

US Mulls Pulling Troops From Germany as Trump-Merkel Tensions Mount - Reports



WASHINGTON (Sputnik) - The US Defense Department is conducting a study on what the consequences would be of a major withdrawal of US military forces from Germany, media reported.

The analysis is being driven by escalating tensions between US President Donald Trump and German Chancellor Angela Merkel, the Washington Post reported on Friday, citing people familiar with the work.



The studies were initiated after Trump's expressed his interest in pulling out US forces at a meeting earlier this year with White House and military officials, the newspaper said, citing unnamed US officials.

Trump was taken aback by the cost and size of the US presence, which includes 35,000 active-duty troops, the report added.

Reports of a hasty US exit from Germany have alarmed officials in Europe who are concerned about America's future in NATO, the report said.

A US National Security Council (NSC) spokesman said in a statement that the Council had not requested any Defense Department analysis of re-positioning troops in Germany. Also, Pentagon spokesman Eric Pahon said there was no intention to withdraw any existing forces from Germany, the Post reported.

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Meanwhile, Trump has reiterated NATO allies need to increase defense spending, ahead of the alliance's summit in Brussels next month. "Germany has to spend more money, Spain, France, it's not fair what they've done to the United States," he said Friday.

He claimed the United States was paying “much more disproportionately to anyone else” in the alliance, which sets a spending target of 2 percent of a member state’s gross domestic product.

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