them the opportunity to continue their career? What was the general image of the Bundeswehr in the new länder? Was it true that the Bundeswehr contributed to national unity? What percentage of the overall population in eastern Germany was substantially affected by such decisions? On 20 April 1990 Dr. Bertram Wiczorek, Parliamentary Secretary (Parlamentarischer Staatssekretär), GDR Ministry of Disarmament and Defence, estimated that the NVA disarmament process would directly affect roughly two million East German citizens.⁹²⁷ The population actually affected by the task of eliminating the NVA after reunification was very close to this estimation. If compared with the total population of eastern Germany on reunification day, then the percentage, less than 12%, was not significant. Other than the NVA military personnel, civilian employees, veterans, interest groups associated with the NVA such as the defence contractors and their employees, local communities connected with the military activities and some local politicians, how many former GDR citizens would really care about the disposal of the NVA after reunification? There was no systematic social survey taken on whether integrating the NVA into the Bundeswehr could be an effective index for reflecting the level of accommodating former GDR citizens into a unified Germany. The argument that managing the NVA greatly benefited German unification was only a subjective perspective of various important FRG political figures and military top brass, later recited by some commentators; it had no academic basis.

On the contrary, an East German diplomat’s comment about dismantling the NVA after reunification, “People are totally indifferent to its fate. There are so many other

⁹²⁶ Klein, Paul and Jürgen Kunhlmann “Coping With The Peace Dividend: Germany and Its Armed Forces in Transition”, in Kunhlmann, Jürgen and Jean Callaghan (ed) *Military and Society in 21st Century Europe ~ A Comparative Analysis*, Hamberg: LIT Verlag, 2000, pp.201 - 202

things to worry about. No one is mourning its passing", reveals not only a lack of concern about the NVA but also that it would not be important to GDR citizens wanting to establish confidence in the future.⁹²⁸ Moreover, given the conviction widely accepted in the FRG that neither the NVA was a military closely associated with its own citizens nor did it ever receive strong support from them, then demonstrating the fair disposal of NVA members should not be so important to citizens in new länder.⁹²⁹

Not all professionals, such as diplomats and members of the intelligence service, who were central in sustaining the survival and appearance of national sovereignty and the effective governance of the German socialist regime were treated like the NVA members. The treatment of former GDR Foreign Service officers was very unsympathetic. FRG Foreign Minister Genscher openly expressed his opposition to integrating any former GDR diplomatic official after reunification. The Bundestag Budget Committee concurred. Basically, all the former GDR diplomats would be relieved from their posts after reunification. The entire GDR diplomatic corps were given notice of termination and six months redundancy payment.⁹³⁰ Eventually, former GDR Foreign Officers were allowed to apply to join the German Foreign Service. Only twenty of them submitted their applications immediately after reunification. The German Foreign Ministry after reunification was less interested in absorbing the "old guard" from the GDR Foreign Ministry to fill the new posts but wanted to recruit young people with untainted background to join the diplomatic service.⁹³¹ Although some East German diplomats might have had the chance to continue their careers as the Foreign Service officials for a unified Germany, distrust and hatred of their previous service for a communist regime was forcibly expressed

⁹²⁷ Hoffmann, 1993, Chinese translation, 2001, Op Cit., p.438, Appendix 7

⁹²⁸ Knight, Robin, et al. *Taps for an Unloved East German Army - Unification Disbands a Force that Never Fight*, Op Cit

⁹²⁹ The NVA was perceived as a military force that never mingled with its own people. General George Joulwan, the Commanding General of the U.S. Fifth Army Corps in Europe, openly made such a comment to the press. Simonian, Haig *The US General Who Believes His Mission Continues*, Financial Times, 21 November 1989, p.3, LexisNexis

⁹³⁰ "Praktisch chancenlos (Practical Chance Vanished)", *Der Spiegel*, No.43, 22 October 1990, pp.54 and 57, in Harlan, John P. "The German Police: Issues in the Unification Process", *Policing*, Vol.20, Issue 3, 1997, p.532, ProQuest

⁹³¹ *Only Vacation Slips in the Files of the SED Diplomats*, Die Welt, 19 October, GDR Diplomats Apply for Work in Foreign Service, FBIS-WEU-90-204, 22 October 1990, pp.10-11

by their FRG counterparts.⁹³²

Neither had the Federal Intelligence Service any intention of recruiting member of the GDR State Security Service after reunification. Lutz Stavenhagen, State Minister in the FRG Chancellery, declared this in February 1990, during a Bundestag policy inquiry and debate.⁹³³ Some former senior members of the Third Reich's intelligence services were recruited by the FRG intelligence, because of the needs of the Cold War. There was, however, no possibility for members of the Stasi and HVA (Main Administration Intelligence or Foreign Intelligence Collection Main Administration) to join the BND or any other security services. This stance was again firmly reiterated by FRG Interior Minister Wolfgang Schauble before reunification.⁹³⁴

