Friedrich Ebert Stiftung

Wolfgang Zellner

Conventional arms control during wartime, in ceasefire and post-conflict situations

Against the background of Russia's war against Ukraine it would be reasonable to imagine that the days of conventional arms control are numbered. Over recent decades, conventional arms control in Europe has been conceived mainly as part of a cooperative political relationship. In other words, there is no room for conventional arms control in an environment characterised by confrontation, deterrence and war. On closer inspection, however, there is a distinct role for arms control even during wartime and its ensuing phases. However, the aims and instruments of such a new kind of conventional arms control are quite different from what we have been used to dealing with over the past three decades. To explore what kinds of arms control might be useful under current conditions, supplementing the military dimension, a rereading of the classic works of arms control theory from the early 1960s might be useful.[1]

This article is inspired by the current war, but its conclusions apply to any conventional inter-state war. It deals with the more classic conventional armaments; cyber war-

fare is only touched upon marginally and lethal autonomous weapons systems and space weapons not at all. Nuclear issues are dealt with as far as dual-use issues, as well as the impact of conventional weapons on the nuclear weapons infrastructure are concerned. What follows may appear modest in substance compared with the comprehensive conventional arms control regime of the cooperative security period. However, the proposals made here provide a relevant contribution to managing crises and wars and to mitigating their impact on the civilian population, the environment and third parties.[1]

The political framing of arms control

The post-Cold War system of European arms control (CFE Treaty, Vienna Document/VD, Open Skies Treaty/OST) was based on the concept of cooperative security. In the wording of the OSCE 2010 'Astana Commemorative Declaration', the concept of 'comprehensive, co-operative, equal and indivisible security [...] relates the maintenance of peace to

---

1 The three most important writings in this context are: Hedley Bull, The Control of the Arms Race. Disarmament and Arms Control in the Missile Age (London, 1961); Thomas C. Schelling/Morton H. Halperin, Strategy and Arms Control (New York, 1961); and Donald G. Brennan, Arms Control, Disarmament, and National Security (New York, 1961).

the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms' (para. 2). Thus, cooperative security entailed a broader notion of political peace, well beyond but including the control of weapons. Though not declared officially, it was widely believed that cooperative security would replace or at least substantially relativise the importance of military deterrence.

At the latest since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, but in its beginnings two decades earlier, cooperative security has been first gradually, then progressively undermined and finally replaced by a system of confrontational security. Now and for the foreseeable future we are living in a system of confrontational security, ranging from strong deterrence to actual war. The current system of confrontational security is more dangerous and war-prone than the last two decades of the Cold War. Contrary to the Russian leadership's current territorial revisionism, the Soviet Union was satisfied with defending its sphere of influence and did not aim at enlarging it, at least not in Europe. This allowed for a certain degree of antagonistic cooperation, not only, but particularly in nuclear arms control, namely the SALT, ABM and START agreements. As far as we can see, there is no way back to this kind of Cold War stability, not to mention cooperative security.

The question is whether conventional arms control is necessary and even possible in a system of confrontational security, which aims it could serve and what instruments are feasible in the current security environment.

The key difference between arms control in a cooperative environment and arms control in a confrontational system is its relationship to military deterrence. Whereas cooperative arms control was intended partly to replace deterrence, arms control under the current confrontational conditions is aimed at supplementing and even strengthening military deterrence. Thus, we are dealing with a kind of complementary arms control.

The idea of arms control within a framework of confrontational security raises the question of the relations between military strategy and arms control. Schelling and Halperin addressed this issue in 1961 as follows: 'arms control is essentially a means of supplementing unilateral military strategy by some kind of collaboration with the countries that are potential enemies. The aims of arms control and the aims of a national military strategy should be substantially the same.'[2] Apparently, there is an inherent tension between a unilateral military strategy aimed at defeating an enemy and 'some kind of collaboration', which presupposes at least some common interests with that enemy. Thus, the task is to qualify the relationship between contradictory and common interests.

