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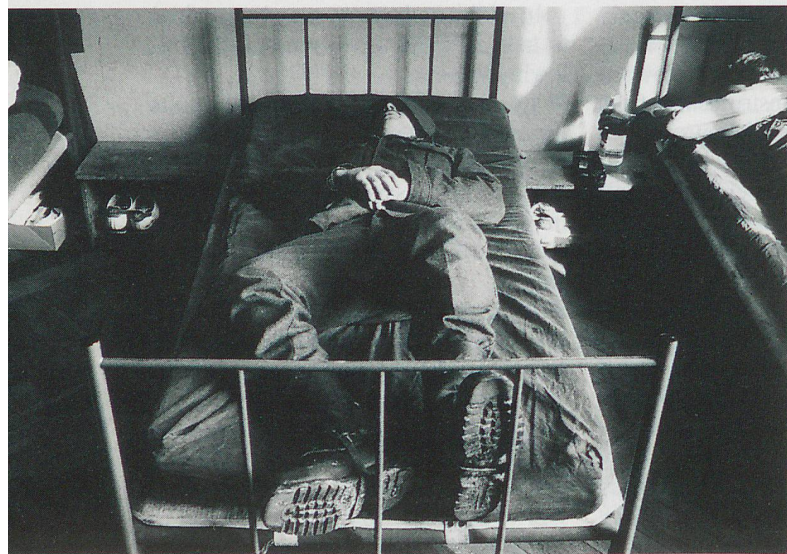
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The Army '95 concept includes a careful combination of work...



...and rest. (Photos: Michael von Graffenried)

Two questions each to Kaspar Villiger

Security – with

The Army 95 reform programme and the purchase of new fighter aircraft, which is an integral part of it, are not uncontested. Federal Councillor Kaspar Villiger, head of the Federal Military Department, and Social Democrat National Councillor Andreas Gross, head of the Group for Switzerland without an Army, have been interviewed by Swiss Review.

Mr. Villiger, will the Army 95 reform programme weaken the army?

Kaspar Villiger: A credible army must reflect both the foreign and domestic situations. The Federal Council has defined a Swiss security policy to take account of recent changes. The Cold War is behind us, and the old structures have broken up. This provides us with new opportunities, but it also increases instability. Risks remain, and the world is not more secure. Army 95 covers all this. National defence is no longer our only task, but Army 95 will be smaller, with shorter periods of service. It will be more flexible and more dynamic, however; forces will be concentrated, and weaponry will be modernised. And military expenditure will fall! The old army of the Cold War days will become a many-sided instrument of crisis management.

Why can Switzerland not afford to forget about buying new fighter aircraft?

Our air force is old; we must replace 130 oldtimers with 34 new jets. This has priority, and it is in the budget. No new taxes will be needed. On June 6, Swiss voters will not only decide whether to buy these 34 jets. This initiative by the Group for Switzerland without an Army aims rather to prevent old aircraft being replaced before the year 2000. It is not only our defence which is at stake, but also our prestige. Can foreigners be expected to trust us if we hand over our security to people who want to phase out the army? The Federal Council also

measure to the same extent. For example, the number of infantry will drop by more than 40%, while signals troops will be reduced by less than 10%.

The most important changes are as follows:

- abolition of the Home Guard (reducing the age limit to 42);
- abolition of the special mountain fortress and frontier forces (units trained exclusively in ground warfare are no longer considered appropriate);
- concentrating the military infrastructure into stronghold units; this would leave other units free for non-territorial duties;
- restructuring the three mechanised divisions into five tank brigades (increasing operational flexibility);
- creating infantry regiments in Berne and Geneva (important cities);
- setting up a special regiment comprising four battalions for cases of disaster;

- adjusting the weapons structure of the mountain fusilier battalions in such a way that troops trained in mountain warfare can be used throughout the country;
- amalgamating the active and territorial age groups.

Soldiers' training

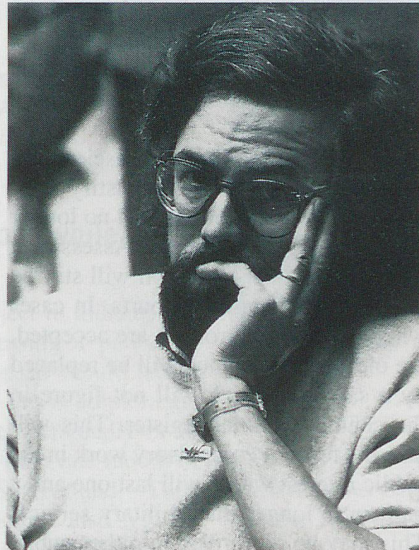
It is stated in the Army '95 guidelines that military training should be developed "in a spirit of mutual respect between officers and troops". Military training should "serve above all to promote a spirit of responsibility, discipline and comradeship, which are the foundation stones of success in both general and crisis situations". The importance of "a reasonable combination of work with rest and recovery" is underlined. The unit should be considered as "a social community" with a view to "improving both training and performance". ■

and Andreas Gross

or without an army?



Kaspar Villiger: "The world has not become a safer place".



Andreas Gross: "The army is no longer a safety factor". (Photos: Keystone)

recommends a clear No to the second initiative, which aims to prevent us from having new depots. Finance? In 1960 the army took up over 30% of the budget – by 1993 this was down to 12%. Between 1990 and 1996, the figure should drop by another quarter in real terms. In today's climate that is enormous.

Mr. Gross, a few years ago you launched the initiative "For Switzerland without an Army". What do you think about the Army 95 reform programme? Are you happy about it?

Andreas Gross: By no means. For me it is simply cosmetic, a superficial change which does not tackle the main issues. The reform is taking place because



For increased flexibility: the three mechanised divisions will be turned into five tank brigades. (Photo: Michael von Graffenried)

companies no longer want to give up their staff for such long periods of military service. It is just a question of rationalising. But today national defence and security policy are no longer military matters. We need to disarm. We need to change our habits. The military do not provide security today; the army cannot defend the country any more. We must transform our way of thinking and concentrate on social and economic policies designed to prevent conflicts which are normal in human relations from being resolved by violence.

You are in favour of both these anti-army initiatives. But is it not taking a risk to prevent the purchase of fighter aircraft up until the year 2000 when there are already crisis areas in our immediate neighbourhood?

Life is dangerous, but it is not going to be less so if we have fighter aircraft. And conflicts are to freedom as Amen is to church! We are faced with the question of why there is so much brutality in ex-Yugoslavia. But we would not be able to prevent it with fighters. There is a civil war in the Balkans; but other countries, Italy for example, do not feel threatened. We must of course ask ourselves whether there is any way we can prevent escalation. Disarmament rather than rearmament is likely to contribute to this. The countries of the former east bloc need substantial financial help in their social and economic development, and they should avoid armed conflict in future. We will be less able to help them if we spend our money on new fighter aircraft.

Interviews: Giuseppe Rusconi ■

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in Switzerland:

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Inventory

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Estate Division Contract



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