Furthermore, they could not be excused from prosecution. The Federal government firmly declined the Berlin Higher Regional Court's argument that punishing the former GDR intelligence service but not its FRG equivalent was unconstitutional. The FRG government firmly believed that it was impossible to differentiate the former GDR intelligence service from the oppressive apparatus of the GDR, the Stasi, which served the totalitarian regime against its own people.⁹³⁵ Likewise, members of the Border Troops, a subdivision of the NVA till just before reunification, had been actively involved in executing the "shoot-to-kill" order against GDR citizens who attempted to escape to the West. Those political and military leaders who made this order needed to face trial after reunification.⁹³⁶ Therefore, some segments of the NVA,

⁹³² Whitney, Craig R. *Evolution in Europe; Most East German Troops Facing Unemployment After Reunification*, New York Times, 23 July 1990, p.A1, LexisNexis

⁹³³ *Intelligence Not To Employ GDR Counterparts*, DPA, 8 February, FBIS-WEU-90-028, 9 February 1990, p.13

⁹³⁴ Whitney, Craig R. *Evolution in Europe; Most East German Troops Facing Unemployment After Reunification*, Op Cit

⁹³⁵ Reitz, Ulrich *Instrument of Dictatorship*, Die Welt, 31 July, p.4, Prosecution of Stasi Spies Called Constitutional, FBIS-WEU-91-147, 31 July 1991, p.14. Marcus 'Mischa' Wolf, GDR long-term spy chief was charged of treason and corruption because, in his capacity as head of GDR intelligence service from January 1953 to October 1986, he directed espionage activities against the FRG. See *Trial of GDR Spy Chief Begins*, DPA, 4 May, FBIS-WEU-93-084, 4 May 1993, p.22

⁹³⁶ *Four Ex-East German Guards Being Tried for Killing at Wall*, New York Times, 3 September, p.A16; *East Hid Berlin Wall Victims, Officials Says*, Toronto Star, 2 September 1991, p.A10; Stauton, Denis *East German Ex-Generals Go on Trial*, Irish Times, 18 August 1995, p.8; Boyes, Roger *German Officers Win Trial Delay*, Times, Overseas News, 19 August 1995; *Top Generals Facing the Music At Last; Berlin Wall Deaths; Former East German Military Men in the Dock Over Shoot-to-Kill Policy*, Independent, 19 August 1995, p.9. The justice of attempting to try GDR Border Guards accused of killing escapees was questioned long before reunification day. See Colitt, Leslie *A Farewell to East German Arms*, Financial Times, 11 September 1990, p.8; and Allen-Mills, Tony *Germans Agonise Over*

such as the political officers and the Border Troops, were turned down by the Bundeswehr because their roles in GDR society might become a political and ethical burden to the unified German armed forces.

According to John Keegan, "The NVA's original role, in the words of an expert, was outwardly to be a symbol of the sovereignty of the German Democratic Republic" and "Inside East Germany it was to be accepted as a reliable support for the regime". This demonstrates how significant the political implication of accommodating former NVA members into a united military force would be at that time.⁹³⁷ This was why many people believed that the task of accommodating former NVA members into the Bundeswehr could facilitate unity within united Germany, though the actual number of people affected by the process itself was not significant, but all other authoritarian GDR professions were totally denied any opportunity of continuing their previous career in a united Germany. Yet, given these unequal arrangements to different professionals, NVA members were unquestionably better treated, for the military in reality did not have a much better social image in GDR society. Some people in eastern Germany fundamentally disagreed with the decision to absorb former NVA members into a united military force. Neither did the process of selecting former NVA members into regular service please all. People viewed themselves as victims of such a selection process, particularly those who were discharged from the NVA immediately after reunification. They did not support the argument that military unity facilitated the unity of the nation, because they were not the beneficiaries.

Wining the Hearts

When the Bundeswehr needed to convert "their force" into "our people" or "our colleagues", perhaps it was more important to convince the people in eastern Germany that the Bundeswehr was "our force". Unquestionably, the Bundeswehr deserved credit for doing well on that mission, which may be the true basis of the Bundeswehr's contributions to overall reunification. Yet it does not mean that the Bundeswehr never encountered difficulties or negative responses from local eastern

Trial For Wall Guards, Sunday Times, 5 August 1990, all reports from LexisNexis

⁹³⁷ Keegan, 1983, Op Cit., p.201

German communities. Once General Werner von Scheven confessed to "dismay at the brusque reaction by various circles". He realised that the Bundeswehr was most unwilling to be compared with the NVA and it considered itself a "people's army", following the ideals of the Prussian reformer Scharnhorst.⁹³⁸