The use of military force has (or should have) clearly defi-

ned political objectives: defending a certain territory against military aggression, seizing territory owned by another party, forcing another party to pursue or not to pursue certain activities, or achieving an agreement terminating a war. Any use of military force may have unintended consequences, however, particularly in terms of vertical and/or horizontal escalation and its impact on the civilian population, the environment and third parties. By vertical escalation we mean a substantial increase in tensions or in the war's intensity and destructiveness, first and foremost by the use of nuclear weapons or other means of mass destruction, but also by the wilful destruction of large cities or critical infrastructure. By horizontal escalation we mean the involvement in the war of other relevant parties that hitherto had not been involved. The horizontal escalation of a war may also increase its intensity. Neither development may have been integral to the parties' original war plans, but they may have a common interest in avoiding such escalation. The question is whether and in what way such a common interest can be realised by some kind of arms control measures, whether during a war, as part of a ceasefire regime or in a post-war environment.

One of the founders of modern arms control theory, Hedley Bull, wrote in 1961: 'It is, furthermore, only the existence of political tension that makes arms control relevant. It is relevant when tension is at a certain point, above which it is impossible and beneath which it is unnecessary.'[3] Although this was related primarily to a nuclear scenario, it is also true in a general sense: arms control embraces specific security-related cooperative acts in an overall confrontational relationship.

The question is at what point arms control is 'unnecessary' or 'impossible'. The first part of the question is rather easy to answer: when states enjoy friendly relations or are even members of the same alliance, arms control among them is unnecessary – relations between France and Germany or the United States and Germany are examples. But even among members of military alliances there can be specific relationships in which states could benefit from confidence-building arms control. The Greek–Turkish relationship is a case in point. More difficult are cases in which arms control is impossible. This may be when mistrust or even hatred prevent any cooperation; when one party does not take the other side seriously; or when a war party deliberately aims at the annihilation of the enemy.

From the experience of the past three decades, we are used to understanding arms control in terms of the specific instruments of the era's treaties and agreements, mainly transparency measures, limitations and weapons reductions (treaty-limited items/TLE), as well as related verification mechanisms. For the future, however, we need (once again) a much broader and more general understanding, such as the one Bull proposed in 1961: 'Arms control is restraint

[2] Schelling/Halperin (1961): 141/142.
[3] Bull (1961): 75.

exercised upon armament policy, whether in respect of the level of armaments, their character, deployment or use.'[4] This includes any kind of unilateral, bilateral and multilateral, formal or informal approaches and agreements including all sorts of communication, discussion and exchange on 'armament policy'.[5] And it puts much more emphasis on operational arms control – restrictions on the use of existing armaments – than on structural arms control (limitations and reductions of armaments).

The aims of conventional arms control are different at different stages of the conflict cycle.

Arms control measures during a war aim at avoiding unintended vertical and/or horizontal escalation, or at mitigating the impact of the war on the civilian populations of the war parties, the environment and also third parties.

Arms control measures contained in a ceasefire agreement are aimed at strengthening the implementation of the ceasefire regime and at avoiding the resumption of war.

Arms control measures in a relatively stable post-war environment are aimed at maintaining a situation in which the probability of renewed military force is at least not increasing.

The following three sections analyse what kind of specific arms control measures can serve these aims.

Arms control measures during a war

The following arms control measures are ordered according to the aims they support. Whether these measures are implemented unilaterally, are communicated in bilateral or multilateral ways, or are negotiated among the parties with or without mediators, depends on the character of the individual measure and decisions made by the parties concerned. Direct communication among the parties, which facilitates the mutual understanding of perceptions and assessments, is also possible in times of war. In late November 2024, 'Gen. Valery V. Gerasimov [...] called President Biden's top military adviser and talked about how to manage escalation concerns between the two countries'.[6]

Vertical and/or horizontal escalation can be avoided by the following (among other things):

→ The unilateral non-use of certain categories of weapons, first and foremost nuclear arms and other means of mass destruction. This can be communicated also bilaterally or via multilateral declarations. A prime example

in the nuclear domain is the 'Joint Statement of the Leaders of the Five Nuclear-Weapon States on Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races' (3 January 2022), which reads: 'We affirm that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.' This is also relevant for the use of conventional arms, as elements of the nuclear-weapons infrastructure (radar, missile silos, certain airfields, command posts) should not be targeted. Such policies around the non-use of certain weapons can be extended to certain types of dual-use carrier systems or to conventional weapons with extremely high destructive capability.

