

Gen. Scaparrotti's remarks at EUCOM change of command

May 3, 2016

Secretary Carter, General Dunford, fellow General and Flag Officers and Senior Executive Service civilians, senior enlisted leaders, honored guests, ladies and gentlemen...

Thank you for attending today's change of command, and a special thanks to those who have traveled great distances to be present. It is a true honor and I am humbled to serve as the European Command Commander. I want to thank President Obama, Secretary Carter, and General Dunford for their trust and confidence in me to lead this esteemed command.

Before going further, I want to acknowledge the hospitality of our host nation here in Germany and especially the city of Stuttgart. We are privileged to be a part of this great community and treasure our strong relationships as Allies. I also would like to recognize the EUCOM Honor Guard, the Salute Battery, the Band and the troops that stand before us – you all look sharp and you represent our command with pride. You've done magnificent work, just as General Breedlove stated.

Since 1952, EUCOM has been tested in the Cold War, in Desert Storm, during the peacekeeping missions in the Balkans, and with the present, persistent global terror threat. And this vital command has endured those tests, and today continues to link us to our closest and most enduring Allies and partners in Europe – nations that sacrifice to secure our shared democratic values and way of life. In 1954, Dwight D. Eisenhower's stated that, "We do not keep security establishments merely to defend property or territory or rights abroad or at sea. We keep the security forces to defend a way of life."

Today, our way of life is at a pivotal moment as we are encountering numerous threats and strategic challenges. We face a resurgent Russia and its aggressive behavior that

challenges international norms in Crimea, the Donbas and South Ossetia. We also face the immediate threat that terrorism poses, as the world witnessed with the recent tragedies in Brussels, Paris and Ankara. And we face, the significant influx of migrants and refugees that are challenging the social fabric of Europe.

General Phil Breedlove demonstrated exceptional skill and judgment these past three challenging years. Certainly, his dedicated leadership proved essential to our success and re-affirmed the support of the United States to Europe. Phil, you have tackled a complex security situation, filled with many challenges. You handled them with agility and resolve - I know I've some big boots to fill. Cindy and I appreciate your focus on our transition to EUCOM, and of course we thank you and Cindy for your leadership and your many years of service; Cindy and I wish you and Cindy the very best in your future. Thank you for everything.

As I conclude today, I want the Command to know that General Breedlove's priorities remain in force. Also, I want the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, and the DoD civilians and their families to know that I appreciate their service and sacrifice and will ensure their readiness and care.

I commit to the Service Members of EUCOM that I recognize our profession's covenant between the leader and the led. Finally, EUCOM will continue to build on its great legacy to deter aggression, to deploy forces for contingency operations, to be ready to fight should deterrence fail, and to strengthen the bonds with our Allies and partners.

Ladies and gentlemen, again, I am humbled to lead such a prestigious command, and I look forward to our future together.

Thank you!