But neither was the Bundeswehr an effective tool for influencing local society, especially the political attitude of the population. General Schönbohm believed that establishing a positive social image of the Bundeswehr in eastern Germany was an important task for securing support from the population. The first young conscripts after reunification were the first citizens from the new länder to work closely with the FRG. Therefore, all efforts made to train and welcome young conscripts from the new länder should have noteworthy returns. But this expectation might not be so applicable. Dr. Gose's research assumed that the Bundeswehr and the Nationale Volksarmee, representing these two Cold War partitioned nation-states, had the capacity to indoctrinate political culture, directed by their political leadership, in each state through the political socialization process within the younger generation of the conscription system. Yet, contrary to expectations, Gose concluded that neither military force was particularly influential in creating different political identities.⁹³⁹ Gose also clarified that neither the Bundeswehr nor the NVA during the era before reunification indoctrinated their conscripts in political ideology or preference as effectively as was generally believed.⁹⁴⁰ Therefore, any expectation of the Bundeswehr facilitating German citizens to establish a new national identity or to promote the overall national unity through the conscription system was unrealistic.

Nevertheless, according to recruitment into the Bundeswehr voluntary service in the third year after reunification, nearly one-third of all volunteers were from the former GDR. The Voluntary Enlistment Station East, located at the former Wilhelm Pieck Military-Political College, the former NVA training establishment, became the best-performing post among the five Bundeswehr voluntary recruitment stations. Overseas deployment and conducting military operations abroad was a hot topic of debate amongst politicians and in the German Federal Constitution Court at that time.

⁹³⁸ Baum, Karl-Heinz *Bundeswehr Is Trying to Boost Its Prestige*, Op Cit

⁹³⁹ Gose, Mark N. *The Role of the Military in Building Political Community: the Case of the Two German States*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Boulder: University of Colorado, 1995, p. iv.

Nonetheless, even with the risk of being killed or wounded in action in Somalia or Bosnia, overseas deployment was a significant factor in attracting some former NVA soldiers to apply for voluntary service.⁹⁴¹ 4,200 of the 6,000-strong German post Cold War overseas combat deployment for peacekeeping operation in Kosovo came from the Bundeswehr IV Korps headquartered in Potsdam and comprising many former NVA members, which implied that a preference and willingness to undertake operations abroad corresponded to regional factors or relevant NVA background.⁹⁴² The willingness of German youth, some of them with NVA conscript experiences, to join the voluntary service shows the Bundeswehr had a positive social image in eastern Germany, though economic necessity or material motivation could have been the actual important driving force.⁹⁴³ Nevertheless, the Bundeswehr in 1993 was still concerned that further defence budget reductions or economic recovery in eastern Germany would hamper its recruitment task.⁹⁴⁴ Apart from providing employment opportunities, the Bundeswehr was a consumer that supported eastern Germany's local economy thus shouldering its social obligation. All the positive interactions between the Bundeswehr and the local eastern German population facilitated German unity far more than accommodating former NVA members wishing to continue their military careers.

But it remained important to manage the NVA after reunification, although recruiting former NVA members into the Bundeswehr was a task that neither affected most nor pleased all in east German society initially. The original aim of disposing of the NVA legacies was not a task that could positively contribute to overall national unity. But if integration was badly executed, then the negative consequences could be extremely severe; failure might be devastating. FRG officers handling the NVA members were concerned about a revival of scenes in 1919 when the defeated German forces went

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid, pp.253-255

⁹⁴¹ Former NVA members served in the Bundeswehr and conscripts from eastern Germany were happy to volunteer for overseas deployments. See Gow, David *Hot Spot for Cold Warriors*, Op Cit.

⁹⁴² Fitchett, Joseph, *German Army Smoothly Makes Room in the Ranks for Former Foes; Success Story for the Bundeswehr / 10% of Its 30,000 Officers Come from the East*, Op Cit

⁹⁴³ *Bundeswehr Dependence on Eastern Volunteers Viewed*, Die Zeit, 30 July, in FBIS-WEU-93-155, 14 August 1993, pp.9-11. The importance of payment to young eastern Germans was shown in another survey. See *Study Shows Bundeswehr Less Attractive in West*, Der Spiegel, 19 April, in FBIS-WEU-93-073, 19 April 1993, p.20

⁹⁴⁴ Gow, David *Hot Spot for Cold Warriors*, Op Cit

on a terrorist storm, which later paved the way for extremism in Germany.⁹⁴⁵ The negative impacts on society if the NVA professionals were angry about their fate and subsequently misused their military professionalism could be likened to the film *Die Hard: With a Vengeance*.⁹⁴⁶ The successful integration of the NVA personnel was merely a necessary but not a sufficient prerequisite for a successful national unification process. The Bundeswehr deserved praise because enormous negative potentials were eliminated by its achievement in smoothly disposing of the NVA, which undeniably helped others to promote national unity. Nevertheless, the actual influence of the task should not be overstated.

