

Wir veröffentlichen das Transkript der Pressekonferenz zum US-Truppenabzug aus der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, die am 29. Juli 2020 im Pentagon in Washington stattgefunden hat, in englischer Sprache – mit angehängten übersetzten Passagen aus den Ausführungen des US-Verteidigungsministers und des EUCOM-Chefs.

**LUFTPOST**

Friedenspolitische Mitteilungen aus der  
US-Militärregion Kaiserslautern/Ramstein  
LP 060/20 – 31.07.20

## **Department of Defense Senior Leaders Brief Reporters on European Force Posture July 29, 2020**

**Secretary Of Defense Mark T. Esper; Joint Chiefs Of Staff Vice Chairman General John Hyten; General Tod Wolters, Commander, U.S. European Command, And Supreme Allied Commander Europe**

Department of Defense, July 29, 12020

( <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/2292996/department-of-defense-senior-leaders-brief-reporters-on-european-force-posture/> )

Eine Videoaufzeichnung dieser Pressekonferenz ist aufzurufen unter <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgWxTathkHw> .

Nachfolgend drucken im Gegensatz zur sonst üblichen Praxis zuerst ein Transkript der kompletten Pressekonferenz in englischer Sprache und ab S. 10 dieser LUFTPOST eine Übersetzung der im englischen Text in Fettschrift hervorgehobenen Passagen ab, die konkrete Angaben über die Einheiten enthalten, die abgezogen werden sollen.

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE MARK T. ESPER:** Okay, good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us today.

Since being sworn into office more than a year ago, I have been consistent in stating that my top priority would be implementing the National Defense Strategy. Over the past year, we've done just that.

If you look at my recent message to the Joint Force regarding the progress we've made, you will see very clearly how far we have moved over our three lines of effort, which include the first line of effort, building more lethal force, and the second line of effort, strengthen alliances, as well as our 10 subordinate goals.

One important initiative to advance the NDS has been to conduct a review of all the combatant commands to ensure a focus on NDS priorities. This includes optimizing our force presence worldwide; directing our time, money, and manpower toward our highest priorities; implementing our immediate response force, contingency response force, and dynamic force employment enhanced readiness concepts; and moving toward greater use of rotational forces from the United States to enhance our strategic flexibility and operational unpredictability, as we've done over the past few months with our bomber task forces.

We are pursuing several other initiatives under this rubric as well. There are currently more than a half-dozen combatant command reviews underway, beginning with U.S. Africa Command, which began late last year, and the most recent being U.S. Space Command. Today, we want to update you on the status of our U.S. European Command review,

which was accelerated with the president's decision in early June to reduce our footprint in Germany, and our plans to reposition our forces in Europe to be better-situated for great power competition.

It is important to note that in NATO's 71-year history the size, composition and disposition of U.S. forces in Europe has changed many times. Sometimes this has been a result of changes in the threat, sometimes because of other changes in the international environment, and sometimes simply because the borders between NATO countries and Russia have shifted as new allies have joined.

As we've entered a new era of great power competition, we are now at another one of those inflection points in NATO's history, and I'm confident the alliance will be all the better and stronger for it. Since June, EUCOM has done excellent work in developing a plan that achieves the president's objective and meets the following five principles that I gave General Wolters as he and his staff began their planning: first, enhanced deterrence of Russia; second, strengthen NATO; third, reassure allies; fourth, improve U.S. strategic flexibility and EUCOM operational flexibility; and fifth, take care of our service members and their families in the process.

The president approved the EUCOM plan in late June, we briefed key members of Congress last week, and the team and I spoke with NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg and directly-affected allies over the past few days. As we share the plan with you, I want to note that this plan is subject to, and likely will change to some degree as it evolves over time.

