



# Association of the United States Army

Voice for the Army—Support for the Soldier

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## The U.S. Army in Europe

*Strategic Landpower in Action*

*The recent deployment of company-sized Army elements to Poland and the Baltic States offers a rubric for what . . . global landpower . . . may look like going forward. With a relatively small footprint, our Army achieves strategic aims by employing trained and ready units, fully prepared for joint combined-arms maneuver, that are adaptive and flexible, prepared to carry out a range of operations with partner nation forces.*

General Daniel B. Allyn, Vice Chief of Staff, Army  
Remarks at AUSA's ILW Hot Topic "Army Networks," 9 July 2015

### Introduction

The growing and emerging threats to the global security environment—the velocity of instability—recently compelled the Department of Defense (DoD) to reexamine its capabilities and capacity for deterrence, sustained operations and reassurance of allies and partners. In contrast to projections in earlier strategic guidance, the regional security and stability in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Pacific have deteriorated in the past several years in ways that were not anticipated. Potential adversaries sought to negate America's strengths, exploit its vulnerabilities and gain temporary or local superiority in one or more capability areas. Additionally, the more adversaries disrupted or undermined the strong U.S. network of security alliances and partners, the greater the threat to the vital interests of the United States. This continues today.

The U.S. Army, as part of the joint force, operates globally in environments characterized by growing urbanization, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, malicious cyber and information operations, humanitarian crises and the devastating effects of climate change. The combination of threats and conditions creates an increasingly dangerous and unpredictable operational environment and underscores the need for Army forces—active, Guard and Reserve—that are agile, responsive and regionally engaged.

In the European region, Russia's intervention has challenged the resolve of the European Union and NATO. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and use of conventional and unconventional land forces in Ukraine suggest that Russia is determined to expand its territory and assert its power on the Eurasian landmass. In addition, terrorist attacks in Europe together with significant increases in numbers of refugees from Africa and the Middle East have created



extreme conditions of volatility and instability. Moreover, traditional allies in Europe continue to face significant economic and demographic burdens that exert downward pressure on defense budgets. Therefore, strengthening military capabilities and building security capacity necessary for regional stability require sustained and focused engagement. That is precisely what U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR)—as the Army service component command (ASCC) to U.S. European Command—is executing under the framework of its *Strong Europe* initiative. And in doing so, it is supporting both U.S. and allied interests on the European continent. Through USAREUR, Army forces are both present and capable in a critical area of the world, sending a strong message of assurance and deterrence to friends and potential adversaries alike. The U.S. Army's presence in Europe is more vital now than it has been since the fall of the Soviet Union.

### Background

When the Berlin Wall fell in 1989, USAREUR had 218,000 Soldiers on more than 850 installations, organized under 41 garrisons with multiple corps, divisions and theater enablers. Many countries were already counting ways to spend their newfound peace

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dividend as the Soviet Union ended. Former Soviet Bloc countries were making decisions on where to focus their futures—East or West.

In the summer of 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait and the United States quickly began to assemble a coalition of countries to oust Iraqi forces. In 1991, USAREUR's VII Corps played a pivotal role in the conflict (Operation Desert Storm). In 1995, after three years of brutal, ethnically rooted conflict in Bosnia, the Dayton Peace accords were signed and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) assumed the role of peacekeeper in Bosnia and Herzegovina. USAREUR's 1st Armored Division played a lead ground role in that peacekeeping force. In 1998, the former Yugoslav Republic of Serbia's province of Kosovo required a NATO-led international peacekeeping force—Kosovo Forces, or KFOR—to bring stability to the country that continues to this day.

The stability and prosperity of Europe is vital to U.S. national interests. The European Union (EU) is the largest U.S. trade partner with almost \$1 trillion in trade annually. In fact, about half of the global gross domestic product (GDP) and a third of the global trade come from the combined U.S. and EU economies. In short, a peaceful and economically stable Europe is in the direct national security interest of the United States. Since the end of the Cold War, the European region has enjoyed a relatively high level of security; as a result, in the past 25 years, USAREUR has undergone enormous change, reducing more than 70 percent of its infrastructure and Soldiers. Today's consolidated footprint in USAREUR consists of two brigade combat teams (BCTs) and about 30,000 Soldiers. Concurrently, European forces had reduced their numbers as well. Though Russia was invited to engage with NATO—and actually participated in joint exercises for a short period in the 1990s—the cooperation ended soon afterwards as the Russian leadership changed. Soon it appeared Russia would not embrace NATO as an international partner. Russia's actions in Georgia, Moldova and then Ukraine have confirmed their change in focus and resurgence as an unstable influence in the region.