Individual Excellence vs. Collective Accomplishment

The value of any military organisation can only be justified by its collective accomplishment. In fact, building a military force or leading a military command is in effect establishing an organisational culture to assure communal performance and effectiveness in fulfilling its legitimate functions and missions. Any individual achievement, especially other than attaining responsibility in service, should not be used as a solid base on which to prove the excellence of such a military force. Likewise, any unacceptable behaviour by individual members discharged from a specific military force does not discredit the whole force.

Many Bundeswehr senior officers involved in integrating the former NVA into the united German armed forces later became very successful in their own right. For instance, General Jörg Schönbohm, the first commanding general of the BKO, later became the service head of the German Army, Permanent Secretary of German Defence Ministry and Minister of the Interior and Deputy Prime Minister of the State of Brandenburg. He is not only very successful in his military career but also in German local politics and public service after fulfilling his duty in managing the

⁹⁴⁵ Fitchett, Joseph, *German Army Smoothly Makes Room in the Ranks for Former Foes; Success Story for the Bundeswehr / 10% of Its 30,000 Officers Come from the East*, Op Cit

⁹⁴⁶ See <http://www.tourvic.com/videoview/pages/indies/DieHard3.html>, the introduction on *Die Hard: With a Vengeance* (1995) directed by John McTiernan and acted by Bruce Willis. Also see http://www.generationterrorists.com/quotes/die_hard_with_a_vengeance.html, the most impressive script in this movie, *Simon: Yesterday, yesterday, we were an army with no country. Tomorrow, we have to decide which country we want to buy.*

former NVA members and assets after German reunification.⁹⁴⁷ General Hans-Peter von Kirchbach, who took over and converted the NVA Ninth Armoured Division into Home Defence Brigade 41 at Eggesin and was promoted to general rank while still serving this task, became the Inspector General of the Bundeswehr in April 1999. Kirchbach is an excellent commander highly respected by his subordinates. He had led 30,000 Bundeswehr troops to fight the Oder River flood in 1997 and won the informal title "Hero of the Oder". But all these credentials did not prevent him from being relieved by the FRG Defence Minister Scharping in a very humiliating way after only one year in office as the Bundeswehr Inspector General because of different viewpoints on military reform policy.⁹⁴⁸ Also General Bernhard Mende of the Luftwaffe, who commanded the Fifth Luftwaffe Division immediately after reunification and thus inherited the former NVA assets and managed the East German Air Force personnel, was promoted to be Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe in October 1994.⁹⁴⁹ The same situation occurred in the Deutsche Marine. Captain Lutz Feldt led the team managing the Volksmarine personnel after German reunification and all the staffing duties of the maritime components in BKO, Strausberg. He demonstrated his excellent professionalism at that time and later became the service head of the Deutsche Marine.⁹⁵⁰ The commanding officer of the Naval Detachment under the BKO command, Vice Admiral Kirk Horten, was later promoted to be Chief of Staff for the Deutsche Marine.⁹⁵¹

But not all commanders who served in the BKO were promoted to higher rank. A general rank officer retired from the Bundeswehr because of a drink problem while he was serving in the eastern German area.⁹⁵² Furthermore, not all members of the Bundeswehr who participated in managing the NVA in the German new länder were the elites of their individual services. Nevertheless, when the BKO was initially established, a media report commented on the quality of personnel originating from

⁹⁴⁷ <http://www.mi.Brandenburg.de/cms/detail.php/15310>

⁹⁴⁸ Inacker, Michael J. *Scharping's Bad Game*, Die Welt website, 25 May, quoted as *German Daily on Timing of Army Inspector-General's Resignation*, BBC Worldwide Monitoring, 28 May 2000.

⁹⁴⁹ Schulte, Heinz *The Jane's Interview of Lt. Gen. Bernhard Mende, Chief of Staff of the Luftwaffe*, Op Cit

⁹⁵⁰ Interview, Kapitän zur See, Peter Behrens, Deutsche Marine, 24 November 2003

⁹⁵¹ Sharpe, Richard (ed) *Introduction/Germany*, Jane's Fighting Ships 1993-1994, Coulsdon: Jane's Information Group, p.231

⁹⁵² A German Army officer provided this information during an interview on 6 October 2003. He asked that both his name and the identity of the general remain anonymous.

the Bundeswehr contrary to expectations. The report indicated that the Bundeswehr assigned many of its best people to help General Schönbohm in this task.⁹⁵³

