

Withdrawal of American soldiers from Germany; pros and cons.

by Marta Cichocka

The political, diplomatic, and military scene has been buzzing recently. Currently, one of the most important topics in Europe is President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw American troops from Germany. This decision raises a lot of controversy and disagreements, but is removing troops from Germany such a wrong decision? Can this decision affect Europe?

On June 15, 2020, U.S. President Donald Trump announced his plan to cut the number of American troops in Germany significantly. He decided to reduce one-third of the force and keep in this ally country no more than 25,000 soldiers. During his meeting with President of the Republic of Poland, Andrzej Duda, on June 24, 2020, President Donald Trump assured him that some of the American troops from Germany would be transferred to Poland. President Andrzej Duda voiced his support for the existence of the American forces in Europe for the good of his own country and for the security of the continent.

President Donald Trump cites many reasons for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Germany, and one of them is the concern that Germany does not spend enough on defense. Trump constancy criticizes all the NATO allies who do not spend 2 percent of GDP on their defense. It is important to note that Germany's goal is to reach 1,5 percent by 2024, and 2% spending by 2031 (Foreign Policy Research Institute).

President Donald Trump also believes that Europe's political situation has changed and that there is no need to protect Germany from Russia. Still, Poland and other Eastern European Countries are at more significant risk. Donald Trump has already shown his support for this region by strengthening the eastern flank of NATO. Changes in the military infrastructure and logistics improvements can be noticed in countries like Poland, Romania, and the Baltic states. Moreover, President Donald Trump noted a significant difference in

Germany's view, which is more and more anti-American, contrasting to pro-American Poland (Łucja Cannon, American Greatness).

During his presidency, it was notable that President Donald Trump is not indifferent to the energy situations in Central and Eastern Europe. He strongly supports energy independence in this region of the world. He notices that the creation of the Nord Stream II pipeline between Russia and Germany will increase Europe's dependence on Russian gas (Marc A. Thiessen, The Washington Post). It seems like Germany does not support their Eastern European allies, but they focus only on their own good. This German decision is like stabbing a knife in our back by someone we want to trust.

The opponents of President Trump's decision to withdraw American troops from Germany believe that it is a very wrong move. As it might seem, that punishment for Germany might create more harm than good in the Eastern European region. It can weaken the security of frontline states. The opponents, like Ian Brzezinski, believe that this decision will also affect the security of the United States itself and by extension NATO.

The withdraw of such a large number of American military personal from Germany will significantly reduce U.S. influence in the European Continent. It is important to note that Germany is a strategic operational location for the transatlantic alliance. American forces in Europe and their presence in the region give strong credibility to American and NATO forces in Europe (CEEC).

Several Republican members of the House Armed Services Committee expressed their concerns that President Trump's decision might damage the national security of the United States and our European allies and, at the same time, strengthen Russia's position and perhaps even encourage Putin in his further aggression and *revanchism*. It should be pointed out that the Russian threats in Europe still exist. The reduction of American military personnel in Germany can be viewed as a sign of declining U.S. assurance to NATO.

According to the Foreign Policy Research Institute, even though Germany is not paying fixed two percent of GDP for defense, this country hosts several military facilities,

including five of seven major U.S. garrisons located in Europe, combatant commands, airbases, etc. Thousands of military personnel came to Germany with their families, who are also welcome in the country. The German nation's contribution to NATO is significant, and can not be reduced to a per cent of GDP.

The fact that for the past 70 years the transatlantic alliance acted successfully in Europe very much depends on strong relationships between NATO's members, based on trust and solidarity. However, there is still work to do, and more can be done by uniting the allies. Withdrawal of American troops from Germany can weaken the bond and might make the work harder to complete. It might significantly reduce U.S. influence in Europe and directly weaken the security of frontline states like Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland. It might encourage Putin to further aggression and *revanchism* and negatively influence Europe, the United States, and NATO.

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