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German Contributions to NATO Peacekeeping and Out-of Area Operations: The Case of the Former Yugoslavia

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Executive Summary

As new threats and security challenges emerging in recent years have changed NATO's security concept and led to policy frameworks for Alliance peacekeeping and other forms of out-of-area missions, it is important to look at the actual as well as the potential contributions that key individual member states are able, willing and likely to offer in this context. Germany undoubtedly is a centerpiece for successful collective Western military operations yet, for a variety of reasons, has long been the weak point of NATO's multilateral planning in that regard. After unification, Germany has gradually taken a new position and has put aside most of its restrictions and limitations regarding a full contribution of the Bundeswehr in all forms of peacekeeping and, thereby, allowing participation in the newly emerging out-of-area operations of the Alliance. The research will assess Germany's actual role in NATO's missions in the former Yugoslavia as a first test case. The article concludes that the changed German stand on combat missions in the former Yugoslavia officially was mainly explained as an effort to comply with allied expectations for a more responsible German security policy. Using the Bundeswehr for combat missions, however, in essence can be seen an attempt of the German government to assure its overall political influence on the scene, to symbolize Germany's full military compatibility, to strengthen army morale and to ensure a more balanced financial burden sharing for the peace process in Bosnia and for future crisis to come. It represents the culmination of a painstaking effort by the German defense establishment to demonstrate that Germany can be a full-blooded and reliable participant in NATO peacekeeping and out-of-area missions. Despite an obviously transformed foreign and security

policy role conception, Germany will, however, remain reluctant to assume a military leadership role within NATO out-of-area missions.

Objective

The war in the former Yugoslavia in many ways qualifies as the first test case for the potential role NATO can play in future peacekeeping. How has the German contribution, seen from the perspective outlined above, turned out during that crisis and, in particular, in the context of NATO's mission to implement the peace-agreement brokered by the United States in Dayton in late 1995? What kind of external pressure did allies and partners, in particular the key allies United States, France and Britain put on the Kohl government and has Bonn responded accordingly? Can the Bundeswehr, integrated into NATO's military structures, by now be said to fully contribute to new forms of Alliance missions and, thus, can Germany play a military role in current and future Alliance operations that equals Bonn's political importance within NATO?

Research Design

This research intends to exploit on the concept of role theory¹ assuming that, over time, states evolve national role conceptions based on a specific set of political culture. These conceptions about a nation's appropriate role and function as an international actor together with external role expectations and systemic conditions, guide and frame nation states foreign policy behavior. Thus, after identifying an actor's specific role conception and the role expectations of powerful interacting states, foreign policy behavior can be explained and, to a lesser extent, can be predicted. Focusing on the actor rather than the system as an explanation for state behavior, role theory considers

¹ For a comprehensive account of role theory see Kalevi J. Holsti, National Role Conceptions and the Study of Foreign Policy, in: *International Studies Quarterly* 14(1970), pp. 233-309; Stephen G. Walker, Role Theory and the Origins of Foreign Policy, in: Charles F. Hermann/Charles W. Kegley/James N. Rosenau (eds.), *New Directions in the Study of Foreign Policy*, Boston 1987, pp. 269-284; Knut Kirste/Hanns W. Maull, Zivilmacht und Rollentheorie, in: *Zeitschrift für Internationale Beziehungen*, 3(1996)2, pp. 283-312.

and combines variables from the systemic level (i.e. expectation and pressure from allies) with variables from the domestic level (i.e. actor's own norms, values and foreign policy conception). Role theory, this article argues, can better explain certain aspects of German foreign and security policy than traditional realist and neo-realist theories², respectively.

It can be assumed that Bonn has changed its own foreign policy role conception -- and thus the proper role for the Bundeswehr -- since unification mainly as a consequence of adjustment to external role pressure and a changed national self-perception. Externally, Bonn was urged to assume greater responsibilities in the area of foreign and security policy, namely an unrestricted German contribution to conflict prevention and crisis management. Internally, over the past eight years Germany has developed a more outward-looking and somewhat 'realistic' foreign policy culture. As a result, despite considerable internal and external pressure, Germany is now fully able and willing to participate with all consequences in NATO peacekeeping and out-of-area missions.

The theoretical framework of the research project will be applied to the case study by looking at three main areas:

(1) The study intends to identify the distinct foreign and security role conception for Germany as expressed by its foreign policy decision makers and elite. What are the political positions of decision makers within the government, including foreign and security policy bureaucracies, regarding the role and contribution of the Bundeswehr in

² See for example Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Emerging Structure of International Politics*, in: *International Security* 18(Fall 1993), pp. 44-79.

NATO peacekeeping and other out-of-area missions, particularly in the Alliance's mission to implement the Dayton peace accord

(2) Secondly, it will assess the role expectations German leaders are facing from abroad. What, in turn, are the role expectations of key allies with regard to Germany's contribution for such missions? Do Germany's partners encourage Bonn to fully participate in any form of operation, including combat missions and welcome a possible German leadership role? Are they quietly perhaps cautious about the idea of German combat missions, thus creating an image of conflicting role-expectations within Germany?

(3) Finally, the extent to which Germany is trying to adjust its behavior to its own foreign and security policy role conception and to role expectations issued by its partners will be examined with regard to Germany's policy during the Yugoslav crisis and NATO's mission in Bosnia. What role and function is the Bundeswehr actually playing in the NATO mission? Is it fair to say that Germany is participating just like any other member of the Alliance or is the Bundeswehr still restricted in carrying out a regular mission in the context of multilateral NATO operations? Are there indications that Germany is adjusting its role conception in order to conform to its partner's expectations? What can be expected for future German contributions in similar NATO missions?

I. Introduction

With the conflict in the former Yugoslavia war and bloodshed reemerged in a Europe that had enjoyed four decades of peace and forced the European powers to deal with military aggression on their borders. For NATO, the crisis became a first test case for collective security missions and more diverse tasks envisaged by NATO members.³ With the 'New Strategic Concept' of the Rome Summit in November 1991, the Oslo Ministerial meeting in June 1992, the Ministerial meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels in December 1992, and the Brussels Summit in January 1994, NATO committed itself to accept crisis prevention and peacekeeping activities under the authority of the UN and OSCE based on the principle of shared risk, responsibility and burden by all members on equitable terms.⁴

For Germany, the Yugoslav conflict was an entirely new experience not only due to the nature of the crisis as a conflict of the 'new type' but also because it confronted the Germans with their own stand on the use of military means in joint Western efforts for international crisis management. For Germany, Yugoslavia became „a test case for new roles and instruments in international security.“⁵

National as well as international commentators and academics warned that adopting a passive strategic role refusing to participate in allied military missions would „diminish

³ For a detailed account on NATO and the Yugoslav conflict see Bertold Meyer/Harald Müller/Hans-Joachim Schmitd, NATO 96: Bündnis im Widerspruch. Hessische Stiftung Friedens- und Konfliktforschung, HSFK-Report 3/1996, Frankfurt März 1996, pp. 41-52.

⁴ For NATO's adaptation to a changing world see Franz-Josef Meiers, NATO's Peacekeeping Dilemma. Arbeitspapiere zur Internationalen Politik 94, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, May 1996, p. 6ff; also see Roger H. Palin, Multinational Military Forces: Problems and Prospects. Adelphi Paper 294, International Institute for Strategic Studies, London 1995, pp. 5-9.

Germany's influence within the Alliance and relegate it to observer status...It may evoke Germany's 'Sonderrolle' (special role), which might be perceived as a return to a historically precarious „Sonderweg“, reawakening fears among its neighbors that Germany is striving for national independence of action again. It will put both the political and strategic rationale for NATO's new role in the post-Cold War world...into question...which critically depends on a clear and reliable German commitment. ⁶

The collapse of Yugoslavia, this article argues, forced Bonn to meet new security demands and move beyond an anachronistic position with regard to its own participation in collective security operations.

II. Background to the Conflict

On the outset of the Yugoslav crisis, German foreign and security policy was in search for a new point of reference. ⁷ With national unification came full sovereignty and the end of the threat posed by the Warsaw Treaty Organization. After forty years of restraint due to its Cold War position, German foreign policy for the first time since the end of World War II seemed to enjoy freedom of action. Likewise, Germany was confronted with increasing foreign expectations to substantially contribute to the creation of a new European security architecture and to become a more responsible security partner, i.e. to fully participate as part of Western efforts for international crisis m n-

⁵ Introduction by Günter Rinsche, Chairman, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, to the Conference on Democracy and Stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina - The German Contribution, Bonn-Bad Godesberg, 17 February 1997 (translation by the author).