**The current EUCOM plan will reposition approximately 11,900 military personnel from Germany, from roughly 36,000 down to 24,000, in a manner that will strengthen NATO, enhance the deterrence of Russia, and meet the other principles I set forth. Of the 11,900, nearly 5,600 service members will -- will be repositioned within NATO countries, and approximately 6,400 will return to the United States, though many of these or similar units will begin conducting rotational deployments back to Europe.**

**The broad strokes of these moves are as follows. First, various United States headquarters will be consolidated in locations in Europe outside of Germany, including in some cases, co-locating at the same locations as their NATO counterparts in Belgium and Italy. This will strengthen NATO and improve the operational efficiency and readiness of over 2,000 service members in these headquarters.**

**Second, the nearly 4,500 members of the 2nd Cavalry Regiment will return to the United States as other Stryker units begin continuous rotations farther east in the Black Sea region, giving us a more enduring presence to enhance deterrence and reassure allies along NATO's southeastern flank.**

**Third, the 2,500 airmen based in Mildenhall, United Kingdom, who are responsible for aerial refueling and special operations, and who had been scheduled to rebase to Germany, will remain in the United Kingdom, thus ensuring the uninterrupted readiness and responsiveness of these units.**

**Fourth, a fighter squadron and elements of a fighter wing will be repositioned to Italy, moving them closer to the Black Sea region and better capable of conducting dynamic force employments and rotational deployments to NATO's southeastern flank.**

**In addition to these moves and the rotational forces announced by President Trump and Polish President Duda in 2019, we also plan on rotating forward the lead element of the Army's newly established V Corps headquarters to Poland, once Warsaw signs a defense cooperation agreement and burden-sharing deal, as previously pledged. There are or may be other opportunities as well to move additional forces into Poland and the Baltics.**

**Our aim is to implement these moves as expeditiously -- as expeditiously as possible, consistent with the principles I set forth from the beginning, particularly being fair to and taking care of our service members and their families. We could see some moves begin within weeks, others will take longer.**

As anyone could see, the repositioning of our forces in Europe constitutes a major strategic and positive shift wholly in line with the NDS and consistent with other adjustments the United States had made within NATO in previous times.

These changes will achieve the core principles of enhancing U.S. and NATO deterrence of Russia, strengthening NATO, reassuring allies, and improving U.S. strategic flexibility and EUCOM operational flexibility. And of course, at all times, we will prioritize our most importance resource: our service members and their families.

**No moves will take place without thorough communication with our people, continued engagement with Congress, and consultation with our allies.**

Thank you, and I will now turn it over to the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Hyten, and then EUCOM Commander General Wolters.

**GENERAL JOHN HYTEN:** Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Good morning, everyone, and thanks for being here today.

Looking back at history, NATO was established more than 70 years ago by 12 countries who signed the North Atlantic Treaty right here in Washington. France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands comprised the eastern flank. As other nations joined NATO, the eastern flank shifted to Germany, and has continued to expand further into Eastern Europe, now with 30 countries in NATO. So another rebalance is essential.

One of our primary missions is to prevent another great power war, and to maintain great power peace. The National Defense Strategy, the NDS, guides our efforts to adapt the force, and the EUCOM plan optimizes our force posture in Europe as we seek to deter malign actors there.

This rebalance consistent with the NDS will align NATO and EUCOM capabilities, better distribute forces across Europe, and increase the use of rotational forces, thus bolstering our commitment to Europe. It enhances deterrence and improves operational flexibility.

Repositioning our forces and making consolidations will provide General Wolters, as the commander, increased ability to dynamically employ his force. This effort will increase opportunities to partner with and strengthen our bond with allies and partners in the region. It will also require additional planning and consultation with our allies.

And let me emphasize that point. We have been and we will remain transparent and collaborative as planning and execution moves forward.

I had the opportunity, as the secretary just mentioned, to speak with a number of my military counterparts over the last week to preview the force posture changes in Europe that we've outlined. Every day, our allies and partners join us in defending freedom, deterring war, and maintaining the rules which underwrite a free and open international order. This strategic posture realignment in Europe, and other actions INDOPACOM is taking as well, should send a clear, unmistakable message to our competitors: the joint force is committed to acting as opportunities arise to counter malign activities, and we remain positioned to deter military aggression against the U.S. and its -- and our allies. While we hope that Russia and China will engage in more productive and cooperative behavior in the future, we are posturing our forces to deter aggression and counter their malign influence.

So the secretary highlighted many of the details. I won't go into those, but I want to take a brief moment to just touch on the impact to our force and our families.

For almost 40 years, I've watched our people and our families sacrifice for this country. It's remarkable what they've done and what they continue to do, and I believe that's the greatest advantage that we as the United States of America have. It's our people in the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, Marines, and our families.

