

Mass Armies in the 1970s

THE DEBATE IN WESTERN EUROPE

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The focus of much of the current strategic debate in the West is how to combat existing or foreseeable Soviet preponderance—the appropriate bargains to strike in Salt II or the necessary readiness levels on the Central Front. Lost in the welter of these discussions is a question of at least equal significance: will the West, and particularly the Western European states, be able over the long-term to raise and maintain mass armies at tolerable political, social, and economic costs? In the last decade, each of the Atlantic states has faced a series of basic challenges to its existing force structure and recruitment practices. While violent anti-military demonstrations and confrontations over conscription are now passed, the significant indicators of the decline of the mass army continue; among these are the decreases in enlistments, in the quality of draftees and their military performance, in retention rates, and in individual acceptance of military authority as well as the increases in deferments, conscientious objector classes, internal disciplinary actions, and in the publicly-expressed frustrations of professionals and conscripts alike with the conditions and terms of military service.

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For many of the professional military and the concerned political leaders, as for most scholarly observers, the long-term trend is clear: the West's security and political needs must and will be best met by smaller, professionalized armed forces within a somewhat different civil-military framework and requiring significantly fewer conscripts in primary defense missions. This trend is itself a function of two broader structural attributes of advanced industrial development: (1) the continuous evolution of the technical milieu, increasingly permissive and efficient, which blurs traditional distinctions between the civil and military spheres; and (2) the widening social and political impacts of the continuing process of liberal modernization and primary political commitment to the achievement of an equitable good life for the greatest number.² Moreover, in Western Europe, the nuclear revolution and the consequences of two European civil wars have left states with only regional military significance, however high their level of economic prosperity and growth. The threats they face, both internal and external, are neither primarily military nor within the present range of autonomous national solution.

This convergence of military, economic, and social trends seems, indeed, to allow a clear forecast for the period 1990 to 2000.³ All else being equal—no major East-West conflict, no extended period of economic warfare and no rapid progress toward European intergration—the public order systems in Western Europe seemingly will involve national armed forces which, most generally described, will:

- (1) be smaller in size (perhaps by as much as 30%);
- (2) involve far fewer conscripts (if any, no more than 25-30%) in primary military positions;
- (3) involve far more specialists and technicians in more highly differentiated role structures;
- (4) evolve internal organizational patterns and authority (e.g., discipline, authority) more like those of a professional career elite or those of civilian bureaucracy;
- (5) be oriented toward a range of missions beyond traditional national security functions;
- (6) encourage the maximum utilization of complex nuclear and conventional technology;
- (7) be supported in essential non-military (or non-combat-oriented) functions by a civil service or contract labor system.⁴

But our thesis is that, in the short run, the obstacles to the evolution of such forces will be enormous. Quite apart from the constraints

on change induced by the international environment, there are the resistances which are symptomatic of all advanced industrialized societies—the pervasiveness of incrementalism, the remarkable ability of bureaucratic actors to defend entrenched positions and the high value attached by democratic governments to the status quo even in the face of acute crisis.

Of greater significance will be the difficulties of making political choices, particularly about the future of conscription. So fundamental a shift in the basic relationship of the armed forces to civil society will require a broad recalculation of present costs and benefits as well as the personal commitment of leaders to secure governmental and popular legitimacy. Success or failure will be mirrored most obviously in resulting legislation but also in the outcomes of budgetary choices—the competing class of defense and non-defense at the budgetary margin, the allocation tradeoffs between manpower and materiel within the defense budget itself. And there will be the longer-run tests of approval (or at least toleration) from domestic opponents and external allies, and the credibility of the resulting national military posture in the view of present enemies and potential competitors.

It is precisely these choices, however, which few European governing elites seem able or prepared to make. One explanation lies in the structural weaknesses of contemporary European politics, the lack of a commanding governing majority or of overwhelming electoral advantage in any Western European state, now or in the foreseeable future. A second issue is the seeming inability of present and potential leaders to assess what would be a tolerable level of political risk if an essentially professional armed force were to be established. The politics of gradualism, of solution by attrition seems the safest short-run course, however compelling and irreversible the long-run pressures and trends.

THE CONSCRIPTION DEBATE

The problem of political choice is apparent in every aspect of the 1970s debate in Europe on conscription.⁵ In the most literal sense, there has been little direct confrontation. Alliance pressures are to retain numbers, not conscription itself. As Table 1 shows, too, the six major European states which still have conscription all have “mixed”

TABLE 1
Military Manpower and Conscription in Selected European States

Country	Year	Total Armed Forces Personnel	% of Regular Armed Forces to Men of Military Age	Conscripts as % of Total Armed Forces	Conscripts as % of Total Personnel in Army
Federal Republic of Germany (FGR)	1970	466,000	4.1	52	60
	1975	495,000	4.0	46	51
	1977	489,000	3.8	54	65
France	1970	506,000	5.2	53	65
	1975	502,500	4.8	54	65
	1977	502,100	4.8	54	65
Italy	1970	513,000	3.8	74	85
	1975	421,000	3.9	71	83
	1977	330,000	3.0	64	75
Netherlands	1970	121,250	5.0	58	70
	1975	112,500	4.0	47	60
	1977	109,700	3.9	45	57
Denmark	1970	44,500	4.1	59	68
	1975	34,400	4.0	24	31
	1977	34,700	3.4	35	41
Sweden	1970	82,000	5.4	65	67
	1975	69,800	4.4	74	80
	1977	68,600	4.3	72	79

SOURCES: 1970 data for all countries (Total Armed Forces, % Regular Armed Forces to Military Age), from *The Military Balance, 1970-71* (London: IISS); 1970 data for all countries (two conscript categories) from Erwin Mackel, "Military Manpower and Political Purpose," *Adelphi Papers*, No. 72 (London: IISS, December 1970); 1975 data for all countries for all categories from *The Military Balance, 1975-76*, except the data for Denmark (conscript categories) which is drawn from *Handbook of the Danish Armed Forces*, Chief of Defense, Denmark (September 1975); 1977 data from *The Military Balance, 1977-78*.

or "two-tier" force structures, with significant numbers of conscripts primarily in the ground forces. Moreover, the debate is relatively muted and confused with a multiplicity of themes and value concerns for which "conscription" serves only as a shorthand expression. Nonetheless, this sample does include states which range along those dimensions deemed most salient for the context of national decision—relative power position in Western Europe, relative significance of alliance membership, and relative intensity of recent political-military debate. It further encompasses those states usually judged the most advanced (the Netherlands and Denmark) and the least advanced (Italy) in the evolution of the present conscription systems. And while somewhat restricted, the data base for our analysis includes all publicly available official documents and ministry studies (1969-1977), the related studies of Western European Union, press and public opinion reports, and a limited number of elite interviews.