⁶ Meiers, 1996, p. 77.

agement.⁸ Given these incentives for an active German foreign and security policy, however, neighbors and allies, especially France and Great Britain still worried a great deal about a reemerging German hegemon in Europe⁹ and thus at least indirectly suggested to German policy makers to stick to their long held Cold War 'culture of reticence'. These conflicting expectations together with the recent experience of the 1990/91 Gulf war, where overall the Germans were criticized for their low profile in Western conflict management, were the background against which policy makers in Bonn had to develop their approach for the Yugoslav crisis.

The German government early on realized the potential danger resulting from a chaotic breakup of the Yugoslav federation and argued for a „managed dissolution.“¹⁰ Bonn worried that the spread of violence caused by a Serbian sponsored aggression of the federation against the republics could lead to a full scale civil war. This in turn would likely cause a mass exodus of refugees most of which were to be expected to come to Germany. Aggression also meant a violation of the fundamental principles of the CSCE final act provisions and, finally, could become a tough test for multilateral Western security institutions.¹¹ From the very beginning, Bonn was fully aware of the potential political influence of about 500.000 Croats living in the Federal Republic of Germany

⁷ Uwe Nerlich, Neue Sicherheitsfunktionen der NATO, in: Europa Archiv 48 (1993), pp. 663-672.

⁸ Gerd Koslowski, Die NATO und der Krieg in Bosnien-Herzegowina: Deutschland, Frankreich und die USA im internationalen Krisenmanagement. Kölner Arbeiten zur Internationalen Politik Vol. 2, Vierow/Greifswald 195, p. 42.

⁹ Uwe Nerlich, Sicherheitsinteressen des vereinigten Deutschland, in: Wolfgang Heydrich et al. (eds.), Sicherheitspolitik Deutschlands: Neue Konstellationen, Risiken, Instrumente, Baden-Baden 1992, pp. 787-796, 792.

¹⁰ Michael Libal, Germany and Yugoslavia 1991-1992. The Issues. Draft, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 1996, p. 5.

¹¹ Hanns W. Maull, Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis, in: Survival, Vol. 37, No. 4, 1995, pp. 99-130, 118f.

at that point.¹² As a consequence, the German government pushed on the diplomatic front, especially among its EU-partners, for the recognition of the breakaway republics Croatia and Slovenia which was unilaterally carried out by the German government in December 1991. Bonn hoped that recognition would internationalize the conflict and thus prevent full scale war which the Germans wanted to avoid by all means not least, because war would likely mean allied demands for some sort of German military involvement.¹³ In retrospective, a high ranking U.S. diplomat described Germany's recognition policy as an attempt to stabilize the breakup of Yugoslavia but criticized Bonn for its unwillingness to assume political and military responsibility for its policy.¹⁴ The same, however, is true for the rest of the Western World, indeed. Recognition of Croatia and Slovenia in the end proved deterring -- the fighting in Croatia was ended in January 1992 and a UN brokered truce was enforced by 14.500 UN peace-keepers starting March 15 1992.¹⁵ Later, on April 6 1992, the United States -- and due to Washington's pressure the EU as well -- recognized Bosnia-Herzegovina. This recognition, however, turned out to become a debacle. As a consequence, the ongoing war between troops of rest-Yugoslavia and Bosnian defense forces intensified. The war in Bosnia raged more than four years and should become the first conflict in which united Germany ultimately send ground troops for combat missions.

¹² John Newhouse, Bonn der Westen und die Auflösung Jugoslawiens. Das Versagen der Diplomatie - eine Skandalchronik, in: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik*, 37/10 1992, pp. 1190-1205, 1191.

¹³ The recognition issue has been described in much detail elsewhere and thus will not be at the bottom of this article. For a detailed account see Heinz-Jürgen Axt, *Hat Genscher Jugoslawien entzweit?*, in: *Europa Archiv*, Vol. 48, No. 12, 25 June 1993, pp. 351-360; Koslowski, 1995, pp. 55ff; Beverl Crawford, *Explaining Defection from International Cooperation. Germany's Unilateral Recognition of Croatia*, in: *World Politics*, 48 (July 1996), pp. 482-521

¹⁴ *Perspektiven der deutsch-amerikanischen Beziehungen*, Speech by James D. Bindenagel, American Embassy, Bonn, delivered to a Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung Expert Meeting, Wildbad Kreuth, 20 March 1996.

III. Germany's early reluctance...

Ever since in August 1991 France had promoted a WEU rapid reaction force to separate the warring factions in Croatia, the Germans discussed whether and how the Bundeswehr could play a constructive role in Western military efforts to end the war in the former Yugoslavia.¹⁶

One group of commentators besides from stressing constitutional restraints for a Bundeswehr deployment focused on Germany's historical World War II legacy in the area.¹⁷ Others warned that a policy of complete military denial would „substantially tie the hands of German foreign policy“¹⁸ and question Germany's position within the Alliance. Initially, the German government's stand at times appeared confusing and contradictory as Bonn called for limited Western military actions but at the same time was unwilling to commit its own forces. While early on in September 1991 German Foreign Minister Genscher had suggested his country's willingness to contribute logistical support should a Western military force be agreed upon¹⁹, the German Chancellor categorically ruled out any German military involvement in the crisis during an address to the Bundestag on November 27, 1991.²⁰ Later on, Kohl underlined his disapproval: „Whoever argues for a participation of German troops on the territory of the former

¹⁵ For details see Europa Archiv 19/1992, D 578ff.

¹⁶ Martin Rosefeld, Deutschlands und Frankreichs Jugoslawienpolitik im Rahmen der Europäischen Gemeinschaft 1991-1993, in: Südost-Europa, Vol. 42(1993), Nr. 11-12, pp. 621-653, 643.

¹⁷ Eberhard Rondholz, Deutsche Erblasten im jugoslawischen Bürgerkrieg, in: Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik, Vol. 37, No. 7, July 1992, pp. 829-838.

¹⁸ Protocol of the Study Group International Security, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, Bonn, 18 April 1994, p. 8.

¹⁹ Genscher fordert eindrücklich Einhaltung des Waffenstillstands, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 19.09.1991.

²⁰ Koslowski, 1995, p. 60.

Yugoslavia must know that the German government will not approve it."²¹ Germany, however, despite refusing a German commitment, supported Western military action to end the conflict in principle. The new Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel on December 11, 1992 did not rule out the use of force by NATO in general: „I have never ruled it out but...we as Germans have to be cautious."²² Instead, Germany promoted Western military action below the critical threshold of combat missions such as the establishment of land-corridors to allow for deliverance of humanitarian aid.²³ Bonn also supported the surveillance of heavy weapons by the international community and later the creation of safe heavens for war refugees.²⁴ In 1993, Germany lobbied its European partners on behalf of the U.S. initiatives to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina, hoping this threat could ultimately force the Bosnian Serbs back to assume meaningful negotiations.²⁵ During the meeting of European foreign Ministers in Middelfart/Denmark on April 1993 and later on the EC summit in Copenhagen in June 1993, the German proposal for lifting or at least easing the embargo was rejected by its European partners, mainly due to French and British resistance, both of which feared the measure would harm their UNPROFOR troops on the ground.²⁶ Later on, in November 1994, the Kohl government, however, criticized the U.S. plan for 'lift and strike' as counterproductive to the peace-process calling the unilateral U.S. refusal to

²¹ Declaration by Chancellor Helmut Kohl on the Developments in the Former Yugoslavia, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 5/1993, p. 20.

²² Foreign Minister Dr. Klaus Kinkel, Deutschlandfunk, 11. December 1992, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 1/1993, p. 13.

²³ This was part of a joint German-French initiative to avoid a catastrophe during the Winter in 1993, cf. Ein Vorschlag aus Brüssel soll Gespräche in Genf bewegen, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 19 November 1993.

²⁴ Rühle lehnt internationalen Militärschlag gegen Serbien ab, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 8 August 1992.

²⁵ Interview with Volker Rühle, on current issues relating to the peace-initiatives in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 5/1993, p. 22-24, 23.

²⁶ Archiv der Gegenwart, 27 April 1993, p. 37806 and Dr. Klaus Kinkel on the Bosnia debate during the EC summit in Copenhagen, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 7/1993, p. 32-34, 32.

enforce the embargo as: „liable to escalate the fighting rather than to promote negotiations.“²⁷ Forced to choose between contrary interests and conflicting expectations of European and American allies, Bonn opted for European solidarity on this issue.