The people we have to do this mission are most incredible. We're going to work closely and communicate frequent -- frequently with each of the services on implementing the changes that we move forward, and most importantly, we want to ensure stability for the service members and their families. Service members will be informed of re-stationing decisions well in advance in order to prepare themselves and their families for any moves. The safety and well-being of our service members and their families remains our top priority.

And finally, we'll continue to work closely with the Congress, and they will be consulted on any movements of units back to the United States, as well as repositioning in Europe.

So I want to close by thanking all our servicemen and women. I want to recognize each and every one of them who are in this fight. The readiness of our military is strong. We're capable. We're ready, no matter what the threat. No one doubts the readiness of the United States military to respond and defend the American people if required, and our allies.

With that, I'll turn it over to General Wolters, whose staff led the effort to develop the plan you heard the secretary describe. We'll lead further detailed discussions, as well as planning and implementation in the future. Over to you, General Wolters.

**GENERAL TOD WOLTERS:** Thank you, Secretary Esper, and thank you, Vice Chairman Hyten.

**Good morning and good afternoon to all of you from our headquarters here in Mons, Belgium. Our U.S. EUCOM strategy demands ever-increasing speed in all endeavors, and ever-improving posture. We focus on actions inside and outside our area of responsibility, and vigilance with respect to great power competition is an absolute imperative.**

**As was discussed, this realignment allows us to favorably deter against Russia, assist NATO, strengthen the alliance, improve Secretary Esper's strategic flexibility and improve EUCOM's operational flexibility, all the while keeping a close eye on the care and feeding of our families.**

**As Secretary Esper highlighted, the current plan proposes the repositioning of headquarters at the combatant command, component command and lower levels. Repositioning U.S. EUCOM headquarters and its component, U.S. Special Operations Command Europe from Germany to Belgium co-locates these organizations with SHAPE headquarters. This will improve the speed and clarity of our decision-making and promote greater operational alignment.**

**Also, there is the potential to reposition U.S. AFRICOM headquarters and its component, U.S. Special Operations Command Africa to a location to be determined. We also intend to reposition three brigade-sized headquarters, an air defense artillery battalion and an engineering battalion to Belgium from Germany, and two smaller support and contracting organizations to Italy. Pending further planning and refinement, we anticipate the 52nd Civil Engineering Squadron could move soonest, at a time to be determined, from Germany to Italy. And as Secretary Esper pointed out, we will propose repositioning an F-16 fighter squadron, its aircraft, its pilots and its jet mechanics from Germany to Italy. We also anticipate the repositioning of two battalions from Germany to Italy to reunite with their parent brigade headquarters, a move that will enhance unity of command.**

**The proposal to reposition forces back to CONUS, as the secretary mentioned with respect to the 2nd Cav Regiment, will allow those units to regain maximum U.S. at-home-station readiness and more effectively support global contingencies, while still maintaining a keen focus on Europe. The forces repositioned within Europe will better promote and better perform comprehensive defense and shared response. This is in alignment with NATO's new military strategy, the first strategy document for the military in over six decades. These efforts all increase our opportunity to generate greater peace in Europe and enhance the U.S.'s effectiveness in great power competition.**

We look forward to taking your questions.

STAFF: All right, so we'll go to the phones first, Lita Baldor. I'd just ask everybody to keep it to one question today so we can get through some people. If not, I'll be forced to reclaim my time. So Lita Baldor.

(Laughter.)

Q: Hi. Thanks.

One question for -- just requesting a few details. How much -- Mr. Secretary, about how much do you think this will cost? How -- what -- how many troops do you think can get moved more quickly? You -- you mentioned some might be able to be moved within weeks. How many of those do you think could be moved within weeks? And could you just give a little bit more detail on those coming home? Where would they come home to? Thank you.

SEC. ESPER: Okay, I think that's about three questions, but I'll -- I'll take a quick swag at them.

Clearly, the costs right now are estimates. It'll -- it'll take a several billion dollars, I'd say, single digits, but that -- that'll be spread out over time, obviously. But we need to refine that. That's where a lot of this work will come in in terms of fine-tuning it.

Where the units will go into the States, that's going to be a -- a matter of consultation, of course, with Congress. It'll be a service responsibility to determine where they should go to

enhance the readiness, to make sure we have adequate housing and childcare and hospital care and all that for families. So that'll be a process that'll be undertaken by the -- by the services.

