



United States Mission to the OSCE

U.S. Statement for the Forum for Security Co-operation: Any Other Business – DEFENDER 25

As delivered by Chargé d’Affaires, a.i. Katherine Brucker
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Thank you, Madam Chair,

I am pleased to brief colleagues today about the DEFENDER 25 exercise. This briefing is a demonstration of the U.S. commitment to transparency.

Dynamic Employment of Forces to Europe for NATO Deterrence and Enhanced Readiness, DEFENDER 25, is a U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) scheduled, U.S. Army Europe and Africa (USAREUR-AF)-conducted large-scale exercise that consists of three component exercises: Swift Response (SR25), Immediate Response (IR25), and Saber Guardian (SG25).

DEFENDER 25 was planned and will be executed in accordance with all applicable international commitments. To ensure maximum transparency, the United States and the host nations involved in Swift Response, Immediate Response, and Saber Guardian have submitted notifications pursuant to the Vienna Document.

DEFENDER 25 includes Allied and partner service members from 29 other nations, which are: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Kosovo, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Moldova, North Macedonia, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

DEFENDER 25 events include the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS) live-fire on Gotland Island, Sweden; deployment of U.S. Army forces

through the Port of Kavala, Greece; Reception Staging and Onward Movement (RSOM) throughout Czechia; unmanned aerial vehicle blood resupply; Army Prepositioned Stock-2 (APS-2) issue of chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, and explosives (CBRNE) protective equipment; and deployment of the recently constituted 7th Engineer Brigade via inland waterways.

DEFENDER 25 began on April 1, 2025, with the deployment of U.S.-based units' equipment from the port of Charleston, South Carolina, and personnel from 14 aerial ports of embarkation in the U.S. This event rehearses the large-scale operation of rapidly deploying a large, credible force from the U.S. to Europe in a contingency operation.

SWIFT RESPONSE 25 (SR25) includes five near-simultaneous airborne assault exercises into Finland, Norway, Latvia, Lithuania, and Sweden. SR25 involves approximately 4,100 U.S. participants and support from all Joint components including U.S. Air Forces Europe and Africa (USAFE-AF), Marine Forces Europe and Africa (MARFOREUR/AF), Navy Forces Europe and Africa (NAVEUR-NAVAF), U.S.-based special forces and 1,900 personnel from 14 other countries, which are: Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

SABER GUARDIAN 25 (SG25) in Czechia, Hungary, and Romania includes a long-distance movement, a water crossing, live-fire exercises, fire support coordination exercises, and multinational training. SG25 involves approximately 2,200 U.S. and 7,600 Allied and partner participants from Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Moldova, Romania, and Spain, and seeks to increase readiness and interoperability by exercising the ability to integrate approximately 10,000 U.S., Allied, and partner forces.

IMMEDIATE RESPONSE 25 (IR25) involves approximately 4,000 U.S. and 8,000 Allied and partner troops/participants from 19 countries. IR25 includes issuing CBRNE defensive equipment from APS-2, live-fire exercises, joint interrogation and detention center (JIDC) operations, a water crossing, and

training in Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Slovakia. The 1st German Netherlands Corps (1GNC)—a multinational warfighting headquarters designed to lead forces in land operations—will execute command and control (C2) of the U.S. Army's 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, and the Greek Army's 20th Armored Division.

This is the sixth iteration of the DEFENDER series of exercises. It will conclude on June 24, 2025.

Thank you, Madam Chair.