Until well into 1994, Germany’s chancellor Helmut Kohl took a cautious position on military intervention of Western ground troops, stressing remote chances for success in ending the war by military means.²⁸ Instead, Kohl focused in conversations with Presidents Mitterrand and Clinton on „the need for political solutions over intensified military measures.“²⁹ At the same time, Bonn supported selective air strikes against Serbian targets as long as they were legitimized by the United Nations Security Council.³⁰ He also anticipated a role for NATO forces in Bosnia: „The use of selective military measures like the ones NATO offered to the United Nations on August 9, 1993, must no longer be ruled out.“³¹ In accordance with Germany’s constitutional restraints against committing forces to such operations, Western military measures, however, were anticipated without the participation of the Bundeswehr. In May 1995 the German government once more demonstrated that in principal it welcomed Western military action when Foreign Minister Kinkel hailed air strikes carried out by NATO as „signal at the right time.“³² This, however, still excluded any substantial German military participation.

²⁷ Allies Worried After U.S. Calls Off Policing the Ban On Arms to Bosnia, INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 12/13 November 1994.

²⁸ Kohl Stresses Risks of Bosnia Intervention, INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 28. January 1994.

²⁹ NATO Is Weighing A More Active Role. Some in Alliance Still Fear Becoming Mired in Combat, INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 20. April 1994.

³⁰ Serbs inject fresh doubts into NATO, Financial Times, 10. August 1993.

³¹ Regierungssprecher Dieter Vogel quoted in: Paris Seeks NATO Ultimatum: Lift Siege or Face Air Strikes, INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 07. February 1994.

IV. ...and its gradual change of mind

German government officials, in the meantime, were eager to promote such a participation and prepared the nation that such missions would soon be expected by Germany's allies. On July 12, 1994, the Constitutional Court ruled that the Bundeswehr could take part in UN, NATO or WEU peacekeeping and peacemaking missions, as long as the German parliament approved such an operation by a simple majority.³³

Allied expectations justified the governments decision to join the club

Western allies and the UN Secretary General repeatedly and on various occasions since the beginning of the conflict asked Germany to supply Bundeswehr contingents for a multinational peace force in Bosnia.³⁴ UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali during a visit in Bonn in January 1993 warned that „a country as important as Germany could not claim special status nor buy it.“³⁵ On the occasion of the annual Security Conference in Munich, Germany was criticized publicly by Western diplomats for its refusal to contribute troops for multilateral peacekeeping efforts at a time, when its partners

³² Bis hierher und nicht weiter, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 27 May 1995.

³³ Bosnia and NATO: Allied Contributions to SFOR, CRS Report for Congress 95-1185 F, February 18, 1997, p. 4.

³⁴ Michael Thumann, Between Ambition and Paralysis - Germany's Balkan Policy 1991-1994, CEPS Draft, June 1994, p. 16.

³⁵ Breite Mehrheit für Blauhelm-Einsätze deutscher Soldaten, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 11.02.1993.

had put together the 15.000 strong UNPROFOR peacekeeping contingent.³⁶ Later on the same meeting, U.S. Senator William Cohen (R-Maine) said in a press interview: „The American’s say, ‘Let’s see some Germans on the ground’. You can’t hide from history but you also can’t hide behind it.³⁷ As early as 1993, Germany’s image as a reliable security partner had suffered considerable damage. A scholarly assessment of the German role in military aspects of Western crisis management in the former Yugoslavia at that time concluded: „...Germany is an uncertain partner in crisis management situations. German inhibitions on the use of combat troops in conflicts beyond Germany’s borders have seriously impaired Bonn’s ability to play an effective role in Yugoslavia, undermined its credibility with the Western allies, and been a source of irritation for the United States. A failure of Bonn to overcome its current internal inhibitions about the use of force and to contribute to NATO’s new conflict management tasks could not only weaken the ability of WEU and NATO to perform these tasks, but damage bilateral relations with the United States as well.”³⁸ Others warned that „a powerful Germany that does not contribute proportionately to the Alliance’s new ‘out-of-area’ activism will be resented and possibly distrusted.”³⁹

During a meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers in early December 1994, NATO Allied Supreme Commander for Europe, General Joulwan, asked the German government to contribute air force planes to support the possible withdraw of UNPROFOR soldiers in a rescue operation. On the occasion, Defense Minister R  he had assured his colleagues

³⁶ International Herald Tribune, 8 February 1993, p. 2.

³⁷ Quotation from U.S., Europe: The Gap is Widening, The Washington Post, February 8, 1995.

³⁸ F. Stephen Larrabee, Implications for Transatlantic Relations, in: The Implications of the Yugoslav Crisis For Western Europe’s Foreign Relations, ed. by Mathias Jopp, Institute for Security Studies, Western European Union, Chaillot Paper No. 17, Paris 1994, pp. 17-34, p. 31.

of „German solidarity“⁴⁰ but did not specify what exactly the German contribution would consist of. He was asked by Joulwan to clarify his commitment in February 1995, as a rescue mission seemed to become more imminent.⁴¹ Chancellor Kohl stressed Germany's „moral obligation for the allies“ and Rühle warned „he who denies due protection for the British and French, would tear up the very roots of NATO.“⁴² French Foreign Minister Juppé, describing his country's coordination with Germany in the contact group as close and helpful, in December 1994 also called on the Germans to send Bundeswehr troops in support of the UNPROFOR mission.⁴³

This demonstrates that Germany's key allies, the United States, France and the NATO-leadership had no reservations whatsoever against a German military involvement in the UN or NATO-led military operations envisaged for Bosnia. The exact terms for the German mission, however, were not stressed in the discussions with the allies.

The German government, however, despite allied coaxing remained exceedingly reluctant. This may have been less so because of ambivalent allied expectations about a proper military role for the Germans as had been the case during the Gulf War in 1990/91. Rather, the circumstances and the German „sense for the political dangers on the specific terrain“ demanded a cautious approach. „It's partners expected from the Bundesrepublik a readiness to act in the military field where German initiatives had

³⁹ See Stéphane Lefebvre/Ben Lombardi, Germany and Peace Enforcement: Participating in IFOR, in: *European Security*, Vol. 5, No. 4 (Winter 1996), pp. 564-587, p. 566.

⁴⁰ NATO-Beratungen über den Bosnien-Einsatz, NEUE ZÜRICHNER ZEITUNG, 16.12.1994.

⁴¹ NATO-Anfrage an Bonn zum Bosnien-Abzugsplan, NEUE ZÜRICHNER ZEITUNG, 09. February 1995.

⁴² Bonn für ein verstärktes Engagement in Bosnien, NEUE ZÜRICHNER ZEITUNG, 17.12.1994.

⁴³ Der französische Außenminister nennt Carters Reise 'nützlich', FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 23.12.1994.

been unwanted for decades and surly would have been condemned on the basis of Germany's history."⁴⁴

German government officials well aware of allied pressure were most eager to prepare the nation on the necessity to commit some sort of troops. For German Defense Minister Volker Rühle, the participation of the Bundeswehr in joint NATO or WEU missions meant „alliance solidarity...When all other nations from Denmark to Greece were able to establish a common approach and agreed to send battle ships and fighter planes, Germany must not stand aside."⁴⁵ Two critical reservations, however, were made: Germany would not send ground forces into Bosnia, where the Germans perceived themselves as part of the problem due to the atrocities Nazi troops had committed during World War II. Secondly, as a consequence, the German contribution was meant as a non-combat, peace-keeping mission only.

Public opinion in Germany shifted remarkably on the issue of a Bundeswehr deployment: An EMNID poll found that between 1991 and 1993 the percentage of Germans in favor of a Bundeswehr participation in multilateral peace-keeping missions in general jumped from 65% to 71% and 50% wanted Germany to take part in a joint military operation in the former Yugoslavia just as French, British and American troops would do. Only 31% opposed a German troop participation and opted for financial support only at that time.⁴⁶ In June 1995, when the German government decided to deploy the Bundeswehr to support a rescue mission for UN-peace-keeping units, 48%

⁴⁴ Both quotations from Wolfram E. Hanrieder, *Deutschland, Europa, Amerika. Die Außenpolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949-1994*, Paderborn 1995, p. 126 and p. 125.

⁴⁵ Serbs inject fresh doubts into NATO, *Financial Times*, 10. August 1993.

in the Western Länder (29% in Eastern Germany) supported the decision, 46% (West, 70% East) opposed it.⁴⁷

Military Involvement Below the Critical Threshold

During the various stages of the war in Bosnia, despite the fact that it had no troops participating in the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) which had been established in 1992, Germany did take part in a number of UN and NATO military operations:

- The German air force provided 40% of flying personnel as well as a commander for the AWACS air surveillance mission in Bosnia⁴⁸, which had been established and legitimized by UN Security Council resolution 781 and 786, respectively, in 1992. This is even more remarkable as this decision, according to members of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), conflicted with the constitution and was -- unsuccessfully -- challenged before the German constitutional court⁴⁹
- German 'Transall' carrier planes delivered emergency aid and supplies for Sarajevo and East Bosnia. After a meeting with NATO Foreign Ministers in Brussels, foreign Minister Kinkel explained in February 1993, that the German air force so far had provided around 400 air missions to Sarajevo and had spend 658 Million DM in humanitarian aid which qualified Germany as the most generous donor of the inter-

⁴⁶ Allensbacher Monatsbericht, Breite Mehrheit für Blauhelm-Einsätze deutscher Soldaten, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 11.02.1993.

