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Dear Julian,

Thank you for your letter of 13 September 2018 regarding the British Army's footprint in Germany. As you highlight, we have touched on this subject in the recent past, including at my evidence session to support your '*Indispensable Allies: US, NATO and UK Defence Relations*' report, and I am happy to provide the Committee with further clarity through this response.

You will have seen that I confirmed the Government's intention for the Army to maintain a number of key facilities in Germany at the Conservative Party conference on 30 September 2018. I will also be discussing these issues with my German counterpart, Dr. Ursula von der Leyen, during my visit to Germany later this week.

Answers to your questions are set out below and I will keep the Committee informed of any future developments as appropriate.

**Does the Department's policy on rebasing from Germany continue to be as set out by the then Secretary of State in his statement of March 2013? If not, please explain how the policy has changed and when decisions on these changes were made.**

The policy objectives of the Army Basing 2020 programme remain unchanged, with the withdrawal of all major British Army units from Germany by 2020 on track. Over 16,000 troops (82% of the 2010 footprint in Germany) have already relocated to the UK, with the final major units returning in 2019. As set out in earlier Government statements, this supports the Army structure and the generation of the Army's future capability as a part of Joint Force 2025 and our vital future contribution to NATO.

**The Rt Hon Dr Julian Lewis MP**  
**Chairman, Defence Committee**  
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As we discussed in detail at my evidence session to support your '*Indispensable Allies: US, NATO and UK Defence Relations*' report, NATO remains at the centre of UK Defence policy and the UK Government's unconditional commitment to the ongoing defence of the European continent. Over the past 12 months the Army has considered its enduring footprint in Germany in response to the emergent requirements to: enhance readiness in response to a resurgent state based threat in Europe; exploit opportunities to collaborate with the German Armed Forces; and utilise existing facilities to meet its training needs. Based on this work we have taken the decision to retain the following presence in Germany:

- I. a commitment to a combined river crossing capability with the Bundeswehr, known as the M3 wide-wet gap crossing capability, and associated shared facilities in Minden;
- II. the Training Area at Sennelager, along with accommodation and appropriate support infrastructure, including housing and schooling for a small number of permanent UK personnel;
- III. the controlled humidity storage facility in Mönchengladbach, home to c2,000 Army vehicles, and our relationship with the ammunition storage facility at Wulfen.

These decisions reaffirm the continuing importance of close defence co-operation between the UK and Germany. I will be signing a Joint Vision Statement with my German counterpart later this week underlining our commitment to building on this important bilateral relationship.

### **How many personnel will be retained in Germany after 2020?**

Based on these decisions there will be around 250 civilian and military personnel permanently stationed in Germany. This number is yet to be finalised.

### **Which units will these personnel be from? If you are unable to be specific about the identity of the units involved, please indicate whether they will be combat, combat support or combat service support personnel.**

No major units will be permanently stationed in Germany. The only sub-unit permanently stationed in Germany will be 23 Amphibious Squadron to maintain the Wide-Wet Gap Crossing Capability M3 vehicles based in Minden. Otherwise, personnel will be employed in roles involved in training, and equipment and infrastructure support.

### **Will Service families remain in Germany after 2020?**

The Army is planning for some Service families to be based in Germany after 2020. These families will be fully supported, for example we plan to maintain a primary school in Sennelager.

**What types and numbers of equipment (including vehicles and HETs) will be retained in Germany?**

The Army will retain around 2,000 vehicles in Germany, including logistical, mobility and armoured vehicles. For security reasons, we are unable to provide the precise breakdown of vehicles in Germany. These plans are yet to be finalised by the Army.

**What will be the fate of the Sennelager and Mönchengladbach facilities? Will any further facilities or infrastructure be retained in Germany?**

As covered above, the Sennelager training facilities and the Mönchengladbach vehicle storage site will be retained beyond 2020. We will use the Training Area and Training Centre at Sennelager along with accommodation and appropriate support infrastructure for a small number of permanent UK personnel. We will also maintain our presence at the defence munitions storage facility at Wulfen.

While it remains our intention to bring all our major units back to the UK from Germany by 2020, as a part of the Modernising Defence Programme we are actively examining how we might forward deploy further resources in the future to enhance readiness. We have not reached any conclusions at this stage.

**What discussions have you had with allies, in particular the United States which is seeking to continue to reinforce its formations in Europe, on these issues and on how our withdrawal affects our NATO commitments?**

I routinely discuss the full range of defence and security issues with the US and our NATO partners.

I look forward to discussing these issues further in the future. I will also place a copy of this response in the Library of the House.



**THE RT HON GAVIN WILLIAMSON CBE MP**