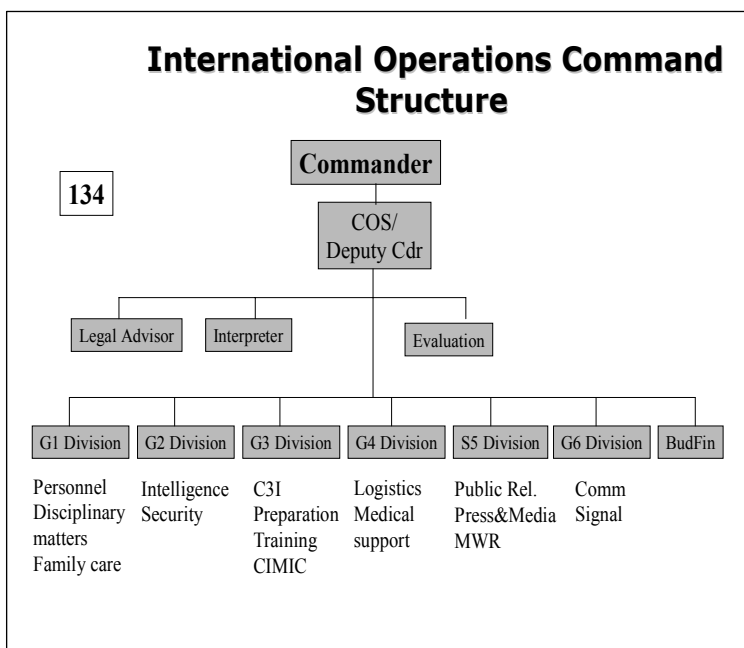


Austrian Participation in Peace Support Operations

Major General Günter HÖFLER
Commander, Austrian International Operations
Command

First of all I want to present to you the staff structure of the AUTINT. As you can see on the illustration below the staff is structured in 7 divisions and includes around 135 staff members.



Austria has a long tradition in peace support, starting already in the 19th century when a multinational task

force was deployed in Crete in order to settle ethnic unrest between the Greek and the Turkish population.

It was in 1960 when again Austrian Forces were asked to provide support to the solution of ethnic conflicts – this time in the Republic of Congo. The Austrian Army, only 5 years old at that time, immediately sent a medical unit, consisting of 166 men and women, to the crisis area. This mission lasted until 1964 and was focusing on medical support for UN Forces, the local population and refugees.

Since the mid sixties of the last century until now, Austria has been participating in the in numerous PSOs, such as the operation Cyprus, the Golan Heights, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Kosovo, Afghanistan, where we deployed troops and other areas like the Middle East, the Western Sahara, Georgia, etc. where we sent military observers. In addition to that Austria provided aid to humanitarian catastrophes like in Pakistan, Iran, Sri Lanka and Albania.

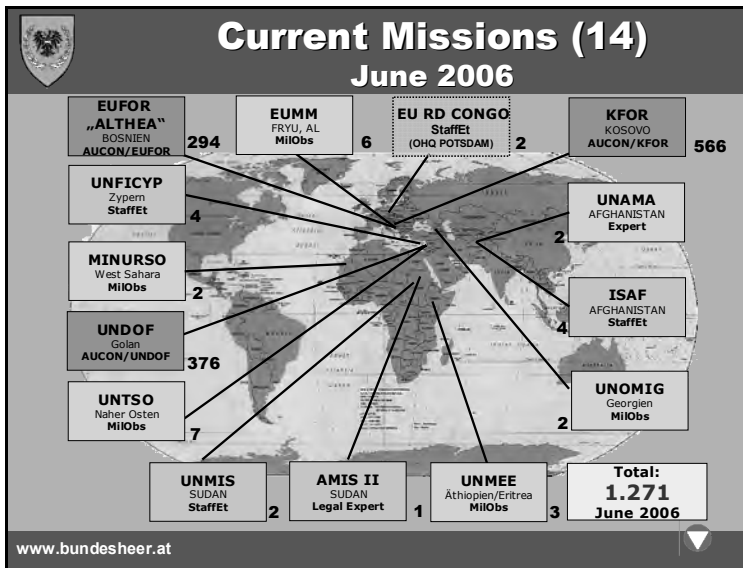
The contribution of the Austrian Armed Forces in PSOs is based on the Charter of the United Nations and the Article 23f of the Austrian constitution (which approves Austria's participation in common foreign and security policy measures).

Currently, Austria is committing nearly 1,300 troops or individuals to 14 missions abroad, as you can see on the chart on the next page.

During the last half century, the character of PSOs has changed considerably from mere observation and reporting missions to complex operations ranging from peace keeping to peace enforcement.

This has consequences for both the training and the character of leadership. Because of the widespread and

flexible information system and the media on the spot, PSOs require a sensitive handling of the conflict. Therefore, Austrian troops need longer training and preparation in order to be able to deal with complicated scenarios, sometimes dominated by rules of engagement which are not easy to understand for the common soldier.



In order to be able to meet these challenges, Austrian troops and individuals operating abroad are subject to constant evaluation. This starts already during the build-up phase of a contingent scheduled to be deployed abroad and is continued during the whole mission. After the redeployment of a contingent, the lessons learned during the tour abroad are taken into consideration for the preparation of the follow-on contingents.

This means in detail that Austrian soldiers scheduled for PSOs have to undergo the following types of training:

1. Each soldier has to undergo a general training.
2. After that, mission-specific training is provided to
 - a. Commanders of all levels
 - b. Staff personnel and
 - c. Key personnel

After the individual soldier has been trained for his/her function, the soldier is trained within his organizational element, i.e. team, crew, squad and platoon.