⁴⁷ Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, Bosnieneinsatz - die Bürgermeinung, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 8/1995, pp. 13-19, 15.

⁴⁸ Die NATO hat mit ihrem Bosnien-Einsatz begonnen, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 08. April 1993.

⁴⁹ Hanns W. Maull, Germany in the Yugoslav Crisis, in: Survival, 37(1995)4, pp. 99-130, p. 110.

national community⁵⁰ Until the end of the Sarajevo air lift operation, on January 4 1996, Bundeswehr transport pilots in 1.412 missions had delivered almost 11.000 tons of humanitarian aid (of a total of 160.000 tons of international aid) and airlifted 3.875 people in and out of Bosnia.⁵¹

- The Bundeswehr has been the largest provider of logistical aid for the various UN peace keeping missions.⁵²
- On December 20, 1994, the German cabinet decided to provide air force fighter planes should a rescue mission for UNPROFOR become necessary.⁵³ Later, under pressure from its major allies France and Great Britain, the government was more forthcoming, offering troops to assist UNPROFOR's regrouping and reinforcement and not only a possible retreat.⁵⁴ After the Serbs took hostage about 400 UN-troops, Chancellor Kohl called the actions by the Serbian leadership 'criminal' and promised 1800 (logistical) ground troops⁵⁵ to support 14 German Tornado air surveillance and reconnaissance jets plus 12 transport planes, all to be stationed at the NATO Base in Piacenza, Italy.⁵⁶ While six Reconnaissance (RECCE) Tornados were intended to basically take reconnaissance photos the eight Electronic Combat Reconnaissance (ERC) Tornados were meant to protect German and allied planes.⁵⁷ No German ground troops were to be sent to Bosnia in support of the UN Rapid Reaction Force. The combat involvement of the German Tornados, though, was severely restricted by the Bundestag: The Luftwaffe planes were intended to 'protect'

⁵⁰ Archiv der Gegenwart, 1 March 1993, p. 37621.

⁵¹ Tagesbefehl des BundesMinisters der Verteidigung, Ruhe, zur Beendigung der Luftbrücke für Sarajewo, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 2/1996, p. 29-30, 29.

⁵² Maull, 1995, p. 110.

⁵³ Arthur Heinrich, Unternehmen Tornado, in: Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik,... pp. 144-155, p. 144f.

⁵⁴ For a more detailed account see Meiers, 1996, p. 63.

⁵⁵ Kohl gegen Abzug der Uno-Truppen aus Bosnien, NEUE ZÜRICHER ZEITUNG, 1.6.1995.

⁵⁶ Kohl Orders Troops to Bosnia, Guardian Weekly, 9 July 1995.

and to ‘assist’ the UN Reaction Force only „if there is an aggression on the ground, namely an attack against the blue-helmet troops.⁵⁸ While REEC Tornados were flying air surveillance missions over Bosnia under combat conditions since August 11, 1995, German ERC Tornados were strictly excluded from NATO air strikes against Serb positions. The German Defense Minister Volker R  he concluded on August 9, 1995, that the narrowly defined circumstances under which German fighter jets were allowed to participate in NATO-run air raids raised questions whether they would ever take part in operations other than ‘exercises.’⁵⁹ The mission was circumscribed to such an extent that the German ERC Tornados, logically to be used for the protection of allied contingents and planes, in effect, were not allowed to protect allied fighter jets on patrol over Bosnia’s no-flight-zone against Serb aggression, leaving the German air force, ironically, with no mission in NATO’s ‘Deliberate Force’ operation against Serb positions.⁶⁰ Only on September 1, 1995, called by NATO commanders, three German ERC Tornados in support of several REEC Tornados were flying reconnaissance missions over the Igman mountain near Sarajevo.⁶¹ This qualified as the country’s first combat mission since World War II. No shots were fired.⁶²

- Since August 1995, about 500 military personnel, mostly doctors and medics had been on duty in the Bundeswehr military field hospital in Donji Sreget, near Split,

⁵⁷ Stefan Marx, Die Bundeswehr in Kroatien, in: *Europ  ische Sicherheit*, No. 4/1996, p. 27-28.

⁵⁸ Defense Minister Volker R  he in a speech to the Bundestag on June 30, 1995. *Stenographischer Bericht*, 48th Session, Bonn, June 30, 1995, p. 4000. Translation in Meiers, 1996, p. 65.

⁵⁹ Germans in Combat Flights For First Time Since War, *International Herald Tribune*, August 10, 1995.

⁶⁰ For a detailed account see Meiers, 1996, p. 66f.

⁶¹ Marx, 1996, p. 28.

⁶² Germans Fly Combat Sortie, *International Herald Tribune*, September 2-3, 1995.

Croatia. With a capacity of fifty beds and ten intensive-care units, German doctors treated soldiers of the NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia-Herzegovina.⁶³

The main German contribution up to that point, despite these examples of military support missions must be seen in the humanitarian field: As German Foreign Minister Kinkel had made clear during an interview in December 1992 Germany due to its military limitations felt a particular responsibility in the humanitarian field and tried to compensate its military handicap with increased humanitarian efforts.⁶⁴ Until March 1995, Germany took more than 350.000 of the alleged 734.900 war refugees that had left the former Yugoslavia, more than all other countries combined. In Berlin, for example, a total of 35.000 refugees had found temporary asylum. The government estimated the financial cost resulting for local and federal authorities at around 3.2 billion DM annually.⁶⁵

V. From logistical support to combat missions: IFOR and SFOR

Germany Lacks Diplomatic Weight

After its recognition debacle, German conflict diplomacy kept low profile. As the crisis had entered its military stage, Germany's foreign policy makers felt helpless and handicapped as their ability to fully participate in Western conflict management was seri-

⁶³ Matthias Rüb, Peace in Bosnia: German Aid for Reconstruction, in: Germany. Magazine on Politics, Culture, Business and Science, No. 1, February 1996, pp. 14-17.

⁶⁴ Bundesminister des Auswärtigen, Dr. Klaus Kinkel, Deutschlandfunk, 16.12.1992, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 1/1993, p. 13.

⁶⁵ Dr. Hans-Ulrich Seidt, Deputy Director, Special Task Force Bosnia, Auswärtiges Amt, Bonn, in a presentation in Trier, 14 July 1997.

ously impaired. During the final stage of the conflict, because of the large number of refugees whose costs for housing, nutrition and health care put a heavy burden on the 'Länder', Germany had an utmost interest in creating stable conditions within the region as soon as possible to allow for the return of the displaced. This implied to have a say during the launching and the later implementation of a possible peace process.

A high ranking German diplomat, later serving as the deputy of the High Representative of the international community in Bosnia, lamented: „The fact that we could not engage militarily as others did, was indeed something that curtailed our role initially.“⁶⁶

Defense Minister R  he observed quite accurately: „Decisions are taken by political players not by political observers.“⁶⁷ This view was well supported by foreign media.

The Financial Times, for instance, emphasized that although Germany was the country most affected by the Yugoslav conflict, the fact that it did not have its own peace keeping troops on the ground drastically reduced Bonn's ability to shape events in the region.⁶⁸

Bonn's foreign policy establishment became increasingly aware of the contradictory nature of Germany's position -- supporting in principle robust Western military engagement but refusing to participate with Bundeswehr contingents. Foreign Minister Kinkel realized that military instruments must be part of Germany's foreign policy repertoire if Bonn was to become fully able to act in light of future crisis of this nature. Kinkel said: „...these crisis can not be solved by praying or just by check-book diplomacy. Instead, they can only be solved by applying force at times.“ The Foreign M n-

⁶⁶ Interview of the author with Gerd Wagner, Minister-Counselor, German Embassy, Washington, 24 June 1996.

