

““[F] from 1991 to August 2017, a total of 408,932 German soldiers were involved³ in 52 mandated operations abroad.⁴ At the highest point over 10,000 German soldiers were simultaneously deployed abroad. In late May 2018, it was less than half that number: Germany contributed just over 4,000 soldiers to a total of eleven missions – three NATO, three EU and four UN missions, and one so-called coalition of the willing.” (Glatz et al., #1)

About SWP

- One of Europe’s largest and most influential foreign policy think-tanks;
- Semi-official organization that advises German government and parliament on foreign and security policy, as well as EU, NATO, UN.
- Permanent staff of approx. 200, of which approx. 70 are researchers, divided into 7 research divisions
- Founded in Munich, in 1962. Headquarters moved to Berlin in 2001.
- Partially funded by the German Federal government.
- Five working principles:
 1. Academic stringency;
 2. Independence;
 3. Multiple perspectives and pluralism;
 4. Policy relevance;
 5. Confidentiality.
- Research papers suggest a strong commitment to transatlantic relationship and Germany’s (and (EU’s) responsibility to contribute, including with military deployments if necessary.

Relevant Publications

1. Rainer Glatz, Wibke Hansen, Markus Kaim, Judith Vorrath ‘Missions in a Changing World: The Bundeswehr and Its Operations Abroad’, *SWP Research Paper 2018/RP 06*, 13.09. 2018, 45 pages (in Dropbox)
Note: Very important document provided also in English.

Key Take-Aways:

- i. “Fundamentally, decisions about military operations abroad are taken within the triangle of pressing problems (crises and conflicts), responsibility (obligations under international law, alliances, political commitments), and the political situation and available capabilities in Germany itself.”
- ii. “In its 2017 *Guidelines on crisis prevention and conflict resolution* and 2016 *White Paper*, the German federal government outlined a framework for German engagement that it now has to fill. Furthermore, the expectations of Germany’s partners within the EU, NATO and UN have grown – which will also require further military contributions.”
- iii. Even though Germany’s leading role within the EU is being called into question and is only just beginning to take shape in NATO while the “intervention scepticism” of the German public seems to persist, any claim to shape the political order must be put into concrete political and military terms in the coming years. This does not only concern EU and NATO, but also UN engagement. Traditionally, Germany has been very reticent about meeting its obligations to the

UN and especially to the latter's peacekeeping missions, aside from making financial contributions.

2. Laura von Daniels, Markus Kaim, Ronja Kempin, Kai-Olaf Lang, Marco Overhaus, Johannes Thimm, '[A New Beginning with President Biden: Five German and European Priorities for the Transatlantic Agenda](#)', *SWP Comment 2020/C 61*, 08.12.2020, 7 pages (in Dropbox).

Key Take-Aways: A renewed transatlantic relationship must go beyond a "revival of the concept of 'the West'". German and European contribution to such a new transatlantic agenda to focus on five priorities:

- i. Transatlantic economic policy;
- ii. Action against disinformation;
- iii. A transatlantic vaccine alliance;
- iv. Contain Russia and stabilize the European neighborhood;
- v. Iran nuclear deal: return to diplomacy.

3. Christian Schaller, '[Military Operations in Afghanistan and International Humanitarian Law](#)', *SWP Comment 2010/C 07*, 15.03.2010, 7 pages (in Dropbox).

Key Take-Aways:

- i. "State armed forces involved in asymmetrical armed conflicts such as the one in Afghanistan face a dilemma. They "are obliged to international humanitarian law even if they are confronted with non-state actors who systematically violate these norms"; and they "may be subject to considerable legal restrictions when combating such actors according to international humanitarian law.
- ii. However, non-state actors in asymmetrical conflicts may "deliberately provoke illegal military responses by state armed forces" to mobilize public resistance against the state in question.
- iii. "Under such extreme conditions international humanitarian law runs a high risk of losing much of its practical force and impact."

4. Hans-Peter Bartels, Rainer Glatz, '[What Reforms Requires the Bundeswehr today – Thinking Ahead](#)', *SWP-Aktuell 2020/A 84*, 30.10.2020, 8 pages.

Key Take-Aways:

- i. Even after the crisis year of 2014, the Bundeswehr remained focused on crisis management as opposed to crisis intervention. The political adjustment happened with the [2016 Defence White Paper](#) and the [Vision of the Bundeswehr 2018](#).
- ii. All systematic military reforms in united Germany have been guided by the maxim "design to budget" – that is, they were Savings-Reforms.
- iii. Since 2014, the Bundeswehr has had to carry out two main tasks simultaneously: Out-of-Area Deployments and Germany's defence in Europe. Since 2014, the budget allocated to the military has increased.
- iv. Structural reforms are urgent (see the 2019 [Report on the Deployment Readiness of the Main Weapons Systems](#), but of the evolutionary kind, according to the principle: 'As much continuity as possible, as much reform as necessary'.
- v. If NATO cannot act in an existential crisis due to Member States vetoes, the parallel US command structure in Europe will take over.
- vi. After the 2021 elections, there will be no need for a new Commission: only for a common plan of military leadership and political direction-setting, political will – and decisions.

5. Markus Kaim, '[Germany's Military Contribution in Afghanistan after 2014: Requirements of the NATO-mission 'Resolute Support'](#)', *SWP-Aktuell 45*, Juli 2013.

Key Take-Aways:

- i. Following the end of NATO's ISAF Mission in Afghanistan at the end of 2014, the successor mission. 'Resolute Support' will have as task the training and support of the Afghan security forces.
- ii. Three key variables will determine if this follow-up mission will actually take place and be successful: development of the security environment in Afghanistan, military contribution of the US, and the legal framework legitimizing the mission.