

Country Profile: Germany¹

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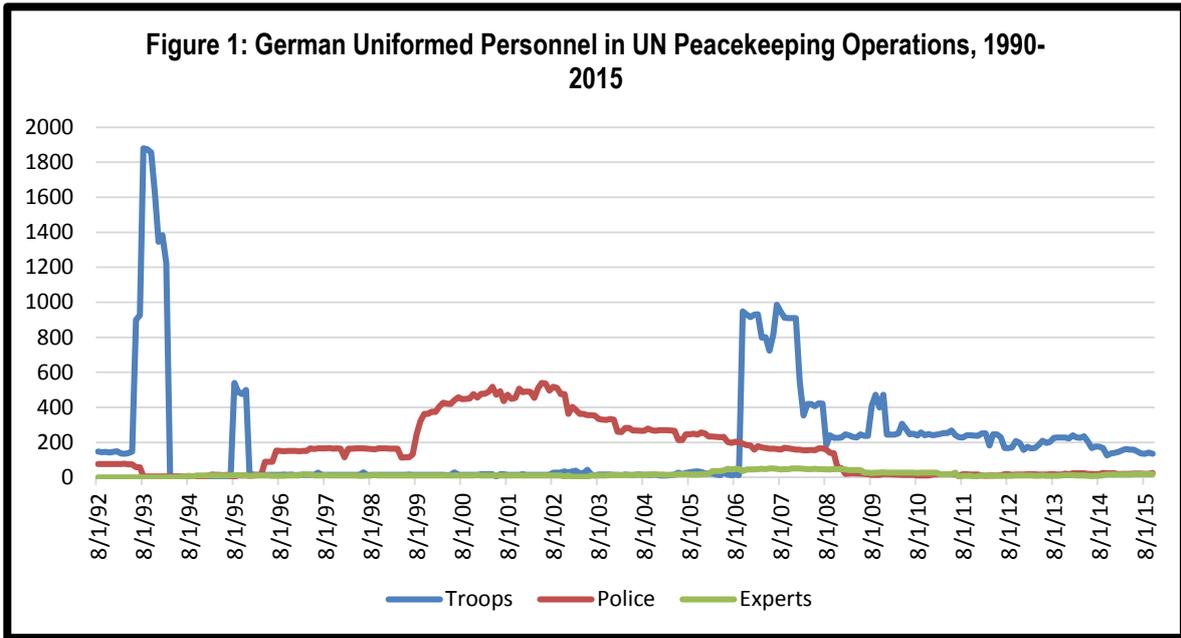
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Active armed forces ²	Helicopters & fixed-wing transport ³	Defense Budget	UN Peacekeepers	UN Contribution Breakdown	Other Significant Deployments
Active (2015): 178,829	Total: 339	2015: €32.97bn (est.) ⁴	175 (5 women) (31 Dec. 2015)	MINURSO 4 experts	Afghanistan (ISAF) 1,599
World Ranking (size): 8th	Attack: 21 (Army)	2014: \$43.93bn (1.20% of GDP)	Ranking: 61st	MINUSMA 24 (8 troops; 15 police, 1 expert)	Kosovo (KFOR) 674
Army: 59,947 Navy: 16,327 Air: 28,475	Transport: 176 Heavy TPT: 64 Air Force Heavy Lift: 18 Air Force	2013: \$44.17bn (1.23% of GDP)	(10 th largest EU contributor, 6 th largest NATO contributor)	UNAMA 1 expert UNAMID 12 (8 troops, 4 police) UNIFIL 102 troops	Mali (EUTM) 146
Joint Support Service: 44,850	Medium: 25 (22 Army, 3 Air Force) Light: 69 Army			UNMIK 1 police UNMIL 7 (5 police, 2 experts)	Ukraine (OSCE) 21
Joint Medical Service: 19,735	Multi-purpose (ISR / SAR): 142 (99, Army, 43 Navy) Fixed Wing TPT 70			UNMISS 24 (5 troops, 10 police, 9 experts)	
Other: 6,500					
Defense Spending / Troop: US\$ 241,396 (compared to global average of approximately US\$ 65,905) ⁵					