→ Sparing certain high-value targets, which could trigger an unwanted escalation of the war if attacked. They can include military targets, such as nuclear weapons sites, military satellite ground stations, other relevant military objects, or cities, particularly capitals, or infrastructure critical for both sides. In the Vietnam War, the United States did not bomb the militarily crucial port of Haiphong as 'it was feared such attacks could spark a wider conflict with China or the Soviet Union'.[7] In late October 2024, there were reports that Russia and Ukraine were in early talks about 'potentially halting air strikes on each other's energy facilities'.[8] Although this did not materialise, it shows that it is possible, in principle, that parties might agree on sparing certain categories of possible targets during a war.

A war's impact on the civilian population can be mitigated by the following:

→ Sparing civilian targets, such as hospitals, schools or refugee camps, in accordance with international humanitarian law. This includes meeting the obligations of the Genocide Convention. In the case of the Gaza Strip (South Africa vs Israel), the International Court of Justice ruled, on 26 January 2024, that 'Israel must [...] take all measures within its power to prevent [...] (a) killing members of the group [the Palestinians]; (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) deliberately inflecting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part'.[9]

→ The establishment of humanitarian ceasefires or corridors to provide the population with food, water, medical treatment and so on. In the abovementioned case of the Gaza Strip the International Court of Justice further considered 'that Israel must take immediate and effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance to address

4 Bull (1961): ix.
5 As the Biden–Xi meeting in November 2023 shows, the US government attaches high importance to military-to-military dialogues with China (cf. Yukon Huang, Isaac Kardon, Matt Sheeban), 'Three Takeaways from the Biden-Xi Meeting', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 16 November 2023.
6 Helene Cooper/Eric Schmitt, Russian General Calls U.S. Chairman of Joint Chiefs, in: New York Times, 4.12.2024.
7 Andrew F. Krepinevich, Jr, The Big One. Preparing for a Long War with China, in: Foreign Affairs, vol. 103, no. 1, January/February 2024: 112.
8 Reuters, Ukraine, Russia in talks on halting strikes on energy facilities, FT reports, 30.10.2024.
9 International Court of Justice, Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa vs. Israel), Unofficial Summary, 26 January 2024: (4), at: https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/192/192-20240126-sum-01-00-en.pdf.

the adverse conditions of life faced by Palestinians in the Gaza Strip' (South Africa vs Israel). Such ceasefires must be negotiated by the war parties, possibly mediated by third parties. Communication among political and military leaders, as well as secret services might be useful.

The war's impact on third parties might be mitigated by the following:

→ The establishment of corridors for exporting certain goods from war-fighting states. The Ukrainian-Russian Black Sea grain deal of 2022/2023, mediated by the UN and Turkey, is a case in point.

→ Sparing crucial transnational infrastructure from the fighting, namely gas, oil or electricity pipes, or sea communication cables. This applies particularly to items used by third parties.

Ecological catastrophes can be avoided by the following:

→ The establishment of security areas around nuclear power plants. This must be negotiated, usually involving international organisations such as the IAEA. A case in point are the efforts to establish a 'nuclear safety and security protection zone'[10] around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine. Such efforts can also be related to other items of civilian infrastructure, such as large dams, the destruction of which would lead to high numbers of civilian victims. It is interesting to note that India and Pakistan have concluded an 'Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities' (ibid.).

This exemplary list of specific arms control measures is by no means exhaustive. Which measures can be implemented depends on the character of the war, the needs of the civilian population, the existing infrastructure, the political will of the parties, as well as the interests of third parties. The measures listed above can be qualified as crisis or war management by means of conventional arms control.

Arms control measures contained in ceasefire agreements

What ceasefire agreements can and cannot achieve

The aim of a ceasefire agreement is to implement a set of rules – essentially arms control – that make the resumption of war less likely. The rules of a ceasefire agreement must be clear and publicly available and they must be monitored and verified in a transparent manner. A well-drafted and implemented ceasefire agreement can result in a higher level of operational stability in the sense that individual

breaches of the agreement do not lead to its total collapse but are processed according to the rules of the agreement.

