



**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION DIVISION
1155 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1155**

Ref: 20-F-0830
December 14, 2022

Mr. Austin Evers
American Oversight
1030 15th Street NW
Suite B255
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Evers:

This is in further response to your March 5, 2020 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, a copy of which is enclosed for your convenience. We received your request on March 5, 2020, and assigned it FOIA case number 20-F-0830. We ask that you use this number when referring to your request.

As stated in our November 15, 2021 response to you, we conducted searches within the offices of the Correspondence Management Division, Health Affairs, the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs, the Secretary of Defense Communications and the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JS). JS located five pages determined to be responsive to your request. Scott L. McPherson, Chief, Information Management Division Declassification Branch, in his capacity as an Initial Denial Authority, determined that some of the information in the enclosed five pages is exempt from release pursuant to the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(6), which pertains to information, which if disclosed, would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the personal privacy of individuals.

During our initial review of the records, we recognized National Security Council (NSC) equities and erroneously referred pages to NSC for review and direct response to you. We have since retrieved those records from NSC and releasable portions of the documents enclosed reflect the reviews of both JS and NSC.

This is our final response to your request. In this instance, fees for processing your request were below the threshold for requiring payment. Please note that fees may be assessed on future requests.

If you have any questions or concerns about the foregoing or about the processing of your request, please do not hesitate to contact the Action Officer assigned to your request, Jasmine Anderson, at jasmine.j.anderson.civ@mail.mil or 571-372-0420. Additionally, if you have concerns about service received by our office, please contact a member of our Leadership Team at 571-372-0498 or Toll Free at 866-574-4970.

Should you wish to inquire about mediation services, you may contact the OSD/JS FOIA Public Liaison, Tonya R. Fuentes, at 571-372-0462 or by email at OSD.FOIALiaison@mail.mil, or the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration. The contact information for OGIS is as follows:

Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS
College Park, MD 20740
E-mail: ogis@nara.gov
Telephone: 202-741-5770
Fax: 202-741-5769
Toll-free: 1-877-684-6448

You have the right to appeal to the appellate authority, Ms. Joo Chung, Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency, by writing directly to the following address: 4800 Mark Center Drive, ATTN: DPCLTD, FOIA Appeals, Mailbox# 24, Alexandria, VA 22350-1700.

Your appeal must be postmarked within 90 calendar days of the date of this response. Alternatively, you may email your appeal to osd.foia-appeal@mail.mil. If you use email, please include the words "FOIA Appeal" in the subject of the email. Please also reference FOIA case number 20-F-0830 in any appeal correspondence.

We appreciate your patience in the processing of your request. As stated previously, please contact the Action Officer assigned to your request, Jasmine Anderson, and reference FOIA case number 20-F-0830, if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Stephanie L. Carr

Stephanie L. Carr
Chief

Enclosures:
As stated

(b)(6) CTR (USA)

From: O'Brien, Robert C. EOP/WHO <(b)(6)>
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 2:37 PM
To: Ulliyot, John L. EOP/NSC; Gray, Alexander B. EOP/NSC
Cc: Gilmartin, Kayleigh M. EOP/WHO; Farah, Alyssa A. EOP/WHO; Williams, Tom M. EOP/NSC; Vandroff, Mark R. EOP/NSC; Ortagus, Morgan D; Esper, Mark HON SD; Milley, Mark A GEN USARMY JS OCJCS (USA); SESMRP1; Pottinger, Matthew F. EOP/WHO
Subject: RE: WSJ: Trump Directs U.S. Troop Reduction in Germany

John,

Per our conversation and the below, the Pentagon is still working on the decision memo and a plan. There is nothing public yet as far as I am aware. This repositioning of troops is part of a longstanding review of our force posture overseas and in Europe. I believe that Ambassador Grenell discussed the issue publicly in Germany last year. We'll announce when we have something to tell the public. DOS and DOD will be in touch with their counterparts in Germany and Europe at the appropriate time. On the broader front, Europe and NATO substantially increased defense spending commitments at the last NATO summit under President Trump's, Secretary Esper's and Secretary Pompeo's leadership. Europe's more robust role in its own defense will allow America to bring some troops home and to reposition some of them in the Indo-Pacific. America will keep 25K troops in Germany and many more in Europe to meet our commitments to the Atlantic Alliance, to which we are firmly committed. Any suggestion that relations with Germany are not strong and cordial and that our force posture review is related to the G-7 or a call with Chancellor Merkel are ridiculous.

