

---

Gerhard Kümmel • Bastian Giegerich (Eds.)

# The Armed Forces: Towards a Post- Interventionist Era?

 Springer VS

*Editors*

Dr. Gerhard Kümmel  
Dr. Bastian Giegerich

Potsdam, Germany

ISBN 978-3-658-01285-4

ISBN 978-3-658-01286-1 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-3-658-01286-1

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2013943262

Springer VS

© Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden 2013

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed. Exempted from this legal reservation are brief excerpts in connection with reviews or scholarly analysis or material supplied specifically for the purpose of being entered and executed on a computer system, for exclusive use by the purchaser of the work. Duplication of this publication or parts thereof is permitted only under the provisions of the Copyright Law of the Publisher's location, in its current version, and permission for use must always be obtained from Springer. Permissions for use may be obtained through RightsLink at the Copyright Clearance Center. Violations are liable to prosecution under the respective Copyright Law. The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. While the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication, neither the authors nor the editors nor the publisher can accept any legal responsibility for any errors or omissions that may be made. The publisher makes no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein.

Printed on acid-free paper

Springer VS is a brand of Springer DE.

Springer DE is part of Springer Science+Business Media.

[www.springer-vs.de](http://www.springer-vs.de)

## Table of Contents

### Welcome Address

*Ernst-Christoph Meier* ..... 9

### 'The End of the World as We Know it'!? On Interventionist Overstretch, Post-Interventionism and Neo-Interventionism: An Essayist Introduction

*Bastian Giegerich & Gerhard Kümmel* ..... 11

## I Macro-Level Perspectives

### Post-Interventionist *Zeitgeist*: The Ambiguity of Security Policy

*Florian P. Kühn* ..... 17

### Soldiers Drawn into Politics? Civil-Military Relations, Hybrid Military Spaces and the Future of Interventions

*Chiara Ruffa, Christopher Dandeker & Pascal Vennesson* ..... 29

### Searching for Minimalist Humanitarian Intervention Strategies in Global Security Policy

*Wilfried von Bredow* ..... 41

### The West's Last War? Neo-Interventionism, Strategic Surprise, and the Waning Appetite for Playing the Away Game

*Christian Leuprecht* ..... 63

### Post-Interventionist or Newly Responsible? Europe as a Security Provider

*Sven Biscop* ..... 73

### The Democratic Civil-Military Relations of Austerity: Thoughts about the Past and the Present

*Donald Abenheim* ..... 81

### Factual Knowledge and Public Support for German Military Operations: The Case of the German ISAF Mission in Afghanistan

*Rüdiger Fiebig* ..... 93

The Future of Liberal Interventionism in UK Foreign Policy <i>Tim Oliver</i> .....	111
A Note on Military Intervention in an Era of Globalization <i>Manas Chatterji</i> .....	131
<b>II Meso-Level Perspectives</b>	
Military Strategic Trends since 9/11 <i>Ben Barry</i> .....	137
A British Perspective on Future Contingency Operations <i>John Henderson</i> .....	143
The Price of Disengagement: Past Trends and Prospects for Portuguese Participation in International Military Missions <i>Helena Carreiras</i> .....	149
Expeditionary Capabilities and the Use of Force in a Post-Interventionist Era: The Case of Sweden <i>Franz Kernic</i> .....	165
Democratic Soldiers as Marginal Men: The Impact of Security-Cultural Transformations on the Military in Europe <i>Sabine Mannitz</i> .....	173
The Quest for 'Evidence-Based Soldiering' <i>Joseph Soeters</i> .....	191
A Premium on Organizational and Technological Efficiency: Making the Comprehensive Approach Work <i>Ralph Thiele</i> .....	203
Unmanned Warfare: Towards a Neo-Interventionist Era? <i>Niklas Schörnig</i> .....	221
The Legacy of Military Heterogeneity in a Post-Interventionist Era: Diversity as a Challenge to the Military Ideal of Homogeneity <i>Heiko Biehl</i> .....	237

Expectations: An Underestimated Factor in International Crisis Management <i>Walter Feichtinger</i> .....	257
<b>III Micro-Level Perspectives</b>	
Militaries and the Multiple Negotiations of Intervention <i>Eyal Ben-Ari</i> .....	265
Generation ISAF: Operational Realities, Self-Image and Organization <i>Anja Seiffert &amp; Julius Hess</i> .....	279
Auf verlorenem Posten <i>Marco Seliger</i> .....	303
How Military Interventions Increase the Gap between Soldiers und Politics <i>Jens Warburg</i> .....	311
About the Authors .....	325