When these elements have reached full operational readiness, they are formed to a task force, structured for the mission abroad. Once the task force is complete, it has to go through a force integration training in order to check their operational abilities. Only when the task force is assessed to have operational readiness, it is sent to the mission area. Details you can find on the following chart.



The Austrian training for international operations has a good reputation, which is also very much appreciated by foreign armies. That is why Austria offers courses like the military observer course, the CIMIC course, military police course, logistics course, etc.

Currently, Austria is focusing on the following PSO missions and around 1.300 soldiers are operating abroad. Austria's main mission at the moment is the KFOR mission in the Kosovo, where we have deployed 550 troops since 1999. This strength will be maintained for the next future. The Austrian Task Force "DULJE" also includes units from Germany and Switzerland. Austria is the Lead Nation.

A very important mission is our deployment to EUFOR. Austria started its commitment to this Task Force in 1995 (at that time called IFOR), then continuing under the name SFOR and now operating since 2004 under the name EUFOR. In December last year Austria took over, for the first time, the lead of a brigade-sized multinational task force, the MNTF (N), including troops from 13 nations. Around 300 Austrian troops are serving in this task force, among them an aviation unit consisting of three helicopters.

Another important mission is the UNDOF Mission on the Golan height, to which Austria has been deploying troops for more than 32 years. The Austrian contingent is reinforced by troops (1 coy) from Slovakia. This mission is famous for its observer positions on the Mount Hermon, the highest of them being located at an altitude of about 2,800 meters above sea level.

One of the biggest challenges so far was the commitment of Austrian soldiers to Afghanistan. This has happened two times so far. The first deployment started in January 2002 with the commitment of an infantry unit tasked to contribute to a safe and secure environment in the area of Kabul. This mission lasted for one year.

The next time Austrian soldiers were sent to Afghanistan was from August to November 2005 where our soldiers provided security to the general Afghan elections, this time in the area of Kunduz.

Talking about international humanitarian missions, I must not forget to mention the Austrian Forces Disaster Relief Unit (AFDRU). This unit is specialized in and famous for the aid it is able to provide to regions shaken by natural or man-made disasters, like earthquakes, landslides, tsunamis, biological catastrophes, etc. The AFDRU is based on a modular system allowing tailoring its support to the real need and thus makes it deployable on short notice. So, AFUDRU was e.g. able to send a water purification unit to Pakistan within 48 hours.

The solution of crises also includes infrastructural reconstruction. Therefore Austria and AUTINT in particular attach great importance to the cooperation between military units and civil authorities in order to boost this matter. This process is called CIMIC, which stands for “civil-military cooperation”. By means of CIMIC we try to coordinate civil and military reconstruction efforts very closely and, thus, efficiently. With the contribution of Austrian civil companies and the support of NGOs, the Austrian Armed Forces are able to accelerate the rebuilding of public and private

infrastructure and to reestablish a basis of life for the population in the crises area.

CIMIC is a rather complex matter which needs coordination between the parties involved not only in the mission areas but also in Austria.

As the Austrian soldiers are very family-oriented people, we try to develop a soldier and family-care system. This means that we organize so-called family days on a regular basis where the families of the soldiers serving abroad come together in our barracks and get updated information about their sons, daughters, husbands deployed to foreign countries. They can also get into direct contact with them by means of video telephones. To provide soldiers abroad a typical Austrian flair, we organize performances of famous Austrian artists in the mission areas.

As I already mentioned before, we constantly try to improve our performance and therefore our training system for missions abroad. Besides the need to integrate the lessons learned into the training of our troops we have also found that a main pillar of our success in foreign countries relies on our reservists. As Austrian career soldiers can not be ordered to go abroad, its PSO system depends very much on the willingness of reserve soldiers to take part in such missions. This does not only mean that it helps us to get the manpower required on the table of organization but also that the reservists bring with them a lot of experience from their civil professional activities. “Civilian know-how meets and boosts military skills” has become very widespread slogan within the

Austrian Army and society. This is why currently 50% of the Austrian forces operating abroad consist of reservists.

Even though reservists are very important, normally they are not at hand within a short period of time. That is why Austria starts to offer short-time contracts for up to 3 years, a period during which the soldier is constantly operational and can be ordered to take part in at least one six-month mission abroad. If a soldier signs this contract, he is granted a standby bonus of 350 Euros per month.

Currently the Austrian Army has 1,100 of such FIOP (Forces for International Operations) soldiers. Since one year a company of FIOP soldiers is operating in the Kosovo.

Let me now come to the end with a summary about the experiences the Austrian Armed Forces have made in international PSOs so far:

- The framework conditions and the character of PSOs have changed and become more complex.
- Troops have to deal with increased multinationality.
- In order to be successful (e.g. in peace enforcement operations), peace support missions have to be based on robust ROEs.
- PSOs require a more intensive intelligence and reconnaissance.
- In order to gain control of escalating situations, nations need rapidly deployable forces.
- As every crisis has its own character we need tailored forces when we want to counter it successfully

- Today, the PSO soldier has to be familiar with modern PSO techniques like the ability to negotiate, to handle threats coming from explosive devices, violent crowds, etc.

We are sure that we will meet these challenges, because the Austrian soldier has a very good reputation abroad, or, as the British General Mc Call said: “Austrian soldiers are firm, fair and friendly and have shown excellent performance in peace support and humanitarian missions”.

The Austrian Armed Forces are convinced that PSO operations will remain an important issue for the future. That is why we will focus our efforts for the next years on this matter, of course not neglecting the homeland defense.