The Dimensions of Debate

Our first task is to describe the present status of the conscription debate in the six selected states. To present the comparative descriptive data most parsimoniously and suggestively, we have used what Kenneth Arrow once called the device of "proto-scales" or "scalar location."⁶ We have isolated key dimensions common to the various national debates, and had each state ranked by four judges in terms of their subjective assessments of the prevailing (and/or official) consensus. These rankings were then cumulated—affected, of course, by our bias—and are now presented along scales ranging from low (1) to high (10), which also, we argue, represent rankings of "most conducive to the long-run evolution of all-volunteer armed forces" (low) and "most conducive to the continuation of the present mixed professional/conscript system" (high).

1. The 'Coup' Concern.

In all the current debates, the first and foremost concern is the continuing significance of conscription as a hedge against military interventionism—hardly surprising given events of the European past. In public discussion, to be sure, there is always an uncertain mixture of real apprehensions and rhetorical flourishes, since the

image of defense against an authoritarian, reactionary professional army has lost little of its electoral appeal, especially on the Left. And in those states where support for conscription has been seriously lagging, governments have also used this image freely.⁷ Yet all evidence suggests this fear is a real element of all six political cultures. Our ranking, based on interview statements, official documents, and the date of the last serious attempt at military intervention in politics is:

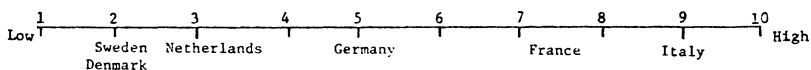


Figure 1: Fear of Political Intervention by a Professional Military

The type of intervention short of a “coup” which would be considered illegitimate is not always clear, particularly in the well-integrated Scandinavian societies.⁸ But the Italian and French cases set the extreme—the several purported challenges by small groups of Italian officers and the official “Boissieu Report” on French army morale, with its specter of military dominance should a May 1968 reoccur.

Whatever the perception of threat, the national consensus in all six states seems at present to value conscription as a hedge against political interventionism. The alternative—a small, professional, necessarily isolated military—is clearly more threatening. It is an almost religious principle that, as a “citizen in uniform,” a conscript’s allegiance, politically and socially, remains in the civilian sector. As in Algeria in 1961, the conscript will prove an unwieldy, if not unwilling, element in any intervention attempt and will serve as the public’s first defense—either in sounding the alarm or providing later witness.

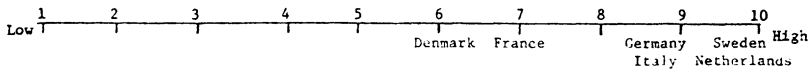


Figure 2: Value of Conscription as a Hedge

The Argument About Military Requirements.

Far less visible in all six states is a second order of concerns, the perceived role of the military *qua* military and the ensuing military

requirements for national service, the type and the length of service, and, to an extent, the type of morale needed among short-serving conscripts.

Such questions are perennial items of defense discussions, especially given postwar uncertainties about defense in a nuclear age. Perhaps the height of public controversy was reached in the late 1950s and early 1960s under the impact of nuclear parity, doctrinal evolution, and German rearmament.⁹ But the advent of quasi-detente and its uncertain achievements gave new life to these issues—on the Left as on the Right, in the military as well as among politicians.

It should also be noted quickly that military requirements will not be the decisive elements in national decisions about conscription. As in the past, these requirements most often are developed to justify decisions dictated by perceived economic and political necessities. A strategy of deterrence allows considerable flexibility and room for reinterpretation and, as we will discuss below, the significance of requirements is clearly a function of whether they stem from alliance decision, backed by the pressure of the U.S. as alliance leader, or simply represent previous national planning. But no decision on conscription will be taken without reference to possible military roles and constraints. And while there is no pure conscription system, this method of generating manpower does provide numbers at somewhat lower governmental cost, ensures a pool of semi-trained reserves, and assures continuing manpower levels whatever the economic or demographic levels of the moment.¹⁰

A basic question is whether the armed forces are believed to have a possible credible external role over the next decade. Here NATO rhetoric introduces confusion, as do traditional images of the state's primary national security function. Sweden's conception of "armed neutrality" is clearly not directly comparable, although France and a very few in Germany (largely on the Right) have toyed with similar definitions of "independence." Yet a rating of national perceptions reveals considerable difference between the six states and evidence of crucial readjustments in the post-war period:

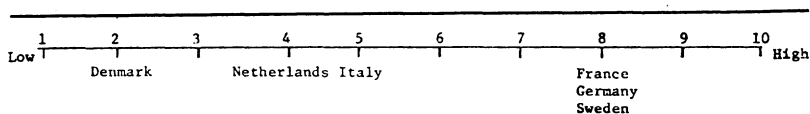


Figure 3: A Credible External Role, Alone or in an Alliance over the Next Decade

At base, of course, are national assessments of capability, all relatively realistic reflections of relative power positions in Western Europe. They also serve as indicators of the present level of defense effort, as shown in Table 2. Perhaps the only controversial rating is that of Italy, which represents both the assumption of a continuing role within NATO and the realization that, with major reorganization, the inadequacies of the mid-1970s will be remedied to allow a more major role.¹¹

Below this general level, there are a number of more specific missions which might be expected of armed forces in Western Europe, in terms of both their present situations and historic tradition. One list of these missions/roles would include the following:

Military/Strategic

- (1) autonomous defense in nuclear/non-nuclear conditions;
- (2) defense in alliance with others in nuclear/non-nuclear conditions;
- (3) unconventional defense against external intervention (e.g., low intensity operations);
- (4) defense against threats to internal security.