And with regard to how quickly units will move, like I said, I'll just say a matter of weeks. It requires diplomacy. We've been in touch with State Department, working close with them. They -- they -- they feel very strongly that this is a positive move, as well. I've spoken to Secretary Pompeo, so we need to rely in -- in -- in good degree on their diplomatic efforts, as well.

But this is something we want to do, we feel very good about. We think it meets all the principles and objectives I outlined, so we want to get there as quickly as possible because of the importance it has to the alliance and to deterring Russia.

STAFF: (inaudible) I'm sorry. Moving back to domestically.

SEC. ESPER: Yeah, the services will handle the domestic piece, so that will take some time.

STAFF: Okay. Lena?

Q: I'm Lena Klimkeit from the German Press Agency, GPA.

As you can imagine, it's from great importance for Germany, what you're announcing today, so I would like to -- to ask for the specific sites which are affected by the reduction of troops. If you could name the exact locations, that would be great.

SEC. ESPER: Yeah, I'm going to -- I can, but I'm going to turn this over to General Wolters to answer because he can give you more comprehensive answer.

General Wolters, did you hear the question?

GEN. WOLTERS: I did, Secretary. And if I could, with respect to the sites of the EUCOM headquarters, as -- as you well know, they currently reside, the headquarters, at Patch Barracks in Stuttgart. And we anticipate -- again, with more refinement required -- to ultimately shift that headquarters into Mons, Belgium, co-located with SHAPE headquarters.

Corresponding with the EUCOM headquarters movement is the Special Operations Command Europe headquarters movement, also in Stuttgart, to Mons, Belgium, located at the same site.

And we have proposals with AFRICOM. And as I mentioned in my opening comments, those discussions have a long ways to go, lots of refinement in front of us and sites to be determined.

And there are other smaller headquarters in much lower numbers that were part of my discussion that also can be located in Belgium at Chievres complex, it's an aviation complex that we work in and out of. It's approximately 25 kilometers away from Mons, Belgium. And we anticipate, pending further refinement, to move some smaller headquarters to that location. Thank you.

SEC. ESPER: I'll just add that probably the area most affected would be the Stuttgart area, and I had a good conversation last week with the German defense minister and laid out

some of these in detail. We'll obviously be engaging the defense ministry in the coming days and weeks with more detail.

STAFF: All right, Nancy?

Q: I had one clarification question, if I could, and then a broader one.

You mentioned cost being in the single-digit billions over a period of time. Over what period of time? Because I imagine there'll be costs associated with having rotational forces. So if you could give us a better understanding of that, and if it comes out of reprogramming, where those costs would come from?

And then, broadly speaking, can you help us understand. You talked a lot about the goal of deterring Russia. Why, from your perspective, is having forces -- the one combat brigade, the 2nd Cav, out of Europe a better form of deterrence than having them in Europe, closer to theater?

SEC. ESPER: Yeah, so I'm going to -- I'll answer both, but then I'm going to turn to General Wolters to let him answer in a little bit more detail.

So you're right. In terms of cost, it's going to be a range of things. It'll be O&M, it'll be MIL-CON, you know, it'll be the PCS transfers. But of course, you know, you have some gains too, if you're not moving families back and forth to Germany, you have savings on that end.

So it's going to take a lot of hard work by our comptrollers, by our financial people to work through that, which is why it's going to take some time. But I think our rough measures -- what I told you, based on historical precedent, if you will.

And again, I'll let General Wolters take that answer -- answer your next question.

And I will say this much, the deployment of rotational forces from the United States, we have observed, whether it's the ABCTs going from the United States to Korea or the ABC to Poland or the Bomber Task Force, we are finding that they are deploying at a much higher level of readiness. And while they are deployed, they are -- they are able to sustain a much more fixed focus on their mission and their capabilities. And they -- and, third, they can provide a more enduring presence.

So I'll let General Wolters speak to this to update you. During my time, when I served in Europe, we would deploy for three, four, five, six, seven weeks at a time, but then we came home.

In this case, what you'll have is a more enduring presence because we will deploy from the United States and able to keep a -- units, in this case a Stryker brigade, if you will, or elements of it, in the Black Sea region in a more enduring way, more focused on the mission and not -- not constrained, if you will, with knowing that the families are back in Germany. So it gives us a lot more flexibility in that regard, to do that. Plus, we can deploy other type units if we need to as well.