Part 1: Recent Trends

German experience with UN peace operations began after reunification in 1989 with the deployment of non-combat troops in Cambodia (UNTAC) and Namibia (UNTAG), as well as a larger contingent (up to 1,700 soldiers in August to October 1993) in Somalia (UNOSOM II). Since 1994, Germany has participated actively in combat missions as well, but its contributions have been heavily concentrated outside the purview of the UN, in missions deployed by NATO and the EU. Contributions to UN-led peacekeeping operations have consisted of a steady but small number of military observers, covering for example the entire mandate periods for UNOMIG, UNAMID (to date), UNMIS and UNMEE. Other contributions have included UNMIL, UNAMSIL and UNSCOM/UNIKOM (transport) and INTERFET (medical). A notable exception to this pattern is Berlin's contribution to the maritime component of UNIFIL II; from a peak of 933 at the mission's inception, this has been drawn down to 117 in September 2015.

At the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in September 2015, [Germany pledged](#) start-up kits of military equipment for contributing states; training at mission headquarters and mobile military training teams; as well as standing civilian engineering capacity and 45 UN police. In January 2016, [Germany's parliament approved](#) the deployment of up to 650 troops to joined [MINUSMA](#) in Mali.



Since 2001, Germany has been actively engaged in NATO and EU missions in the Balkans, Afghanistan and, to a lesser extent, Africa. Between 2001 and 2012 it consistently deployed between 6,000-8,000 troops with the bulk of troops deployed to either ISAF in Afghanistan or KFOR in Kosovo. While Germany’s contribution to KFOR is still ongoing, it has gradually reduced its contingent from 5,300 in 2001 to 903 in November 2015. At the same time, it increased its contributions to ISAF (see Figure 3), until the end of the mission in 2014. By November 2015 it deployed 917 soldiers to NATO’s Operation Resolute Support, the successor mission to ISAF. Over 700 troops were deployed with UN-mandated EUFOR RD Congo to oversee elections in 2006, and Germany has participated in a number of smaller EU training missions in Africa. The German Navy is still also participating in the maritime EU Operation *Atalanta* off the Horn of Africa.

Figure 2: German Military Contributions to Non-UN Operations (2005-2012)

