

# Strengthening the U.S. Army Europe's Commitment to Its Allies

Assuring our European Allies that a significantly reduced U.S. force can still meet the increased security threats within the European theater and complete the mission was the challenge presented to the class of 2016 USAWC students by LTG Hodges, USAREUR Commanding General.

The priorities of USAREUR are to enable its Allies, deter external threats, protect civilians against the Islamic State, and protect refugees. To combat the reduced level of troops, U.S. Forces in Europe needs to adapt and improve the responsiveness to support its priorities. LTG Hodges discussed the USAREUR strategy for success in the European environment:

- The complex operating environment serves as a leadership laboratory for empowering junior leaders to succeed. Often these leaders serve as the senior US representative in a foreign country requiring them to apply initiative and mission command concepts to the unique challenges presented that cannot be replicated outside of Europe for their professional development. LTG Hodges praised these leaders for their ability to adapt and serve as the face for U.S. forces interacting with dignitaries and the local press on a daily basis.
- The integration of the National Guard and Reserve Components enables the land force capability by increasing its force size across the USAREUR footprint. The State Partnership Program and the leveraging of Overseas Deployment Training rotations bring 22 states partners with 22 different countries.
- Increase the interoperability with our Allies and partners.
- Possessing Regionally Allocated Forces contributes to the U.S. ability to respond to emerging requirements, improves operations, and reinforces the U.S. commitment to our Allies.
- Essential active engagements are paramount to creating a relevant presence in the region.

Students then viewed a live feed with current USAREUR Theater commanders who provided current assessments of what their troops are doing on the ground. COL Meyer, 2CR Commander spoke on the unique experience that a young troop commander had in planning a 2000km road march back through four countries over a period of two weeks and being able to see those partnerships benefit both areas

through the region.

U.S. forces in Europe are adjusting ways to deal with resource constraints and perform effectively in the daunting security environment. Interoperability, commitment to NATO standards and communications will serve as the driving force to succeeding in Europe. Any junior or senior leader wanting to serve in the European theater should be prepared to plug into multinational units and be expected to take responsibility to help figure out the strategy going forward.

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