



ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY

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March 6, 2019

The Honorable James M. Inhofe
Chairman, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member, Armed Services Committee
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inhofe and Senator Reed:

I had the privilege of serving as Commander, U.S. Army Europe from 2008-2011. I was the last officer to serve in that position as a four-star General. Given a changed security environment and the threat from an increasingly provocative Russia, it is time to restore U.S. Army Europe to a four-star command, commensurate with the Air Force and Navy Service Components of U.S. European Command.

In January 2011, then-Secretary of Defense Robert Gates announced his decision that the Service Components of U.S. European Command would be reduced from four-star commands to three-star commands. The Army implemented this directive in February 2011, and three-star commanders have served since then in this position. The Air Force and Navy Service Component Commands have remained at the four-star level.

While Service equity is certainly relevant, the more important issue is what would be achieved by restoring U.S. Army Europe to a four-star command. As General Scaparrotti addressed in his recent testimony before Congress, additional U.S. capabilities are required to counter an increasingly provocative threat from Russia. The deterrent effect of restoring a four-star Army commander is important, signaling to Russia and to other potential adversaries the seriousness our nation attaches to our security interests in Europe. The assurance to Allies would also be significant. The Commander, U.S. Army Europe routinely engages with heads of state and other top-level civilian and military leaders in European countries as well as within NATO. The fact is that rank matters in these engagements and having an Army commander of rank equal to the other U.S. Service Components and equal to many of the military leaders across the Alliance facilitates meaningful relationships. Lastly, as General Scaparrotti seeks to increase the capabilities of U.S. European Command, much of what he requested requires additional Army forces either forward stationed in Europe or on a "heel-to-toe" rotational basis in theater. A four-star Army Service Component Commander can most effectively oversee these critical improvements to readiness requested by the Combatant Commander.

Restoring a four-star commander to U.S. Army Europe is cost effective. No new housing, office or other facilities would be required. While the personal staff of the Commander might grow by a few (increased Personal Security as an example), the functional staff need not change at all. In short, this is an extraordinarily low-cost way to significantly improve both assurance and deterrence in the European Theater of Operations.

I recommend the Senate Armed Services Committee include in the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act the authority for the Army to assign a four-star Commander to U.S. Army Europe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. Ham".

Carter F. Ham
General, U.S. Army Retired
President & CEO