So, General Wolters, over to you to follow up on those two issues.

GEN. WOLTERS: Thank you, Secretary. And you're exactly right with respect to the flexibility that it affords us.

And in -- in the discussion about repositioning forces in a comprehensive fashion, I mentioned in my opening comments that NATO just approved its military strategy and its concept, and it talks about all domains, all regions, from a comprehensive perspective.

With the rotational set that Secretary Esper described, and with us having the opportunity, given this realignment, to reach out to the southeastern flank in Europe, we'll now be able to rotate units in perpetuity in multiple locations, to include potentially Poland, to include the northeast in the vicinity of the Baltics, to include the southeast in the vicinity of the Black Sea. And, on occasion, back into Germany.

And the flexibility that this affords us certainly complicates a potential enemy against us and it dramatically improves our operational capability to more effectively deter and defend. Thank you.

SEC. ESPER: Talk anything further on the cost piece?

GEN. HYTEN: I'll -- I'll just real quick --

SEC. ESPER: General Hyten? Okay.

GEN. HYTEN: -- jump in on the cost piece. The -- the secretary said single-digit billions, but those are rough estimates. The -- what we have right now is really a concept, a concept that we've shared with our allies, shared with the Congress, and we've shared inside the department fairly widely. We now have to turn it into plans.

As you turn it into plans, we have a very structured process involving the Joint Staff, the Office of the Secretary, and the combatant commands and the services, to make sure we understand what those are. Then we'll lay in the costs.

But we're starting moving right away, with forces moving right away because we need to actually reach out to the potential locations where these forces are going to move, make sure we understand what is there, what can be there, and then turn those into real cost estimates. And then work with the Congress to get the resources.

Some of those resources can be handled in year of execution, some will be handled out years, especially military construction, which will clearly have to be handled in the out years.

STAFF: Tom Bowman?

Q: Mr. Secretary, you say this is about strategy, but the president has clearly said this is about his grudge with Germany. Just a few weeks ago, he said, "Germany's been delinquent, of billions of dollars. This is for years, so we're removing a number down to" -- putting that number down to 25,000 soldiers.

He's linking this to Germany's lack of payments to NATO. So how do you reconcile that? You're saying it's about strategy, he's saying it's about basically sticking it to Germany.

SEC. ESPER: We began this process actually several months ago, when I gave EUCOM direction to begin looking at ways by which we can improve our force disposition in Germany, our composition of -- I'm sorry, not Germany. In NATO. Our composition, our size of our forces. He knew it was coming too because I announced it as soon as my hearing last -- last year, also.



So the combatant commanders know that we're doing these reviews. We gave specific guidance months before that to begin this process. And what the president did with his directive in early June, was to accelerate that process.

When you step back and you look at what's happened -- right? -- what you'll see is, we are still retaining a little more than 24,000 troops in Germany, which is still a lot, and I think still more than any other country in Europe.

And then you look at what we're moving. What we're doing is, we're moving the forces -- to answer your strategy question -- we're moving forces out of central Europe -- Germany, where they had been since the Cold War, since I first traveled there in the early 1980s, and we're now moving -- we're following, in many ways, the boundary east, where our new west allies are.

So into the Black Sea region, we talked about additional forces into Poland, and I think there are opportunities to put forces into the Baltics. That's why it's a strategic laydown that enhances deterrence, strengthens the allies, reassures them. We've gotten very positive feedback from several of the countries I mentioned this morning with regard to this move. And so overall, I think it is -- again, it meets all those objectives.

Q: I understand what you're saying, but your boss is saying it's about Germany being delinquent. He said nothing about strategy.

SEC. ESPER: I'm telling you that this is going to accomplish what the president said with regard to getting us down to a lower numbers in Europe, and it meets those other objectives I outlined with regard to the strategic piece, the principles, assuring the allies, and taking care of our service members and families.

STAFF: All right, we're going to go to the phones.

Jung Eun Li, from Dong-A Libo?

Q: Hi, thank you for the briefing. About the reduction plan of the U.S. troops in Germany, there are some speculations that some of the troops evacuating in Germany could be re-deployed to the Indo-Pacific area later to respond to the Chinese military threat.