## **The West's Last War? Neo-Interventionism, Strategic Surprise, and the Waning Appetite for Playing the Away Game**

*Christian Leuprecht*

### **1 Introduction**

Why maintain armed forces? The question is as fundamental as the answer unambiguous: Because democracies have national and common interests to defend. One current of thought contends that the wars of Iraq and Afghanistan are setting the tone for the sort of future interventions that await the Western military alliance. The logic that follows is that we need to learn from them to prepare ourselves for what is to come. This chapter begs to differ on two basic grounds. First, politicians and electorates have neither the stomach nor the fortitude for lengthy campaigns that result in soldiers coming home in body bags, consume exorbitant amounts of resources, but where short-term payoff seems elusive. Second, the challenge of strategic surprise endures: We have an extraordinarily poor track record at predicting the location, nature and characteristics of interventions. If we concentrate on any one type, we risk falling into the platitude that tends to bedevil militaries: Generals always prepared for the last war – especially if they won it! As Hegel poignantly opined: ‘Those who marry the spirit of their age are bound to end up a widow in the next.’

Based on these two propositions this chapter posits the concept of neo-interventionism: While interventionism per se is not necessarily on the wane, the Western military alliance is now more unlikely than ever to engage in long-term open-ended interventions. Whatever intervention proves unavoidable will be short-term with minimal and well-defined objectives. The chapter marshals evidence as follows to argue for conceptual differentiation of interventionism. In fiscally austere times, it turns out that there is merit in experimenting with more optimal ways to spend money and direct the economies of effort than the conventional form of interventionism to which the West has grown accustomed. The chapter concludes that even in a post-interventionist era, foreign policy remains inextricably linked to armed forces. Foregoing armed forces means foregoing one's ability to make or shape international stability and security. Given the challenges that loom in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Leuprecht 2012a), the consequences of Western democracies' inability to assert their interests would be deleterious. Still, fiscal austerity and changing structural constraints are precipitating innovation in the use of resources to advance national interests.

## 2 The Limits of Intervention

Inside the main entrance of the Mackenzie Building at the Royal Military College of Canada are plaques and pictures of all cadets who have fallen in the line of duty. The earliest died in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century in the same places they are dying today: On the Hindukush and in sub-Saharan Africa. Military historians remind us that expeditionary adventures to conquer and pacify Afghanistan are rife with frustration, be it the British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century or the Russians in the 1980s. Ten years of American troops in Iraq and US\$1 trillion later, Iraq's government is as dysfunctional as it is ridden by sectarian strife and violence. Years after the Dayton Accord was supposedly meant to have settled disputes in the Balkans, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo remain deeply troubled and divided.

The West is reaping what it sowed: Unapologetically attempting to implement a Westphalian nation-state model in places whose ethno-cultural, linguistic and religious diversity made that an improbable proposition from the outset. How exactly is more intervention supposed to fix the unintended consequences of historically short-sighted interventions that got the West into the unenviable situation in which it finds itself?

Can the Afghan expedition really be taken as representative? Or is Afghanistan an anomaly? Afghanistan differs significantly from earlier interventions because now, for the first time, we actually have a somewhat transparent account of the human and financial toll of expeditionary adventurism. Confronted with the bill and death toll, politicians and electorates alike are showing little enthusiasm for a repeat of an Afghanistan-like mission anytime soon. Fiscal austerity and recruiting challenges are imposing long-term political and institutional constraints that would make it difficult to sustain a similar deployment (Leuprecht 2012b). Western participants in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo or Libya financed those operations on credit: At best, they had balanced budgets and could have used the money to pay down their national debt; at worst – and that is the case for the vast majority of Western democracies – they bankrolled these missions by running up the tab further. Following the compound effect of the economic downturn of 2008 and its aftermath, that meant that, for the first time in decades, the Western military alliance ran up against hard fiscal constraints: it was forced to cut back.

## 3 Reining in the Expeditionary Mindset

In most countries, that has resulted in smaller, leaner, professional armed forces. These are the result of a combination of structural changes, including the New Security Environment (NSE) of the post-Cold War era as well as

technological change that inaugurated a whole new generation of warfare (Moskos 1999). Supposedly the NSE is responsible for the shift towards lightly armored rapid reaction expeditionary forces (King 2011) and analogous types of military transformation. Measured against manpower, finance, and future capital commitments, however, expeditionary forces are actually far less prominent than their profile within the armed forces would suggest. Far from being the 'only game in town', they verge on the marginal in terms of total defense effort.

