

Durbin Discusses Troop Withdrawal From Germany, Covid-19 Testing With Secretary Of Defense

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL), Vice Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, spoke by phone today with Secretary of Defense Mark Esper to follow up on an [August letter](#) regarding the justification for the President’s decision to remove nearly 12,000 American service members from Germany. Durbin again pressed Secretary Esper about the plan, its projected timeline, and about support for the Baltics and Poland. With no clear justification from the President or Department of Defense, Durbin has argued that this plan to remove troops from Germany will only weaken our relationship with a longstanding NATO ally with an action that will favor Russian interests.

“DOD plans must be made on sound military strategy, not the President’s political grudges. Months after this policy was announced, American taxpayers are still waiting on a clear, coherent explanation for this troop withdrawal,” said Durbin. “We are stronger for our relationships with NATO allies like Germany. Rather than allowing space for Russian aggression with this strategy, the President should focus on standing behind our allies.”

On the call, Durbin also encouraged Secretary Esper to consider utilizing the SHIELD T3 COVID-19 testing program, which was developed by the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), within the DOD after bringing up the rapid testing system to Secretary Esper in a [letter](#) last month. Durbin asked Secretary Esper to assist UIUC in securing more testing supplies and robots quickly to aid in expanding the availability of the SHIELD T3 testing program.