In his book, Schönbohm asked, "will these civil servants who have no immediate chance of promotion come to the East - as is possible in the case of servicemen and Bundeswehr officials?" So perhaps the personnel quality was not as perfect as the media believed, though the excellence of the BKO core members was applauded by Schönbohm.⁹⁵⁴ Schönbohm personally experienced some subordinate commanders who dishonestly reported the reality to the BKO and even tried to deceive him about the actual quality of life in the barracks during his visits to these units.⁹⁵⁵ Many ex-Bundeswehr officers who later served in eastern Germany confessed to the media that the driving force was literally never "a pioneering spirit" but rather better career prospects.⁹⁵⁶ Extra payments to Bundeswehr officers for their willingness to overcome hardship while they served in eastern Germany also indicate a lack of ideological incentives.⁹⁵⁷

An Unexpected Mission

The BKO task was one for which the Bundeswehr was totally unprepared, so it was very hard for the Bundeswehr to choose the appropriate personnel. Previous service records could only attend as references but there was no direct proof of anyone's suitability. Armed forces conduct many tests and reviews in order to select the best person to undertake an assignment, when future missions are clearly defined. For the tasks in the BKO were like an uncharted sea; if all the seafarers always sailed in well-charted oceans, no one could identify who could be the best mariner to navigate uncharted waters before they actually returned from the journey. Furthermore, the BKO task was apparently not the most prestigious billet in the Bundeswehr then. Six weeks before reunification, a report indicated that the recruitment of volunteers to join the mission of managing the NVA after reunification was not getting a very positive

⁹⁵³ Bertram, Christoph *"With a Fervid Heart and Cool Head": General Jörg Schönbohm To Integrate Remnants of the NVA Into the Bundeswehr*, Op Cit.

⁹⁵⁴ Schönbohm, 1992, English translation, 1996, Op Cit, p.105

⁹⁵⁵ Ibid, pp.74, 76-79 and 106-107

⁹⁵⁶ Gow, David *Hot Spot for Cold Warriors*, Op Cit

⁹⁵⁷ Petty, Terrence *Bundeswehr Searches for New Mission As It Absorbs Old Enemy*, Op Cit

response from Bundeswehr members, thus it became necessary for Stoltenburg to persuade his subordinates more aggressively. The substantial life changes and uncertainty of mission were two realistic reasons to discourage involvement.⁹⁵⁸

Actually, the pace of preparation was so fast that even Schönbohm's appointment as the BKO Commander was confirmed by the German Defence Ministry only five weeks before reunification.⁹⁵⁹ The overall mission concept, command structure, and area of responsibility (AOR) of the BKO was settled within the Defence Ministry and published by *Welt am Sonntag* ten days before Schönbohm's appointment.⁹⁶⁰ Some enthusiastic commanders already selected to serve in the BKO lobbied their former colleagues to participate in this mission.⁹⁶¹ A report published just after reunification used the analogy, "it is not unlike the Commissar system introduced after the Russian revolution to keep an eye on former Czarist officers whose military skills were still needed", to describe the 650 Bundeswehr officers and non-commissioned officers who attended as "command and support groups" in former NVA units.⁹⁶² No matter what reasons made them serve in eastern Germany, the BKO members who actually achieved the task proved their excellence. Glorious previous service records, positive or speculative media reports, and the true reasons to attend this mission were irrelevant. Neither the personal achievements nor misconducts of specific individuals who participated in this mission can detract from their collective achievement.

Likewise, some former NVA members turned to be very successful after leaving military service. Deutsche PhoneSat, a satellite information systems provider founded in 1994 by former East German military experts, was very competitive in the market economy.⁹⁶³ Dr. Richard Herrmann, who had commanded an NVA logistics unit of 14,000 members, later became an extremely successful entrepreneur in public transportation, tourism and driving schools in the Berlin area.⁹⁶⁴ Extreme counter-examples also existed. Two former NVA commandos from an elite unit in the

⁹⁵⁸ Eisenhammer, John *Germany's Two Armies to March as One*, Op Cit

⁹⁵⁹ *Head of Eastern Territorial Command Appointed*, DPA, 27 August, BBC Summary of World Broadcast, Part 2 Eastern Europe, EE/0855/B/1, 29 August 1990, LexisNexis

⁹⁶⁰ *Plan for "Bundeswehr Command East" to Take Over NVA Straight After Accession*, Op Cit

⁹⁶¹ Interview, Oberstleutnant, Rolf Papen, Heer - Bundeswehr, 24 November 2003

⁹⁶² Bellamy, Christopher E. *German Army Goes, But Some Soviet Arms Stay*, Op Cit

⁹⁶³ *PhoneSat postpones IPO*, Financial Times, London, Companies & Finance, Europe, 9 October 1998, p.25

⁹⁶⁴ Interview, Professor, Dr. and retired NVA army colonel, Richard Herrmann, 20 November 2003

GDR army, Gerhard Polak and Raymond Albert, committed serious crimes, such as bank robbery, prison escapes and holding police officers hostage. They attracted media attention and public concern in November 1994.⁹⁶⁵ These individual cases really reveal nothing because there is no way to prove any link between individual deeds and organisational culture of the Volksarmee, though many would like to believe that there was some relevance.