As a result, Army forces in Europe received direction to immediately flow Soldiers into Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland to reassure allies and partners. This mission quickly expanded into a continuous series of exercises—Operation Atlantic Resolve—taking place from the Baltics to the Black Sea (24 battalion-led multinational exercises so far in 2015, with more scheduled).

### **U.S. Resolve in Europe**

Recent U.S. military guidance together with executive and legislative government support have served to underscore U.S. resolve toward Europe and, in particular, the need for landpower on the European continent. The Department of the Army's (DA's) regionally aligned forces (RAF) initiative provides maneuver units and enablers resulting in a continuous presence of U.S. land forces in Europe. This builds partner capacity and increases U.S. interoperability as a member of NATO. Another DA initiative, European Activity Sets (EAS), enables one of these RAF units—a battalion—to integrate into the training cycle of NATO's Response Force. The goal of EAS is to expand the size of the unit from a battalion to a brigade combat team as well as including enablers such as air defense, transportation, signal and engineer assets to increase capabilities. In sum, these two programs are integral to the overall success of NATO's Readiness Action Plan.

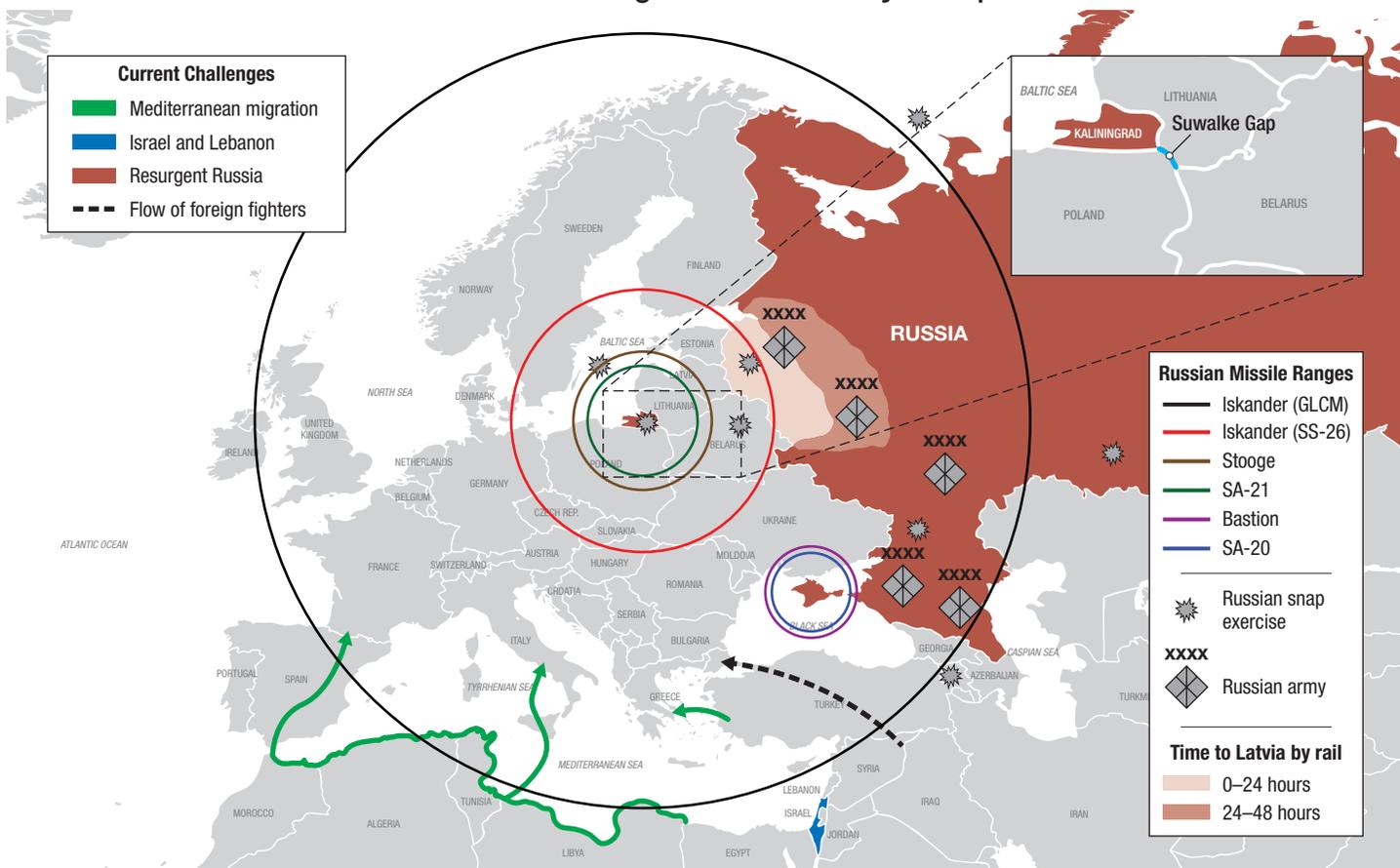
Undergirding U.S. commitment to the region is the European Reassurance Initiative (ERI, part of the Consolidate and Further Continuing Appropriations Act of 2015), which provides critical funding while supporting four landpower requirements: increased presence; infrastructure; exercises and training; and prepositioning of equipment. This provides persistent armored brigade combat team presence in theater; infrastructure enhancements to enable reception, staging and onward movement (RSOI); and improvements to training areas as well as increased exercises.