'Rapid reaction force' is a contradiction in terms (as President Carter had poignantly observed): They cannot react, they are not rapid and they are hardly a force. And for an allegedly 'rapid reaction force', they have a rather large footprint! That is because, unlike FedEx, democracies do not 'absolutely, positively' have to be there overnight (and for times when they do, they maintain covert special forces, not rapid reaction forces). To the contrary, democracies want their own people and the world to know that they are 'reacting'; so, their electorates and the world are put on notice, and the nature of the way democracies operate means that they tend to take their time to do so. The real issue up for democratic debate is whether (or which) European countries want to retain this *Pax Americana* 'interventionist' model that is premised on 'boots on the ground' that occupy, control and impose political will; and which are happy to content themselves with a more benign 'influence-and-defend' model (Last 2011). The former comprises 'rapid reaction forces', the latter acknowledges that 'rapid reaction forces' are both empirically and normatively controversial. Are they really the force of choice; or the force of last resort?

The elite status and concomitant special treatment they receive, along with their 'warrior ethos' supposedly make them the spearhead of future interventions, possibly even in a limited confrontation with China or Russia. But most of the Western allies bank on the 'home game' over the 'away game'. If aid to civil authority and aid to civil power will gain in importance over the longer term, the oscillation between domestic and international focus in military effort may offer a more fruitful line of investigation. The sampling bias in favor of interventionism wrongly biases the expeditionary mindset as well as misguided inferences and conclusions that follow.

The imaginaries of an international confrontation with China or Russia, propagated by narcissistic military planners and a military-industrial complex continuously looking to justify massive public investments in military technology and procurement, run a serious risk of becoming the self-fulfilling prophecies of strategic planners who continue to be wedded to the big war paradigm that has defined U.S.-style Mahanian-type overwhelming-force doctrine for much of the last century. These strategic pipedreams contrast

starkly with the array of *actual* systemic threats to international stability in the 21<sup>st</sup> century emanating from the reverberations of domestic instability driven by climate change, resource scarcity, crony capitalism and democratic authoritarianism. In countries thus afflicted, elite warriors are hardly the solution; they are actually a significant source of the local problem. Having European major powers deploy their 'warriors' is likely to exacerbate an already volatile situation. Major powers – realistically any country – maintain 'warriors' to defend their strategic interests. In other words, their interventions are perceived to have ulterior motives of which local populations are wary and which risk drawing in adversaries, thus making precisely the sort of major-power confrontation a self-fulfilling prophesy which the experience of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century suggests military planners had better stand on guard to avoid.

#### 4 The Limits of Integration

Western allies whose 'warriors' are reticent to exercise their trade kinetically, notably much of the armed forces of continental Europe, get a bad reputation in an Anglosphere – the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia – long marked by an expeditionary culture. But might the elusion of 'strategic success' in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Kosovo perhaps offer some vindication for the more reserved approach to the conduct and operations of foreign 'warriors' on other countries' sovereign territory? The Anglosphere, led by the United States, likes to set its kinetic expeditionary expectations as the benchmark to which the rest of the allies, in their view, ought to aspire. Within the Anglosphere, one cannot fail to notice a touch of British hubris longing for the grandeur of the *Pax Britannica* of a long-gone Victorian era. On military posture and integration, non-Anglo allies – which amounts to much of the rest of Europe (save France) – should supposedly be looking to the one European country that has long hindered greater defense integration across Europe: Britain? As it turns out, the collaborative interventionist experience of the 2000's has actually generated a feedback loop of nationalist retrenchment in reaction to greater cooperation.

Militaries, especially those of smaller countries, have good reason to be enthusiastic about greater integration as a means to enhancing their institution's functional imperative, international stature and military professionalism. By contrast, politicians and civilian bureaucrats are likely to be apprehensive as they look to limit their political (even partisan) and financial liabilities while maximizing national effect. Unlike the institution itself, they have a vested interest in the institution's social function. That partially accounts for the perennial tensions between military and civilian authorities.

Countries maintain and deploy militaries to defend national and collective security interests, to be sure, but they also do so to reap international and domestic payoffs, notably to score points with their allies and electorates. As European countries seek to minimize defense expenditures while maximizing payoffs, that sort of cost-benefit calculation is likely to become deterministic of the way European countries and coalitions generate and deploy forces. That they will necessarily default to the U.S. 'interventionist' model – from which the U.S. itself appears to be retreating – using these new force structures rather than a more modest 'influence-and-defend' approach along with its less direct application of force is hardly self-evident.

