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## **GERMAN DEBATE ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY INSTITUTIONS**

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## German Debate on International Security Institutions

### I. Multilateralism: the third Basic Law?

Walter Leisler Kiep has baptized German relations with the United States as the second Basic Law of the Federal Republic. The third Basic Law seems to be multilateralism in German security policy. Already the Germans had developed their foreign and security policy during the Cold War period in a multilateral context with a multilateral approach and multilaterally oriented institutional structures. United Germany continues that orientation, despite the fact that the country is now free to choose after having regained full sovereignty. This continuity may be explained by tradition: Bonn used to assert some of its national independence through multilateral security policy and through candid support of integration and cooperation. Today, German leaders continue to favor collective action also for other reasons: They have experienced during the period of "forced" multilateralism that collective action within common frameworks and based on a set of common rules and obligations is paying, it represents the better way of achieving national security interests.

Nevertheless, Germany tries to become a normal country with articulation of national (and not multilateral) security goals. In this regard, both the public and the political elite, are about to learn to establish a national process for foreign and security policy making. Such new behavior raises the temptations for a move toward nationalist action while the definition of national interest is supposed to prepare a national position for multilateral cooperation. It is not easy to guide this learning process in the right direction. And overreaction from outside the country which refers to new dangers of an aggressive, hegemonistic Germany do not help with such delicate exercise in self-confidence.

Staff of the Auswärtiges Amt, has been quoted as saying, "German foreign policy does not have to be reinvented."<sup>2</sup>

This is very true - the two main institutions which have helped shape German policy over the past 40 years--EU and NATO--still exist and are being strengthened and redefined. To this end the governing CDU/CSU/FDP coalition has undertaken steps which help to underline the importance they place on German entrenchment in multilateral security measures. For example, the establishment of two multinational corps with the United States, the establishment of the Eurocorps with French, and soon to come Flemish, and Spanish participation, the proposed establishment of a German/Dutch corps in 1994, the participation of German personnel on AWACS aircraft in the Balkan region, the involvement of German medical personnel in Cambodia, and the stationing of German army units in Belet Huen, Somalia. Defense Minister Volker Rühle emphasized the need for "Europe" to become militarily capable; the establishment of the corps mentioned above is a step in this direction. As he stated in a speech given at the 34th Meeting of Commanders in early October 1993, "The Eurocorps is available for NATO use; under the control of the WEU it is the core for a European Defence. It is an important step towards an all European defensive capability."<sup>3</sup>

This in no way implies a move away from a close alliance with the USA, or of a distance from NATO. Rühle later went on to say that it is necessary for the West Europeans and North Americans to be able to deal independently but not separately depending on the situation. In the German government's view the Eurocorps achieves three goals: 1) the establishment of a central building bloc for European defense; 2) the development of an instrument for a Common Foreign and Security Policy; 3) and the strengthening of the

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted in The Economist, 20.11.1993, p. 20

<sup>3</sup> Speech given by Volker Rühle at the 34. Kommandeurtagung der Bundeswehr. 7.10.1993

advance *European* solutions and positions within foreign and security policy (and this also within the UN) while at the same time the national state representation within the UN Security Council is being promoted (by participants of the debate within and outside of Germany).

Germany was faced with an entirely new situation in 1989 after the fall of the Soviet Bloc. Suddenly all the old rules were no longer in place and policy makers had to grapple with a completely foreign situation. Given its size and economic strength many members of the world community look to Germany to take on a greater share of the burden in ensuring world peace. However, because of its historical baggage the debate has not been as clear cut as observers might want. In the past, Germany was able to rely on the bipolar nature of the Cold War in order to defer responsibility in world affairs and security to others. That is, its geographic location made it *the* battle zone in a possible European confrontation. As such its allies were not prepared to pressure German involvement in areas outside of Europe. However, with the fundamental change which has occurred in world politics since 1989 these old arguments no longer can be applied.

The position of the CDU/CSU fraction of the governing coalition has been fairly straightforward regarding Blue Helmet missions. They want the Federal Republic to participate at all levels. They also do not see the necessity for an amendment of the Basic Law in order to implement these missions. The FDP partner has, on the other hand, insisted on an amendment to the constitution. Meanwhile, the government has slowly implemented policies and inserted the Bundeswehr in differing areas and under differing auspices to first of all set precedent cases as well as to slowly accustom the populace to the fact that the Bundeswehr is active internationally: From Gulf mine sweeping in 1988 to the Somalia mission in 1993 - German

implementation of the Bundeswehr was unconstitutional. A final ruling has as of yet not been handed down.