Please work closely with WH comms, DOD comms and DOS comms to ensure that this situation is not misrepresented and to develop an appropriate strategy.

Best,
RCO

From: Ulliyot, John L. EOP/NSC <(b)(6)>
Sent: Friday, June 5, 2020 1:44 PM
To: O'Brien, Robert C. EOP/WHO <(b)(6)>; Gray, Alexander B. EOP/NSC <(b)(6)>
Cc: DL NSC NSA FO Staff <(b)(6)>
Subject: Fwd: WSJ: Trump Directs U.S. Troop Reduction in Germany

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Vincent, Grayson K. EOP/NSC" <(b)(6)>
Date: June 5, 2020 at 1:22:46 PM EDT
To: DL NSC EUR <(b)(6)>, DL NSC Defense <(b)(6)>, DL NSC Legislative <(b)(6)>
Cc: DL NSC STRATCOM <(b)(6)>
Subject: WSJ: Trump Directs U.S. Troop Reduction in Germany

Trump Directs U.S. Troop Reduction in Germany

The move would reduce the U.S. troop presence in Germany by 9,500

By

Michael R. Gordon

and

Gordon Lubold

June 5, 2020 12:47 pm ET

President Trump has directed the Pentagon to remove thousands of U.S. troops from Germany by September, U.S. government officials said Friday.

The move would reduce the U.S. troop presence in Germany by 9,500 troops from the 34,500 troops that are permanently assigned there.

The move also caps the number of U.S. service members who are in Germany at any one time at the 25,000-troop level. Under current practice, overall troop levels can rise to as high as 52,000 as units rotate in and out or take part in training exercises.

The change was ordered by the White House in a memorandum signed recently by White House National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien, the officials said Friday.

One person familiar with the decision said that it has been under discussion within the administration since September and not linked to the decision by German Chancellor Angela Merkel not to attend a G-7 meeting that Mr. Trump was to host in Washington at the end of June.

But it comes amid sharp strains in U.S. relations with Germany, including over [Germany's level of military spending](#).

Richard Grenell, the former ambassador to Germany who recently stepped down as the acting director of national intelligence, has long pressed for a troop cut amid complaints that the German government isn't spending enough on its own defense.

Germany's defense minister promised last year to meet the NATO goal of [spending 2% of its GDP on defense](#), but the target date for meeting that objective is 2031.

Pentagon officials declined to comment.

(b)(6)

CTR (USA)

From: O'Brien, Robert C. EOP/WHO (b)(6)
Sent: Saturday, June 6, 2020 7:58 AM
To: Ulliyot, John L. EOP/NSC
Cc: Gray, Alexander B. EOP/NSC; Gilmartin, Kayleigh M. EOP/WHO; Farah, Alyssa A. EOP/WHO; Williams, Tom M. EOP/NSC; Vandroff, Mark R. EOP/NSC; Ortagus, Morgan D; Esper, Mark HON SD; Milley, Mark A GEN USARMY JS OCJCS (USA); SESMRP1; Pottinger, Matthew F. EOP/WHO; Hoffman, Jonathan R SES OSD OSD (USA); Gidley, Hogan H. EOP/WHO; Vasquez, Eddie J. EOP/NSC
Subject: Re: WSJ: Trump Directs U.S. Troop Reduction in Germany

Thanks. RCO

Sent from my iPad

On Jun 5, 2020, at 2:46 PM, Ulliyot, John L. EOP/NSC (b)(6) wrote:

+Hogan/Jonathan/Eddie

Will do Ambassador O'Brien — we discussed and are working on a holding statement from NSC along those lines and will circulate it to the group shortly.

Meantime DoD/State and WH Comms will continue to refer reporters to NSC so that we don't have competing voices on this.

Thanks very much,

John U.

(b)(6)

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 5, 2020, at 2:36 PM, O'Brien, Robert C. EOP/WHO (b)(6) wrote:

John,

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