
Defense Report

AUSA



Host-Nation Support—Our All-Time Bargain in Jeopardy

For years U.S. Army, Europe, has reported serious inadequacies in its logistic support and has maintained that the most pressing wartime problem facing the command is an inability to sustain combat operations. The credibility of the Army's deterrent posture is undermined when an enemy can easily recognize a lack of stamina.

For years USAREUR has considered three ways to alleviate the problem: first, a larger USAREUR, more combat service support units deployed to Europe; second, more prepositioned equipment and more strategic lift for moving units from CONUS to combat; third, host-nation support, logistics support supplied by the countries in which our forces are deployed. Costs, timeliness and practicality have combined to identify host-nation support as the most promising and economical.

Last year the German government agreed to help support U.S. forces in Europe with both civilian resources and 93,000 German soldiers organized into many of the units needed by American forces. For the first time, and in spite of the historic NATO policy that "logistics is a national responsibility," a nation agreed to help sustain the forces of another. In return, the United States undertook to provide and retain title to that essential equipment needed by the host-nation units and not available from the German civil sector.

USAREUR has already arranged for significant civilian sector contributions. And USAREUR and the German Army have produced the "military model," the organizational structure for the 93,000 soldiers.

All, it would seem, goes well. A major improvement in the war-fighting sustainability of American forces is under way. A major contribution to the credibility of deterrence is about to be realized. But this most practical, most timely, and most economical solution to the most pressing wartime need will be denied to USAREUR if Congress sticks to its decisions to deny funds needed for the American contribution to this undertaking. By some calculations it could cost 200 times more for another option. That arithmetic qualifies the host-nation support agreement as one of the all-time bargains. It should be supported.