

European GI Cutback Forced by Viet Needs

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The United States will pull back some 15,000 men from Europe during the next three months to provide highly trained specialists and other personnel required in the Vietnam expansion, U.S. officials said yesterday.

The European cutback to about 210,000 men will be only temporary, the officials said. Plans call for building Army strength back to the present 225,000 by the end of 1966.

Men due for rotation home this summer after two or three years service in Europe will be returned several months early to help train and activate new units slated for Vietnam and to release trained men for replacement duty in Southeast Asia.

Officials also disclosed that military manpower will be expanded faster than originally scheduled this spring. Overall armed forces strength will exceed the prior goal of 2,987,000 on June 30, mainly because of increases in the Army and Air Force. It was indicated, however, that the total increase would be relatively small.

There is no plan so far, it was said, to raise the armed forces beyond the goal of 3,093,109 men projected for June 30, 1967. The Army had been due to achieve a strength of 1,159,043 by the end of June this year and 1,233,693 a year later. Prior plans called for an Air Force of 854,498 by June 30, 1966, and 853,359 on June 30, 1967.

Officials said the temporary withdrawal of troops from Europe will not materially weaken the experience level and combat effectiveness of the

7th Army in Western Germany.

However, it is bound to have some impact on that force's readiness. Officials said it will be possible to achieve the over-all U.S. troop buildup and to carry on the Vietnam war without removing any major combat units from Europe.

Discussing the disorders and riots in South Vietnam, officials said that so far military operations against the Vietcong have not been affected significantly. But if they continue in the northern areas around Danang and Hue, it was said, the war could well be influenced.

There is large force of Communist troops near Danang. Many of the North Vietnamese regulars who have infiltrated across the border have remained in the northern provinces, officials said, and the Vietcong can be expected to take advantage of the instability if it continues.

Asked about the use of American planes Monday to airlift troops of Premier Nguyen Cao Ky to Danang to confront other South Vietnamese troops, officials said Ky asked for the airlift to help prevent the Vietcong from taking advantage of the crisis.

U.S. Marines remain active militarily against the Communists in the area, it was said.

The number of American troops in Vietnam now exceeds 230,000 and is approaching the goal of 235,000 set six weeks ago, it was disclosed. Officials declined to say whether more than 235,000 will be deployed there.