So do you have such a plan? Can you elaborate more on the redeployment and assessing plan of the troops from Germany?

SEC. ESPER: Well, in all things, they could be. But because I want to -- I want to enhance my strategic flexibility, right? That was principle number four, if you will.

But right now, there are no plans to do so. We're going to eventually take a look, as we get to the INDOPACOM review, and look at how we can enhance our, again, strategic flexibility, our operational flexibility, if you will, and several of those other principles I outlined as we head into the INDOPACOM review.

But right now, there are no plans to do that. The plan is to begin these rotations back to Europe in a way that, again, enhances my strategic flexibility. But maybe more importantly, enhances General Wolters' operational flexibility to deploy them in a more enduring way, where he needs to in the theater -- could be this -- we're talking about the southeastern flank, but it could be up into the northeastern flank -- to accomplish the objectives that he's outlined, that I've outlined as -- as part of our planning.

STAFF: All right, we're going to go to the phones for one more from Luis Martinez?

Q: Hi, sir, thank you very much for this briefing. Going back to Tom Bowman's question, President Trump on the South Lawn has once again restated that really this is more about Germany's payments, or that its GDP payments are not amounting to what he would like. And so he says that everybody should be at 4 percent, and he said that Germany has only paid 1 percent. And he called them being delinquent.

And so how can you reconcile -- I know that this process has been going on for quite some time, but is it safe to say it was accelerated by the president's opinion that Germany is not doing enough with regards to its GDP payments?

SEC. ESPER: Well, first of all, I'd say to President Trump's credit, under his leadership, we have -- we've seen an increase in defense spending by NATO. I think it's over \$130 billion over a few years. We have seen a few more countries join -- I'll call the 2 percent club. And that is, countries who have lived up to their Wales commitment -- I think it goes back to 2016 under the previous administration -- to contribute more to NATO's collective defense.

Let's be clear, I think Germany is the wealthiest country in Europe. Germany can and should pay more to its defense. It should certainly meet the 2 percent standard and, I would argue, go above and beyond that. And I've said that very publicly, I've said that very privately to my counterparts as well, about the importance of NATO, any alliance, sharing the burden so that we can all deter Russia and avoid peace in Europe [editor's note. Secretary Esper intended to say "avoid conflict in Europe"].

And, again, the president's directive in June accelerated that, and I think we are -- we are excited about where we're going and what it will mean in terms of our ability to enhance deterrence, strengthen the alliance in the process.

STAFF: All right, guys, thank you very much.

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## Unsere Übersetzung

### **Aus den Ausführungen des US-Verteidigungsministers Mark Esper:**

Das EUCOM plant gegenwärtig etwa 11.900 US-Soldaten aus Deutschland abzuziehen, also deren bisherige Anzahl von 36.000 auf 24.000 zu reduzieren, um damit die NATO zu stärken, die Abschreckung Russlands zu erhöhen und die anderen von mir erwähnten Ziele zu erreichen. Von den 11.900 Soldaten sollen etwa 5.600 in andere NATO-Staaten umziehen und etwa 6.400 in die USA zurückverlegt werden; die in die USA zurückverlegten oder andere gleichwertige Einheiten sollen später regelmäßig zu Rotationseinsätzen nach Europa zurückkehren.

Die wichtigsten Maßnahmen sind: Erstens werden verschiedene Hauptquartiere der US-Streitkräfte in Europa (von Stuttgart) in Deutschland in andere europäische Staaten umziehen, um besser mit entsprechenden NATO-Kommandozentralen in Belgien und Italien zusammenarbeiten zu können. Das wird die NATO stärken und die 2.000 umziehenden Soldaten werden die Leistungsfähigkeit und die Einsatzbereitschaft der NATO-Hauptquartiere erhöhen.

Zweitens werden die fast 4.500 Soldaten des 2nd Cavalry Regiment (aus Vilseck in Bayern) in die Vereinigten Staaten zurückkehren; andere Stryker-Einheiten sollen durch regel-

mäßig Rotation in Regionen am Schwarzen Meer die Südostflanke der NATO stärken, Russland abschrecken und die dortigen Verbündeten beruhigen.

