

Germany And NATO's Nuclear Nexus

By [Rick Rozoff](#)

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The reunification of Germany and the start of NATO's post-Cold War expansion, drive east and beginning of its transformation into a global military force occurred on the same day, October 3, 1990.

On that date East Germany was absorbed into the Federal Republic and simultaneously into NATO, the first of thirteen additions to the bloc from that time to the present year.

United since 1990 within its pre-1938 borders, Germany has cast aside most all post-Potsdam Agreement and Nuremberg Principles constraints and become a military power engaged in wars on the European and Asian continents (Yugoslavia in 1999, Afghanistan since 2001) and naval surveillance and interdiction operations in the Mediterranean Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

NATO membership was the gateway for Germany to send troops, warplanes and warships outside its borders and overseas for the first time since the end of World War II; to date to Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Sudan and off the coast of Somalia as well as deploying AWACS, Tornado warplanes and tanks to the US since the activation of NATO's Article 5 in 2001. The latter also led to the participation of the German Navy in the nearly eight-year-old Operation Active Endeavor monitoring and interdiction patrols throughout the Mediterranean Sea.

The nation has the third largest military budget of all European states, only surpassed by Britain and France. Germany's military spending is larger than Russia's, for example, even after German spending dropped and Russian increased last year. The numbers were \$46.8 and \$40 billion, respectively.

It also has the third largest army of any exclusively European state (Russia and Turkey excluded from this category) with some quarter of a million troops.

Though not itself a nuclear power, Germany hosts an undisclosed (for apparent reasons) number of the estimated 350-480 US nuclear warheads deployed in Europe to this day under NATO arrangements.

According to one report of two years ago "At least 20 US atomic warheads are reportedly still deployed underground at the German air base in the southwestern town of Buechel, where they can be mounted on German Tornado fighter planes...." [1]

According to a statement of the opposition Left Party, an additional 130 US warheads may be stored at the Ramstein Air Base, headquarters for the United States Air Forces in Europe

(USAFE) and also a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) installation. The same report adds “German air force pilots headquartered in Buechel will be ordered to drop nuclear bombs in case of a military attack or war.” [2]

Regarding Germany’s unabashed housing of nuclear weapons, the Director of NATO’s Nuclear Policy Section Guy Roberts said in 2007 that “Each decision in this field is up to national sovereignty. Each nation is free to decide whether or not it wants to actively participate in the joint management of nuclear devices.” [3]

Last year German government spokesman Ulrich Wilhelm made a statement that didn’t receive much coverage in the international news, to wit “For the foreseeable future ... we remain of the view that a deterring military capacity includes not only conventional capacity but also nuclear components.

“There is a NATO policy framework for the presence of US nuclear weapons in Europe. But the security details and the handling of those weapons are a matter of bilateral arrangements.” [4]

For bilateral, one is to understand the United States which placed the nuclear weapons and Germany which stores them and would deliver them if ordered to by the US and NATO. Among the American nuclear arms in Europe are 200-350 air-launched B-61 bombs stored in air bases in Germany, Turkey, Belgium, Italy and the Netherlands. [5]

Last year an internal U.S. Air Force report, The Blue Ribbon Review of Nuclear Weapons Policies and Procedures, “recommended that American nuclear assets in Europe be ‘consolidated,’ which analysts interpret as a recommendation to move the bombs to NATO bases under ‘U.S. wings,’ meaning American bases in Europe.”

The news source cited above also revealed that “Although technically owned by the U.S., nuclear bombs stored at NATO bases are designed to be delivered by planes from the host country.” [6] If the deployment of nuclear arms at US and NATO air bases in Europe wasn’t alarming enough, in January of 2006 former German Defense Minister Rupert Scholz was quoted as stating “Germany needed to ponder building its own nuclear deterrence system.”

In Scholz’s own words, “We need a serious discussion over how we can react to a nuclear threat by a terrorist ***state*** [emphasis added] in an appropriate manner – and in extreme cases with our own nuclear weapons.” [7]

Only hours after assuming the mantle of the French presidency in May of 2007 Nicolas Sarkozy spoke of a “holy” (his precise word) alliance with Germany and “underscored...France’s willingness to use its nuclear weapons to defend Germany in case of a hostile attack.” Sarkozy’s Defense Minister Michele Alliot-Marie was quoted as saying, “If Germany asked us for help, it is probable that European solidarity would come into play. For us, nuclear weapons are the ultimate protection against a threat from abroad.” [8]

Later in the year a German news source wrote of a reiteration of the offer and said that “President Nicolas Sarkozy has asked Germany to open talks about a possible role the country could play in France’s nuclear defence system” and that “Sarkozy told German leaders that French nuclear weapons were also protecting neighbouring Germany, which was one reason why they should think about a closer cooperation in that area.” [9]

NATO membership alone allows for – in fact necessitates – this policy but its public mention at such a high level signifies a qualitatively new emphasis on the use of nuclear weapons.

Another aspect of Sarkozy's proposed new Holy Alliance was detailed this past February:

"German troops are to be posted in France for the first time in 60 years, in an effort to uphold military cooperation between the ex-foes.

