

"Europe: Sleepy Hollow or Long Term Challenge?"

General Roger A. Brady

16 September 2009

General Brady: Thank you. It's great to be with you, and first of all let me thank the Air Force Association for this opportunity to come and talk to you a little bit about what is going on in Europe.

The good news is that I'm not here to sell you a coat with a belt. [Laughter]. But I do have -- It's a shame that Steve Lorenz is not here. I really wanted him to be here, because what I do have for you is for only three payments of \$19.95, you can have the complete compendium of Steve Lorenz on Leadership. And if you come see me and give me some money I'll also get him to autograph it because this is a first edition. So when you see him I want you to tell him that it's now in production and you can all have a copy.

Sleepy hollow or long term challenge? Why would I pick kind of an obnoxious title like that? The reason is because I wanted to maybe provoke some discussion.

Is it a bit of a sleepy hollow? Well it is because there's no war going on there, that's for sure and so I think that's a pretty good thing. However, it is a very important place. You know everybody, any commander worth his salt or her salt can show you a set of slides that depicts them as the center of the universe. And we've all got a set of slides like that.

The fact of the matter is it isn't true. But all of our MAJCOMs -- PACAF, USAFE, all of the others -- are extraordinarily important and we're doing important things in the global war on terror, if I can use that term, and we all contribute to a greater whole. Quite frankly, Gary North of PACAF could give this briefing and would and I can say the same thing about PACAF, but since I know a little bit about USAFE I'll brief you on USAFE rather than PACAF. But this really about the advantage and the importance of forward based forces and what we're doing.

I also want to talk to you a little bit about some things that are going on in Europe. None of them I think, none of the things that I tell you today I think will be a surprise to you. If you pay attention at all, and I know you do, you will know most of the things I am showing you but I don't know that you've seen it put together in particularly in this way.

There are things going on in Europe that are important to know about and not all of them are good I think in terms of what is happening long range. So let me walk through this and I hope perhaps it will motivate you to ask some questions or have some comments. I do think that Europe presents for us some long term challenges that we need to be aware of. Next slide.

This is the Europe that we all remember. Oktoberfest, a hugely successful F-16 program across Europe, all the beautiful castles, and the nice people, and the beer at Oktoberfest and all that sort of thing, the Eiffel tower. We all remember this Europe and the good news is that Europe is still there, and when our very busy people in USAFE have an opportunity to participate in this activity they do so. So that Europe is still there. Next slide.

But I would like for you to look just for a second at what Europe is from a global perspective and how important is Europe? Let me tell you, Europe is hugely important, a major financial center and trading partner; 2.8 billion dollars in trade between the U.S. and Europe every day, and as was mentioned, about a third of the world's gross domestic product. An incredibly important area of the world for us.

Also, Europe is the hub to go everywhere. We've got some former TACC commanders, Bill Welser is here and others. If you go almost anywhere, you go through Europe. It just so happens that we're at about the 3500 nautical mile point which is about the optimum range for our strategic airlifters so we have Ramstein and Mildenhall and Morone and Spangdahlem and Fairford as an important part of the strategic lay down of the USTRANSCOM and Air Mobility Command. So we are an important hub of access not just to the continent but to the rest of the world.

And it is the home of most of history's easily most successful military alliance. For the last 60 years NATO has held a large number of fairly disparate nations together because we have very important shared common values. This is an important place and remains an important place to us. Next slide.

Now, there is another Europe. You saw the Europe before, this is Europe also. This is a Europe that has had terrorist attacks, that has growing challenges with non-assimilated people of nationalities that are not traditionally associated with Europe, and a resurgent Russia. Air Forces that are flying some very old equipment like the AN-2 Colt that you see up there. So this is Europe as well. Next slide.

Europe is a continent that is extraordinarily and growing in its dependence on Russia for natural gas and for oil. There are lots of things that make up a nation's power and a nation's authority and a nation's ability to operate as a sovereign state and Russia, despite whether you're optimistic or pessimistic about Russia, they have demonstrated an ability to use this as a tool of national power in Russia to effect the behavior of European states and it has been successful.