⁶⁷ Quotation in: Keine Deutsche Sonderrolle mehr, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 27 September 1996.

ister concluded „...we must get the ability to act and urgently need to change the constitution.“⁶⁹

The Dayton Accords

After a cease-fire had been reached starting October 10, 1995 all warring factions agreed to meet in Dayton, Ohio for peace talks. The agreement had been brokered by mediation of U.S. special envoy Richard Holbrooke.⁷⁰ On 14 December after arduous negotiations the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed in Paris by the presidents of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina paving the way for UN Security Council Resolution 1031. Under the UN Charter's Chapter VII, it authorized the deployment of a multilateral 60.000-strong NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR) to replace the UN Protection Force in Bosnia (UNPROFOR).⁷¹ The North Atlantic Council approved Operation 'Joint Endeavor' on December 20 and set IFOR's mandate for one year initially. IFOR's mission, according to Annex 1-A of the Dayton Accord, included marking the inter-entity boundary line, patrolling the four-kilometer zone of separation, overseeing the demilitarization of the entity forces, and monitoring and enforcing the cease-fire as well as the airspace over Bosnia.⁷² Moreover, IFOR was intended to provide a secure environment which was seen as precondition to allow peace to take

⁶⁸ Germany at the centre but still on the edge, Financial Times, 20 July 1995.

⁶⁹ Interview mit Bundesminister des Auswärtigen, Dr. Klaus Kinkel, RIAS Berlin, 16 May 1993, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 6/1993, pp. 20-25, quotes on p. 20 and p. 21.

⁷⁰ Endgame at last? The Economist, October 7th 1995.

⁷¹ For further information see Bosnia Peace Accord and NATO Implementation Force: Questions and Answers. CRS Report 95-1186F. Congressional Research Service. The Library of Congress. Washington, February 29, 1996.

⁷² Bosnia - Former Yugoslavia and U.S. Policy, CRS Issue Brief IB91089. Congressional Research Service. The Library of Congress. Washington, April 21, 1997, p. 9.

hold and to accomplish the various aspects of the civilian side of the peace agreement.⁷³

Germany's IFOR Contingent

Based on its strong diplomatic support for the Dayton accords the German government strongly felt that it was important to contribute to IFOR. Michael Steiner and Wolfgang Ischinger, Germany's representative to the Contact Group and the foreign ministries political director, had made significant contributions to the conclusion of the peace treaty.⁷⁴ It was assumed that only a military presence would allow the Germans to keep a high diplomatic profile needed to shape events on the ground. Foreign Minister Kinkel understood: „Germany's contribution for peace provides us with political cloud and adds weight to our diplomatic voice.“⁷⁵ Most of all, Bonn regarded IFOR as the first step to create stable conditions that would pave the way for the return of more than 350,000 war refugees from the region currently living in Germany.⁷⁶ Naturally, Germany intended to show solidarity with its NATO allies as all NATO members except Iceland participated in IFOR.

Already before the Dayton agreement had been formally reached, NATO Allied Supreme Commander Joulwan asked during an interview for a German contingent for a NATO implementation force to monitor a peace agreement in Bosnia: „The fact that the Germans participate, bears an enormous meaning for the solidarity of the a i-

⁷³ Bosnia: Civil Implementation of the Peace Agreement. CRS Report 96-177F. Congressional Research Service. The Library of Congress. Washington May 7, 1996.

⁷⁴ Rüb, 1996, p. 17.

⁷⁵ Kinkel: Der Waffenstillstand bleibt zerbrechlich, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 27 October 1995.

ance.⁷⁷ The Kohl government reacting to allied demands committed around 4.000 troops to IFOR for an initial twelve month and on December 6, 1995 the Bundestag supported the governments decision with an overwhelmingly positive vote.⁷⁸ The 4.000 German ground forces contributed 6.3% of total NATO components of IFOR.⁷⁹

The mission and the level of engagement for the Bundeswehr contingent were described in the German press as follows: While the combat troops of the French, the British and the Americans would implement the various military aspects of the peace accord, Bundeswehr soldiers who were not stationed in Bosnia were to provide for the logistics and would function as service providers for NATO troops in the three stationing sectors of Bosnia. The Bundeswehr would not be engaged in combat missions and weapons were to be used in self-defense only. The rules of engagement, however, would allow a very ridged form of self defense.⁸⁰ Hereby, Germany had already gone a long way from the categorical 'no' to any participation of German troops at the outset of the conflict towards substantial logistical support for NATO forces and, thus, towards fuller integration into Western military conflict management. The mission represented the largest military deployed by Germany outside the NATO area since 1945.

At the time, Defense Minister R  he justified the somewhat surprising turnaround of the German position with the fundamentally changed situation on the ground: The

⁷⁶ Regierungserkl  rung von Bundeskanzler Dr. Kohl zur deutschen Beteiligung, in: Stichworte zu Sicherheitspolitik, No. 1/1996, pp. 9-11, 11.

⁷⁷ Clinton: Frieden in Bosnien n  her denn je, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 25. September 1995.

⁷⁸ Bosnia and NATO: Allied Contributions to SFOR, CRS Report for Congress 95-1185 F. Congressional Research Service. The Library of Congress, Washington, February 18, 1997, p. 4. The Bundestag voted 543 to 107 in favor with 6 members abstaining.

⁷⁹ Bosnia and NATO, *ibid.*, p. 6.

⁸⁰ For the mission of German IFOR-troops, S  ddeutsche Zeitung, 7.12.1995.

peace agreement reached at Dayton had ended the military conflict, reduced the risk for German troops and no longer meant that the German contingent „would be rather part of the problem than part of the solution.“⁸¹ However, Bundeswehr contingent still claimed special status. Combat missions were not intended and the Bundeswehr was to be stationed exclusively outside of Bosnia.⁸² Furthermore, on a bilateral basis the Alliance was granted ‘operational control’ but not ‘operational command’ which was exclusively exercised by the German Defense Ministry.⁸³ Within the German military, there were opposing views on whether the deployment qualified as combat mission or not. While Germany’s General Inspector Klaus Naumann called it „a combat mission“ Defense Minister R  he clarified it as „essentially a logistical task“ and Naumann’s successor, General Bagger called it „a priori not...a combat mission.“⁸⁴ German units would occasionally go into Bosnia to carry out their various missions and upon being attacked were allowed to fight back. The Defense Minister, however, apparently aimed to play down the potential combat involvement in light of a maturing but still reluctant German public opinion.⁸⁵

Until November 1996, NATO requested 1475 missions from the German IFOR contingent, called GECONIFOR (German Contingent Implementation Force) which was composed of medical, transportation, pioneer and telecommunication units as well as members of the engineering corps and a logistics battalion stationed in Northern Italy

⁸¹ Defense Minister Volker R  he, Interview in DIE ZEIT, 1 December 1995.

⁸² A notable exception were the 150 or so German staff officers based at NATO headquarters in Sajevo and elsewhere in Bosnia.

⁸³ Bonn to Send 4,000 Men, International Herald Tribune, November 29, 1995; see also Meiers, 1996, p. 70

⁸⁴ For quotations and translation compare Meiers, 1996, p. 70f.

⁸⁵ Compare the various RAND Studies by Ronald D. Asmus, esp. Germany’s Contribution to Peacekeeping - Issues and Outlook, Santa Monica, CA 1995 and Knut Kirste, Zivilmacht als Rolle n-

and Croatia.⁸⁶ Pioneer units built 9 bridges, paved 25km of roads and swept 40km of mine fields. The Bundeswehr provided 5,000,000km of transportation in and outside of Bosnia, more than 1300 air transport missions were flown and the German field hospital in Trogir treated 20,000 emergency room and 1,800 in-patients. Back in Germany, 16.000 Bundeswehr soldiers received a special IFOR-training of six to eight weeks in duration.⁸⁷

Germany had an extraordinary interest in the implementation of the civilian aspects of the peace agreement intended to stabilize the situation in Bosnia so that refugees could begin to return home. Michael Steiner, who on Bonn's insistence was serving as deputy High Representative in Sarajevo⁸⁸, outlined the German strategy as twofold: in a first step, the fighting in the area had to be stopped. Disarmament and confidence building measures were intended to demilitarize and pacify the country. In a second step, which according to Steiner was even more important, the civilianization of Bosnia was to be achieved by organizing free and fair elections, by building common institutions and multi ethnic structures and by rebuilding the economy. Only then, Steiner concluded was Germany's foremost interest to be achieved: the return of the war refugees to Bosnia.⁸⁹

From IFOR to SFOR: the ending of a special role

konzept. Ein Vergleich amerikanischer und deutscher Außenpolitikstrategien. Dissertation, Trier 1997, p. 156ff.

⁸⁶ Lefebvre/Lombardi, 1996, p. 581. Also see NATO Fact Sheet, Implementation Force, 7 Dec. 1995.

⁸⁷ Interview with Generalleutnant Dr. Klaus Reinhardt, Befehlshaber des Heeresführungskommandos Koblenz, Bonn 19 November 1996.