Professor Herspring noted that there was still no former NVA member absorbed by the Bundeswehr who was promoted to General or flag officer rank, though he believed that it was only a matter of time.⁹⁶⁶ No NVA-origin officer accepted by the Bundeswehr has even reached this milestone now. This is not surprising, however. First, because of the highest Bundeswehr rank granted to former NVA members, it will take a long period, longer than the duration that they had ever served in the NVA, before they reach general rank. Therefore, the relevance of their NVA experiences would be much less than that acquired from their Bundeswehr service period. Second, the first condition for any NVA-originated officer to eventually reach general rank must be his adaptability to Bundeswehr culture. Whether he can perform ably and demonstrate his excellence according to the criteria set by the Bundeswehr would decide his future career. How much NVA training he had retained does not matter. Third, whether the true fairness of treating the former NVA members in the Bundeswehr can be justified by such promotions is indeed questionable. Regarding the fairness of recruiting and treatment of former NVA members in the Bundeswehr, there was no solution that could satisfy all and it is a matter that is hard to prove. Former NVA personnel could never have the same starting point as their Bundeswehr colleagues. Any personal achievement in Bundeswehr service might neither validate the fairness of the Bundeswehr policy nor the excellence of NVA practice. The only certainty is the influence of previous NVA service should gradually vanish. That former NVA members performed neither noticeably worse nor significantly better than their Bundeswehr colleagues may be the best proof that full assimilation was achieved and true accommodation was granted. The NVA had already played its finale in 1990. Later achievement of its former members should not affect the NVA's position in history because it would be irrelevant to the functions and missions of the

⁹⁶⁵ Tomforde, Anna *Bandits Run Out of Time and Road*, Guardian, 2 November 1994, p.16, LexisNexis

Nationale Volksarmee.

Paradigmatic Experience?

General Henning von Ondarza, the Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces Central Europe (CINCENT), also the former German Army Inspector, believed that the large-scale exchange programme between Bundeswehr-originated personnel and former NVA members who later joined the all-German Armed Forces won credibility and valuable experiences which could be extended to the armed forces of Germany's eastern neighbours.⁹⁶⁷ Ondarza's perspective was partly justified by the Ukrainian Defence Minister Kostyantyn Morozov: "I observed how the issue of re-subordinating the former National People's Army of East Germany, and involving those troops in the Bundeswehr, was resolved in an efficient, humane and well-organised manner. Something like this was happening in the Ukraine when we took the former Soviet army grouping as a basis for building our armed forces. Of course, we can exchange experiences, but there are problems so different they cannot be compared".⁹⁶⁸

But Istvan Gyarmati, who makes security policies in the Hungarian Foreign Ministry, says the German case was "child's play" in many ways because the Hungarian government did not have the luxury of being able to disband its military force, which originated in the communist regime.⁹⁶⁹ Professor Gyarmati pointed out that the democratisation process of the Hungarian armed forces needed to accommodate previous socialist military structures. Furthermore, there was neither the economic resource nor an existing democratic military force like the FRG in Hungary to hand to facilitate the task.⁹⁷⁰ Experiences can be always referred to, but should not completely and blindly duplicated, which would be like recklessly swallowing without chewing. Hong Sun-yong, Korean Ambassador to Germany, expressed similar sentiments: "it is not easy to transplant the lessons of German unification to the

⁹⁶⁶ Herspring, 1998, Op Cit, p.188

⁹⁶⁷ *Military East-West Co-operation*, International Defence Review, Vol.26, Issue 6, 1 June 1993, p.441

⁹⁶⁸ *Ukrainian Defence Minister Stresses Increasing World Respect for His Country*, UNIAR News Agency, 18 August, BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 20 August 1993, Part 1 The USSR, SU/1772/C3, LexisNexis

⁹⁶⁹ Fitchett, Joseph, *German Army Smoothly Makes Room in the Ranks for Former Foes; Success Story for the Bundeswehr / 10% of Its 30,000 Officers Come from the East*, Op Cit

⁹⁷⁰ Maischak, Lars, et al. *The Bundeswehr Challenges of Democratic Integration*, 2000, Op. Cit., p.3

Korean peninsula".⁹⁷¹ Furthermore, the South Korean government sent delegations before the formal German reunification day to study the experiences of travel and economic integration between the two German states but little effort was specifically targeted on military and security dimensions.⁹⁷² Donald Gregg, the former American Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, argued that the fate of the NVA members after German reunification would actually reduce the willingness of the North Korean military professionals to embrace the idea of unification. Gregg believed that the North Korean military would treat the NVA personnel's experience as a negative lesson and would feel "rather uneasy about the prospect that would change the philosophy in North Korea". To some extent there were some similarities between the North Korean and the former GDR military professionals, such as a social class and attendant privileges, while the general public had been relatively poorly treated.⁹⁷³

Actually, it was not the first time the FRG government selected military personnel from a previous German force. Experiences acquired from managing former Wehrmacht officers and soldiers into the Bundeswehr in 1955, such as a committee formed by prominent citizens to screen NVA members wishing to join a unified German force, were proposed by FRG politicians before the task began.⁹⁷⁴ Nevertheless, the selection process of NVA members was quite unlike any previous experience because there were so many differences, both domestic and international. Events that happen repeatedly in history are similar but never identical. If the Germans had not followed the same track to execute similar tasks, then it would be hard to convince other states that the German experience could be a valuable lesson to them.