Ceasefire agreements cannot change the parties' longer-term political aims in any way, '[b]ut arms control does not provide a technique for insulating a military situation from the future will of states to change it: it cannot bind, nor settle in advance, the future course of politics. There are no technical means of excluding the political factor.'[11] This means that a fragile ceasefire agreement cannot be saved by itself, if one or more parties have abandoned it. In the same sense, no ceasefire agreement can prohibit arms races and the parties' preparations for future wars.

Ceasefire agreements substantially differ in substance and form

→ There are isolated ceasefire agreements that stipulate simply that hostilities should cease at a certain time. At the other end of the spectrum, a ceasefire may be just one element of a comprehensive peace accord. Experience shows that more comprehensive agreements are more durable, whereas isolated ceasefires frequently serve only as a springboard for the next round of war.

→ Ceasefire agreements can be bilateral or can be embedded into a wider international framework, preferably involving the UN based on a mandate from the UN Security Council.

→ Ceasefire agreements are implemented or (partially) not implemented, such as the Minsk Agreements 2014–2022.

Ceasefire agreements should contain the following arms control elements:

→ *An agreed and defined line of contact* is the basis for any arms control measures contained in ceasefire agreements. The fact that the Minsk Agreements did not contain a defined line of contact was one of the more important technical reasons for their failure.

→ *Disengagement/demilitarisation zones*, which remove certain categories of heavy weapons from the front line to rear areas, build on the existence of an agreed line of contact. The Minsk II Agreement of February 2015 provided for the following zones of withdrawal: 50 km for artillery, 70 km for MLRS and 140 km for certain tactical missile systems. However, as no line of contact was defined, it was unclear from where these systems should be withdrawn.

→ *Rules for adjacent oceans and seas* to maintain freedom of navigation and the safety of flights might be key to safeguarding export lines. In the Ukrainian context the Black Sea is crucial.

10 Maria Kurando, The Case of Zaporizhzhia: Making International Nuclear Safety and Security Fit for Conflict, IFSH Brief Analysis, 11 April 2022.
11 Bull (1961): 11.

→ As the failure of the Minsk Agreements shows, there is an urgent need for *monitoring and verification*, which represent two different, though related tasks. Monitoring means observing and counting certain items or events. In the case of Russia's war against Ukraine (2014–2022) this was done quite successfully by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) in Ukraine. Verification involves comparing the results of the monitoring exercise with the rules agreed in a ceasefire agreement in a special verification body that comprises the war parties plus, preferably, third-party mediators. Such a body was lacking in the context of the Minsk Agreements. In a rough security environment, an armed peacekeeping force might be necessary for monitoring.

The arms control regulations contained in a ceasefire agreement might be simple or complex, but the key is that they must be implemented. Therefore, it is crucial that there is a joint verification body and that this body is closely interlinked with the higher levels of conflict regulation, up to foreign minister level. Non-implementation must have serious political and/or economic consequences for the party violating the rules of the ceasefire agreement.

Ceasefire agreements are complex, their implementation is costly and requires a lot of expertise and experience. Almost always, the parties have differing interests with regard to whether a ceasefire agreement should be signed at all and in what way it should reflect the military balance of power at a given time. And almost always, the elaboration of a ceasefire agreement faces a dilemma: on one hand, agreements of this kind are usually negotiated under huge time pressure; on the other, their complexity requires thorough preparation.

The measures discussed in this section qualify as crisis management by conventional arms control.

Arms control measures in post-war environments

What kind of arms control is possible in a post-war environment depends on the politico-military quality of a given situation.

Arms control in a fairly unstable, ambiguous post-war environment

The most important task in an ambiguous post-war environment is, apart from maintaining and strengthening the ceasefire regime, to obtain a clearer picture of the ambitions and intentions of the other side. It is therefore important to start a comprehensive dialogue and exchange on political intentions and military strategies. Such a dialogue should be conducted among political and military leaders;

if possible, civil society institutions should be included. The more inclusive this dialogue is, the easier it will be to get a realistic idea of the intentions and strategies of the other side and/or of different factions on the other side.

It should be examined whether the OSCE seminars on military doctrine could provide a proper framework for this kind of dialogue.

Until it becomes clear that both sides are aiming at a longer-term peace, further steps of arms control beyond the implementation of the ceasefire agreement are almost impossible.

