

Military transformation advances U.S. basing footprint eastward

The U.S. military footprint in Europe has significantly changed from just a decade ago. Gone are dozens of American enclaves — some self-contained communities complete with schools, shopping centers and housing complexes — located throughout Western Europe, but primarily in Germany.

In their place soon will be small regional training centers in Romania and Bulgaria, through which U.S. combat brigades will rotate on training and regional-security-cooperation missions.

“We have the capability in that region to do some things with the existing infrastructure from the former Soviet days, capitalizing on some of their training grounds,” said Army Gen. William E. “Kip” Ward, U.S.

European Command’s deputy commander.

“We capitalize on what is there, because we go into existing locations and facilities,” Ward said in a recent interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service. “And I think we reap the benefit of that at a much-reduced cost . . .”

Also, through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Europe District, U.S. Army Europe is in the process of planning, designing and ultimately constructing additional military facilities in the region to complement the existing infrastructure.

“The District has issued a pre-solicitation notice to contractors in order to alert them of the planned work,” said Kris Hurst, chief of international

engineering for the District.

The notice is for the design and construction of a forward operating base and forward operating facilities in Romania, said Hurst. The work includes the design and construction of basic facilities to support rotational training units, including expeditionary-type billets, operation/administration, and maintenance facilities.

The creation of these forward operating sites, whether using existing infrastructure or building anew, is part of EUCOM’s and USAREUR’s transformation strategy, said Hurst.

In total, it’s part of a larger initiative: the principle of collective security.

In an October 2005 interview, Marine Gen. James Jones, who is

Bulgaria



- **Joined NATO in 2004.**
- **Scheduled to obtain EU membership on Jan. 1, 2007.**
- **Signed an agreement with Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice in April 2006 to allow several already-established Bulgarian military facilities to be shared by U.S. and Bulgarian troops for training.**



- **Capital: Sofia**
- **Government: Parliamentary democracy**
- **Area: 110,910 square km., slightly larger than Tennessee**
- **Population: 7,385,367**
- **Population growth rate: -0.86%**

Source: CIA World Fact Book

both the supreme allied commander for NATO military operations and the commander of EUCOM, spoke about the changes in EUCOM. He said EUCOM and NATO have moved away from the reactive defensive missions that characterized the organization in the 20th century and moved toward building capabilities that can take on asymmetric threats.

The end result is a lighter footprint in Europe, Jones said.

Forward basing U.S. forces in Eastern Europe also creates the opportunity to help shape regional militaries so they can better interact with allies during combined operations, Ward said.

EUCOM and NATO are working to reinforce such concepts as an expeditionary force structure and a professional noncommissioned officer corps, he added.

“Transformation is not just about things. Transformation is about the intellectual aspects of thinking about the way you do business, as well,” he said. “And, quite frankly, before the physical part of transformation occurs, that intellectual shift has to occur.”

Such efforts benefit the United States as well, he said, because they make other countries better partners in the “Long War.”

The Eastern European initiative, called the Eastern European Command Post or the Eastern

European Task Force, will consist of a small permanent staff of U.S. servicemembers facilitating the rotation of U.S. brigades through Romanian and Bulgarian bases. These rotational brigades will conduct training with Eastern European militaries and be available to react to any potential developing crises in the region.

“The Eastern European Task Force is clearly an integral leg of a transformed U.S. European Command,” Ward said.

Ward described this arrangement with the host countries as a win-win situation. The host countries get training from U.S. forces, and the United States is allowed to base expeditionary forces in a key geographic region.

The notion of expeditionary forces being employed throughout U.S. Central Command in the war on terrorism is not new, Ward added, and is a part of Army transformation.

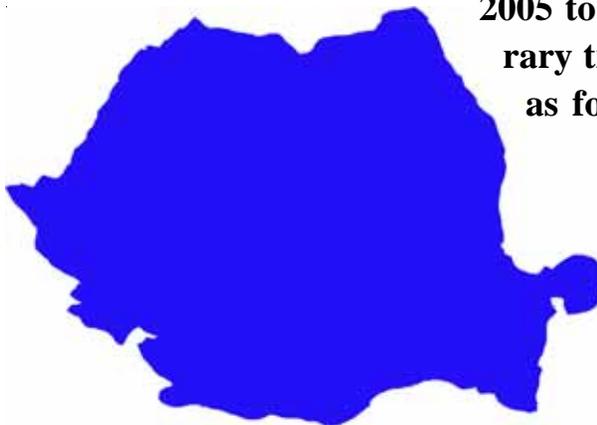
Once the Army transformation process is further along in Europe, a Stryker brigade combat team of the 2nd Cavalry, scheduled to move to Germany from Fort Lewis, Wash., this summer, and the 173rd Brigade Combat Team, based in Vicenza, Italy, will be available to rotate through the Eastern European Task Force as well, Ward said.

Information and quotes for this story were compiled from various DoD sources.

Romania



- **Joined NATO in 2004.**
- **Scheduled to obtain EU membership on Jan. 1, 2007.**
- **Signed an agreement with Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice in December 2005 to allow the U.S. military to establish temporary training bases in the country and use them as forward operating sites.**



- **Capital: Bucharest**
- **Government: Republic**
- **Area: 237,000 square km., slightly smaller than Oregon**
- **Population: 22,303,552**
- **Population growth rate: -0.12%**

Source: CIA World Fact Book