Socio-Political

- (5) national emergency force;
- (6) citizen training (Schule der Nation);
- (7) symbol of the state and national integration.

Logically, manpower requirements and, therefore, the requirements for a conscription system would seem to decrease within each category, that is, the symbolic requirements would certainly require fewer forces than a national emergency force.

An appraisal of the military policies and postures of these six states shows, not surprisingly, a fairly consistent pattern which will almost certainly pertain for the next five years. The significant differences are between the big and the small power, and between the Scandinavian states and those more involved in NATO's integrated forces and the defense of the Central Front. Other differences are related to idiosyncratic experiences and national traditions as, for example, the availability of "third forces" (the CRS and gendarmerie in France, the carabinieri in Italy) to counter internal security threats, while in Holland such duties must be divided between the police and the army. In France and Germany, given their stormy political past, there is also a felt need for "non-partisan" civic education which far exceeds

TABLE 2
Indices of Defense Effort

	Total Defense Expenditures in Constant Prices (1970=100)					Defense Expenditures as a Percentage of GDP				
	1960	1966	1970	1974	1977	1960	1966	1970	1974	1977
FRG	70.2	98.7	100	124.2	122.2	4.0	4.3	3.3	3.6	3.4*
France	85.7	97.1	100	108.1	116.5	6.4	5.0	4.1	3.6	3.9
Italy	67.0	97.1	100.0	124.8	113.0	3.3	3.1	2.7	2.6	2.5
Netherlands	65.6	84.0	100.0	117.9	118.1	4.1	3.7	3.5	3.4	3.3
Denmark	71.4	97.0	100.0	113.2	121.3	2.7	2.7	2.3	2.2	2.5
Sweden						4.0	4.1	3.6	3.4	3.7

*Does not include aid to Berlin.

SOURCES: Prices: *The Military Balance 1977-1978* (London: IISS, 1978); Percentages: *SIPRI Yearbook 1974, 1978, NATO Review, 26/1* (February 1978).

that usually required in the name of individual responsibility in defense of the state.

The only point of overall consensus is that a conscription system provides for a vital socializing mission not covered by an other state agency. For all the other missions, it is alleged by at least one national group that conscription is a manpower strategy which may not be useful, in terms of its relative cost, the level of resulting economic and social disruption, and legislative convenience. But the suitability of an all-volunteer force (by definition smaller and more technology-intensive) has seemed only marginally more certain in terms of the military/strategic missions. And its use in socializing or symbolic roles is clearly not acceptable to considerable segments of the European domestic publics, Left and Center.

The Argument Concerning Social Costs

Clearly linked to discussion of the socio-political role of the conscription forces is the question of the social costs conscription imposes on both the whole society and on the military establishment. National service has traditionally been viewed as a system in which the social costs were borne by the individual—short-run economic and physical sacrifices as “payment” for protection by the state. Other costs were hidden and passed on to the society—the loss of a wage-earner to the civilian economy, the costs of his retraining and readjustment after service, even the problems of housing, transport, and costs of previous training. The state, on the other hand, could expect considerable economic and social benefits—the result of the progressive, standardizing effects military service had upon the health, education, and social security of successive conscript generations.

Even in the case of the most extreme incidence of social cost—the case of those declaring themselves to be conscientious objectors to military service—the cost was still borne by the individual either in terms of public opprobrium or the obligation to dull or demanding alternative service. Such objection might not even involve active alienation due to opposition to state purposes but rather might reflect a choice made for personal interests. Once the economy slowed, or a real threat to the nation arose, many argued these too would largely be available for military service.¹²

During the late 1960s, each of the six states, but particularly France and the Federal Republic, experienced major counter-culture chal-

lenges, in part engendered by and perhaps exacerbated by the conscription experience either undergone or feared. Public demonstrations against the military, thus took on a new, far more pointed and in some ways personal tone than those of traditional leftist movements. This led to a predictable reaction on the Right and even in the Center—profound doubts about the effects of conscripting such young people upon military capability and credibility, and, thus, strident calls for the reassertion of traditional standards and the avoidance of any concession (as in the saluting debate in Germany) to the preferences or lifestyles of the young conscripts. In most states, the professional military themselves became more tolerant and lenient about concessions than a parliamentary or electoral majority might have wished—a willingness borne not out of conviction but out of a sense of the requirements of day-to-day operations.

Conscription armies, as universities, also played another quite different role in the imposition of costs in the early 1970s. Radical groups quickly came to realize that the induction of radical young men into the army could achieve as much in terms of recruitment (however short-term) to radical causes as could public disruptions. Politically-captive conscript audiences became the principal arenas for such radical groups as “Constant Struggle” and “Proletarian Action” in Italy, the Marxist-Leninist clubs in Sweden, and the Trotskyites in France.¹³ As the industrial sector became more fluid and more committed to moves towards a degree of workplace democratization, groups that specialized in confrontation politics also had to find well-defined, vertically hierarchical structures upon which to mount their attacks. And as shown by various incidents particularly in France and Holland in which conscripts, indeed only a small number of conscripts, were able to bring military operations to a standstill, the army hierarchy was at a singular disadvantage in making a response which was swift, certain, and democratic.

