The long battle over 'Gone With the Wind'
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President Donald Trump said Monday he is ordering a major reduction in U. S. troop strength in Germany, a move widely criticized by members of his own party as a gift to Russia and a threat to U. S. national security.

ﹾWe're putting the number down to 25, 000 soldiers, ﹾ Trump said at the White House.

The U. S. currently has about 34, 500 troops in Germany ﹾ far fewer than during the Cold War, when Germany was the central focus of American and NATO efforts to deter invasion by the former Soviet Union. In recent decades, Germany has hosted key American military facilities and provided a transit point for troops deploying to and from the Middle East, including during years of conflict in Iraq.

Trump faulted Germany for failing to pay enough for its own defense, calling the long-time NATO ally ﹾdelinquent. "

ﹾWe're protecting Germany and they're delinquent. That doesn't make sense, ﹾ the president said, referring to Germany's failure thus far to attain a goal set by all NATO members in 2014 to spend at least 2% of gross national product on defense by 2024. Germany says it hopes to reach 2% by 2031.

ﹾUntil they pay, we're removing our soldiers, a number of our soldiers, ﹾ Trump said. His plan, however, did not sound fully defined.

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