### **Strong Europe**

U.S. Army forces provide strategic landpower to **prevent** future conflict through deterrence, to **shape** the security environment by reassuring allies through presence and action and—if necessary—to **win**. The U.S. Army on the European continent provides that landpower through highly ready forces; robust logistics; transportation and infrastructure; networked intelligence; strong communications; and an ever-increasing level of interoperability with allies and partners.

USAREUR contributes to European security through an initiative called *Strong Europe*—a framework that focuses on relationships, capabilities, infrastructure and exercises that aim to assure allies, deter aggression and posture the force to respond to a crisis or conflict if deterrence fails. Operation Atlantic Resolve is a major part of *Strong Europe*. Trained and ready, 30,000 Soldiers evoke a 300,000-person capability. In addition, USAREUR leads Atlantic Resolve

# Current Challenges for U.S. Army Europe



Source: Headquarters, U.S. Army Europe

land-force multinational training across Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and Romania, ensuring multinational interoperability and strengthening relationships among allied militaries, thereby contributing to regional stability and demonstrating U.S. commitment to NATO.

Under *Strong Europe*, training and operations focus on “Prevent” and “Shape” while training in the Decisive Action Training Environment (DATE) at the Joint Multinational Command Training Center (JMTC). European-based training focuses on interoperability in a joint, interagency, intergovernmental and multinational (JIIM) environment, under three USAREUR interoperability factors:

**Partnership:** Interoperability is crucial to USAREUR’s ability to train and, if required, to fight as part of the multinational NATO force. The initial building block of interoperability is the formation and sustainment of cooperative partnerships among Unified Action Partners.<sup>1</sup> These partnerships result in the development of common operating procedures, shared tactics, techniques and procedures and expanded access.

**Adaptability:** Unified Action Partners must be able to provide rapid and responsive communications in support of military operations. The various Unified Action Partner Friendly Forces Tracking Systems must work together under a common operating picture. This may result in restructuring of personnel, facilities and equipment to support this capability beyond the current operational framework. Interoperability benefits from mobile capability for operational needs. Interoperability reinforces adaptability by enabling mobile assets from across regions or countries and by deploying forces to link into Unified Action Partners’ capabilities quickly, regardless of the region or the countries involved.

**Unity of Effort:** Operation Atlantic Resolve enhances Unified Action Partners’ ability to quickly muster, shoot, move and communicate in training, which sets the conditions to respond to a challenge in the region.