Every nation that I visit and every Chief of Staff that I talk to, I always talk to a Minister of Defense, I occasionally talk to a President or a Prime Minister and they all talk about energy dependence or energy independence and the effect that it has on them and their concerns about it. It is anticipated that by 2020 -- Right now it's 40-60 percent of the oil and gas in Europe comes from Russia. By 2020 it will be more like 80 percent. Next slide.

Also, there is a lot of terrorist activity in Europe. The good news is that there is a great deal of cooperation between the U.S. and the nations across Europe at the intelligence level, at the service level, at the police level, to deal with this, but this is a lot of terrorist activity and it is ongoing. This is all from unclassified sources; you can imagine what the classified sources would tell you. Lots of activity of this nature.

Now, interestingly, what makes this continue to be a large part of the challenge is -- next slide -- there is also a strong demographic shift going on in Europe. And many of the terrorists attempts that have failed and the terrorist activity that has been uncovered and the terrorists that have been arrested are folks who you would not historically associate with Europe -- people from Africa and people from South Asia. But in many cases they have been in Europe for second and third generations. So there is a strong demographic shift in Europe. That's not bad in itself. There's a strong demographic shift in the United States also. The concern is about the few extremist elements that are associated with that and what it means for Europe and its stability.

This data that you see up there, the factors. Lack of cultural assimilation, radicalized first generation immigrants, disaffected second and third generation, 21-29 year olds, links to South Asia and North Africa and the use of Mosques, prayer holes and prisons for extremist activity and discussions. It all came out of a study by the Rand Corporation just this last summer. There are implications of this for European stability and security. Next slide.

Then we have Russia. Which face do we deal with? In the U.S. there was a little bit of difference of opinion.

Former President Bush said, "I looked a man in the eye and I was able to get a sense of his soul." But Senator McCain said, "I looked into his eyes and I saw KGB."

There is also a variety of opinions within Europe about Russia depending on how close you live to them, number one, and what your recent history with them is. If you're further to the west generally speaking and it's very dangerous to make general statements, but if you're further to the west you're more inclined to think you can get along with them. If you spent 40 years as part of the Soviet Union you're inclined to not believe that and to take a little harder line and to not be as optimistic about what Russia will become of will be up to. Next slide.

So what is our role? If you come down a couple levels, that's more of a strategic look. If you come down a couple levels to an operation like what do we do there? I tell people we do four things in Europe; first of all our primary mission is CENTCOM. That's not just a bumper sticker, it's absolutely true. We've been told by the Joint Staff that our primary job is the global war on terror and CENTCOM operations. As a part of global force management our units spend as much time in CENTCOM in either in Afghanistan or Iraq as any of the other units in the Air Force. I have eight fighter squadrons. I have anywhere between one and three squadrons in either Iraq or Afghanistan at any one time. So we're a very busy force just like everyone else is.

We're there and have been there for 60 years to assure the allies of our support to NATO and to deter aggression. We are there to ensure strategic access. As I mentioned earlier we are kind of the host for those bases that support Air Mobility Command and USTRANSCOM operations. A very important part of the U.S. strategic lay down.

And finally, and really my busiest and central day to day job, is building partnerships. So we have forward based air power supporting the EUCOM mission, primary of which is not just going forward, but when we're at home we spend full time building partnerships among our allies. Next slide.

Now what are the trends and who are we dealing with in NATO? This is not necessarily a good story. This has been a problem for a long time. I think it is getting a little worse rather than getting a little better. But this tells you there are only about five nations that meet the NATO goal of spending at least two percent of their GDP on defense. And of the people that meet that, several of them are in decline. I would argue that the United States is as well. And, increasingly, politically it is becoming easier for European politicians to support EU missions as opposed to NATO missions. The EU is doing a good job doing some

humanitarian things in Chad and other places and those are missions that are a little easier politically for them to sign up to. Next slide.

