



A paratrooper from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team presents a patch to Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė during a welcome ceremony 26 April 2014 at Siauliai Air Base, Lithuania. The Lithuanian president personally shook hands with each of the Sky Soldiers as they disembarked the aircraft.

(Photo by Sgt. A.M. LaVey, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team PAO)

Assurance in Europe Why Relationships Matter

Lt. Gen. Donald M. Campbell Jr., U.S. Army, and
Maj. Michael T. Whitney, U.S. Army

At the U.S. Army Europe's (USAREUR's) 2014 Combined Training Conference in Oberammergau, Germany, Lt. Gen. Donald M. Campbell Jr., commanding general, was asked how the United States was able to respond so quickly to the crisis in Ukraine.¹ His answer was simple—*relationships*. As Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, commander,

United States European Command (USEUCOM) and NATO's supreme allied commander, Europe, is fond of saying, "you cannot surge trust."

Since the start of Operation Atlantic Resolve, USAREUR has hosted many visitors, and every one has walked away with an understanding of how vital the permanently based U.S. forces in Europe are and

will continue to be in responding to challenges such as the recent events in Ukraine. USAREUR's response to unpredictable events can be orchestrated and replicated in a timely manner—as demonstrated by Operation Atlantic Resolve—only because of the relationships, trust, and access it enjoys from its forward-based presence in Europe. Maj. Gen. Almantas Leika, commander, Lithuanian Land Forces, echoed this sentiment when he said of Atlantic Resolve, “We feel in this complicated situation that we are not alone. This is extremely important.”

A Persistent Presence

In light of Russian intervention in Ukraine, the United States is demonstrating its continued commitment to collective security through a series of actions designed to reassure NATO allies and partners of America's dedication to enduring peace and stability in Europe. As part of the persistent presence mission, which has transitioned to Operation Atlantic Resolve, USAREUR forces are conducting land force assurance exercises and expeditionary sustainment, as well as planning future bilateral training opportunities.²

USAREUR leaders feel this is made possible only by the relationships developed through years of stationing in Europe. USAREUR, the Army Service component command of USEUCOM, has a unique ability to leverage friendships built on more than 1,000 annual security cooperation events and exercises. A perfect example of the enabling factors of personal and professional relationships is how the mission in support of Operation Atlantic Resolve developed.

Relationships developed by USAREUR with the affected countries allowed its senior leaders to make initial phone calls to Baltic region chiefs of defense to set the conditions for what at the time was called persistent presence. These phone calls were quickly followed by the USAREUR operations officer, Maj. Gen. Darryl A. Williams, immediately traveling to all the Baltic states and Poland to set the conditions for the reassurance mission. After the initial coordination was complete, the USAREUR deputy commanding general, Maj. Gen. Richard C. Longo, traveled to Poland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to follow up with their leadership. He performed a joint welcome ceremony for the initial forces from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team “Sky Soldiers,” based out of Vicenza,

Italy, to begin the initial persistent presence mission. After all forces arrived, Lt. Gen. Campbell traveled to each country and met with their key leaders to ensure USAREUR was meeting the host nations' expectations. These visits by USAREUR senior leaders with key military and political figures demonstrated an unwavering commitment to partners and allies. The successful visits were enabled by the personal relationships developed throughout the year during multinational training exercises and events. USAREUR's perspective is that the relationships highlighted above are the direct result of U.S. forces being stationed in Europe and developing a foundation of trust through credibility. This trust, in turn, has allowed USAREUR the ability to gain access to key leaders in the affected region and respond to events quickly, when every second was critical to providing friends the assurance they desired. The command's senior leaders received a truly overwhelming personal response from these countries' key leaders during face-to-face engagements in the affected areas after USAREUR units had arrived. Country leaders



expressed amazement that USAREUR could react as quickly as it did and also that senior leaders took time to meet and work with them, in person, and establish a foundation for the mission. While USAREUR played a large role in the response to the situation in Ukraine, the command believes that the overall operation was made possible by a holistic team effort from USEUCOM and the joint and interagency communities in providing a comprehensive response in support of U.S. objectives.

Operation Atlantic Resolve

The ability to have soldiers—without a formal request for forces—board a tactical aircraft in Italy, fly just over two hours, walk off the plane, and immediately begin training with a partnered force sends a powerful message of assurance to a country that lives day in and day out in the looming shadow of a perceived threat. USAREUR leadership believes this rapid response could not have been conducted from anywhere else but Europe without a significant amount of

country coordination, foreign clearances, and cross-talk over different time zones.

From 23 to 26 April 2014, company-sized contingents of U.S. paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team arrived in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia to begin exercises with their troops. At each location, as part of a joint welcome ceremony, Longo was on the ground to make remarks about USAREUR's unwavering commitment to its friends and allies. The leaders of these countries explained how they had called upon NATO, and especially the United States, for support during a trying time. The response included tactical aircraft on the airfield with U.S. soldiers standing shoulder to shoulder in formation with their own forces. USAREUR soldiers were always met by the host country's soldiers for handshakes and patch exchanges as they arrived. They were welcomed with open arms. Longo, a leader with 34 years of service, later stated, "This was the greatest experience of my military career."