Most importantly, the successful German experience in this case might offer significant lessons. Nevertheless, the possibility of another peaceful reunification, after longest political rivalry and military stalemate in human history, is very

⁹⁷¹ *Envoy Comments on Lessons of German Reunification*, Korea Times, 4 February, p.2, FBIS-EAS-95-024, 6 February 1995, p.42

⁹⁷² *Officials Prepare to Study German Reunification*, Yonhap, 7 July, FBIS-EAS-90-131, 9 July 1990, p.27

⁹⁷³ Begleiter, Ralph *Donald Gregg Looks at North Korea Leadership Vacuum*, International News, Cable News Network (CNN) News Transcript 749-6 broadcast 2 January 1995, LexisNexis

⁹⁷⁴ Whitney, Craig R. *Evolution in Europe; Most East German Troops Facing Unemployment After Reunification*, Op Cit. Establishing a committee to screen NVA personnel was also a part of efforts contained in its own military reform before reunification. See Herspring, 1998, Op Cit, p.89

uncertain. Integrating the NVA into the Bundeswehr was not anticipated, nor was it a part of Bundeswehr strategic or military planning. As General von Scheven pointed out, "in the Defence Ministry in Bonn, where I worked for a total of nine years, there was no discussion or even a tentative blueprint for the possibility of a unification of the two German states", and "The Bundeswehr was not only taken completely unaware by the so-called turn of events in the GDR, but was making preparations for something completely different, namely improving their conventional defence capabilities". Very few Bundeswehr military professionals had even tried to image the possibility of a peaceful integration with the former enemy.⁹⁷⁵ As identified by Abenheim, "...before early 1990, the contingency of German unity and the need to take command of the remnants of the NVA would have struck German military planners as too hypothetical - if not utterly ridiculous - to be of any concern in the year-to-year planning cycles of the Ministry of Defence and NATO...". He believed that such a mindset was one of the factors that hindered the preparation for taking over the NVA, even though the possibility of such an operation was so evident near reunification day.⁹⁷⁶

The division of Germany seemed one of the most solid facts of world politics. It was understandable that little thought had been given in the Bundeswehr to the problems of integrating the NVA. No military planner with the preoccupation of an ongoing confrontation can allocate precious time to such an unlikely scenario. Suddenly, however, the political situation changed and the modalities of integration were an urgent policy. Policy had to be made rapidly. In these circumstances, the process did not develop entirely smoothly.

One overriding fact, however, was that the FRG was the dominant partner in the process. In many ways, the GDR was the defeated party. It had no leverage in the situation and no resource. The East German actors were trapped in a process they could not control. Inexperienced politicians like Eppelmann were ill equipped to deal properly with the situation. His inexperience led him to put forward unrealistic proposals that reflected private conviction, rather than rational calculation or the

⁹⁷⁵ See von Scheven, Werner *Forward* in Zilian, 1999, Op. Cit, p. x. See also von Scheven, Werner "The Merger of Two Formerly Hostile German Armies", Op Cit., p.167

⁹⁷⁶ Abenheim, 1997, Op Cit., pp.104-105

views of his professional subordinates.

Similar cases in other environments, the two Koreas and PRC/ROC, would probably display similar characteristics, should it be concluded non-militarily. The political and economic dominance of one party in shaping the environment of unification will be the fundamental factor. This will dictate the dynamics of the process. It is possible also that the process of change would throw up politicians on the weaker side who lacked experience and who would be unable adequately to safeguard the interests of their armed forces in the integration process. Nevertheless, the armed forces are one of the vital elements symbolising the existence of sovereignty. Should the survival of the regime be denied, the fate of its military professionals would be predictably miserable.

The process also demonstrates the technical difficulties of integrating military technology built in one socio-economic system into the armed forces of another. Most of the outwardly impressive inventory of the NVA was unusable by the Bundeswehr, for a range of reasons. The NVA's inventory became one of the most notable white elephants in military history. There were even major problems in disposing of this equipment on the open market. Although market forces were important in certain areas where they could work freely, the nature of the arms trade, with its inevitable strategic significance, meant that NVA equipment could not be disposed of freely. In the inevitable confusion of the unification process, there was scope for covert dealing which the FRG was unable or, perhaps in certain cases, unwilling to stop. Even when deals were made at an official level, notably with Indonesia, the result was not without its problems.