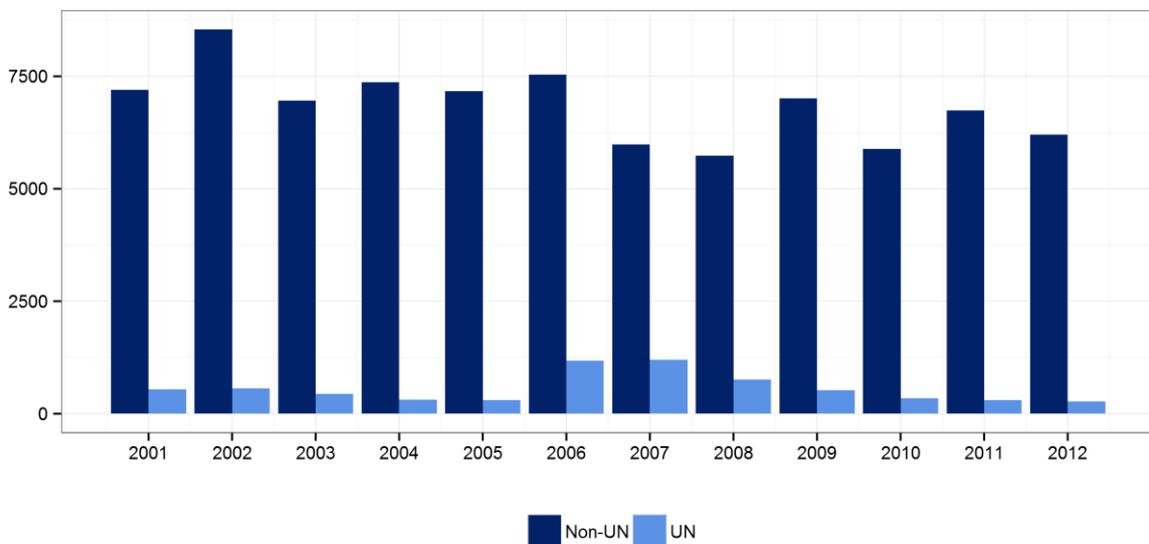
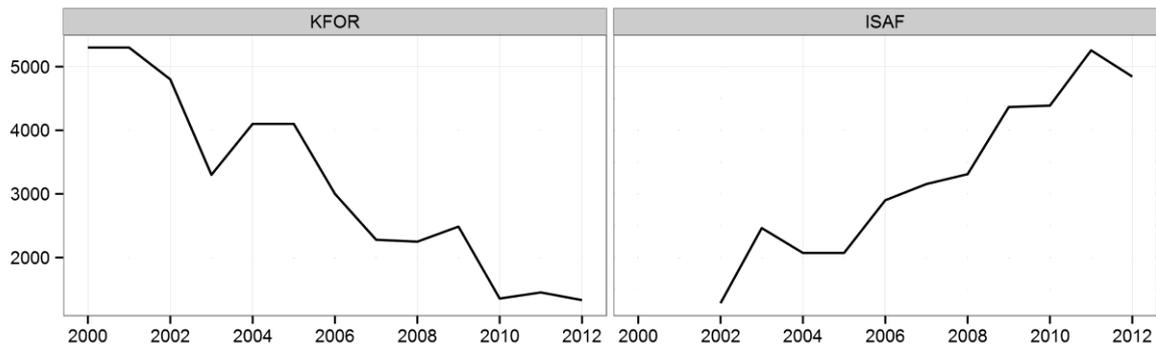
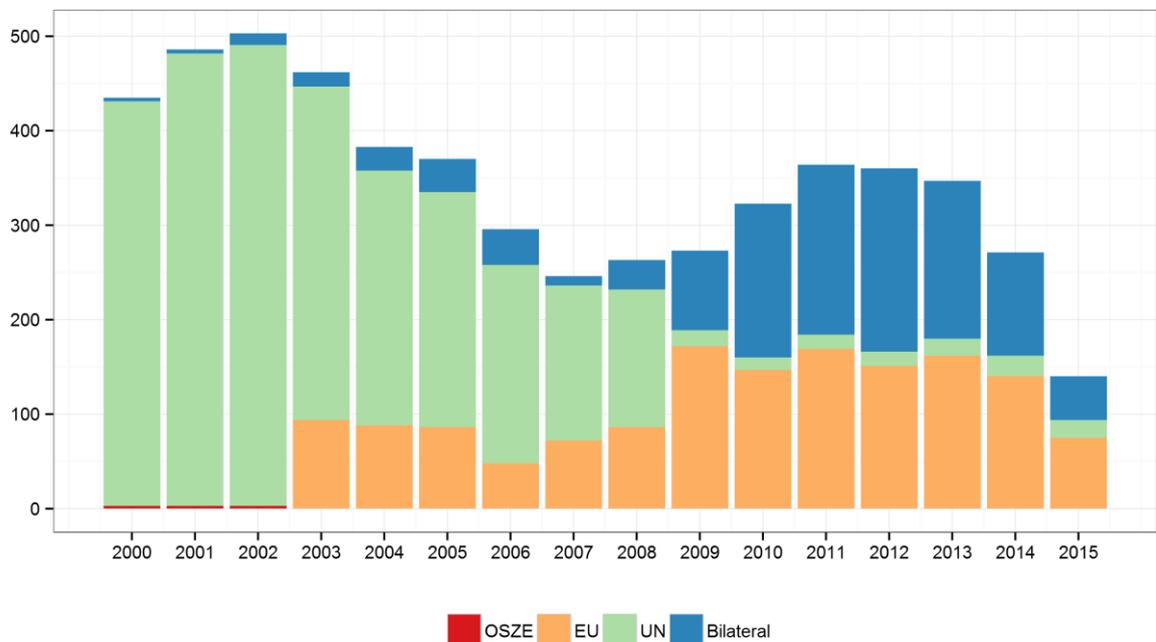


Figure 3: German Troop Deployments to KFOR and ISAF



Germany also actively contributes to police contingents in the context of multilateral peace operations. However, Germany has shifted its focus from deployments in UN-led operations to bilateral operations or mission in within an EU framework (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: German participation in international police operations⁶



In the aftermath of the Paris attacks on 13 November 2015, Germany decided to participate in the alliance against the so-called Islamic State in Syria and Iraq, where Germany provides reconnaissance, aerial refueling and organizational and planning support. German participation in the mission is currently mandated from 1 January to 31 December 2016 and is funded with €134m.