Overall, the initiative *Strong Europe* improves interoperability and capacity with allies and partners and facilitates U.S. and NATO logistical infrastructure, thereby expanding freedom of action.

<sup>1</sup> Unified Action Partners are those military forces, government and nongovernmental organizations and elements of the private sector with whom Army forces plan, coordinate, synchronize and integrate during the conduct of operations. Army Doctrine and Reference Publication (ADRP) 3.0, *Unified Land Operations*, May 2012; and Association of the United States Army, *U.S. Army Training for Unified Land Operations* (Torchbearer National Security Report, September 2011), [http://www.ausa.org/publications/ilw/Documents/TB\\_Full-Spectrum\\_web.pdf](http://www.ausa.org/publications/ilw/Documents/TB_Full-Spectrum_web.pdf).

## ***U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR) adapts to the new security environment***

In April 2014, after Russian activities in Ukraine created international political and military concerns, U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) directed increased Army force presence to attempt to deter Russia and assure allies during this time of uncertainty. USAREUR responded with a 173d Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne) deployment to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. One company deployed to each country to train and conduct exercises. Since then, USAREUR-assigned or regionally allocated forces have remained to train with allies. The immediate increase in U.S. and allied forces conducting training in northeast Europe provided the assurance that the United States and NATO disapprove of Russia's actions and are ready to respond if required.

In March 2015, Atlantic Resolve expanded to the southeastern flank—the Black Sea region of Bulgaria and Romania. With NATO allies, USAREUR forces expanded training and exercises to include an airborne assault into an airfield in Romania, followed by the introduction of troops from 2d Cavalry Regiment and heavy forces from the RAF pool under the control of USAREUR. Subsequently, Hungary and Slovakia volunteered to host a portion of the next Atlantic Resolve, further growing the Atlantic Resolve framework.

### ***Strong Europe in Action***

Within Europe, USAREUR is at the forefront of assuring allies and partners and deterring adversaries by shaping the environment, setting the theater, projecting power, conducting strategic maneuver and employing special operations forces (SOF). To execute this, Army forces in Europe focus on building and strengthening relationships, maximizing capabilities, enhancing infrastructure and training to standards through exercises.

**Relationships.** When compared to the capability of the Russian military, the ability of any single nation to challenge Russian aggression is limited. However, a comparison of the combined capabilities and capacity of the coalition against Russia shows a very different picture. The key to maintaining overmatch to deter continued Russian aggression is the relationships between USAREUR and the European nations. The RAF provides USAREUR constant access to units that provide the necessary capabilities to enhance partnerships and build partner capacity. The interface between international land forces in Europe attempts to expand coalition capability and capacity to maintain overmatch against Russia. USAREUR's leading role as trainer and synchronizer of land forces in Europe helps to ensure unity of effort in the region.

USAREUR's semi-annual Combined Training Conferences (May/June and November) serves as a catalyst to bring the European and NATO land forces together to



collaboratively prioritize, synchronize and schedule scarce national resources. The conferences maximize the national and collective readiness of land forces in Europe. The collaboration that results during the conferences further reinforces the *Strong Europe* initiative and the commitment to U.S. coalition partners. A strong unified coalition is the key to preventing conflict in Europe, shaping the environment and winning if deterrence fails.

**Capabilities.** Stationing forces in partner nations is one way that the United States demonstrates a commitment to regional security. The armored brigade combat team (ABCT) provides a particularly strong message to potential adversaries. In an attempt to assure allies and partners, deter adversaries and maintain a force capable of responding to terrorist threats and increased refugee flow into Europe, the United States provides permanent and rotational forces in Europe. With the recent increase in Russian aggression, the U.S. Army continues to reinforce USAREUR's presence in the region. The increase in capabilities includes command and control, combat formations, air missile defense, engineers, sustainment, and protection. RAF and bolstering of Army prepositioned stock (APS) and European activity sets (EAS) are two of the initiatives the Army is pursuing in Europe.

The 4th Infantry Division (4ID) is USAREUR's RAF division headquarters (HQ) and 1st Brigade, 3d Infantry Division (1/3ID) is USAREUR's current RAF ABCT. 4ID has a mission command element (MCE) in Europe, providing mission command for Atlantic Resolve and serves as an intermediate HQ between USAREUR and Army forces in Europe. The 4ID MCE provides a permanent command and control element not only to conduct exercises in the region but also to develop a long-standing relationship with USAREUR, USEUCOM and NATO for unity of command.