"Paris has agreed in principle to a proposal made by Germany earlier this year to allow a German battalion to be stationed in eastern France." [10]

This February German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke of NATO's collective defense obligation and an account issued by her office summarized her position as follows: "NATO has proved its worth as a defence alliance, which is why Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty (which lays out the right to individual and collective self-defence) should in the Chancellor's view continue to embody the substance of NATO. In future its main responsibility should continue to be to ensure the defence of member states. But today we face new threats and new conflicts. We must also prevent Iran developing nuclear weapons at all costs." [11]

A year before five former military chiefs of staff of major NATO states – General John Shalikashvili (former US chief of staff under Clinton and NATO's ex-Supreme Allied Commander), General Klaus Naumann (Germany's former top military commander and ex-Chairman of NATO's Military Committee), Lord Inge (former British Chief of the General Staff), General Henk van den Breemen (former Dutch chief of staff) and Admiral Jacques Lanxade (former French chief of staff) – issued a joint 150-page document which affirmed that the option of a nuclear first strike is indispensable, "since there is simply no realistic prospect of a nuclear-free world." [12]

Germany's Naumann was Chairman of the NATO Military Committee during the war against Yugoslavia in 1999.

On the eve of the 2008 NATO Summit in Bucharest, Romania – for which the document discussed above was largely prepared – a German news source wrote that "A French officer was quoted as saying that the document showed US determination to hand NATO the task of fighting terrorism on all five continents" and that "NATO will discuss the use of so-called mini-nukes behind closed doors at its Bucharest summit...." [13]

This January a high-level task force appointed by Pentagon chief Robert Gates, the Secretary of Defense Task Force on Defense Department Nuclear Weapons Management chaired by former defense secretary James Schlesinger, released a report advocating that the "United States should keep tactical nuclear bombs in Europe and even consider modernizing older warheads on cruise missiles...." The document states "The presence of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe remains a pillar of NATO unity." [14]

A Washington Post report on the study mentions that "The Natural Resources Defense Council, which specializes in nuclear matters, recently reported that about 400 U.S. B-61 tactical nuclear bombs are stored at bases in several NATO countries, including Germany, Italy, Turkey and the United Kingdom." [15]

The 1990 Treaty on the Final Settlement With Respect to Germany (or the 2 + 4 Agreement) with the Federal Republic of Germany, The German Democratic Republic, the United States,

Britain, France and the Soviet Union in the final months of its existence expressly prohibited the “manufacture, possession of, and control over nuclear” weapons.

How faithfully Berlin, Brussels and Washington have abided by that pledge in both letter and spirit has been seen. US nuclear weapons stored in Germany “can be mounted on German Tornado fighter planes” because “nuclear bombs stored at NATO bases are designed to be delivered by planes from the host country” and “German air force pilots headquartered in Buechel will be ordered to drop nuclear bombs in case of a military attack or war.” And as a former German defense minister urged “We need a serious discussion over how we can react...with our own nuclear weapons.”

Part 1

New NATO: Germany Returns To World Military Stage

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/message/40658>
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=14332>
<http://dandelionsalad.wordpress.com/2009/07/12/new-nato-germany-returns-to-world-military-stage-part-1-by-rick-rozoff/>

Part 2

From WW II To WW III: Global NATO And Remilitarized Germany

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/message/40691>
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=14377>
<http://dandelionsalad.wordpress.com/2009/07/14/from-ww-ii-to-ww-iii-global-nato-and-remilitarized-germany-part-ii-by-rick-rozoff/>

Part 3

Germany: First New Post-Cold War World Military Power

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/stopnato/message/40717>
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?context=va&aid=14415>
<http://dandelionsalad.wordpress.com/2009/07/16/germany-first-new-post-cold-war-world-military-power-part-iii-by-rick-rozoff/>

For all three previous articles combined see:

The Bundeswehr is back to the World Military Stage

<http://usa.mediamonitors.net/content/view/full/64608>

Note on references: Germany’s largest presswire, Deutsche Presse-Agentur, is only available by subscription and the cost for individuals is prohibitively expensive. Websites in Iran, Azerbaijan and China are among the best sources for DPA material in English, so citations are sometimes secondary.

- 1) Islamic Republic News Agency, September 1, 2007
- 2) German party marks Hiroshima anniversary, calls for removal of warheads
Islamic Republic News Agency, August 6, 2007
- 3) Rainews 24 (Italy), April 10, 2007
- 4) Agence France-Presse, June 23, 2008
- 5) Ibid

- 6) Time Magazine, June 19, 2008
- 7) Deutsche Press-Agentur, January 26, 2006
- 8) Islamic Republic News Agency, May 17, 2007
- 9) Der Spiegel from Agence France-Presse, September 15, 2007
- 10) Press TV, February 6, 2009
- 11) Federal Republic of Germany, The Federal Chancellor, February 7, 2009
- 12) Michel Chossudovsky, The US-NATO Preemptive Nuclear Doctrine: Trigger A Middle East Nuclear Holocaust to Defend "The Western Way of Life", Global Research, February 11, 2008
- 13) Deutsche Presse-Agentur, April 2, 2008
- 14) Washington Post, January 9, 2009
- 15) Ibid

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