Germany joined the UN Standby Arrangement System (UNSAS) in July 1998 and signed an additional agreement in November 2000 focusing its contributions on the areas of land and air transport, medical capacity, engineering, communications, maritime components, military observers, military police and staff personnel. In addition, Germany is the fourth largest financial contributor to UN peace operations, providing 7.1% of the UN's peacekeeping budget (2014-15). This rate will drop to about 6.4% between 2016 and 2018.

Berlin has also invested in increasing German contributions to the civilian components of

peace operations. Through the Center for International Peace Operations, Germany currently deploys approximately 250 civilian staff in international peace operations (as of October 2014). The structure of the civilian deployments mirror the military ones: German civilian personnel in peace operations predominantly participate in EU missions, albeit the gap is not as stark as in the military deployments.

The German Armed Forces are currently undergoing significant reform and restructuring. The reform process was initiated in 2010 and has been in the process of implementation since 2012. Motivated by austerity and the desire to address capability gaps and operations problems, the reform has included significant budget cuts, base closures, personnel reduction, the move to an all-volunteer force, and a restructuring emphasizing flexibility and broad-spectrum capabilities. Underlying the reform process was an orientation from the operation. Consequently, one of the reform's targets is guaranteeing the permanent availability of 10,000 combat-ready troops for overseas deployment. This reflects the priority status of conflict resolution operations in the German Armed Forces' mission, albeit overwhelmingly within the framework of its regional alliance commitments.

Part 2: Decision-Making Process

For historical reasons, the deployment of German armed forces abroad is a highly controversial issue. The two main constitutional restrictions are:

- 1) deployment is strictly limited to participation in collective security arrangements; and
- 2) close parliamentary oversight is required.

Two Constitutional paragraphs govern the deployment of armed forces abroad: Article 24 permits the transfer of sovereign powers to international organizations, particularly collective security arrangements; Article 87a limits the Armed Forces' mission exclusively to defense. During the Cold War, this was taken to mean that *Bundeswehr* troops could not leave German, and later NATO, territory. Accordingly, German troops did not participate in UN peacekeeping until its reunification, despite a lengthy list of instances of unilateral international humanitarian assistance. After 1990, participation by non-combat troops in UN missions was permitted. All decisions about German military operations outside of Germany are usually taken to the parliament after close consultations with its partner countries and within the bodies of the respective governing councils of these multilateral institutions.

NATO's operations in the Balkans generated major controversy over German participation from 1992. Following increased *de facto* participation based on deployments authorized by the executive, the tension was resolved by a decision by the Federal Constitutional Court in July 1994 that permitted foreign deployments, including of combat troops, under the two aforementioned constitutional conditions. The decision both expanded the possibilities for participation—it does not distinguish between mission types as defined by the UN—and places them under stricter decision-making provisions.

Strong parliamentary oversight was formalized by a March 2005 law that states any deployment of troops abroad with the expectation of combat requires the advance consent of the *Bundestag* (lower house of Parliament). Requests for consent must include detailed information on the projected size, capabilities, deployment period, and cost of the contingent. Small contingents, non-combat humanitarian missions and mission renewals are subject to an expedited process, and Parliament possesses the right to recall any contingent currently on deployment.

The decision-making process for German participation in police operations is similar, but not

as tightly controlled as military participation. Crucially, consent of the parliament is not necessary, but it needs to be informed. However, since the police falls under state legislation and not federal legislation, the German cabinet—through the Ministry of Interior—has to approach each of the German states (the “Länder”) and ask for deployments of the state’s police forces.