Elements of the 1/3ID deployed in the spring of 2015 to exercise Atlantic Resolve. During the one year that 1/3ID is the RAF unit for USAREUR, it will deploy the entire ABCT for one 90-day rotation (October–December 2015) and one 180-day rotation (April–October 2016). The 1/3ID



will conduct theater security cooperation with partners, including participation in USAREUR's exercise program. ERI supports the deployment of the continental United States (CONUS)-based RAF, augmenting European-based units including 4ID and 1/3ID. The Army expects USAREUR's requirements to change and potentially grow as it continues to evaluate the best way to adapt to its dynamic security environment. The Army will source the evolving requirements through the most effective mix of forward-stationed and rotational units and will use RAF to ensure unity of command and force predictability. Capabilities for consideration include fires, bridging, cyber protection, air and missile defense, transport (especially heavy equipment) and additional sustainment capabilities. Ready forces with the right capability and capacity are crucial for USAREUR to adapt to the new security challenges. Part of the U.S. Army's solution to the increase in ready forces in Europe combined with dwindling resources is to forward-position equipment to reduce the cost associated with rotational units. It is less expensive to deploy personnel without their equipment.

**Infrastructure.** Armored and mechanized (heavy) Army forces play a significant role in assuring allies and partners. Although the Army is improving its posture in Europe, it would struggle to present a formidable deterrence posture in Central Europe. To enhance that posture, forward-positioned equipment is necessary to effectively and efficiently equip rotational units in northeastern Europe. EAS includes an ABCT and a hefty enabler package, and the Army is considering expanding the size and scope of both the EAS and APS in Europe. With Department of the Army support, USAREUR will geographically expand the current EAS by positioning company- to battalion-sized unit sets forward in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania and Poland. As a minimum, EAS significantly reduces the costs, in both time and dollars, of transporting heavy equipment.

While the use of EAS is to equip rotating units from the United States that will exercise with allied and partner

nations' militaries, Army prepositioned stocks (APSs) is equipment designed to support units that would deploy from the United States in a time of crisis. The basis for the determination of the size and composition of each site involves several factors: the availability of existing infrastructure; the Army's ability to source the equipment for prepositioning; and the strategic requirements for the theater. Action is ongoing between USAREUR and potential host countries to coordinate this effort.

**Exercises.** Since the end of the Cold War and 25 years of relative security, the reduction in land forces in Europe has created challenges in mobility. With the end of the Returning Forces to Germany (REFORGER) exercises in 1993, the ability to command and control multinational forces in a large-scale response to a crisis had deteriorated. New technologies resulted in vehicles that were too large for aging infrastructure. Movement corridors used during the REFORGER exercises were too restrictive due to urban development. Obstacles existed with rail operations into Poland and the Baltics. All of these then and now restrict movement of forces throughout Europe. Moreover, operating within the many countries required agreements with each one to access and base forces. USAREUR's exercise program will increase the freedom of movement within Europe by addressing these challenges, thereby setting the conditions to respond to a crisis or event.

To do so, the command has expanded its exercise program and is conducting approximately 50 exercises per year. To increase land force capabilities, it will increase the size and scope of Atlantic Resolve in the next two years. This more robust exercise program seeks to assure and prepare NATO partners to collectively respond with other U.S. allies in the region as part of NATO's Allied Land Command (LANDCOM).<sup>2</sup> In sum, the exercises will increase freedom of movement and interoperability, reinforce the readiness of U.S. and partner forces in the coalition and demonstrate to potential adversaries the resolve and capabilities of the coalition land forces.

As part of this expanding exercise program, a new exercises series called Allied Spirit improves tactical-level interoperability at the brigade and battalion levels with peer and near-peer allies. These exercises identify technical, cultural and procedural interoperability challenges, then share best practices with the appropriate Institutional Army and NATO institutional agencies that can determine and implement systemic solutions. Using Allied Spirit as the vehicle to increase interoperability between U.S. and coalition technologies at the tactical level will assist in the coordination of command and control, intelligence sharing, combined-arms maneuver and sustainment operations at the tactical, operational and strategic levels of command.