Drittens sollen die 2.500 Air Force-Soldaten (des 100th Air Refueling Wing und der Spezialeinheiten mit ihrem gesamten Flugzeugpark) im britischen Mildenhall verbleiben, und nicht, wie bisher geplant, nach Deutschland (auf die Air Bases Ramstein und Spangdahlem) verlegt werden (s. dazu unbedingt auch [http://www.luftpost-kl.de/luftpost-archiv/LP\\_16/LP13318\\_011018.pdf](http://www.luftpost-kl.de/luftpost-archiv/LP_16/LP13318_011018.pdf) ), damit ihre Einsatzbereitschaft nicht unterbrochen wird.

Viertens soll eine Kampfjet-Staffel (der 52nd Fighter Wing in Spangdahlem) mit ihren Unterstützungseinheiten nach Italien umziehen – näher ans Schwarze Meer, um die Südostflanke der NATO zu stärken.

Zusätzlich zu diesen Verlegungen und den bereits 2019 zwischen dem US-Präsidenten Trump und dem polnischen Präsidenten Duda vereinbarten Rotationseinsätzen soll das kürzlich neu konstituierte Hauptquartier des V Corps der Army (s. [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/V\\_Corps\\_\(Vereinigte\\_Staaten\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/V_Corps_(Vereinigte_Staaten)) ) nach Polen verlegt werden, sobald Warschau das bereits zugesagte Stationierungs- und Finanzierungsabkommen unterzeichnet hat. Möglicherweise werden noch andere Einheiten nach Polen und in die baltischen Staaten verlegt.

Unser Ziel ist es, diese Umgruppierungen so schnell wie möglich und unter Einhaltung der bereits beschriebenen Grundsätze vorzunehmen – unter besonderer Rücksichtnahme auf unsere Soldaten und deren Familien. Einige Maßnahmen werden schon in wenigen Wochen beginnen, andere werden sich länger hinziehen. ...

Umgruppierungen werden erst nach der Zustimmung des Kongresses und nach intensiven Gesprächen sowohl mit den betroffenen Soldaten und deren Familien, als auch mit den betroffenen Verbündeten vorgenommen.

### **Aus den Ausführungen des EUCOM-Chefs Tod Wolters:**

Ich wünsche Ihnen allen einen guten Morgen und einen guten Tag aus unserem Hauptquartier (gemeint ist das NATO-Hauptquartier!) in Mons in Belgien. Die vom U.S. EUCOM (dem in Stuttgart residierenden Hauptquartier aller US-Streitkräfte in Europa) verfolgte Strategie erfordert eine immer schnellere Anpassung der Positionierung und sämtlicher Aktivitäten der US-Truppen in Europa an sich ändernde Gegebenheiten. Wir müssen unsere Aufmerksamkeit ständig auf Veränderungen innerhalb und außerhalb unseres Verantwortungsbereichs richten und in Bezug auf mögliche Gegner äußerst wachsam bleiben.

Wie Verteidigungsminister Esper bereits ausgeführt hat, sollen durch die beabsichtigten Umgruppierungen die Abschreckung Russlands verbessert, die NATO gestärkt und die strategische Flexibilität der US-Streitkräfte und des EUCOM erhöht werden, wobei wir die Interessen unserer Soldaten und ihrer Familien nicht aus den Augen verlieren dürfen.

Verteidigungsminister Esper hat bereits mitgeteilt, dass nach dem derzeitige Planungsstand Hauptquartiere von Regionalkommandos, von Waffengattungen und von Untergliederungen umziehen sollen. Das U.S. EUCOM (in Stuttgart-Vaihingen) und das ihm nachgeordnete U.S. Special Operations Command Europe (ebenfalls in Stuttgart-Vaihingen) sollen von Deutschland (nach Mons und auf den US-Flugplatz Chièvres, s. [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milit%C3%A4rflugplatz\\_Chi%C3%A8vres](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Milit%C3%A4rflugplatz_Chi%C3%A8vres) ) in Belgien umziehen, um enger mit dem SHAPE (dem NATO-Hauptquartier, s. <https://shape.nato.int/> , das EUCOM-Chef Wolters auch jetzt schon befehligt) zusammenarbeiten zu können (s. [11/12](http://www.luftpost-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

[kl.de/luftpost-archiv/LP\\_13/LP20714\\_291214.pdf](http://www.luftpost-kl.de/luftpost-archiv/LP_13/LP20714_291214.pdf) ). Das wird die Befehlsübermittlung vereinfachen und beschleunigen.

