Negative Brief: Brigade Combat Teams removed from Germany & Italy

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***Resolved: The United States federal government should considerably decrease its military commitments.***

Plan removes 3 Brigade Combat Teams from Europe.

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Negative: Brigade Combat Teams

TOPICALITY

1. Location, not commitment

Link: Resolution says change a military “commitment”

That’s in the wording of the resolution.

Violation: Location isn’t commitment

Since the US would still have a commitment to defend Europe with the same men and equipment … the AFF isn’t substantially reducing a commitment. They therefore don’t uphold the resolution.

Impact: No Affirmative team means a Negative ballot.

No one in the room today is affirming we should substantially reduce any commitment, so there’s no Affirmative team. So, no matter who wins, you should vote Negative.

2. Not substantial decrease in budget

Link: AFF claims they’ll save $486 million

Problem: That’s not even peanuts. The 2020 defense budget was $738 billion

Lawrence J. Korb 2020 (senior fellow at the Center for American Progress. Former assistant secretary of defense in the Reagan administration; served four years on active duty as a naval flight officer; and retired from the U.S. Navy Reserve with the rank of captain ) 6 May 2020 " The Pentagon’s Fiscal Year 2021 Budget More Than Meets U.S. National Security Needs" https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/security/reports/2020/05/06/484620/pentagons-fiscal-year-2021-budget-meets-u-s-national-security-needs/#:~:text=The%20FY%202021%20defense%20budget%20is%20composed%20of%20two%20parts,%2473%20billion%20in%20FY%202020.

When the Trump administration unveiled its FY 2021 federal budget, many defense hawks in and out of government expressed concerns that the increase in the size of the proposed $740 billion defense budget was too modest, particularly when compared with the $738 billion that the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) received for FY 2020.

Violation: $486 million out of $738 billion = 0.066%

Impact: Negative ballot

There is no planet on which 0.066% reduction is a “considerable decrease” in anything. This is ridiculously abusive to the Negative team and we shouldn’t even be debating it. The best way to teach Affirmatives not to be abusive is to award a Negative ballot. Trust me, they’ll learn from that and stop doing it.

3. Not substantial decrease in manpower

Brigade Combat Teams have 4,400 to 4,700 personnel.

Congressional Budget Office 2016. (non-partisan budget research agency of Congress) THE U.S. MILITARY’S FORCE STRUCTURE: A PRIMER, July 2016 <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/114th-congress-2015-2016/reports/51535-fsprimerbreakoutchapter2.pdf> (accessed 26 may 2021)

Brigade Combat Team/Functional Support Brigade/Regiment/Group: A brigade is commanded by a colonel and is generally configured as either a brigade combat team (BCT) or a functional support brigade (FSB). A BCT has about 4,400 to 4,700 personnel, depending on whether it is an armored, Stryker, or infantry BCT. An FSB has about 3,000 to 5,000 personnel, depending on its type (of which there are 20).

AFF reforms or removes 3 of them

That adds up to about 14,000 men total, if each one has 4400 to 4700.

US Army has 1 million troops

Congressional Budget Office 2016. (non-partisan budget research agency of Congress) THE U.S. MILITARY’S FORCE STRUCTURE: A PRIMER, July 2016 <https://www.cbo.gov/sites/default/files/114th-congress-2015-2016/reports/51535-fsprimerbreakoutchapter2.pdf> (accessed 26 may 2021)

Of the nearly 1 million military personnel serving in the Army as a whole, roughly half are in support units and a third are in combat units (see Table 2-2). The rest belong to units that perform various overhead functions, such as recruiting, training, and equipping combat units.

Violation: Do the math. Removing 14,000 out of 1 million = 1.4%

So…. We’re going to spend 2 hours debating a 1.4% reduction in the Army? Didn’t we all have better things to do?

Impact: Waste of time justifies a Negative ballot

We all had better things to do with the 2 hours we’re spending here. Teach the Affirmative to do better time management with a Negative ballot. It will be a good life lesson and teaching moment for them, and will benefit them substantially in the long run. They’ll regret losing this round, but they’ll be far better off for it and they’ll thank you some day.

GOAL RESPONSES – A/T “Fiscal Responsibility”

1. Affirmative violation #1: By its in-round behavior with this insignificant plan

Untopical insignificant plan wastes our money debating it

We all paid money in travel costs to attend and judge this debate. That’s money we’ll never get back and it’s wasted when we are expected to debate an untopical plan. We lose the educational value of debate and defeat the purpose for which we spent that money to get here. When the Affirmative’s own behavior violates their goal, either the goal isn’t worth doing, or you should vote Negative to uphold it if it is worth doing.

2. Affirmative violation #2: By proceeding with reform before studies are completed

Cross apply Solvency #1 about more study needed before we can do this policy correctly

In a moment we’re going to run a solvency argument about needing 5 to 10 years more study before BCT and Prepositioning can be reformed correctly. Rushing into it before the study is completed is fiscally irresponsible because we’ll waste all the money we spend on this reform if we do it wrong and then have to undo everything and start over.

3. Goal should be national security, not budget concerns

Constitutional duty to "provide for the common defense" outweighs budget concerns

James Di Pane and Janae Diaz 2020 (DiPane - Research Associate, Center for National Defense, Heritage Foundation. Diaz - Fall 2020 member of the Young Leaders Program at The Heritage Foundation) https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/global-threats-are-high-now-not-the-time-shortchange-national-defense-budget

As the leadership of our nation weighs the balance between domestic spending priorities and the fate of future defense budgets, they should not lose sight of the federal government’s solemn constitutional duty: to provide for the common defense.