⁸⁸ Es soll solange verhandelt werden, bis ein Friedensabkommen erreicht ist, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 1 November 1995.

⁸⁹ Special Ambassador Michael Steiner, Democracy and Stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina - the German Contribution, Conference, Bonn-Bad-Godesberg, 17 February 1997.

In the summer of 1996, after the military tasks of IFOR's mission had been largely accomplished -- the disarmament process, being one notable exemption, however -- it became obvious that the civilian implementation of the peace agreement was lagging far behind schedule. Many observers expressed their concern that the one year time frame for IFOR's mandate was too limited to achieve long lasting peace and to ensure full compliance of the various factions with the civilian aspects of Dayton. Some NATO military force it was argued would be required beyond IFOR's December 20, 1996 mandate. Up until May 1996, however, German officials alongside with their American colleagues ruled out any extension of the previously agreed upon timetable for IFOR's departure.⁹⁰ Speculations about a NATO follow up mission, however, soon proved to be well grounded. On December 12, 1996, the Security Council authorized, a follow-on force, called Stabilization Force (SFOR) and set its mandate for 18 month ending in June 1998.⁹¹

By August 1996, R  he declared that Germany was not only prepared to engage in the new mission significantly⁹² but also that Germany's troop deployment for the follow-up mission would be of substantially altered quality.⁹³ The new Bundeswehr contingent no longer would exclusively function as a mere logistical unit but rather had been d e-

⁹⁰ Up until May 1996, German Chancellor Kohl supported president Clinton's attempt to pressure for compliance with the Dayton peace accord schedule and to limit the duration of IFOR troop deployment to one year. Cf. US-Pr  sident Clinton und Bundeskanzler Dr. Kohl in einem gemeinsamen Pressegespr  ch zur Dauer der IFOR-Mission, CNN 23.5.1996, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 6/1996, pp. 21-22.

⁹¹ Bosnia: U.S. Military Operations. CRS Issue Brief IB93056. Congressional Research Service. The Library of Congress. Washington, April 24, 1997, summary.

⁹² BILD-Interview with Bundesverteidigungsminister Volker R  he, 31.8.1996.

⁹³ The fundamentally new quality of the mission was also emphasized by Generalleutnant Reinhardt, who is responsible for the planning and command of the German IFOR contingent. Bundeswehr troops, according to Reinhardt were now performing the same tasks as any other allied contingent. Cf. Interview with Generalleutnant Dr. Klaus Reinhardt, Befehlshaber des Heeresf  hrungskommandos Koblenz, Bonn 19. November 1996.

signed and composed in accordance with allied standards attempting to adapt and adjust it to perform equal duties and missions.⁹⁴ German infantry and reconnaissance elements would be deployed in Bosnia and would operate „under the same rules of engagement as other NATO partners“⁹⁵ making SFOR the first operation in which German combat forces fully participated in a ground mission together with their NATO allies. As peace had been widely established by IFOR at that point, an actual involvement of German troops in combat situations, however, was unlikely to happen, as Defense Minister R  he emphasized. On December 13 1996, the Bundestag approved the deployment with an overwhelmingly 499-93 vote in favor. ‘Operation Joint Guard’ as the mission became known numbered about 25.000 allied and other contributor’s troops combined. The Bundeswehr participated with about 2.500 personnel and thus reduced its overall IFOR contingent by half, but for the first time deployed forces into Bosnia. Specifically, Bonn sent:

- 1 reconnaissance battalion
- 1 helicopter squadron
- 1 logistics battalion
- 1 transportation battalion
- 1 field hospital
- as well as the 14 Tornado reconnaissance aircraft from the previous IFOR mission.⁹⁶

Germany’s Contribution to SFOR

The new German contingent came into Bosnia with changed rules of engagement. The German contingent had been transformed from logistical into fully compatible comba

⁹⁴ Langerer Aufenthalt und neuer Auftrag f ur die Bundeswehr in Bosnien, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 29. August 1996.

⁹⁵ Interview with Bundesminister der Verteidigung R  he im Spiegel vom 23.9.1996, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik Nr. 10/1996), pp. 31-33, p. 32.

units shaped according to NATO standards and was equipped with a full mandate which would allow an unrestricted integration into multinational NATO force structures.⁹⁷ R  he said: German soldiers from now on should „take on the same duties and responsibilities“⁹⁸ and have „the same rules of engagement as any other allied forces.“⁹⁹ This view was confirmed by General Reinhard, responsible for the planning of the German IFOR contingent, who underlined that Bundeswehr troops now had the same rules of engagement like other allied troops.¹⁰⁰ Later, the German commander in Bosnia, Major General Klaus Fr  haber, expressed his relief about the ‘normalization’ of the German mission: „For the first time, we are no longer playing a special role but are in the same position as our allies with regard to the tasks and risks.“¹⁰¹ The German decision to fully engage seems less dramatic if one considers that the fighting had been stopped long before and the militarily contagious aspects of the peace agreement had been largely implemented by that time. In essence, however, one must observe a fundamentally altered stand of German policy makers concerning military foreign policy instruments. As one German diplomat put it: a „rational policy“ for future conflict management has to consider a „case oriented application of the instruments of physical force at hand.“¹⁰²

Command Structures

⁹⁶ Figures as of February 24, 1997. Cf. Bosnia: U.S. Military Operations. CRS Issue Brief, loc. cit., p. 6f.

⁹⁷ L  ngerer Aufenthalt und neuer Auftrag f  r die Bundeswehr in Bosnien, Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 29 August 1996.

⁹⁸ Verst  rktes Engagement Bonns f  r Bosnien, Neue Z  richer Zeitung, 24 September 1996.

⁹⁹ Interview with Defense Minister Volker R  he in DER SPIEGEL, 23 September 1996 in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 10/1996, pp. 31-33, 32.

¹⁰⁰ Interview by the author with Generalleutnant Dr. Klaus Reinhardt, Befehlshaber des Herrens-f  hrungskommandos Koblenz, Bonn, 19. November 1996.

¹⁰¹ Quotation in: History on Their Backs, Time March 24, 1997, p. 23.

The German contingent, based in the Rajlovac barracks, a Sarajevo suburb, served in a joint Franco-German brigade for which command would alternate between a French and a German officer. German Brigadier General Hans-Otto Budde would be taking up command in March 1997. Germany would also provide the chief of staff to the French-German headquarters near Sarajevo.¹⁰³ Together with Ukrainian, Italian, Moroccan, Algerian and Spanish soldiers, the Franco-German Brigade formed NATO's Multinational Brigade Southeast in Bosnia and was commanded of the French general Chatelier. Their mission was to patrol an area of about 7.000 square kilometers located between Sarajevo and Mostar and deter the reemergence of violence.¹⁰⁴ The German Defense ministry reckoned the total cost for their SFOR-deployment as high as 350 million DM in 1997 only.¹⁰⁵

Public Opinion

Surprisingly, there were no serious objections in the German public against the new deployment and the fundamentally changed rules of engagement. More than 65% of the public had already supported the IFOR mission. Consensus even extended to the opposition social democrats and the Greens, who only a year earlier made headlines describing the Balkans as Germany's Vietnam.¹⁰⁶ Germans seemed to have accepted the notion, that a 'normal' country needed a 'normal' army.¹⁰⁷ German press articles

¹⁰² Dr. Hans-Ulrich Seidt, Deputy Director, Special Task Force Bosnia, Auswärtiges Amt, Bonn, in a presentation in Trier, 14 July 1997.

¹⁰³ German Troops Forge New Role in Bosnia, The Guardian, December 20, 1996.

¹⁰⁴ Deutsch-französischer Schulterschuß in Bosnien; Erstmals ein gemeinsamer Einsatz von Truppen, Neue Züricher Zeitung, 07 February 1997.

¹⁰⁵ Leos für den Notfall, Focus 27 January 1997.

¹⁰⁶ Remember no goose steps, U.S. News & World Report, October 21, 1996, p. 56.

¹⁰⁷ Normal Army Equals Normal Country?, THE ECONOMIST, September 7, 1996.

talked about a Defense Minister who finally had got his way in a long quest for 'normalization' of Germany's foreign and security policy.¹⁰⁸

History proved not to have been an obstacle for the German mission in Bosnia. Both Muslims and Croats in general welcomed the German contribution and supported the mission. As Brigadier General Hans-Otto Budde, commander of the 2,500-strong Franco-German Brigade in Bosnia noted: "Times have changed. We aren't here as occupiers. We aren't here against the will of the people. We aren't the Wehrmacht."¹⁰⁹

Mixed Signals for SFOR's Success

On April 29, 1997, dpa announced that Federal German ground forces had their first armed clash in Bosnia, as a spokesman for the SFOR peacekeeping force had disclosed in the capita

Sarajevo. A Bosnian threatened them with a firearm and the soldiers, who were serving in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) military police, fired warning shots in self-defense.¹¹⁰ Germany had suffered no casualty in the previous IFOR mission. In May 1997, two German SFOR-soldiers were killed in a friendly-fire accident while their vehicle was checked before departing on a patrol mission. Earlier in May, a sergeant was found dead in his quarters but apparently had died of natural causes.¹¹¹ SFOR-troops frequently suffered from a lack of local support and at times met considerable resistance by all entities' hard liners. Due to a reluctant American Congress and a split stand of the administration on whether to continue an American engagement in

¹⁰⁸ Nach Bosnien, Abteilung marsch!, die tageszeitung, 21 December 1996.