The ultimate future of these groups, disavowed if not opposed by the regular Leftist parties, is unclear. It is also difficult to test what impact they have had on the present or latter attitudes of involved conscriptees towards conscription or national defense. There is reason to expect that although such incidents may continue into the 1980s, they will occur in far fewer numbers and at lower levels of intensity. Nonetheless our evidence suggests the following rankings about national expectations, and the implied consequences for the future of conscription:

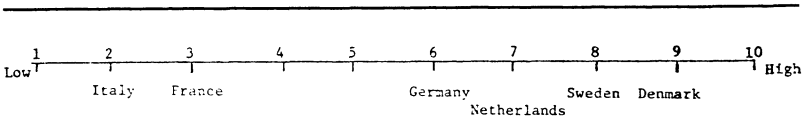


Figure 4: Expectations about Continued Internal Incidents in the Next Ten Years

In essence, this ranking reflects three factors: (1) the continuing attractiveness of radical or socialist groups within the domestic political context; (2) the “lessons of success” drawn from the level of previous incidents; and (3) the number of internal reforms and changes which have denied to radicals some of their conscript audience.

The thrust of most changes has been to increase the rights and the scope of responsibility of individual military—volunteer as well as conscript, officers as well as enlisted men—at the expense of the command authority and purview of the military hierarchy. The threshold at which such change becomes militarily dysfunctional is unclear and at best only vaguely discussed. And somewhat surprisingly, there is considerable evidence of widespread parliamentary and governmental willingness to avoid the general issues and allow case-by-case decisions, sometimes often in civilian courts.

Our analysis is based on the useful categories of change suggested first by van Doorn: civilianization, democratization, unionization, and political activation.¹⁴ Since these changes have been discussed elsewhere, we will simply present a few ratings suggested by our evidence, along with what seem particular qualifications. We have used the same high-low scale, for somewhat different reasons. We argue, as do most Western European decisionmakers, that the failure to make such changes (e.g., a low rating) will only raise social costs to the point where a professional army is less of a social and military risk.

Civilianization. The adoption of changes which minimize the separation between civilian and military life—e.g., in uniform regulations (Netherlands), in domiciling (Denmark), in identity of civilian and military assignments (Sweden), in restrictions on marital status or civil participation (Italy).

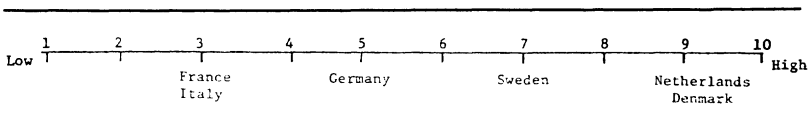


Figure 5: Civilianization

Democratization. The adoption of changes which maximize the role of the individual military man in the decisionmaking process relevant to this level or above—e.g., the establishment of consultative committees (Sweden), the right to know the reasons for an order (Netherlands), and the right of appeal from an order to a civilian authority (Germany, Denmark).

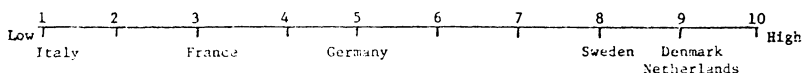


Figure 6: Democratization

Unionization. The adoption of changes which permit, if not encourage, individuals to organize in binding structures separate from those of the military hierarchy in order to improve their material and professional position.

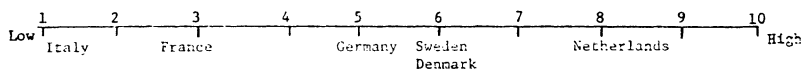


Figure 7: Unionization

Here, national ratings represent a composite score across three variables: (1) the existence of such structures (whether unions, consultative committees or professional associations); (2) the recognition of these parallel structures by the authorities—and therefore their legitimate right to participate and bargain; and (3) the acceptance by authorities of the exclusive responsibility of these structures in their own sphere, the extreme being the right to call a strike.¹⁵

Political Activation. The adoption of changes to permit, if not encourage, positive political action by serving the military in the party of their choice—e.g., political canvassing within facilities (Netherlands), released time for candidacy and political office (Germany), and full rights of political expression (Denmark).¹⁶

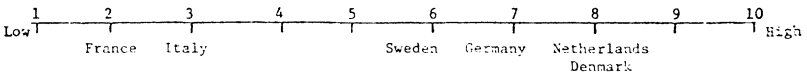


Figure 8: Political Activation

Concerns About Economic Tradeoffs

Of all the themes present in the national conscription debate, the questions of economic tradeoffs are the easiest to identify and the most difficult to assess. At issue have been not only the much-discussed expenditure tradeoffs between defense costs and “welfare” sectors within the national budgets.¹⁷ There also have been pressures for reallocation within the defense budget—in view of reequipment needs, the pressure for new training techniques, and the requirement of competitive salary ranges for long-serving officers. All of this has taken place in an economic environment of grave uncertainty, in which a composite score of relative economic health, based on present unemployment figures, average inflation rate over the past year, and present productivity index, would yield the following scale, and consequences for the future of conscription:

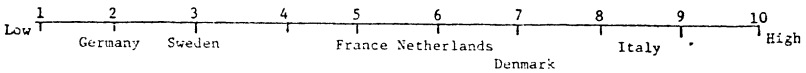


Figure 9: Present Economic Health

Our argument here is that a high ranking reflects the availability of few free resources to pay the higher costs associated almost inevitably with an all-volunteer force, whatever the numerical reduction involved. Cost questions, of course, are again basically political decisions; it is possible to purchase both guns and butter if the political (and later economic) costs seem important or tolerable. The need to pay conscripts less than professionals will not necessarily mean that the financial requirements of any reequipment program will be met.

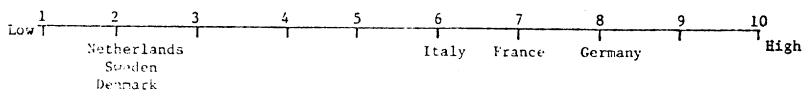


Figure 10: Level of Funded Reequipment

Nonetheless, the high unit cost of modern military technology has made reequipment a major political question. Germany, France, and Italy are currently undertaking staggered reequipment programs (see Table 3) and shared production arrangements but are only just at the overall capital expenditure level deemed minimal (30%) to keep pace with technological progress. All the other states will, within the next five years, be faced with the problem that if their armed forces (and especially their armies) do not reequip, then the obsolescent nature of their current inventories will place their military credibility in doubt, will damage the status and operational relationship of their armed forces within any alliance, and will increase discontent amongst the military professionals. If military budgets remain within the same range as over the past five years (see Table 3), the effect of the high unit cost of military equipment will probably be to insure that, as in the Italian case, the "teeth" end of these armies will diminish in actual numbers. If force levels do diminish beyond a certain point, the usefulness of maintaining conscription, in comparison to the desire to acquire more equipment, will almost certainly not remain a purely military issue.