HARMS / SIGNIFICANCE

1. A/T “No local threats in Europe” – there are big threats

Russian dysfunction makes it a more volatile threat

Constanze Stelzenmüller, 2016. (expert on German, European, and trans-Atlantic foreign and security policy and strategy; senior fellow in the Center on the United States and Europe at Brookings Institution) “NATO: Necessary but not sufficient” December 7, 2016. https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2016/12/07/nato-necessary-but-not-sufficient/

Russia’s internal dysfunctionality only adds to the volatility and instability. It increases the risk of the Kremlin using external meddling and aggression as a distraction from, or compensation for, its growing domestic weakness.

Risk of war greater than ever, and US less prepared than ever. Russia and China are big threats

Brandon J. Weichert, 2020. (former Congressional staffer; M.A. in Statecraft and National Security Affairs from the Institute of World Politics in Washington, D.C.) “World War III is Coming—And So is the Draft” January 7, 2020. https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/world-war-iii-coming%E2%80%94and-so-draft-111576

Today, however, the chances for great state conflict are high. As the threat of interstate warfare increases, America’s small expeditionary force (which is wearing thin from decades of constant deployments) will be insufficient to meet the challenges that rival great powers, such as China or Russia, pose to the U.S. military. This is especially true, considering the focus of America’s enemies on depriving U.S. forces of their aforementioned technological advantages.

European allies agree Russia is a threat

Rose Gottemoeller, 2020 (nonresident senior fellow in Carnegie’s Nuclear Policy Program. Distinguished Lecturer at Stanford University’s Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies and is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.) 29 Jan 2020 “Russia Is Updating Their Nuclear Weapons: What Does That Mean for the Rest of Us?” https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/01/29/russia-is-updating-their-nuclear-weapons-what-does-that-mean-for-rest-of-us-pub-80895

The Europeans, most prominently the NATO allies, are very concerned about Russia’s nuclear modernization programs. Their concerns revolve more around new nuclear missiles to be deployed on European soil than the intercontinental systems that threaten the United States. Poland and Lithuania, for example, are NATO countries bordering Kaliningrad, a Russian enclave in the heart of NATO territory. Russia has put increasingly capable missiles there, including the Iskander, a highly accurate modern missile that is capable of launching either nuclear or conventional warheads. Likewise, the Europeans are of one mind about the threat posed by a missile known as the 9M729 (SSC-8 in NATO parlance), which is an intermediate-range ground-launched cruise missile that the Russians developed and deployed in violation of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. The allies all agree that this missile poses a threat to NATO.

SOLVENCY

1. More study needed

The Army General in charge of the Affirmative’s plan says: Army currently reforming pre-positioned stock and BCTs in Europe, but need more study to do it right. We’ll know in 5 to 10 years

Jen Judson 2020 (journalist) 30 Nov 2020 “The US Army is adjusting its pre-positioned stock for more than just war” DEFENSE NEWS <https://www.defensenews.com/land/2020/11/30/the-us-army-is-adjusting-its-pre-positioned-stock-for-more-than-just-war/> (brackets in original) (accessed 26 May 2021)

The service published a strategy for aligning its Army pre-positioned stock, or APS, a few years ago in order to modernize and configure the fleet for combat. APS historically has been designed to be ready for troops to draw from rapidly to respond during a regional conflict. But since the strategy’s publication, the Army has realized “that we needed to take it to another level,” Gen. Edward Daly, Army Materiel Command chief, told Defense News in a November interview. Daly assumed command in July after serving as the AMC deputy commander under Gen. Gus Perna. Perna is now in charge of the Trump administration’s Operation Warp Speed — an effort to rapidly develop a COVID-19 vaccine. “We needed to relook [at] the purpose of Army pre-positioned stocks because, in the past, Army pre-positioned stocks were essential and key to great power conflict,” he said. “Now, based on the Army senior leaders’ intent, we want to focus it as much on great power competition, to use those stocks in great power competition as much as we had planned on using those stocks for great power conflict.” This means the Army will exercise its APS more, according to Daly, and will also consider whether it must reset locations and composition of stock in theater. “I feel very, very comfortable. We’re on a good glide path in understanding what those requirements are” over the next five to 10 years, Daly said without going into detail. Certain details related to APS are classified.

DISADVANTAGES

BIG LINK TO US HEGEMONY / NATIONAL SECURITY LOSS

Link: Moving BCTs back to the US mainland degrades US military capabilities because BCTs are especially vulnerable to slow reaction time (so they are even slower if they now have to come in from USA instead of already being there)

Adam Davis 2020. (master’s degree candidate, Univ. of Southern Maine, Muskie School of Public Service) Dec 2020 "The Brigade Combat Team (BCT): A Revolution in Organizational Structure” <https://digitalcommons.usm.maine.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1165&context=muskie_capstones> (brackets added) (accessed 26 May 2021)

As each opposing force observes the other, the leadership tries to synthesize the data/information into knowledge, make decisions about how to defeat the enemy, and then get their soldiers to carry-out those plans. Modern technology works to dramatically increase the available information that armies can observe while also decreasing the reaction time for armies to act. In the technology-laden BCTs with numerous combat and support capabilities, the OODA [Observe, Orient, Decide, Act] loop becomes distorted from MDMP [military decision making process] instead of facilitated by it.

APPLY ALL NEG HEGEMONY DISADS & IMPACTS TO LOSS OF US MILITARY CAPABILITY