



11350 Random Hills Road, Suite 800, Fairfax, Virginia 22030 Phone (703) 934-6101 Fax (703) 352-3678

fff@fff.org www.fff.org

Bring 'Em Home by Scott McPherson

In response to rising complaints about the presence of U.S. troops, the Bush administration is making plans to reduce the number of American forces in both South Korea and Germany. At present, there are 37,000 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea and 71,000 in Germany.

The timing of this move is not coincidental. Since the election of South Korean president Roh Moo-hyun, who took office on February 25, that country has been making greater and greater strides towards distancing itself from the United States. In Germany, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder has been a highly outspoken critic of U.S. policies towards Iraq; last fall, one of Schroeder's ministers compared Bush's actions to those of Adolf Hitler.

So it comes as no surprise that President Bush is taking steps to remove American soldiers from those two countries — but not without making it quite clear what is motivating the decision. According to the *Washington Times*, “A senior [administration] official said the sudden action contains a not-so-subtle message.... ‘Let’s just say that if they take [the removal of troops] as a slight, they’re paying attention,’ the official said.”

Why should anyone be slighted? Bush's temper tantrums are his own problem.

The president thinks he's making a bold statement by threatening to bring our soldiers home. If foreign governments no longer want American troops around, then he'll give them what they want and see how they like it. To which Messrs. Roh and Schroeder should enthusiastically cry, “Thank you, President Bush!”

For more than a century the U.S. government has sought to control the world and build its own sprawling empire. From the Philippines to Latin America, the number of times American soldiers have been deployed to foreign lands exceeds the number of years our country has existed.

Rather than making the world safer, continued U.S. intervention in foreign affairs most often brings instability, resentment, and hatred.

It's time to stop babysitting the world. The United States can start with Germany and South Korea, but the end goal should be that there are no U.S. troops on distant soil. Bring the soldiers back home.

Scott McPherson is policy advisor at The Future of Freedom Foundation in Fairfax, Va.