TABLE 3
Major Equipment Expenditures as a Percentage of
Total Defense Expenditures

	<i>Average 1965-1970</i>	1972	1974	1976	1977
FRG	16.1	12.3	11.9	13.2	13.3
Italy	13.0	16.9	15.2	13.1	14.0
Netherlands	14.5	10.7	13.2	15.2	18.1
Denmark	13.6	15.4	19.3	19.4	17.3
UK	15.9	18.6	17.2	20.6	21.8
US	27.8	21.6	18.1	18.5	20.8

SOURCE: *NATO Review*, 26/1 (February 1978), pp. 30-31.

In both France and Italy, long-term professionals have attempted with some success to force political choices along lines dictated by military efficiency requirements.¹⁸ The bitter outbursts of Admiral Sanguinetti in the French press in the mid-1970s, for example, were not without political motivation.

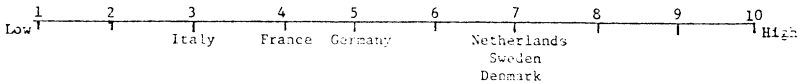


Figure 11: Level of Available Training among Conscripts

As military equipment is made simpler to operate (not necessarily to accommodate conscripts but usually to improve battlefield performance), the maintenance of such equipment becomes more complex. In a professional army, soldiers may be trained over a period of time until they reach the proficiency of a civilian technician. Through proper grading and selection, as in Britain, volunteers may be recruited who already possess qualifications relevant to the task. The short term of service under conscription does not usually allow time for new training in any complex task. Since most conscripts enter service directly from school or college, the range and depth of the usable skills that they already possess are limited. This in effect maintains the “two-tier” system, with conscripts undertaking simple, often non-military tasks, in order to relieve the professional technicians.

One of the standard questions in each national debate is how much new training does a conscript need. Training costs are constantly increasing, given their labor-intensive nature and the rapid manpower turnover implicit in the reduced term of service introduced by each of the six states in the last five years (see Table 4). The continuing inequalities in the annual callups—allowing the deferment of the better educated or the more skilled—only intensifies the problem. To be sure, the threshold below which a conscript military term loses any meaning is far from clear. But the Danish debate suggests doubts that per capita costs at present levels would allow training at any meaningful military level in much less than one year, unless, as in

TABLE 4
Compulsory Military Service: Length of Service and Pay in
Selected European Armed Forces

	<i>Length of Basic Military Service as of February 1978 (Months)</i>			<i>Pay of Unmarried Private as of July 1975 (U.S. Dollars per month)</i>		
	<i>Army</i>	<i>Navy</i>	<i>Air Force</i>	<i>Army</i>	<i>Navy</i>	<i>Air Force</i>
FRG	15	15	15	66	66	66
France	12	12	12	50	50	50
Italy	12	18	12	24	26	24
Netherlands	14	14-17	14-17	213	213	213
Denmark	9	9	9	190	190	190
Sweden	7.5-15	7.5-15	8-12	69	69	69

SOURCE: Service Figures: *The Military Balance 1977-1978* (London: IISS, 1978); Pay Figures: Federal Republic of Germany, *White Paper, The Security of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Development of the Federal Armed Forces, 1975/76* (Bonn: January 1976, p. 175).

the Swedish case, there is a deliberate matching of civilian and military skill occupations and a system of regular, extended reserve training.

Moreover, there is every indication that new technologies will not ease the expense of man-machine tradeoffs. In the early 1970s,

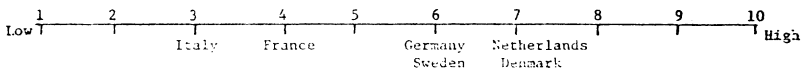


Figure 12: Present Provision of Social Welfare within the Armed Forces

there were optimistic estimates that the increased accuracy of new conventional weapons (e.g., PGMs) would lessen the need for large numbers of military forces or that such advances as cruise missiles would significantly reduce the manpower burdens borne by the NATO defense. Recent studies, however, suggest that these new technologies will benefit both sides and that the manpower requirements, if only

in terms of maintenance and assured deployment, will clearly not be less than those at present.

Even though most of the states view the conscript as essentially a civilian on loan to the armed forces, each has made increasing efforts to lessen the shock of the break from civilian life, especially for those conscripts who have dependents. The generous pay and rights afforded to the Dutch and Danish conscripts (see Table 4) are one way of lessening the pressure on the individual. France and Italy clearly rank lowest in this regard despite the efforts made by both governments in the last half-decade (e.g., nine increases in French pay rates between 1970 and 1975). Perhaps the ultimate irony for the French was the revolt of French conscripts stationed in West Germany who were unable either to afford minimal comforts within the German economy or to pay rail transportation costs back to the French border where their free military pass allowed travel homeward. The resulting political brouhaha and national debate clearly indicate that if demands for better pay and fringe benefits become articulated political issues, those states that maintain conscription as a cheap manpower option may have to compute the tradeoff between paying the conscripts more or spending the money on more equipment and more professionals.

That option itself is hardly a secure one. Again with Italy lagging behind, each of the six has had to meet renewed demands for salary increases from its longer-serving military, even in a period of relatively high civilian unemployment and continuing inflation. In Germany, the problem of attracting sufficient officer candidates has been partially resolved after the implementation of an expensive educational and mid-career training program.¹⁹ But if the British case provides any guide, retention beyond the first or second period of service will almost certainly be markedly affected by the creation of not just competitive pay and benefit programs, but those which promise more, either in terms of indirect benefits or what the British call, the addition of an "x" factor (now 10% of pay).