Arms control in a rather stable post-war environment

In an ambiguous post-war situation, in which one side cannot be sure whether the other side seeks to continue the war, transparency measures involve military intelligence. Only if the parties have given up their various options for continuing the war, at least for the time being, can arms control measures provide mutual assurance of benign intentions. The following options could be considered:

→ Creating an arms-control framework for existing and future conventional long-range strike (LRS) weapons is currently the most urgent and, at the same time, most challenging arms control task in the European context.

— The escalatory impact of LRS was recognised years before Russia's 2022 attack on Ukraine.[12]

— The build-up of LRS systems in Europe also started years ago and is now being supplemented by the US/German announcement of the near-term deployment of additional land-based LRS systems.

– Russia has deployed the sea-launched cruise missile Kalibr (1,500–2,500 km range), the Iskander mobile ballistic missile (400–500 km range), as well as the hypersonic Zircon cruise missile (1,000 km).

– NATO currently relies on its air- and sea-launched stand-off weapons. The United States and Germany are planning in 2026 to commence the deployment of the long-range hypersonic Dark Eagle (2,770 km range, Mach 5-17), the SM-6 missile (370–500 km range) and the Tomahawk ground-launched cruise missile (1,600–2,500 km range).[13]

12 Cf. Wolfgang Zellner/Olga Oliker/Stefen Pifer, A Little of the Old, a Little of the New: A Fresh Approach to Conventional Arms Control in Europe, Hamburg 2020 (Deep Cuts Issue #11): 7; Samuel Charap/Alice Lynch/John J. Drennan/Dara Massicot/Giacomo Persi Paoli, A New Approach to Conventional Arms Control in Europe. Addressing the Security Challenges of the 21st Century, Santa Monica, California (Rand Corporation, 2020): 17–20, 30.
13 Cf. Moritz Kütt, Zur Verknüpfung von Mittelstreckenraketen und nuklearer Eskalation, in: Wissenschaft und Frieden, 4/2024: 48/49.

– Both sides perceive LRS systems as highly threatening,[14] particularly in view of the geographical proximity of political and population centres (Warsaw, Berlin, St Petersburg, Moscow).

– The geographical proximity and short flight times of LRS put a premium on pre-emptive strikes. This is aggravated by the fact that conventional LRS can also hit elements of the nuclear weapons infrastructure. In addition, unintended escalation can be sparked by accident, error or out of military exercises. Together, different sides' LRS systems have an escalatory and highly destabilising impact.

– Therefore, stabilising risk reduction measures are needed.

• Abolishing all LRS systems in the European context – a kind of conventional INF Treaty – would be the best solution, but will probably not be possible, not least with regard to Chinese medium-range capabilities.

• The next-best option is to limit the number of LRS launchers and missiles in the European context.[15]

• In addition, or if limitations are not possible, it is desirable to introduce notification requirements for the deployment of LRS systems in Europe, as well as for exercises involving LRS systems.[16]

• Further notification and verification measures are conceivable.

→ Establishing accident- and incident prevention measures, in more detail a 'multilateral Prevention of Dangerous Military Activities Agreement' and a 'multilateral NATO-Russia Incidents at Sea Agreement'[17] that would address military accidents and incidents of any kind. Twelve NATO states have Incidents at Sea Agreements with Russia; the agreement between Norway and Russia includes a hotline and its implementation is reviewed on a regular basis.[18]

→ Classic confidence- and security-building measures. It is advisable not to give up the Vienna Document (VD) prematurely. The Vienna Document is currently implemented by most of its parties, but at least in part not by Russia (which has stopped the VD data exchange), Belarus, Ukraine and Armenia. Given a relatively stable post-war environment, one should aim at full implementation of the Vienna Document. In a second step, if conditions are ripe, another attempt should be made to modernise the Vienna Document. This concerns particularly its Chapter III (Risk Reduction), as well as Chapters V (Prior Notification of Certain Military Activities), VI (Observation of Certain Military Activities) and IX (Compliance and Verification. Inspection. Evaluation).