Part 3: Rationales for Contributing

Given the consistently small baseline of German contributions to UN peacekeeping, none of the following rationales have generated many blue helmets over the past decade. Because of Germany’s history and constitutional restrictions, its foreign policy is normatively motivated to exercise increased international responsibility, particularly with regard to international peace and security, and to do so in a multilateral fashion. Germany’s security concerns prioritize Europe and overlap with those of its regional partners in NATO and the EU, including anti-terrorism. Security and political rationales have thus prevailed in recent years in terms of military deployments *as a whole*. This explains the clear predominance of NATO- and EU-led combat missions over contributions to UN peacekeeping, which derive predominantly from normative motivations.

Political Rationales: While they are present, political rationales do not explain German military participation in UN peacekeeping to the same extent as they do non-UN missions. UN peacekeeping is seen as a way to contribute to international peace and security in the absence of major ulterior motivations that might be present in non-UN missions. As UNIFIL II demonstrates, Germany is more likely to contribute in significant numbers where it is likely to be joined by its European allies and where there is overlap with alliance interests. The UNIFIL II contribution may also have been additionally motivated by its historical commitment to protect Israel. Prestige and influence are not major factors. Nor is pressure from the UN Secretariat given Germany’s large financial contribution to UN peacekeeping. Political rationales play a greater role in explaining non-UN participation: Germany’s low-scale contribution to the military alliance against ISIS in December 2015 in form of logistics and reconnaissance can be seen as smallest possible support to its European ally France and as commitment to a European Foreign and Security Policy without risking a major outcry in the German public.

Economic Rationales: As the cost of deploying German contingents outweighs UN reimbursements, there are few economic incentives for deployment with the UN, even at a lower relative cost than NATO and EU missions. Individual troops receive overseas pay based on degree of hazard, ranging from €30 to €100 a day. There are similar financial and career incentives for the participation of German police in international police operations, at least for the lower ranks. For leadership positions within the German police, participation in police operations is not as attractive.⁷

Security Rationales: Since 2001 security rationales have provided the predominant overall rationale for German military activity overseas. However, as there is a very limited number of UN peacekeeping operations in areas of primary security concern for Germany (i.e. Europe), these are not a strong motivating factor for contributing specifically to UN operations. The country’s participation in UNOMIG is one example of this preoccupation. Security rationales have also been the main driver of German deployment of police officers to international operations. The significant participation of German police in police training missions in the context of UNMIK and UNMBIH (mostly during the early 2000s) are a case in point.

Institutional Rationales: Deployments abroad continue to constitute one of the major objectives of the *Bundeswehr*, and the continued ability to contribute at a significant level (10,000 troops) is a foundational principle of the Forces' long-term strategic planning and purchasing. As a source of combat experience NATO and EU missions provide more of an institutional rationale than UN operations. In contrast, the participation in international operations is not one of the core rationales of the German Ministry of Interior, both on the federal and the state level. However, the Federal Foreign Office has sought to increase the participation of civilian staff in peace operations.

Normative Rationales: German foreign policy is very strongly motivated by normative factors. For historical reasons there are very strong pacifist and anti-militarist currents in public opinion, and the country has adopted a strong aversion to unilateral action. Foreign and security policy is frequently couched in the rhetoric of responsibility, especially as concerns multilateral conflict resolution. Peace operations are viewed as an attractive way to demonstrate good global citizenship and Germany's commitment to international peace and security. There is, however, a strong preference to participate in less robust settings and provide civilian or technical capabilities rather than combat troops. As noted above, Germany's pledges at the Leaders' Summit on Peacekeeping in September 2015 are a case in point: instead of concrete troop deployments, Germany's pledge focused on training and additional civilian and police personnel. These rationales are only outweighed by security motivations, where a preference for non-UN missions prevails.

Military deployments abroad have become a standard mission for the *Bundeswehr*, although a large segment of the population that opposes these operations has attacked precisely this point, arguing on normative grounds against the routine use of military force by the German state. Leadership of two Provincial Reconstruction teams within ISAF has led to the incipient development of what might be considered a "German approach" to peacebuilding and the mention in planning documents of maintaining the capacity to serve as a framework nation in multilateral operations. Nevertheless, no "peacekeeping habit" has developed within Germany. Instead, every major troop deployment is typically subject to public debate and parliamentary scrutiny.