There are countless other examples of what this assurance message meant to these countries; the Lithuanian president personally shook hands with each of the Sky Soldiers as they disembarked the aircraft, the Estonian president broke bread with three Sky Soldier privates after his welcome speech, and dozens of civilians approached Longo in town to thank him for bringing soldiers to help them.

During the Conference of European Armies in 2013, Longo met all four countries' chiefs of defense and developed strong professional relationships with them.³ These friendships allowed him the access he was immediately given when he arrived in their countries before USAREUR forces. He was personally invited to lunch with the chief of defense in each location and accorded the opportunity to sit in on each country's internal intelligence briefs. He was then able to relate his observations to the arriving company first sergeants and stress the importance of international relationships, USAREUR expectations, and the fact that if

Senior military officials from participating nations gather 26 September 2014 for the closing ceremony of Rapid Trident 2014 at Yavoriv, Ukraine. Rapid Trident is an annual multinational exercise conducted by USAREUR, led by Ukraine, to enhance interoperability with allied and partner nations while promoting regional stability and security.

(Photo by Spc. Joshua Leonard, U.S. Army Europe)



USAREUR did not act to bolster these Baltic allies, it risked a shift in the balance of power in the region. This level of access and USAREUR's rapid actions would have been extremely difficult for a stateside force to accomplish in the same timeframe, weakening the effect and level of assurance provided.

Another great example comes from Col. Mike Foster, commander of the 173rd Airborne Brigade, and his professional connection to Maj. Gen. Adam Joks, commander of the Polish 6th Airborne Brigade. When Foster visited Joks' headquarters in late 2013, they went to Pope John Paul II's hometown in Wadowice, Poland, and sampled the pastries the Pope had every day as a boy on his way to his elementary school. It was at a planning conference in Poland where they scheduled the bilateral airborne operations their two units would later execute in February and May of 2014. The command believes opportunities for building relationships are one of the great benefits of the Army in Europe. Foster's trusting relationship with Joks is just one example of how Operation Atlantic Resolve was enabled by this forward presence.

Trusting Relationships Mean Strategic Access

Location and access matter. U.S. Army forces in Europe live, train, and operate alongside many capable allies and partners every day from a network of strategically positioned bases with the necessary access to respond to contingencies in the Levant, the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and around the globe. Europe's borders often provide direct linkages to increasingly unstable and unpredictable regions vital to U.S. national security interests.

The prevailing instability and unpredictable operational environment along the fringe of Europe presents an opportunity for USAREUR forces to be fully responsive to geographic combatant commanders (GCCs) with an economy-of-force posture centered in Europe. USAREUR remains first and foremost prepared for rapid contingency response. It achieves timely Army responsiveness to GCC requirements through assigned, trained-and-ready forward forces, with direct operational access to likely contingencies in this region as demonstrated by Operation Atlantic Resolve. USAREUR forces contain a spectrum of tailored Army capabilities to meet initial GCC operational response

requirements until forces based in the continental United States arrive. Access, which remains vital for Operation Atlantic Resolve, is assured by continually reinforcing relationships with allies and partners—relationships built on a foundation of trust. The relationships are the priceless commodity that allows access; that commodity cannot be bought at the last minute. Relationships are the foundation for everything USAREUR seeks to accomplish in Europe.

Another capability to help reinforce access comes from the regionally aligned forces concept.⁴ USAREUR's experience is that regionally aligned forces provide an avenue to reinforce existing relationships that allow for access, while offering tailored capabilities by geographic region. Regionally aligned forces enhance the capabilities of forward-stationed forces and serve to strengthen friendships already developed in regions where there is uncertainty. This concept further illustrates how vital partnerships, built on the shared understanding of training, living, and working together, lead to trust and understanding for the future. Access also provides a way ahead for meeting the challenges of uncertain security environments developing in locations across the globe. Operation Atlantic Resolve provides an excellent example of forward-stationed forces providing initial crisis response, while setting the conditions for follow-on rotational forces to add increased capability and flexibility, achieving a dynamic presence.

The United States, its allies, and its partners share common interests in maintaining a Europe that is safe, secure, and prosperous. USAREUR's access has forged the bonds to jointly engage with an uncertain future. It continues to see benefits of this concept demonstrated first hand in Operation Atlantic Resolve. Partners and allies of the United States desire assurance in challenging times, and USAREUR forward-based relationships offer that assurance through trust. Relationships and access will continue to be pivotal in an uncertain future, and are the road to overcoming uncertain security environments.