Summary of Descriptive Rankings

It is not possible at this point in the project to attempt a comprehensive rating for each national conscription debate. The scalar positions

at best provide a sense of the directions for evaluation, the pattern of expectable changes and probably limits in national policymaking. There are a number of factors which seem a direct function of relative economic power. One is struck, moreover, by the predictable, yet marked influence throughout of broader European civil-military patterns. The first is typified by the Scandinavian and often the Dutch ratings, a Northern European model (analogous to the Anglo-American tradition) which relies heavily on broad societal patterns for implicit regulation of civil-military interactions. The second is the more Southern European mode of explicit, structured civil-military relationships with specific limits and channels of sanctioned interpenetration. Germany, an even more hybrid political culture since the Allied interpositions of 1945, represents an interesting mixture of elements from both.

The basic impression remains that in each state the mixed system in which conscription provides the major elements of the ground forces to command considerable justification, if not direct support. Conscription serves to limit fears on the Left about military intervention in politics, and to reassure the Right about a continuing program of civic education and defense training in an era of declining national authority. The social and economic costs conscription engenders are, and will continue to be, substantial. But they are at least equalled in severity by those which Europeans, drawing on the British and now American experience, believe would result from a shift to a largely professional or even all-volunteer force.

Short-run change, if it comes, would seemingly be through an intensification of the trend toward greater professionalization and gradual attrition of numbers within a "two-tier" system. This would have three probable consequences: (1) the recruitment of more technical specialists to replace a larger number of conscripts; (2) the continuing assignment of conscripts to less specialized or even rudimentary tasks; and (3) still further reductions in the basic term of service, allowing only for minimal training.²⁰ The present Swedish and Danish structures are perhaps the closest to this future model.

It is unclear how far a "two-tier" system could evolve towards an idealized 50:50 or even 40:60 conscript-professional division before confronting many of the problems already discussed. Long-serving soldiers cost a great deal, a cost which promises to increase as rapidly as that of new equipment and maintenance facilities. Moreover, strong

counterarguments center upon the inability of the armed forces to compete with the civil sector in the area of recruitment (the perceived poor record of the American and British forces in is the most often quoted example)²¹ and upon the necessity to maintain “numbers” of men as the major criterion of military power in Europe. In part this is the product of continuing American pressure, but it is also a matter of national prestige and reflects underlying concerns about intra-European balances and especially, the dominant position of the FRG should American withdrawal take place. Moreover, dissension in the ranks would not necessarily be less for as the army becomes more specialized, the conscript becomes more isolated and his role becomes less definable.

We return, therefore, to the basic theme: any fundamental change in present conscription systems must be the product of hard political choices and even harder political leadership. We now turn to an examination of the sources, internal and external, from which the impetus for change might be expected to come.

PRESSURES FOR POLITICAL CHOICE

Internal Pressures

It is difficult to identify the precise sources from which primary stimuli for short-run change will come. The present period of relative quiescence does, as we have noted, mask a relatively stable consensus on the need or inevitability of some change in force size and structure. Objectively the time for change would seem to be relatively soon—a function of pressures from the troubled interdependent Western economy, burgeoning technology, or continuing, albeit fragile detente.

Yet the limits on further adaptation appear almost equally clear. A review of the principal domestic political actors of the six Western European states reveals few who are committed to conscription reform in the near term. In part, the reason lies in the absence of acute crisis on this, or indeed many other national security issues. With the exception of the Danes, and perhaps the Dutch, the present governmental leadership have pursued the politics of gradualism—a few reforms, then the creation of study commissions, new organizational channels

for communication, and a stance of watchful reaction. In some cases, this has paid off handsomely (in the remarkable Schmidt reforms in 1971-1972 in Germany); others, the papering-over has been less skillful or less fortuitous (e.g., the succession of public inquiries in France, or the public trials of the Italian "coup" participants).

Unlikely to expect anything different from foreseeable successor governments in any of the six states. One probable set would be Right-Center coalitions—the CDU and FDP in Germany, or a Catholic-led coalition in the Netherlands. Which might be expected on traditional grounds alone to favor greater stress on: (1) military efficiency and professionalism; (2) strength through reequipment; and (3) the "biggest bang for the buck." Yet for similar reasons they can also be expected to value the patriotic education conscription systems promise and the discipline bestowed by common military training. Moreover, in foreign policy, such Right-Center coalitions will be anti-Communist, whether still pro-NATO or with stronger nationalist emphasis. As such, they would probably view the matching of growing Soviet numbers as an item of primary governmental concern.

Traditional reasons would lead to fewer expectations of change under possible Left-Center successor coalitions—these would include the much-publicized "compromiso storico" of the Italian Christian Democrats and Communists, as well as the return of the Swedish Social Democrats. All would be bound to pay at least lip service to the Left's long-standing fear of military intervention, to the belief that conscripts constitute the primary, if not only, guarantee against professional adventurism and misbehavior. Their policies would probably lay great stress on the efficiencies in moves toward greater professionalization but would simultaneously include greater internal changes, especially democratization and political activation.

There is, however, one great uncertainty—the precipitating role which may be played by an eventually triumphant Socialist-Communist coalition in France.²² If a French "socialist experiment" could encompass a trustworthy volunteer army, suitably constrained and backed up by a reserve of short-time conscript forces (perhaps a term as short as six months), its impact on the programs favored by other socialist parties (of North and South Europe) and on the foreign policy interests they support would be substantial.

Beyond the parties, there is only the military itself as the primary agent for inducing discussion, if not decision, on possible future changes.

Over the past half decade, various factions of the military leadership in each country have expressed their considerable dissatisfaction with conscript performance and with existing manpower-material tradeoffs.²³ In almost every case, however, the spokesmen and the military generally have found themselves exposed to criticism from the Right as well as the Left and many have suffered dismissal or early retirement. These lessons of political vulnerability will not silence criticism or discussion within the leadership nor stop the enlisting of allies within the Government and/or Opposition. The next five years may well see far fewer military figures engaging in public diatribes if the basic needs of reequipment and insistence on minimal discipline are met. And there will continue to be the occasional maverick within the structure who asserts the desirability of maintaining conscription whatever the cost in internal reform and efficiency.