Part 4: Barriers to Contributing

Alternative political or strategic priorities: This is the main reason for Germany's limited contribution to UN-led peace operations. While German defense policy recognizes the threats posed by WMD, terrorism and globalization-driven conflicts, its focus is Europe. Coupled with its emphasis on multilateralism, this generates a certain overlap with NATO interests, centered on the Balkans and Afghanistan, and clearly situates regional collective security arrangements as the preferred means of contributing to international peace and security.

Alternative institutional preferences for crisis management: Currently NATO and EU deployments are Germany's preferred means of contributing to international crisis management. The German constitution does not permit, and public opinion does not support, unilateral military engagements. Due to its multilateral orientation Germany does perceive some degree of overlap of its own interests with those of institutions of global governance as a whole, though these are serviced through significant financial contributions, including to both the UN operating and assessed peacekeeping budget. Further, Germany traditionally tends to focus more on political solutions and rather engages in intense diplomatic efforts than in extensive troop deployment. Participation in military missions is thus often seen as last resort and applied only in addition to political ways of crisis management.

Financial costs: Given Germany's aforementioned substantial contributions to the UN's finances, the losses incurred due to the gap between operating costs and UN reimbursements may function as a small barrier, but this does not play a major role.

Discomfort with the expanding UN peacekeeping agenda: Not relevant. Germany has generally been strongly supportive of efforts surrounding the protection of civilians, R2P, and democracy promotion and has been supportive of the expansion of UN mandates. Germany also signed onto the Leaders' Summit on UN Peacekeeping to strengthen UN peace operations. Germany's abstention on S/RES/1973 and non-participation in UN-authorized NATO-led operations in Libya points to increasing qualms as levels of use of force rise. The current Merkel administration, however, especially Defense Minister von der Leyen and Foreign Minister Steinmeier, is more supportive of German military engagements abroad, including the support of peacekeeping (just not necessarily with German military participation).

Exceptionalism: Not relevant. Germany has in the past been more concerned with avoiding accusations of negative exceptionalism in the form of "checkbook diplomacy," and has sought to demonstrate its full commitment, including in combat roles, to major Western-led missions in the Balkans and Afghanistan.

Absence of pressure to contribute: Pressure to contribute with troops is effectively lessened by significant financial contributions to UN peacekeeping operations.

Difficult domestic politics: German reluctance to engage militarily in robust peace operations is to a great extent driven by the German public's aversion to engage militarily abroad. In 2014 and 2015, the German Foreign Ministry conducted a review of its foreign policy objectives and institutions. As a part of this process, the German public was surveyed about their support of different foreign policy objectives and strategies. While a majority (51%) sees international peace as most important goal of German foreign policy, only 13% of Germans support the view that Germany should engage in more military deployments abroad. However, 87% consider German military operations justified for humanitarian reasons and the prevention of genocides. While arguments that appeal to security concerns and global responsibility are effective in garnering public support for operations, there is a clear preference for keeping combat roles to a minimum. There is strong aversion to casualties and increasing awareness of the psychological effects of combat on returning service personnel.

Damage to national reputation: There is general confidence in the *Bundeswehr's* image. Soldiers receive extensive historical sensitivity training. Sensitivity to scandals (the desecration of human remains in 2006) and operational errors (a controversial air strike in 2009) in Afghanistan has been high.

Resistance in the military: The ongoing *Bundeswehr* reform process is in part designed to address some of the strain and capability gaps created by extensive deployments abroad. Beyond this, there is broad support for both UN and NATO missions.

Lack of fit with legislative, procurement and operational timelines: The *Bundeswehr* reform seeks to address procurement and operational problems. The decision-making process is rapid.

Legal obstacles: Removed by the July 1994 Court decision and the 2005 law on parliamentary oversight.

Part 5: Current Challenges and Issues

There is broad support in both parliament and public opinion for Germany's role in peace operations, though it decreases sharply as the robustness of a mission increases. The leading rationale for this support is and will most likely continue to be normative, with humanitarian motives as the main narrative. There is a broad consensus that peace operations should always be accompanied by intense diplomatic efforts, where the German government continues to play a major role (see, for instance, Germany's efforts in peace talks in Syria).