There are differences between Scharping and Klose. Scharping initially said yes to peace keeping missions, but no to waging war (peace-enforcement). Klose, on the other hand, has stated that if Germany is a member of an international institution such as the UN then it also has to accept all the obligations of such a membership. He is against a partial German participation in UN missions. His argument is that the declaration of human rights as stated within the charter of the UN cannot be superseded by individual national interests. All or nothing, so to speak. The discussion is augmented by the fear on his part that if Germany shows itself to be incapable of fulfilling international commitments it will not be given the added responsibility and trust by the international community through a permanent seat in the Security Council.

Scharping has begun to make advances towards Klose by reasserting his position that UN soldiers should not look for a fight but should be ready to defend themselves. In September 1993 he went one step further and stated that it would be unacceptable for a constitutional amendment to be so formulated that Germans would only participate in particular UN missions. This of course led to speculations about exactly what his position was. He himself has stated that the inner party debates are more about his leadership than about the actual topic of changes in SPD security policy. In November 1993 at a Party Convention the position of the SPD became clearer.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Excurs: results of the SPD Sonderparteitag in brief**

SPD-Parteivorstand-Declaration given by Wieczorek-Zeul:  
-the integration of Western Europe needs to be quickly advanced

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<sup>6</sup> Frankfurter Allgemeine 18.11.1993. p. 3.

responsibilities and a sound financial management, 6) the establishment of an environmental security council, 7) reducing the burden on the UN by strengthening regional agreements and organizations.<sup>7</sup>

-reduce Bundeswehr to 300.000 by 1996 and even further if the security situation is favorable; would consider an armed forces based on volunteers or a mixed version. In the former, the draft would be abolished and could be implemented over a period of five years, the latter would see the reduction of service duty to 6 months and could be implemented quicker; the costs of military planning and arms acquisitions needs to be further reduced. Focus should be on a further cooperation with European partners; not all countries need to have the same weapons/capabilities--rationalisation and specialization need to occur European wide.<sup>8</sup>

#### Internal party debate:

##### New "ostpolitik"

-debate was not ideological or very contentious

-"right wingers" (Peter Glotz) in the party want to stop a further transfer of powers to supranational institutions; in order to help the east you first have to strengthen the west

-"left wingers" (Egon Bahr) recall the SPD tradition of promoting collective security even during the time of east-west confrontation; security needs to be established now, if its not possible through NATO because of US opposition then it must be tried through the CSCE

##### Blue Helmets

-much more contentious and divisive

-"right wingers" want SPD to go further than what the Vorstand proposed; make peace making missions possible; make troops available for the CSCE and UN to use

-this addendum suggestion is taken directly from the Manifesto which was adopted by the Euro Social Democrats at their congress on the 5.11.1993 of which both Scharping and Wiczorek-Zeul were part of and which they both agreed to.

The Manifesto was unanimously accepted. The final result of the Parteitag was that the declaration of the Vorstand was adopted.

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<sup>7</sup> Extracts from Antrag des SPD-Parteivorstandes zum Bundesparteitag "Perspektiven einer neuen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik", 13.09.1993

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

- Russia or Ukraine - it is important not to weaken the power of the reform process by moving too quickly or early
- an initial step for the preparation for NATO membership would be the process of establishing bilateral agreements between NATO and the membership candidates
  - the cooperation of NACC must be intensified; can be an important factor in taking responsibility for peacekeeping/making measures; NATO-Visegrad and or Russian/Ukrainian troops
  - WEU should offer EU candidates--including Eastern/Central European countries--association
  - Eurocorps should be trained and armed to take part in UN actions; this is a step toward greater European responsibility.
  - only by taking on the full responsibilities of membership in the UN can the FRG be taken seriously in its calls for UN reform; to strengthen this position it is necessary for Germany to have a permanent seat in the Security Council, and with it all the rights and responsibilities which belong to it.
  - CSCE needs to be strengthened in its role as a community of values, and at the same time become a security institution which is able to function properly; to achieve this:
    - increase the mandate and the operative possibilities of the High Commissioner for Minorities
    - increase the "consensus minus one" principle to majority decisions
    - Restructure the "Vienna Group of High Level Officials" into a functioning Council of Permanent Members, such as those that exist in NATO and the EC
    - strengthen the Warsaw Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
    - increased participation of Parliaments and non-governmental organisations in finding solutions to conflicts
  - NATO remains the most important security instrument in Europe. The NATO conference in January must:

status--still exists, but the loss of the overarching Soviet threat has left a vacuum of rationale which has to be filled. The defense minister was very clear in his speech to the German Commanders--multinational crisis management must become the main function for NATO. This, certainly, implies the hope that such language will gradually move the debate within Germany toward a better understanding of the new type of collective security challenges which demand German military involvement in crisis management. Moreover, any German defense minister could count on a wider political acceptance at home if peace keeping measures were undertaken in a legitimized multilateral context such as NATO.



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