The residual category, therefore, seems to be the conscripts themselves and their ability to recreate the instruments of the early 1970s—confrontation politics, continual harassing and incidents, group solidarity in job actions—which gave rise to limited reforms. The situation will be inherently less favorable—if only because there has been some change and because of the public denial of support from organized Left parties and groups. Moreover, with a new, more apathetic, privileged student generation (the exception being France) conscript organizers may be less sure of the limits of their political capital outside their own group. Only the most committed militants in, for example, the Netherlands or Italy, can envisage the securing of all their demands without a wave of reaction bringing with it their least-preferred option, a more rapid shift toward a less troublesome all-volunteer force.

External Pressures

A possible shift away from conscription is suggested by even fewer factors in the expected external environment in which the West European states will exist until the early 1980s. As noted earlier, this assessment is based on three fundamental assumptions: (1) the continual existence of the NATO alliance guaranteeing U.S. protection of Western Europe; (2) the continued slow trend toward greater European cooperation without integration; and (3) a continued state of East-West detente, however ambiguous. In such a milieu, it would seem

there would be fewer benefits accruing from manpower cuts and considerable advantage in maintaining at least the appearance of stable force levels.

The primary determinant for four of the states will, of course, be the position of the United States on the need to maintain or increase conventional strengths in Europe. Over the past quarter century, but especially in the last decade, it has been American pressure, expressed through NATO, which has significantly deterred national force level reductions. Basic acquiescence to American-preferred goals is generally understood as the price to be paid for the American guarantee (nuclear and conventional); few states in the foreseeable future will not pay the required price.

Change might come as the aftermath of the long-stalled Mutual Balanced Force Reduction talks²⁴ with perhaps decreases in American and Soviet forces to a common ceiling in a first phase, followed by unspecified (but presumably similar) reductions among the Western and Eastern European states in a second round.

Even if MBFR were to succeed, however, there is little to suggest that an agreement alone would provide a sufficient justification for a shift away from conscription. The situation would at most be permissive and subject to the same cost arguments described in Part II. Moreover, it is not clear that the Soviet Union (let alone the Western European allies) would welcome any shift toward greater unilateral professionalization of the West German armed forces. Such an evolution, of course, would prove of considerable propaganda value but would also touch continuing Soviet anxieties about appropriate force balances on the Central European front and about constraints against a resurgent Germany.

The maintenance of intra-West European force balances may also preclude drastic shifts in the conscription system. In one sense, the NATO force levels (far more than the stated WEU maxima) have corresponded to the rough balances generally acceptable to all the NATO states—and to a post-1966 France and always neutral Sweden as well. There might be need for some readjustment once a shift occurred, particularly in Germany. Moreover, should the present faint moves towards European defense cooperation intensify, the number of men under arms might once again assume bargaining significance. And while a new European Defense Community arrangement of integrated forces, procurement, and decisionmaking seems still a chimera, national

manpower levels, and the efficacy of present conscription systems would be critical elements in the initial construction phases.

A final factor is provided by recent American and British experience with all-volunteer forces. Most Europeans, and particularly the present German government, view the all-volunteer concept as basically a disastrous one which has both exacerbated the social isolation of the American military and intensified political, social, and economic cleavages within the military and the society. The British case seems to prove the economic obstacles inherent in any contemporary scheme, the inability of the military even in times of high domestic unemployment, "double-digit" inflation, and a shooting war to attract long-serving, trained or trainable forces.

In sum, whether one projects an external environment for 1981 virtually the same as that in the mid-1970s or quite different, a basic calculus of national interests still suggests little reason to shift away from conscription as a primary element in a two-tiered system. There seems little to be gained by any one of the six states and possibly much to be lost.

CONCLUSION

In recapitulating our argument, we must begin where we began in the first part. The logic of the argument that we stand on the threshold of a new phase in the evolution of Western military forces is indeed compelling. The political, economic, and technological environments which sustained the *levée en masse*, which both made possible and dictated the needs for large standing armies dependent on conscript numbers, seemed to be passing or to have already passed. States committed to social equality in an atmosphere of detente through deterrence will surely be under increased pressure to find more efficient and meaningful military structures—most probably involving smaller, more technical, more civilianized professional forces that do not involve conscripts in significant roles and which find other ways of implementing both civic education and the demands of civic duty.

But our review suggests an important caveat, both with respect to the present state of the conscription debate and political pressures

for short-range change in the six Western European states. Mixed conscription systems, that is systems which combine large conscript elements with those of long-serving professional volunteer forces, still command a considerable degree of support for diverse political, economic, social, and even military reasons. They are also supported by considerable bureaucratic inertia. In the short-run, at least, their numerous disadvantages seem at least matched by those inherent in possible alternative structures or even by the political costs involved in raising the issue to a topic of primary political debate. And while the trend in all European six states is towards a high proportion of volunteers within the ground forces, towards gradual attrition among the conscript ranks, there seems no strong political pressure for either a swift or abrupt shift away from the significant involvement of conscripts in national security missions.

Long-run change is, of course, usually the product of a process of incremental decisions. But on an issue as basic to political life as the continuation of conscription to military service, governmental leadership will indeed be brought at some point to hard political choices. At the moment, few Western European leaders seem to have decided when, if ever, those choices must and will be made.

NOTES

1. Much of the analysis of these long term trends which point to the decline of the mass army in the West has been done by members of the Research Committee on Armed Forces and Society of the International Sociological Association. See particularly Morris Janowitz, "The Decline of the Mass Army," *Military Review* 52 (February 1972): 10-18, the collected papers of Jacques van Doorn in *The Soldier and Social Change* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1975), and those presented in Gwyn Harries-Jenkins and Jacques van Doorn, eds., *The Military and The Problem of Legitimacy*, especially Morris Janowitz's summary paper "Military Institutions and Citizenship in Western Societies," (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1976).