Confronted with exorbitant financial and human costs, politicians and electorates alike are showing little enthusiasm for a repeat of an Afghanistan-like mission anytime soon. The nature and pace of military transformation is being forced by fiscal, human-resource and materiel realities of overstretched public finances. The three big-ticket items in any democracy are health, education and national defense. The situation is even bleaker in federations where national defense often makes up more than 20 percent of actual federal program spending (once transfer payments are factored out). It is impossible for a democracy to get its fiscal house in order without cutting defense expenditures. Absent a concrete menace that might threaten their existence, given the choice many electorates – especially the rapidly aging kind that pervades most post-industrial democracies – will sacrifice defense spending before health and education. That makes good sense: Health and education are services they use – or, at least, know people who benefit immediately – whereas they are increasingly distant and removed from their armed forces. The move to eliminate mandatory military service in favor of professional all-volunteer armed forces is bound to hasten societies' alienation from their armed forces (Szvirczsev Tresch/Leuprecht 2011). Downsizing and transforming the military is thus having second-order effects on civil-military relations with lasting implications: Aloof from their armed forces, and not perceiving immediate threats to their livelihood, electorates will be less likely than ever to invest in them. Armed forces who are hedging that the way democratic societies are divesting themselves of their militaries is merely a phase should think again. To the contrary, it is likely to precipitate a spiral of mutually reinforcing alienation and divestment.

#### 5 Aligning Means with Ends

Cuts to defense spending notwithstanding, the recent U.S. strategy statement suggests that NATO allies (and adversaries) continue to bank on airpower, tactical and strategic blue-water naval assets to secure their international-

stability interests (U.S. Department of Defense 2012). Libya, not Afghanistan, appears the more probable model for future missions – insofar as they materialize at all: Short-term, with limited objectives, a clear exit strategy, little risk of mission creep, and, notably, no ‘boots on the ground’. Tepid uptake of the Libya mission among many allies intimates that even for such a limited mandate sufficient support is proving difficult to galvanize, especially when foisted upon modest allies by great powers looking to advance their self-interest, the same great powers that are responsible for creating precisely those conditions that are driving much of the international instability that pervades the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The well-defined limited mandate in Libya with a clear exit strategy contrasts with the expansive mission creep to which the mission in Afghanistan succumbed. To this end, Afghanistan is emblematic of an epic failure in civil-military relations. Instead of adhering strictly to the original stated purpose of ensuring that Afghanistan would no longer serve as a staging ground for international terrorism, ferocious lobbying by ‘enlightened’ cosmopolitan constructivists – the bulk of whom are disinclined towards the armed forces and to signing up for military service themselves – ended up imposing upon the armed forces a civilizing mission consisting of the transfer and imposition of liberal-democratic norms on an atavistic host society. Laudable as these moral imperatives may be, they were as sociologically unrealistic as they were internally contradictory: The same constituency that is fiercely protective of national ‘values’ and sovereignty of their own country is quite happy to intervene elsewhere to advance its idiosyncratic worldview. The neo-colonial aspect of deploying armed forces to this end appears to have been lost on them, as does the fact that this is hardly a functional specialization of armed forces to begin with. That the results of such mission creep were bound to disappoint was painfully obvious.

Why, then, maintain armed forces at all? Not to make the world a safer place. The premise that the West has an obligation to act on humanitarian grounds, let alone to stick around in an attempt to build flourishing democracies in societies to which freedom, equality, justice and equality of opportunity are an anathema, is highly problematic: For want of agreement on consistent principles to justify intervention (why Kosovo and not Darfur, for instance?), the emerging post-Kosovo, post-Afghanistan, post-Iraq, post-Libya consensus seems to be a recognition that one may be better off to abstain altogether. Countries maintain and deploy armed forces to assert foreign-policy, national and collective-security interests. For most Western allies, these are easy to define: Open trade routes and the requisite international stability to secure their economic, social and political well-being. But democracies also maintain armed forces to reap domestic and international payoffs,

notably to score points with electorates and allies alike. The strategic behavior of politicians is constrained by maintaining a seat at the table with the allies that makes it possible for them to try to overcome collective-action problems in an effort to shape international-security policy. NATO Needs Americans to Operate; but it persists because it continues to serve collective security interests. Those infamously used to be to: Keep the Americans in, the Russians out, and the Germans down. With the end of the Cold War, collective interests became more diffuse; but they are not about to vanish. The transatlantic relationship and the American security umbrella (let alone the dividend that flows from outsourcing to the United States instead of having to bear the real costs of international security themselves) remains as important as ever for the bulk of allies, such as the fear of Russia that pervades NATO’s Eastern and Central European allies.