When you think of European air forces, sometimes I believe you think ah, European air forces, F-16 -- pretty modern. That's true and it's not true. It's hard and unfair in some ways to put people into categories, but for the purpose of this discussion I would put the NATO air forces into three broad categories.

There are about 13 of them that are a whole lot like us. They can go to Red Flag and they do and they're pretty effective and they can employ precision guided munitions. About 13 of them. Highly capable, highly interoperable with us, with extraordinary language skills that Americans don't tend to have. And they are great folks and very effective for us to operate with.

Then there are about half a dozen countries who are competent aviators and have an air force and fly fighters but they're pretty much flying MiG-21's, MiG-29's, SU-25's, that sort of thing, that are getting very old, very hard to maintain. They are not interoperable with us very easily and they are not refuelable and therefore they are not deployable. So they're kind of a point defense air force.

Then you have a number of countries that I would call nascent air force. They have a collection of five or six airplanes that are hard to really call an air force in terms of actually being able to package them and employ them in some meaningful way. So these are some folks that need a lot of help.

The NATO air capability, in other words, varies widely. For example, and I want to say this carefully, the Afghan National Army Air Corps is very close to being able to deliver ordnance air to ground in support of their ground troops. We have about a half a dozen NATO nations that cannot do that and will not be able to do that for the foreseeable future. So there is a lot of work to be done in NATO in this building partnership mission. Next slide.

Let's look at Afghanistan as a barometer, and I bring this up just to provide you a little bit different perspective than I think you probably hear inside the Beltway. It is very fashionable in the U.S. to be critical of NATO allies and what they are not doing in Afghanistan, and certainly there is room in some cases to be critical of some nations who are perhaps not delivering all the capability that they could deliver in Afghanistan. However it's also important to point out that when we go places as the U.S. and we conduct operations, and we need to go for all kinds of reasons as a coalition, the people that go with

us are Europeans. Almost invariably the people that are dependable and that go with us are Europeans. Of the 41 nations that are with us in Afghanistan they are NATO basically and a handful of others, but basically this is a European and American operation.

Now the most capable are not always the most willing and the most willing are not always the most capable. We have some nations in NATO; I would single out Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, who have incredible political will. They will bloody their nose in the fight but they don't have much capability. But those are the people that I am really motivated to help. Next slide.

This gives you just a brief rundown of the 12 countries that can provide some fixed wing or other kinds of flying air. There are others that provide other kinds of air forces but these -- Of our nations in NATO, there are only 12 nations that can deploy air forces in traditional ways. Over there you see JTAC. JTAC is a growth industry in Europe. It's extraordinarily important, everybody wants to grow JTAC and I am in no way discouraging that. That is a good thing. However, it is very important because the JTAC mission is so critical. It's very important that we all know what a JTAC is, that we be standardized in the way we do things and together USAFE and my other brother, the commander of CC Air, Ramstein, are working together to make sure that when we say JTACs we know what we're talking about and that we standardize all that training, and we've had some great successes. These are all the nations that have provided JTACs that you see over there on the left. Our policies and actions as nations and as air forces can affect both the will and the capabilities of these nations today and going forward. Next slide.

Now, what do I have? That was the wind up, this is the pitch. Things have changed a lot. Just a few short years ago, in 1991 there were 450 fighters in USAFE. At the end of the 2010 budget there are 150. At the same time we have gone from 16 NATO nations in the 1990's to 28 NATO nations. So, are fighters everything? No, but fighters are just a metric of the forces that we have to conduct building partnership activities. Just as important are the personnelists and the maintainers and the security forces and the air traffic controllers and all of the skill sets that support aircraft operations that we use to relate to our Allies and to train and to exercise with them.

We also in that time have grown 22 Partnership for Peace nations who also want to interact with us and be not just an absorber, not just a consumer, but also a producer of security for the Alliance and for the West. So resources in doing this mission are extraordinarily important.