<sup>2</sup> Association of the United States Army, "Strategic Landpower in NATO: Vital for U.S. Security" (Torchbearer Issue Paper, October 2014), <http://www.ausa.org/publications/ilw/DigitalPublications/Documents/tbip-landcom/index.html>.



## The U.S. Army in Europe Strategic Landpower in Action

USEUCOM and NATO both benefit from the extensive exercise efforts that USAREUR is planning and executing across Europe. The demonstration of increased interoperability during exercises serves to reinforce to potential adversaries that the coalition is prepared to respond quickly and effectively.

An integral part of USAREUR's capability to quickly respond to unknown threats at any time is the continued emphasis on maintaining highly-ready forward forces. To maintain this readiness, the command has instilled the expeditionary mindset through Freedom Shock, which exercises leaders and Soldiers at every level as they navigate challenges of movement across country boundaries, enabling increased freedom of movement throughout Europe. This in turn improves the security status within NATO, and improves the alliance's ability to deter aggression and restore European security.

The ability of USAREUR to absorb additional capabilities from CONUS serves to further deter potential state and non-state adversaries. The collaborative exercise program added Swift Response, another powerful dimension to signal potential adversaries of NATO's intention and capability to quickly move and mass forces with allies and partners when needed. The Swift Response exercise series will demonstrate the ability to leverage the CONUS-based U.S. Global Response Force (GRF) to deploy on short notice and conduct a Combined Joint Forcible Entry operation together with in-theater USAREUR forces. The rapid employability of the GRF in conjunction with the NATO High Readiness Task Force, and Special Operations Forces originating from nine other countries will demonstrate the collective capability to respond in Europe. This year's Swift Response exercise takes place in 11 locations in four countries. The ability of U.S. forces to rapidly deploy in Europe demonstrates the capability to respond to aggression globally. This is crucial as Russian military forces are increasing in Syria and may threaten U.S. interests outside of Europe.

### The Way Ahead

Russian aggression, transnational threats and mass migration of refugees add to a deteriorating security situation in Europe now and for the foreseeable future. The latest U.S. National Military Strategy succinctly outlines the future U.S. direction toward Europe: "U.S. Operation Atlantic Resolve, [America's] ERI, NATO's Readiness Action Plan and the many activities, exercises and investments contained in them serve to underline the nation's dedication to alliance solidarity, unity and security."

This unpredictable and complex environment together with the need to reassure allies and partners



require adaptive, engaged and responsive Army forces. USAREUR provides landpower through a combination of these highly-ready forces as well as robust logistics, transportation and infrastructure, networked intelligence, strong communications and an ever-increasing level of interoperability with allies and partners. For this landpower to be effective, three enduring priorities of the Commander, U.S. Army Europe must ensue: enabling the Alliance; leader development; and readiness. What makes the U.S. Army's presence in Europe so vital is its ability to: improve NATO's maneuver and sustainment capabilities; develop innovative and adaptive leaders who have the freedom to take initiative and accomplish any mission; and be ready to guarantee America's obligation to support the Collective Defense of the Alliance by instilling an expeditionary mindset through episodic exercises. The effectiveness of capabilities provided by USAREUR to the European theater is enhanced by a Total Army effort—active, Guard and Reserve, through shared capabilities with allied forces, U.S.-based rotational forces and continuous engagement.

USAREUR's *Strong Europe* initiative strives to leverage partnerships, maximize adaptability and ensure unity of effort through strong international relationships, the development of partner and U.S. capabilities and adequate infrastructure to conduct training and exercises. This assures allies and partners and deters potential adversaries. USAREUR is efficiently and innovatively using available resources to effectively posture U.S. landpower capabilities for future contingencies. However, the indiscriminate and disproportional reductions in defense budgets through 2023 together with the corresponding reductions in landpower capabilities place U.S. and coalition interests at significant risk. Through its presence and implementation of its initiative, the U.S. Army in Europe is mitigating that risk and, in doing so, significantly contributing to the protection of U.S. vital interests. An investment in USAREUR is a smart investment for the nation.