Zusätzlich sollen auch das U.S. AFRICOM und das im nachgeordnete U.S. Special Operations Command Africa (die jetzt beide noch in Stuttgart residieren) in einen noch festzulegenden Ort außerhalb Deutschlands umziehen. Außerdem sollen drei Brigade-Hauptquartiere, ein Luftabwehrbataillon und ein Pionierbataillon von Deutschland nach Belgien und zwei kleinere Einheiten für Logistik und Verwaltung von Deutschland nach Italien umziehen. Zukünftige Planungen sehen vor, auch die 52nd Civil Engineering Squadron (von Spangdahlem) nach Italien zu verlegen. Wie Verteidigungsminister Esper bereits mitgeteilt hat, soll auch eine F-16-Kampfjet-Staffel mit ihren Flugzeugen, Piloten und Mechanikern von Spangdahlem) in Deutschland nach Italien umziehen. Wir planen außerdem, zwei (bisher nach Grafenwöhr) in Deutschland ausgelagerte Bataillone wieder mit ihrer Stammeinheit in Italien zu vereinen.

Mit der Rückführung des 2nd Cavalry Regiment (von Vilseck in Bayern) in die USA sollen die globale Einsatzbereitschaft seiner Stammeinheit wieder hergestellt, künftige Rotations-einsätze in Europa aber nicht ausgeschlossen werden. Die innerhalb Europas umgruppierten Einheiten sollen die gemeinsame Verteidigungsfähigkeit erhöhen und die Verantwortung besser aufteilen. Das geschieht in Übereinstimmung mit der neuen Militärstrategie der NATO (s. <https://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article194146953/Bedrohung-aus-Russland-Die-Nato-gibt-sich-eine-neue-Militaerstrategie.html> ), die nach sechs Jahrzehnten erstmals geändert wurde. Unsere sämtlichen Bemühungen sollen den Frieden in Europa sicherer machen und die Verteidigungsfähigkeit der USA gegen andere Großmächte erhöhen.

*Beachten Sie bitte, dass wir aus Gründen der Aktualität nur zwei besonders relevante Auszüge aus dem Transkript der Pressekonferenz übersetzt haben, das eingangs vollständig in englischer Sprache abgedruckt ist.*

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## **Unser Kommentar**

*Die Bewohner der Westpfalz und des Saarlandes könnten sich freuen, wenn die absturzgefährdeten, schrottreifen Tankflugzeuge wirklich im britischen Mildenhall bleiben (s. auch dazu [http://www.luftpost-kl.de/luftpost-archiv/LP\\_16/LP13318\\_011018.pdf](http://www.luftpost-kl.de/luftpost-archiv/LP_16/LP13318_011018.pdf) ) und die ständig durch die Tra Lauter und das Übungsgebiet POLYGONE donnernden F-6-Kampfjets aus Spangdahlem tatsächlich nach Italien umziehen würden (s. [http://www.luftpost-kl.de/luftpost-archiv/LP\\_09/LP04409\\_220209.pdf](http://www.luftpost-kl.de/luftpost-archiv/LP_09/LP04409_220209.pdf) ).*

*Das ist aber nicht sicher, denn die endgültige Entscheidung darüber wird vermutlich erst nach der Wahl des US-Präsidenten im November fallen.*

*Die Quasi-Zusammenlegung des EUCOM mit dem SHAPE würde General Wolters, der beide befehligt, das ständige Hin und Her zwischen Stuttgart und Brüssel ersparen, den US-Streitkräften noch mehr und direkteren Einfluss auf die NATO und dem Oberkommandierenden des geplanten Atomkrieges gegen Russland etwas Distanz zur angestrebten "Hauptkampfzone" Bundesrepublik Deutschland verschaffen (s. [http://www.luftpost-kl.de/luftpost-archiv/LP\\_19/LP02620\\_250320.pdf](http://www.luftpost-kl.de/luftpost-archiv/LP_19/LP02620_250320.pdf) ). Deshalb dürften für den Umzug von US-Hauptquartieren aus der "Schusslinie" die größten Realisierungschancen bestehen.*

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