Major Dave Edgington gave a presentation yesterday or the day before on CCJO which is Cornerstone Concept for Joint Operations which is becoming kind of the foundational document from which I believe joint doctrine will be written. And what they are saying is that while we think that we're going into a period of irregular warfare where you would think that you would use a lot more special forces, the reality is that a growing share of joint engagement tasks will fall to general purpose forces. So general purpose forces forward deployed, in place, permanently assigned are critically important for us to meet what is really a growing challenge in this area. Next slide.

So I would say that in a nutshell Europe is a major trading partner. They are a site of major deployment hubs, our link to the continent and the world. They are increasingly reliant on Russia for energy. They are changing demographically. They are growing their own terrorists. They are increasingly challenged to maintain credible defense forces. And they are not a partner that we can take for granted. We must stay linked with the Europeans and they with us for us to continue to accomplish the extraordinary things that we have been able to do in the last 60 years.

It is important I think to point out that just as Mr. Gates, our Secretary of Defense said, and this was from an article that he wrote in Foreign Policy magazine earlier in the year, where he said "The capabilities of the U.S. allies and partners may be as important as its own, and building their capacity is arguably as important as, if not more so, the fighting the U.S. does itself." So it's extraordinarily important that we do that.

I think I would make the same case for the Pacific. We must maintain the forces in the Pacific that we have. We must maintain the forces that we have in Europe if we are going to do this, what we consider a cornerstone of U.S. policy going forward which is to build a partnership of our current and future coalitions and alliances, this is extremely important for us. Next slide.

I think I'm through.

We are in a period now I think as you've heard where resources will be a challenge for us. It is absolutely true that we are going to have some reduction in our forces. We have had a reduction, you've heard about the CAF redux of some 250 aircraft. As a member of the Combat Air Forces that is something that I signed up to, something that I support. It's not something I like but it is a reality. But it is critically important that as we decide how to

distribute and how to place the forces that are left we need to make sure that that decision is made based on strategy.

Yesterday if you heard the nuclear enterprise guys talk, Roger Burg said in relation to the nuclear forces he says "you must start with strategy," and that's my sermon. You must start with strategy.

Domestic politics and money are something you can't be ignorant of but you can't start there. As military professionals we must speak truth to power and we have to give unfettered military advice to civilian leadership. That's what we signed up to do.

So the politics will take care of itself. The money will eventually take care of itself. But our job as senior leaders in the military is to provide advice based on what it takes to support the strategy that we are given. That's the story I'm sticking to.

Thank you very much.

[Applause].

Moderator: Thank you, General Brady. We have some very good questions here. I've tried to sort them by category.

A couple regarding NATO and you addressed the NATO air forces and the questions have to deal with NATO in terms of is it too big now? Have we lost something because of the capability gap between the original NATO countries and the new countries? And then very specifically, does NATO still regard itself as a nuclear alliance or an alliance with a few nuclear members? And then finally in NATO, is the importance of the dual capable air craft. I know I threw a lot at you at one time.

General Brady: First of all, is NATO too big? No, it's not. But it does present challenges. I mean the people that have come on from the time that we had 16, then we got in the 1990's while I was there last time we got Hungary, Czech Republic, and Poland, and we've grown since then. The folks that came are people who answered a call and saw a promise of freedom and a better life for their people. You bet they should be in NATO. They bring more challenges than they bring capability but that's not a reason not to do it.

I think Mr. Biden, our Vice President, has said that people that want to join the NATO club ought to get to join the NATO club. And we'll deal with their capabilities. We

expect them to do what they can do and then we'll help them do the rest. I believe that very passionately.

I think that NATO is nearly twice as big as it was, presents growing challenges, but that's what we're there for. That's what we signed up to do and I'm glad they're part of the team. They came across, they bought into the idea of democracy at some risk to them and walked away from the Soviet Union, and they're to be applauded and supported for that.

Your other question was?

Moderator: The nuclear question.

General Brady: Are there nukes in Europe? [Laughter].

The nuclear question. I think that nuclear forces in Europe may become a part of the NPR. I'm not sure if they are, I've heard both things. I've heard that they would be, I've heard that they won't be. They won't be a major focus but I don't know how you ignore them.