2. *Ibid.*

3. The first and perhaps most extensive cost-benefit calculations offered in support of these conclusions were published in the early 1970s: 1) The Gates Commission *Studies Prepared for the President's Commission on an All-Volunteer Armed Force* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1970) and 2) *The Report of the Wehrstruktur Commission* (Bonn: Ministry of Defense, 1972).

4. To this list might be added two other points on which analysts have disagreed: To what degree would such future armed forces require (1) larger or smaller officer-enlisted man ratios and (2) more or less direct political control?

5. The final project will include surveys of other national conscription systems as well as the all-volunteer systems of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada.

6. See Arrow's seminal article "Mathematical Models in the Social Sciences," in Daniel Lerner and Harold Lasswell, eds. *The Policy Sciences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1951). To generate these rankings, we solicited the views of four experts, military and academic, from each country, asked them to define the ends of each continuum, and rank each country in terms of both their own experience and that of every other state involved. Whenever possible, an attempt to gauge intensity has been made, but most of the scales involve no assumptions about fixed intervals between points or cumulative scoring, except in this restricted sense.

7. See, for example, the remarks of French Defense Minister Robert Galley regarding the Military Service Deferment Bill of 1973, quoted in the *London Times*, (June 15, 1973).

8. The low rating for Denmark reflects the new level of confidence of the Danish public in its quasi-volunteer army; see Steen Borup-Nielsen "The Right to Trade Union Membership in the Danish Armed Forces" presented at the meeting of the B.I.U.S., Manchester, England, 1976.

9. See the author's earlier analysis in Catherine M. Kelleher, *Germany and the Politics of Nuclear Weapons* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1975), chapters 3-5.

10. Almost all the European judges involved in generating the national ratings concurred with the judgement, first offered in the *Wehrstruktur* report cited in note 3, that an all-volunteer force of equivalent size would cost at least four times as much as a mixed conscript-volunteer system.

11. The official announcement of Italian plans for force reductions and restructuring came in the official *White Paper*, published in 1977, although the major thrust had been outlined in "La Ristrutturazione dell'Esercito," published as a supplement to *Rivista Militare* (3) 1975. Although appropriations to fund tri-service reequipment have now been passed, some analysts question whether the present Italian government or an even stronger successor government involving the explicit cooperation of the Communist party will be able to fully implement the ambitious programs.

12. In Denmark, until mid-1973, the number of conscientious objectors was running at a level of 15-18% of the annual induction rate. As unemployment began to rise toward 6% in 1976, press reports noted a drop in level to approximately 8%, *Le Monde* (May 7, 1976). Similar statements were made when the level of German C.O. applications declined, although once more lenient declaration procedures were enacted, the number of applications again rose sharply.

13. See, for example, the report of Robert Pelletier and Serge Ravet in *Le Mouvement des Soldats* (Paris: Francois Maspero, 1976).

14. See his *The Soldier and Social Change*, chapters 3 and 4.

15. For a detailed discussion of these distinctions, see the papers collected in the special issue, "Trade Unionism in the Armed Forces," *Armed Forces and Society* (Summer 1976).

16. It should be noted that the scale of political activation is in some respects the obverse of one which rates the extent of political interest and involvement—right or left-wing—within the leadership of the armed forces.

17. The statistical relationships involved in such tradeoffs are examined in the research report "Guns vs. Butter: the European Experience 1870-1970" presented to the Uppsala meeting of the Research Committee on Armed Forces (1978) by the author, together with Richard C. Eichenberg, Thomas R. Cusack, and Miroslav Nincic. This work builds both on the earlier work of Bruce Russett, *What Price Vigilance?* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), especially chapters 4 and 5, and on an earlier research paper by Kelleher, Eichenberg, and Christopher Carr, presented to the 1976 C.E.R.S.A. Colloquium at Toulouse, France.

18. This is particularly true given the interests of the other military services whose needs have been largely omitted from the present analysis. It is only in France and Italy that there are substantial numbers of conscripts in the naval and air arms. The Uppsala report cited in the previous footnote suggests indeed that present personnel costs (without consideration of operational costs or pension compensation) are running at the 55-60% level for all these states. See also Michel Martin's "Conscription and the Decline of the Mass Army in France," *Armed Forces and Society* 3 (May 1977): 355-406.

19. See Dietrich Genschel's report on these developments, "New Patterns of Military Education: The Case of the Armed Forces Universities in Germany," presented to the 1975 Biannual Conference of the Inter-University Seminar.

20. For one effort to model how these principles might affect the security of a larger state, see the *Wehrstruktur* Commission report cited in note 3.

21. See, for example, the arguments in a report by General Boissieu which included the estimate that, even at a cost four times the 1975 defense outlay, it still might not be possible to attract enough long-serving volunteers to maintain force levels. *Financial Times* (January 22, 1975).

22. See Michael Harrison's summary report on the attitudes of French Socialists in "A Socialist Foreign Policy for France?" *Orbis* (Winter 1976) and Martin, "Conscription and Decline." Of particular interest is the position of Charles Hernu, a Socialist defense spokesman who supports conscription (see his *Soldat-Citoyen*, [Paris: Flammarion, 1975]) but who believes it is possible to exercise more direct political control over the army and to reduce conscript service to an intensive six month period which would maintain both present levels of effectiveness and mobilizeable reserves.

23. The list includes at a minimum four Dutch generals, two Italian admirals and one general, three French generals, one admiral, and a number of high-ranking officers, and German generals, captains, lieutenants, and parliamentary defense commissioners.

24. That does not mean none have tried, nor that some have not succeeded. Britain's actual BAOR manpower levels have always been low, even before the Northern Ireland emergency; Germany failed to meet its allotted level, albeit with permission, for over a decade.

25. For a more detailed analysis of the possible cost tradeoffs under various MBFR agreements, see the analysis prepared by the author with Thomas R. Cusack, "The Economic Consequences of an MBFR Agreement" presented to an ACDA conference, "The Economic Consequences of Arms Limitation Agreements" held at PSIA, Harvard University, May 1978.

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