

The Costs of an Illegal Military Occupation: Trump Demands Five-Fold Increase in Payments from South Korea

Officials scramble to justify Trump's demand for \$4.7 billion

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South Korea has historically paid an unusually large percentage of the cost of keeping US forces there, and under pressure from President Trump, agreed earlier this year to a [substantial increase](#), with South Korea agreeing to pay \$924 million annually.

Since then, Trump had suggested a few times that he wanted more, and that South Korea could easily afford it. His new demand, however, shocked everyone on both sides as he is demanding [over five times what South Korea is paying, \\$4.7 billion annually](#).

This is raising a lot of questions in South Korea about the viability of keeping the US around, but the bigger task is for US officials, [who are trying to somehow justify a \\$4.7 billion price tag that seemingly came out of nowhere](#).

South Korea, after all, was paying a lot of the cost of US forces already, then agreed to pay more. It is going to take massive amounts of creative math to even argue that the US presence costs what Trump is now demanding. Early indications are that officials will try to argue that South Korea's relative economic prosperity is because of the US presence and that the US deserves to take a cut.

But some officials are also worrying that this isn't an isolated matter, and that what Trump is doing now in South Korea could be a bellwether for upcoming demands in Germany and Japan, other nations Trump has long been keen to get more money out of.

Though Trump seems to believe these nations have no choice but to pay up, they may ultimately decide the US troop presence simply isn't affordable, and that other arrangements make more sense.

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