I think first of all nuclear forces in Europe are very sensitive. It's a very sensitive issue. We don't talk about where they are or if they are. We don't talk about them nearly as openly as we do in the U.S. The Europeans, my take on it is the Europeans are okay that they're there. They think they're important and they don't want to talk about it, and I honor that. So I think they provide an important political deterrent and I think if we decided to do something else with them we would do something advisedly. I think that is something we need to think through very carefully and we should do it as a decision of the NATO alliance, not just the decision of the U.S. or some handful of nations.

Moderator: And then the final piece of that had to do with the dual capable aircraft.

General Brady: Dual capable aircraft.

I think the Secretary of Defense gave a great answer to that this morning, he either made a comment or responded to a question, I have forgotten which. But he said you know down the road we may talk about no nukes, but while you've got them they've got to be a credible force and so dual capable aircraft, F-35? Of course it's important. Until the policymakers change their mind and tell me we're not going to do that anymore we've got to make it a credible force. Weapons systems and weapons carriers and all of those things wear out over time and the components wear out and you have to replace them. We're at the point where that

is happening. Ed Thomas is right in the middle of that and so yes, we should move forward and develop the capability in our systems to conduct those kinds of operations or have that kind of operational deterrent and until the policymakers tell us to do something else.

Moderator: I had a couple of questions about AFRICOM and the relationship between EUCOM and AFRICOM and essentially the support that EUCOM currently gives to AFRICOM. How do you see that playing out in the future? Is the EUCOM support going to rise, going to fall, going to stay about where it is?

General Brady: AFRICOM is, if you've ever talked to General Ward, he's a very positive energetic gentleman and has taken on AFRICOM. He's pretty pleased with us to the degree that he doesn't get as much help from anybody as he needs, I'll tell you for sure. But we stood up 17th Air Force -- re-stood up, the old 17th Air Force as the air component to AFRICOM. Major General Ron Ladner the former king of TACC is the commander there and doing an extraordinary job he's got about 250 whole people and they're doing a marvelous job there's just not many of them.

As you know AFRICOM, does not have assigned forces and so they go through the RFF process, request for forces process, which is slightly better than the Department of Motor Vehicles, and it's just not a real responsive process. So that's frustrating I think to the AFRICOM folks. But we end up supporting them a lot. People say how's our support to the chain? Well it's probably not that different from when my friend and immediate predecessor Tom Hobbins was there. We provide a lot of support to AFRICOM. Our C-130s we've got a few C-130s chopped to them right now. Some of them are out of Ramstein, some of them are out of what we call the Delta Squadron at Ramstein. But they don't have any permanently assigned forces.

Africa is bigger than anybody can imagine and a couple of C-130s won't quite hack it in Africa. So we still do a lot of things in Africa, METL things. All the things that we were doing before. The only difference is that I chopped those forces from 3rd Air Force to 17th Air Force and Ron Ladner leads that. So the command and control has changed a little bit but the mission really has not.

Moderator: You talked very specifically about keeping our forces in Europe and I've got a couple of questions here that are related. One of them had to do with keeping the forces there and then obviously the related issue of host nation support.

So the specific question is with all the costs associated with maintaining our troops overseas, wouldn't it be more cost effective to the building partnership piece from the U.S., and maybe leveraging the Guard and Reserves and then --

General Brady: No. Next question. [Laughter].

Moderator: A generic question about how well is our host nation support going? Are we having some major issues there?

General Brady: Good. The first question is a question I get a lot. I hope it wasn't a serious question, but I'll treat it like one. Couldn't you just do this from CONUS? Well no, you can't. Are the Guard and Reserve important? Absolutely, they help us a lot. The state partnership program that the Guard has is extraordinarily effective particularly effective when it matches up with the COCOM's guidance. And so we work really hard and we couldn't do what we do without the Guard. The 152nd, the guys out of New York, our plug for our AOC do an extraordinary job. The 110th out of Michigan comes over and they are doing the same thing for Ladmier at 17th Air Force. The Michigan guard is training a boatload of Latvians and Poles as well. So we get a lot of help from the Guard and the Reserves come over and do WTDs to Bulgarians and with the Romanians as well. That is all wonderful stuff, but they're not there all the time.