In democracies, politicians have a strong incentive to do so since their job security is a function of a four-year electoral horizon (at best). As a result, interventionism may be waning, but is not about to become extinct. Where national interest is at stake and/or points can be scored with allies (notably the United States as the guarantor of the *Pax Americana*), intervention is still a possibility. That explains why democracies are not about to divest themselves of their armed forces altogether: Militaries remain pivotal to a democracy’s toolkit. Yet, democratic politicians are quickly learning that it is not in their electoral interest to invest any more in the armed forces than they absolutely have to, to optimize the payoff matrix with their domestic and international constituencies. A ready explanation as to why that investment has been dwindling is that, with the end of the Cold War, a growing number of allies find themselves in the enviable position of having the luxury of deciding when, where and how to deploy abroad. That does not preclude another Afghanistan-style intervention outright; but it does suggest that Afghanistan is likely to turn out to have been the high-water mark of Western interventionism.

## 6 Conclusions: Alternatives to Conventional Forms of Kinetic Intervention

The aforementioned spate of structural factors from demographic and climate change to ethno-cultural strife and resource depletion juxtaposes a growing need for heavy lifting with waning money, kit and troops. That cleavage need not necessarily be deleterious. On the one hand, it breaks the security curse in which much of the West, and the Americans foremost, have been trapped: The more security you have, the more security you want. A rationalization of the armed forces may thus have the effect of optimizing expenditure relative

to expected returns, instead of the diminishing returns that would necessarily have flowed from ever-mounting investment in the armed forces. On the other hand, a rift between the interests of the traditional great powers and more modest – often continental European – allies may impose a welcome check on the former's expeditionary culture. Much of Europe and the Anglosphere spent the first 50 years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century pushing the Germans back to their borders and the next 50 years keeping them there; much to their consternation, that experience has curbed Germany's interventionist ambitions! In light of path-dependency, no surprise then that in German political culture, the legitimation of expeditionary deployment is not solely the prerogative of the political executive, but requires authorization from the legislative branch. The proliferation of institutional veto players to conventional forms of intervention has resulted in a substitution effect of soft over kinetic influence where national interests are at stake, but conventional interventionism would be as impractical as it would be ineffective. To analogize Andrew Bacevich (2011): It is always easier to go to war with someone else's soldiers. It is a bit hasty to write off either continental Europe or European military sociology. To the contrary, the changing constraints confronting European allies are forcing them to introduce innovation and diversity into the hitherto ossified Westphalian market of interventionist realism. One size no longer fits all. The *frontières extérieures* (FRONTEX) initiative to secure the community through the extensive sharing of personal data among member states and the *European Neighborhood Policy* are two prominent innovations of a post-interventionist era, at least a post-kinetic one. Why default to kinetic intervention when it runs a needless risk of provoking resentment among locals and confrontation among great powers?

### References

- Bacevich, Andrew J., Jr. (2011): Whose Army? *Daedalus*, 140: 3, 122–134.
- King, Anthony (2011): The Transformation of Europe's Armed Forces: From the Rhine to Afghanistan. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kümmel, Gerhard/Soeters, Joseph S. (Eds.) (2012): New Wars, New Militaries, New Soldiers? Conflicts, the Armed Forces and the Soldierly Subject. Bingley: Emerald.
- Last, David (2011): Respectful Collaborative Stabilization Operations and the Rule of Law. In: Leuprecht/Troy/Last 2011: 275–296.
- Leuprecht, Christian (2012a): Security Implications of Demographic Change. In: Leuprecht/Hataley/Nossal 2012: 39–50.
- Leuprecht, Christian (2012b): Recruitment and Retention Strategy: Endogenous Constraints, Exogenous Imperatives. In: Kümmel/Soeters 2012: Chapter 5.

- Leuprecht, Christian/Hataley, Todd/Nossal, Kim Richard (Eds.) (2012): Evolving Transnational Threats and Border Security. Kingston: Queen's Centre for International and Defence Policy. <http://www.qshare.queensu.ca/Groups/QCIR/www/Publications/Martellos/Martello37En.pdf?uniq=gerhwi>.
- Leuprecht, Christian/Troy, Jodok/Last, David (Eds.) (2011): Mission Critical: The Role of Smaller Democracies in Global Stability Operations. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Moskos, Charles C./Williams, John Allen/Segal, David R. (Eds.) (1999): The Post-modern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Szvirczsev Tresch, Tibor/Leuprecht, Christian (Eds.) (2011): Europe without Soldiers? Recruitment and Retention among Europe's Armed Forces. Montreal – Kingston: McGill – Queen's University Press.
- United States Department of Defense (2012): Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State.