¹⁰⁹ History of Their Backs. Germany's first foreign mission of combat soldiers since 1945 proceeds gently and winningly in Bosnia, Time, March 24, 1997, p. 23.

¹¹⁰ Baptism of fire for Germans in Bosnia - warning shots fired, dpa, 29 April 1997.

Bosnia, the U.S. was eager to solidify the shaky peace before the 1998 deadline for SFOR's withdrawal.¹¹² During the summer of 1997, President Clinton and other European leaders increased his pressure to strip Serbian leader Karadzic of his continuously leading role in Bosnia and as a consequence SFOR became more assertive.¹¹³ NATO-led forces, for example, seized a Bosnian Serb special police station in a move intended to punish hard-line Serb nationalists on the eve of Parliamentary elections in the Serb controlled half of Bosnia.¹¹⁴ At the beginning of 1998, less than five month before the scheduled departure of SFOR it seems highly uncertain that the peace in Bosnia can be preserved after NATO's withdrawal.

VI. Reasons for Germany's new policy:

Allied pressure plus a specific foreign policy role conception or power politics?

From the analytical perspective applied in this article, the question arises what variables explain the changed position of the German government regarding the deployment of combat troops for NATO peacekeeping. Three variables will be assessed with regard to their plausibility.

1. Allied pressure and foreign role expectations

¹¹¹ Two German Soldiers Killed in Accident in Bosnia, Reuters Financial Service, May 23, 1997.

¹¹² For the role of the U.S. Congress see Ivo Dalder, Bosnia After SFOR, in: Survival, Vol. 39, No. 4, Winter 1997-98, pp. 5-18, 8f. For the battle within the administration about the nature of the U.S. engagement in Bosnia cf. interview of the author with Ivo Dalder, Senior Staff Member for Europe, National Security Council (NSC), Washington, 2 July 1996.

¹¹³ Allies Tighten Squeeze on Karadzic, International Herald Tribune, 14 August 1997.

¹¹⁴ Serb Hard-Liners Lose Police Station, International Herald Tribune, 12 November 1997.

Obviously, allied expectations about a German participation played a significant role in the governments decision-making leading from a categorical 'no' to any German military participation and logistical support to a full fetched German combat mission in the end. During his November 1996 visit in Bonn, NATO Secretary General Solana expressed his hope that Germany would provide troops for an IFOR follow up mission. The German participation was of significant meaning for NATO's new mission, according to Solana.¹¹⁵ When Germany committed 4.000 troops for the follow up mission, U.S. Bosnia envoy Richard Holbrooke approved the decision enthusiastically: „We welcome this. We can not secure the peace without a German contribution.“¹¹⁶ He did not mention any requirement for changed rules of engagement for the Germans, though.

In public statements, German officials repeatedly suggested that the government had to come forward with unrestricted rules of engagement, i.e. that it had only given the go ahead for combat mission, due to allied pressure. Asked whether the new quality of Germany's mission was imposed on Bonn by the allies, Defense Minister R  he replied that it was the wish of the allies, a logical step that was expected by Germany's partners.¹¹⁷ A high ranking German officer also confirmed that there had been „pressure from the alliance“ to commit equal forces.¹¹⁸ Foreign Minister Kinkel justified the new rules of engagement by warning that Germany's partners would no longer tolerate a

¹¹⁵ Solana hofft auf deutsche Beteiligung am Ifor-Folgemandat, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 7. November 1996.

¹¹⁶ Amerikanische F  hrung ist unerl  sslich f  r die Wahrung des Friedens, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 21. Februar 1996.

¹¹⁷ Bundesminister der Verteidigung R  he zur Lage in Bosnien und einem m  glichen neuen Mandat f  r Friedenstruppen, ARD, 19.9.1996, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik Nr. 10/1996, pp. 29-30, p. 30.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Generalleutnant Dr. Klaus Reinhardt, Befehlshaber des Heeresf  hrungskommandos Koblenz, Bonn 19.November 1996.

special status of the Bundeswehr.¹¹⁹ He also emphasized that only a full and unrestricted military participation could ensure an equal German say in the political decisions to be made in the peace process and assure high diplomatic standing for Germany among the allies.¹²⁰ The German government thus identified foreign role-expectations and the government's own desire to build diplomatic leverage as highly influential in Bonn's decision to deploy combat mission ground troops for the first time after World War II.

Germany, though, seems to have at least in part exploited the foreign-expectation-argument in order to secure domestic public support for a higher profile in the operation that was actually sought by the government itself. Contrary to widespread belief there seems to have been no direct pressure by the allies to change the special status of Germany's deployment, i.e. to move on to rules of engagement that would allow for combat missions of the German contingent. Interviews with allied officials suggest that Bonn's partners understood the obstacles for an unrestricted German mission -- at the time not due to constitutional constraints but rather for historical reasons -- quite well and accepted the mainly logistical role of the Bundeswehr as sufficient to ensure the success of NATO's joint mission. Allied pressure by itself, thus, is unlikely to have been the single most eminent cause for Germany's changed position.

2. Germany's specific foreign policy role conception

¹¹⁹ Deutsche Kampftruppen nach Bosnien?, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 16. September 1996.

¹²⁰ Kinkel: Der Waffenstillstand bleibt zerbrechlich, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 27. Oktober 1995.

German foreign and security policy has been characterized by a specific foreign policy role conception, i.e. that of a civilian power.¹²¹ According to the basic assumption of the concept, „civilian powers“ like Germany and Japan put emphasis on multilateral cooperation and trade, rely on negotiations and the rule of law and prefer non-military means to achieve their national interest, defined as welfare (well-being) of their citizens. They only reluctantly resort to arms and only with broad international legitimization as part of a multinational coalition.

„Civilian power“ is assumed to be one specific foreign policy role-conception for nation states among others. The paradigm of „civilian power“ includes six main areas and their corresponding foreign policy roles:

- the willingness to exert a form of cooperative leadership intended to civilize international relations
- a national interest primarily defined as the welfare (well-being) of their citizens, democratic stability and social justice
- attempts to civilize the international system by promoting of the rule of law and by strengthening international institutions and regimes
- a foreign policy based on national values reflecting the idea of interdependence, democratization, human rights, good government and sustainable development
- a foreign policy style/culture focusing on collective instruments, negotiations, compromise, mediation and sanctions
- stringent conditions regarding the use of force requiring collective security, international legitimization and collective implementation.

Focusing exclusively on the militarily relevant aspects of the ‘civilian power’ concept how has Germany performed in its policy change from IFOR towards SFOR? In the spring of 1994, German Foreign Minister Kinkel had declared the countries deep-

¹²¹ Hanns W. Maull, Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers, in: Foreign Affairs, Vol. 69, No. 5, 1990, pp. 91-106; Knut Kirste and Hanns W. Maull, Zivilmacht und Rollentheorie, in: Zeitschrift

rooted antipathy against the use of military means: „The culture of restrained which we displayed in our foreign and security policy after the Second World War, must absolutely be kept. There will be no militarization of German foreign policy: the culture of restrained will be maintained. Foreign and security policy normalization does not mean playing the role of world policeman, it does not mean that German soldiers will be sent everywhere where it is burning. There will be no automatism for German participation. Its military options will remain limited in factual and political terms.¹²² The Political Director of the Foreign Ministry, Wolfgang Ischinger, urged in March 1995, that Germany just as in the past should primarily follow a non-military foreign policy approach.¹²³ Asked whether the German SFOR mission was an attempt to establish the Bundeswehr as a regular foreign policy instrument, Defense Minister R  he declared: „We will never copy others, including the French and British. And even in this case, we were following our specific German path.¹²⁴

These statements clearly suggest a firm commitment to a foreign policy role conception which qualifies as that of a ‘civilian power’ in which the use of military force is by no means precluded but definitely bound to several strict conditions. IFOR and SFOR both qualify as civilian power operations and meet the necessary criteria, i.e. international legitimization - given both by a UN Security Council resolution as well as by NATO decision - and multilateral conduct. The fact that Germany finally was ready t

f  r Internationale Beziehungen, Vol. 3, No. 2, December 1996, pp. 283-312.