The planning situation appears to be favorable to the availability of troops for UN peacekeeping operations. Policy documents commit the government to maintaining roughly current levels of troops ready for deployment. Major drawdowns of NATO operations in Afghanistan have been completed by December 2014, although Germany continues a troop presence of over 900 soldiers both in Afghanistan and Kosovo.

Recent developments in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, as well as the current refugee crisis have sparked new debates, mostly within the conservative party, about German participation in missions that can stabilize origin countries of refugees. Germany is therefore likely to contribute to peace missions on a steady low level, mostly in form of logistics and support, rather than in an active combat role, and in close coordination with its NATO and EU partners.

Part 6: Key Champions and Opponents

There is broad support among political parties for ongoing participation in military missions abroad at current levels. The small far-left Linke party is the only parliamentary faction to categorically oppose contribution to peace operations; all others have come out in favor. Very broadly speaking, the right-wing parties are more likely to justify deployments in terms of alliance commitments and security rationales; left-wing parties, while also likely to draw on security rationales, more often make use of political and normative rationales as well.

Public debate is irregular and coalesces around parliamentary approval of specific missions. Germany's historical experience has been mobilized as an argument both for and against its contributing to humanitarian interventions;⁸ opposing forces, mainly on the left of the political spectrum, are a more vocal presence. Nevertheless, the traditionally conservative Green party was the first to effectively mobilize German history in favor of intervention, in the person of Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer with respect to Kosovo in 1999. However, left-wing support for peacekeeping will continue to center on humanitarian motives, accompanied by intense diplomatic efforts and with less robust engagements.

The Berlin Centre for International Peace Operations (ZIF-Berlin) works closely with the German government to train civilian personnel for deployment with various international organizations. The Global Public Policy Institute, a Berlin-based think-tank, has also conducted research on and promoted German contribution to peace operations.

Part 7: Capabilities and Caveats

The *Bundeswehr* is a highly-trained and thoroughly modern armed force. However, previous budget cuts for the Ministry of Defense led to a slight decrease in the quality of equipment of the armed forces. Current planning emphasis is on broad-spectrum capabilities, with a view

to their deployment in peace operations of various types. Past German contributions—including those highlighted in the UNSAS agreement—focus on specialist units such as medics, engineers, transport capability (aircraft and heavy-lift helicopters) and military police. Germany's pledges at the 2015 UN World Summit on Peacekeeping suggest that these capabilities likely also constitute the future of German contributions to UN-led operations.

Within NATO operations Germany has gained a leadership role in police training and other rule-of-law functions, which would play an important role in increasing Germany's presence in UN operations. UN peacebuilding missions might therefore benefit from harnessing experience gained from Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan.

Part 8: Further Reading

White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr 2006 (German Ministry of Defense).

Defence Policy Guidelines 2011 (German Ministry of Defense).

Egbert Jahn, 2014: *The "Defence of Germany in the Hindu Kush." The German Role in Afghanistan.*

Notes

¹ This Country Profile is based on a previous version by Prof. Kai Kenkel (2012).

² The most current troop size data is provided by the [German Ministry of Defense](#) (In German)

³ IISS, *The Military Balance 2015*, (London: Routledge, 2015), pp.96-100.

⁴ [Estimated defense budget data for 2015 from the German Ministry of Defense](#) (in German). Other figures from *Military Balance 2015*, p. 96-100.

⁵ Armed Forces Spending is a country's annual total defense budget (in US dollars) divided by the total number of *active* armed forces. Figures from the German Ministry of Defense (size of armed forces & estimated defense budget for 2015, i.e. €32.97bn (\$35.27bn) /178,829). US\$ current to November 2015.

⁶ Steffen Eckhard „Zwischen Sicherheits- und Außenpolitik: Deutsche Polizeikräfte im internationalen Kriseneinsatz“, *Vereinte Nationen 2/2015*

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Maja Zehfuss, *Wounds of Memory: The Politics of War in Germany* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).