Live Together, Train Together, and Face Adversity Together

This simple concept is at the heart of what USAREUR seeks to do with its European allies and partners: Partner and practice together. Only by building strong bonds and connections can

USAREUR hope to form the kinds of partnerships that prove resilient through uncertainty, as demonstrated by Operation Atlantic Resolve. USAREUR conducts partnership training at every opportunity and at all levels, most notably at the Joint Maneuver Training and Readiness Centers in Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels, Germany. This creates a foundation that allows USAREUR to practice working together and builds interoperability throughout its multinational team. This is also the key to developing a skill set that focuses on allowing the USAREUR team to seamlessly integrate wherever called upon, or to walk off an aircraft and immediately begin partnership training.

USAREUR prevents and protects as a member of a larger team. As the Army Service component command for USEUCOM, USAREUR is separate from NATO, though it fills a vitally important role in the transformation of partnered NATO forces. USAREUR's goal is to be a manifestation of a continued U.S. commitment to stability on the European continent, while offering a number of unique capabilities to support NATO objectives.

Leveraging the USAREUR staff, assigned forces, and longstanding partnerships is the way USAREUR maintains interoperability across multiple operational domains—an interoperability that was developed through years of investment in combined operations in



Army paratroopers assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team conduct an allied training exercise 25 May 2014 alongside soldiers from Latvia's Land Forces Infantry Brigade at Adazu Training Area, Latvia. Approximately 600 paratroopers from the 173rd ABCT are in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland as part of Operation Atlantic Resolve to demonstrate commitment to NATO obligations and sustain interoperability with allied forces.

(Photo by Sgt. Alonzo Werner, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team PAO)

Afghanistan and around the world. NATO is a viable deterrent to aggression, and many non-NATO members look to NATO for reassurance. USAREUR's location, along with the great capabilities of the Joint Readiness Training Center, provides a ready avenue to achieve this shared goal. Every country with which USAREUR currently has units operating for Operation Atlantic Resolve has participated in at least one USAREUR training event at a Joint Multinational Training Command training area, or a combined USAREUR exercise that has been hosted in another country.

This command fully believes that partnering, training, and working with NATO and non-NATO members will lead to the common goal of providing a safe and stable environment and will give USAREUR the ability to respond to crises when needed. Atlantic Resolve illustrates why USAREUR believes relationships matter and will continue to matter in an uncertain and challenging future. Never forget that endeavors involving organizations are always about people and with people—it is the relationships that truly matter. ■

Lt. Gen. Donald M. Campbell Jr., U.S. Army, is the commanding general of United States Army Europe, headquartered in Wiesbaden, Germany. He grew up on Army posts throughout the United States and is a distinguished military graduate of Kansas State University, where he was commissioned as an armor officer in May 1978. Campbell has held various positions at all levels of staff and command in the Army from armor platoon leader to corps commander. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College and the U.S. Army War College, and he holds a master's degree in administration from Central Michigan University.

Maj. Michael T. Whitney, U.S. Army, is a member of the Commanding General's Initiatives Group for United States Army Europe. He holds a B.A. from Santa Clara University and an M.B.A. from the University of West Florida. His assignments include tours in Europe and the Middle East, and deployments supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Notes

1. The Combined Training Conference is a semi-annual conference designed to synchronize and source USAREUR multinational exercises and training events to promote greater interoperability with NATO allies and troop-contributing nations. The conference is run by USAREUR and is cohosted by NATO's Joint Forces Command Brunssum. The conference, held 17 to 19 June 2014, had more than 150 attendees from 32 nations.

2. Persistent presence land forces assurance exercises are the first in a series of expanded U.S. land force training activities in Poland and the Baltic region taking place for the next few months and beyond. The exercises, conducted by USAREUR soldiers and host-nation forces, are a demonstration of the United States commitment to NATO and to our collective defense responsibilities through increased ground, air, and naval force presence. The intent of the supplementary exercises is to reassure NATO allies that the U.S. commitment to meeting our nation's Article 5 obligations is unwavering. Accordingly, USAREUR has deployed company-sized contingents of U.S. paratroopers from the 173rd Airborne Brigade to Poland, Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia—roughly 600 Soldiers in all—to conduct the expanded land force training. This action comes at the request of the host-nation

governments.

3. The Conference of European Armies took place in Wiesbaden, Germany, 30 September to 2 October 2013. The conference's goal was to enhance this common interest and support a foundation for the strong relationships shared in the region as senior land forces leaders discussed solutions to our many shared security concerns and reinforced their mutual commitment to each other. The conference included senior land forces leaders such as Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, Gen. Philip M. Breedlove, and senior officers from 35 other countries. The theme of the conference was *Opportunities to Address Common Security Challenges*.

4. According to Field Manual 3-22, *Army Support to Security Cooperation* (2013), *regionally aligned forces* are those forces that provide a combatant commander with up to joint task force-capable headquarters with scalable, tailorable capabilities to enable the combatant commander to shape the environment. They are those Army units assigned to combatant commands, those Army units allocated to a combatant command, and those Army capabilities distributed and prepared by the Army for combatant command regional missions. (Regional missions are driven by combatant command requirements and include theater security cooperation, other shaping efforts, and collective response to threats, if necessary.)