Recently, in the last six months I have cancelled two exercises with important NATO Allies. I cancelled an exercise with the Turks, I cancelled an exercise with the Bulgarians. I cancelled the exercise with the Bulgarians because the reserve unit that was going to come did not have a high enough priority for lift to get there. Now, I tried to plug in with a unit out of USAFE but I was out of slips, too.

I don't need priority for lift. First of all I can ship them over the roads, like we took the A-10s over the roads to Romania this last year, or we could use the airlift out of the 86th Wing and we can use, if we need them, Eden Murray's tankers out of the 100th. So in-place forces are a lot more effective. I appreciate and am reliant on the Guard and Reserve Forces, and I have about three or four general officers from the reserve components who come over and keep us alive quite frankly. So I am extremely appreciative of that, but they do not replace in-place forces.

Forward forces do three things for you. They are more -- I repeat, they are more flexible than CONUS based forces.

They go to the desert at the same rate that everybody else goes. When they're home their priority is to do building partnerships so I don't have a priority problem. And I also am providing the deterrent support to the allies that we pledged more than 60 years ago. So forward based forces are a three-for. They are a three-for, it's an incredibly efficient force.

Is it more expensive to have people overseas? You'd have to prove that to me. I'm not sure that it is. I'm not sure that it is.

Let me give you an example of some of the efficiencies. I'm trying to get, and Art Lichte, my friend at AMC, is being very supportive of me. I am trying to get a simulator for C-130Js at Ramstein so I don't have to send all my crews back to Little Rock or Kiesler to get their SIMS. How much does that cost? Well I'll put it this way. A C-130 SIM will cost me between 80 to 100 million dollars and I'll pay for it in four years. I'll pay for it in four years, plus I'll sell hours to all the allies who want to fly a 130J SIM, so there are some real economies associated.

Are the people costs a little more in Europe? Yeah, they are. But the operational costs of being there are greatly reduced. Next slide, sorry next question.

Moderator: We don't have another slide. Sir, this question has a political twist to it so if you feel like just saying next question please, have at it.

General Brady: I'm very politically correct so I probably won't answer it.

Moderator: Since the change in administration how has European sentiment about the United States changed if at all?

General Brady: Hmm. I do have an opinion. Guys like me, who the President is or who the administration is is largely irrelevant to us, and the longer I am in the Air Force, 39 years and 10 months so far, the longer that I am in the Air Force the more I think it matters quite frankly which party or who's in power. So that's not relevant. But I think it's a truism that rightly or wrongly the Bush administration had lots of detractors in Europe. Mr. Obama on the other hand is an absolute Rock Star in Europe. Very similar to the way that John F. Kennedy was when we were young. But I don't know that that translates to change.

It was very instructive to me, I've been a back bencher for the last two years at the Munich Security Conference and I can tell you this just as a guy who observes things, I

listened to the speech that Mr. Biden gave to the Europeans at the Munich Security Conference and he stood up and said, you can double check me, he stood up and said "the good news is we're going to talk to you more, the bad news is we're going to ask more from you." He gave a speech that George Bush could have given and the German parliamentarian who was sitting next to me said "What do you think he said?" And I said, "I think he said there's been no change." You may like the new guy better than you liked the old guy but he's still an American President and so although we're all different personality wise and style wise I don't think you're going to see a difference. U.S. foreign policy has not changed.

Moderator: And we have time for one more question and you addressed this somewhat regarding the Muslim population in Europe and how that has changed things. The specific question is how, if any, will this affect the USAFE mission in Europe?

General Brady: First of all I'd like to say that Muslim is not the issue. Extremism is the issue. And it doesn't change my mission, but it does make me pay attention. We pay very close attention to force protection issues. Physical force protection as well as force protection of our net but it doesn't change our mission. We just tell our people to be smart, pay attention and it's just something that a commander pays attention to.

#