¹²² Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, quotation after Meiers, 1996, p. 62; see also Kinkel: Deutschland wird auch in Zukunft   fter nein als ja sagen, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 13 Jul 1995; Peacekeeping missions: Germany can now play its part, in: NATO-Review, Vol. 42, No. 5 (October 1994), p. 4.

¹²³ Alte Bekenntnisse verlangen neue Begr  ndungen, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 17 March 1995.

fully and unrestrictedly contribute to joint military operations of the Alliance can be interpreted as a learning process of a committed and responsible member of a collective security system acting in solidarity with its partners.

3. Power politics: ensuring political influence by military engagement

However, besides allied expectations and a specific foreign policy role conception, there seems to have been a strong additional motivation for German policy makers. In essence, Bonn tried to gain political influence by military engagement. For example, the Germans expected to be represented in the political and military decision making process according to their new and increased military engagement. In line with full combat-compatibility of the German deployment, Rühle demanded that the chief of staff position for the NATO operation in Bosnia be given to a German general¹²⁵ and refused the post of deputy commander for the logistical unit of SFOR.¹²⁶ After some quarrels with the allies, Rühle was promised to get the position at a later point.¹²⁷ A two-star German general was appointed Chief of Staff for SFOR's Southeastern Brigade, serving under the French sector commander and the U.S. overall mission commander. This marked another sign of the significance of the German role in Bosnia. Given Germany's paramount interest to create the conditions for a speedy return of 350.000 war refugees, the desire to have a say in the Bosnian peace process and to have German personnel in crucial positions was quite understandable.

¹²⁴ Bundesminister der Verteidigung Rühle zur Lage in Bosnien und einem möglichen neuen Mandat für Friedenstruppen, ARD, 19 September 1996, in: Stichworte zur Sicherheitspolitik, No. 10/1996, pp. 29-30.

¹²⁵ Verstärktes Engagement Bonns für Bosnien, NEUE ZÜRICHNER ZEITUNG, 24. September 1996.

¹²⁶ Längerer Aufenthalt und neuer Auftrag für die Bundeswehr in Bosnien, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 29. August 1996.

Bonn also hoped that a full-fledged military role could save the Germany disproportionate financial contributions for the peace effort in the former Yugoslavia. For the first year of the Dayton implementation, the foreign ministry reckoned the cost of Germany's contributions as high as 17 to 18 billion DM, 13 to 15 of which were estimated for Germany's war refugees and over 700 million DM were anticipated costs for the German military operation.¹²⁸ As Chancellor Helmut Kohl made clear during his February 1995 visit in Washington, the Germans were determined to shed a check-book-diplomacy, a role traditionally foreseen for the Germans by their allies, mainly on the grounds that Bonn was unable to meet its full military obligations. As a conservative German defense analyst put it, SFOR was a chance to make up for the rather frustrating experience during the Iraq-Kuwait crisis in 1990/91: „In the Gulf war, Germany paid a lot of money to its allies, but enjoyed no influence.“¹²⁹ A German diplomat referring to Kohl's Washington spring visit in 1995 concluded: „Never again Germany will play the paymaster. This was the turning point of a development where others would deploy troops and Germany would pay.“¹³⁰ Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel justified the decision to change the rules of engagement for Germany's SFOR troops testifying before the foreign affairs committee of the Bundestag in October 1995 as an attempt to counter „high financial expectations of the entire international community“¹³¹ regarding German contributions. A German foreign office diplomat concerned with the IFOR/SFOR mission also underlined that an unrestricted German military mission not

¹²⁷ Die Bundeswehr soll künftig auch Überwachungsaufgaben übernehmen, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 10. Oktober 1996.

¹²⁸ Mehr als 17 Milliarden für Bosnien-Hilfe, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 30 September 1996.

¹²⁹ German troops prepare for mission in Bosnia, Financial Times, 19 November 1996.

¹³⁰ Interview with Gerd Wagner, Minister-Counselor, Deutsche Botschaft, Washington, 24. Juni 1996.

¹³¹ Kinkel: Der Waffenstillstand bleibt zerbrechlich, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 27. Oktober 1995.

only would significantly increase Bonn's political clout for the implementation of the peace process but would also save the Germans quite some money.¹³²

A normal role for a normal army

The Bundeswehr also welcomed the Bosnia deployment to justify a new and expanded role for the armed forces. On the occasion of the government's decision to order 180 state-of-the-art Euro-fighters German Defense Minister Volker Ruhe said in early 1997 at the US Air Force Academy in Colorado: "The ease and speed with which they can be deployed over great distances make them indispensable for flexible and effective crisis management. Bosnia has clearly demonstrated that air forces can be decisive for turning an awful situation, because they can enforce a cease-fire and provide the necessary back-up for peace negotiations." Brigadier General Dr. Horst Schmalfeld, Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Policy further outlined this new outlook: "There is an increasing risk potential at the periphery of the Alliance and outside of Europe. We had to develop a capability to participate in multinational, joint crisis management operations covering the whole spectrum from humanitarian aid efforts to collective defense."¹³³ German defense planning had acted accordingly: A new Crisis Reaction Force could command as much as a quarter of the Army, a third of the Air Force and 40 percent of the Navy. More than 75 percent of its personnel would be professional soldiers--in contrast to the conscripts who make up the body of the Army. Senior officers stressed, however, that these new units would be used only with allied consent and that much of the pressure for reform came precisely from NATO's decision in

¹³² Telephone-interview with Eberhard Pohl, Vortragender Legationsrat, Referat für Grundsatzfragen der Verteidigungs- und Sicherheitspolitik (201), Auswärtiges Amt, 14. January 1997.

¹³³ Luftwaffe takes off for new horizons, Jane's Defense Weekly, Vol. 27, No. 5, February 5, 1997, p. 21.

1996 to strengthen Europe's role within the alliance.¹³⁴ The military leadership was also keen on boosting morale by giving their troops a sense of duty with the IFOR/SFOR missions. Inspector General Hartmut Bagger, the Bundeswehr's top military officer said the old restrictions inflicted upon the German army had taken its toll on morale, which hit an all-time low during the Gulf War when Germany declined to send an forces to the UN-backed mission to oust Saddam Hussein from Iraq. "The Gulf War was a trauma for us," said Bagger. "We had the highest level of draft dodgers ever. But that trauma prompted a discussion that led to the successful mission in former Yugoslavia. It all went astonishing fast for me."¹³⁵

VII. Conclusions and Outlook

Officially, the changed stand on combat missions was mainly explained as a German attempt to comply with allied expectations and to show solidarity with NATO partners, as Kinkel repeatedly stated in public.¹³⁶ Using the Bundeswehr for combat missions, however, in essence can be seen an instrument for the German government to assure its overall political influence on the scene, to symbolize Germany's full military compatibility, to strengthen army morale and to ensure a more balanced financial burden sharing for the peace process in Bosnia and future crisis to come.

¹³⁴ Remember no goose steps, U.S. News & World Report, October 21, 1996, p. 56.

¹³⁵ Germany's army morale soars with peacekeeping mission, Reuters World Service, January 29, 1997.

¹³⁶ Kinkel: Der Waffenstillstand bleibt zerbrechlich, FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, 27. Oktober 1995.

What can be expected for German participation in future NATO out-of-area missions

The IFOR/SFOR deployment surely represents the culmination of a painstaking effort by the German defense establishment to demonstrate that Germany can be a full-blooded and reliable participant in NATO peacekeeping and out-of-area missions and will have considerable implications for the future. As Chancellor Helmut Kohl made clear in the opening remarks in his Bundestag speech in December 1995, IFOR represented „a break in our people’s life, and it is a decision that will have an impact on the future.“¹³⁷ This statement and the widespread acceptance of a normalization process throughout the German public and elite suggests that there will be no turning back for a German military participation in future crisis management and no return to the ‘culture of reticence’. Germany, thus, seems to have gradually evolved a new foreign and security policy role conceptions which now includes the use of force. However, it would be premature to conclude that Germany will assume a global military leadership role commensurate with its economic or military power. For quite some time to come, there will be a contested internal debate over each and every conflict that calls for a German military participation. Future NATO-missions should not count on a Germany which automatically sends troops any time anywhere the Alliance feels compelled to take action. Despite signs of normalization, Germany will remain highly reluctant on the use of force to achieve political objectives.

¹³⁷ Kohls Bundestag Statement on Bosnia Mission, 6 December 1995, in: FBIS-WEU-95-234, 6 December 1995, p. 9.

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