→ Refraining from hostile cyber operations might also lessen tensions. In September 2015, Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Barack Obama agreed on a cyber protocol, according to which the 'United States and China agree that neither country's government will conduct or knowingly support cyber-enabled theft of intellectual property, including trade secrets or other confidential business information'.[19] Although 'only' related to the business domain, the case shows that matters of cyber-attacks can be regulated, at least in principle. Unfortunately, three years later it turned out that, according to a US senior intelligence official, China had violated the agreement.[20] This shows that cyber agreements are highly desirable, but their implementation is extremely difficult. Revisionist states in particular favour hacking over jointly regulating offensive cyber operations.

→ Measures for protecting certain categories of possible targets, that is, critical infrastructure. If it is possible, in principle, to spare certain categories of targets during war (cf. 2a), it should be possible all the more to reach agreement on this issue in a post-war environment.

More far-reaching measures, particularly limitations of major weapon systems, are out of reach under the current conditions. This applies also to sub-regional arms control aimed at limiting armed forces and armaments in the NATO–Russia contact zones.[21] Thus, for the time being there are no arms control solutions for specific sub-regions characterised by close proximity and high density of armed forces, such as the Suwałki Gap. This kind of 'hard' arms control is conceivable only if the current confrontational system is under transformation in a more cooperative direction. For the time being, there is no indication of such a development.

A note on verification

As there is zero confidence between the various sides, trust in the reliability of specific arms control measures must be established by verification measures.

Arms control measures during a war will usually be verified by national technical means, as the nature of war pre-

14 Cf. Charap et al. (2020): 35.
15 Ibid.: 66.
16 Ibid.: 60, 62.
17 Cf. ibid.: 65.
18 Cf. Barbara Kunz, Deterrence, Reassurance and Military Self-Restraint. The Nordics in Their Security Environment, Hamburg 2024 (Deep Cuts Issue Brief 18): 3.
19 The White House, FACT SHEET: President Xi Jinping's State Visit to the United States, 25 September 2015.
20 Cf. Reuters, U.S. accuses China of violating bilateral anti-hacking deal, 9 November 2018.
21 See Wolfgang Zellner et al., Reducing the Risks of Conventional Deterrence in Europe. Arms Control in the NATO-Russia Contact Zones, Vienna 2018 (OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions).

cludes joint approaches. This means that only those arms control measures can be implemented that can be verified by national technical means.

By contrast, arms control measures contained in a ceasefire agreement must be implemented by joint instruments. As a ceasefire agreement constitutes a cooperative act, its control must also involve cooperation. In this context, it is crucial to distinguish between the monitoring exercise, implemented by a bilateral or preferably international body and the verification exercise, for which a joint body is needed in which both sides are represented, plus, preferably, an international third party.

Early stages of arms control in post-war environments will lack joint verification instruments, which can gradually come into play again with a resumption of cooperative elements.

Recommendations

As there are many and highly specific options for conventional arms control during wartime, in ceasefire and post-conflict situations, the following recommendations focus on a few politically timely issues.

→ NATO states should, as a matter of urgency, prepare for the establishment of a large, robust peace force to be deployed after the conclusion of a ceasefire/peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine. This should include, among other things, the following essential elements: size, structure and deployment of the force, national contributions, command and control, monitoring and verification of the ceasefire agreement, as well as budgeting issues.

→ NATO should establish a hotline and a regular exchange on military issues with the Supreme Command of the Russian armed forces. The OSCE states should examine the resumption of their military doctrine seminars in a format appropriate to changed needs.

→ States should establish Incidents at Sea Agreements, including hotlines with Russia where they do not yet exist, and review their implementation on a regular basis.

About the Author

Wolfgang Zellner is Senior Research Fellow at the IFSH. From 1994 to 2019, he worked in different capacities within the IFSH, since 2005 as Deputy Director of the IFSH and Head of the IFSH's Centre for OSCE Research (CORE). Wolfgang Zellner is the initiator and co-founder of the OSCE Network of Think Tanks and Academic Institutions. Wolfgang Zellner holds a diploma in sociology from the University of Regensburg and a Ph.D. in political sciences from the Free University of Berlin. The title of his summa cum laude dissertation thesis was: "The Negotiations on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe with a Special Focus on the New Political Situation in Europe and the Role of the Federal Republic of Germany". From 1984 to 1991, he worked as an adviser to a member of the German Bundestag dealing with issues of security and military policy as well as of European arms control.