All circumstances are, to some extent unique. One cannot use the German case as a model for other processes in the future. However, knowledge of how this process was handled in the past might at least inform those engaged in similar activities in other contexts. The fundamental factor is however clear. In such unexpected circumstances, where the relative power of the various actors is highly asymmetrical, the possibility of rational decision-making is limited. Events are dictated by forces beyond the control of many of the actors. Attractive compromise solutions resting on premises that are slipping away, e.g. "the second German force", have little chance of being put

into effect. In such circumstances, the dominant factor in such bargaining is the basic power relationship of the participants. The GDR had never had much real independent power. Its existence depended on the Soviet Union. Its destiny and that of its armed forces was rooted in the end on an FRG-USSR bilateral dialogue. The NVA, for all its raw military power, never stood a chance.

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Name and Title	Billet	Date and Place	Remark
Ablaß, Werner E.	Former Deputy Defence Minister, GDR	Oct/1/03 - SOWI	

Fregattenkapitän Usczeck, Manfred	Instructor/Staff, Zentrum Innere Führung - Bereich 5	Oct/1/03 - SOWI	Former VM
Fregattenkapitän Tschhauder, Ulrich	Staff, IF Operation, AFNORTH, NATO	Oct/6/03 - AFNORTH	
Fregattenkapitän Otto, Hans-Jörg W.	Staff, SO Maritime, J5/9, AFNORTH NATO	Oct/6/03 - AFNORTH	
Fregattenkapitän Ahlborn, Ulrich	Staff, Exercises, J3/7, AFNORTH, NATO	Oct/6/03 - AFNORTH	
Fregattenkapitän Sauerborn, Machsel W.	Staff, SO CJTF, J5/9, AFNORTH, NATO	Oct/6/03 - AFNORTH	
Oberstleutnant Schorr, Harry (Luftwaffe)	Staff, J5/9 Force Planning, AFNORTH, NATO	Oct/7/03 - AFNORTH	
Oberstleutnant Preusse, Stefan (Heer)	Staff, General Staff, Chief Exercise Section, AFNORTH, NATO	Oct/7/03 - AFNORTH	
Fregattenkapitän Sarembe, Ingo	Staff, Exercise Budget Manager, J3/7, AFNORTH, NATO	Oct/6/03 - AFNORTH	
Oberstleutnant Meadler, Tilu (Luftwaffe)	Deputy Director of Staff, DD05, AFNORTH, NATO	Oct/7/03 - AFNORTH	
Oberstleutnant Hochwald, Udo H.(Heer)	Staff, WHQ Management/ C2 Req., AFNORTH, NATO	Oct/7/03 - AFNORTH	
Dr. Schulze, Horst	Former Head of Juridical Affairs Department, GDR Ministry of Disarmament and Defence	Nov/19/03 - AIK Office, Strausberg	Former NVA
Professor Dr. Herrmann, Richard	President, ABUS Personenverkehr GMBH & CO.KG	Nov/20/03 - Dr. Herrmann's Office, Berlin	Former NVA
Mr. Gebert, Bernd	Staff, German Federal Office for Defence Technology and Acquisition (BWB - Bundesamt für Wehrtechnik und Beschaffung), Berlin Division	Nov/21/03 - Landesverband Ost, Berlin	Former NVA
Oberstleutnant Pohl, Hartmut (Heer)	Staff, Infrastrukturstab OST, Dezernat 4.2	Nov/20/03 - Bundeswehr Julis Leber Barrack, Berlin	Former NVA
Kapitän zur See Berhrens, Peter (Marine)	Instructor, Zentrum Innere Führung, Koblenz	Nov/24/03 - Zentrum Innere Führung, Koblenz	
Oberstleutnant Rapen, Rolf (Heer)	Instructor, Zentrum Innere Führung, Koblenz	Nov/24/03 - Zentrum Innere Führung, Koblenz	
Informal Interview			
Dr. Paul Klein	Project Director I, German Armed Forces Institute for Social Research (SOWI)		
Dr. Nina Leonhard	Research Fellow, German Armed Forces Institute for Social Research (SOWI)		
Dr. Jörg Duppler Kapitän Zur See (Marine)	Director, Bundeswehr History Research Institute (MGFA)		
Dr. Hans-Joachim Harder Oberst Im Generalstabsdienst (Luftwaffe)	Deputy Director, Bundeswehr History Research Institute (MGFA)		
Dr. Rüdiger Wenzke	Research Fellow, Bundeswehr History Research Institute (MGFA)		
Oberstleutnant a.D. Herbert Becker	Bundeswehr Verband Landesverband Ost		Former NVA
Oberst a.D. Wolfgang Tschier	Diplomanglist / Diplomamerikanist		Former NVA