



SENIOR LEADER PERSPECTIVE: LT. GEN. PHILIP BREEDLOVE

NSCI's Lindsay Trimble recently had the opportunity to sit down with Lt. Gen. Philip Breedlove, commander, 3rd Air Force, at Ramstein Air Base, Germany, and talk about his organization's cyber defense efforts. As the U.S. Air Forces in Europe component numbered air force for U.S. European Command, 3rd Air Force supports the USAFE and EUCOM commanders at both the operational and tactical level directing all USAFE forces engaged in contingency and wartime operations in the EUCOM area of responsibility. Along with its headquarters staff, the command is comprised of nine wings, three groups and the 603rd Air and Space Operations Center. It also has a unique mission as the U.S. military's primary liaison to the British government.



NSCI: How have you integrated cyberspace operations into 3AF's operational and tactical level air and space operations?

LT. GEN. PHILIP BREEDLOVE: Our nation is trying to find its way toward a national strategy/policy construct so that we have that over-arching, whole-of-government approach to cyber. We, as the military, should help shape this thought at a very national level.

You really can't do air and space operations without doing air, space and cyberspace operations because everything we do is tied to cyberspace. We are unable to function apart from the domain, and the other piece is that we really don't have a choice as to how we integrate because it requires constant attention. The defense of our cyberspace capability is a 24 x 365 thing. The enemy is pounding at the door continually and all it takes is inattention in a moment and you're compromised. We really haven't chosen to do it; we have to do it. We have to do it, but we also need to do it, because everything we do is enabled by the use of cyberspace.

I think you would be absolutely surprised if you were to ever totally lose your capability to use the net or the other things that cyberspace represents. We never fully understand just how completely dependent we are on it.

NSCI: You were the Joint Task Force Commander for Unified Engagement 2008 (UE08). Did that exercise provide any insight and/or lessons learned you've been able to leverage in supporting USEUCOM cyberspace operations?

BREEDLOVE: I think that, more than anything else, UE08 opened my eyes as to how wide this issue is. As military men and women, we tend to focus on those military things that we do. The effects of this cyberspace operation and defense of our networks in cyberspace are so much broader than just the military that, as the Joint Task Force Commander, I really didn't understand how many people played and what the effect was and how wide the effect was of the enemy's operations in cyberspace, and how they can affect much broader than just my military forces. And, as you know, we've worked really hard in Afghanistan and Iraq. This is not a military-alone fight; this is all about the whole of government. And operations in cyberspace are exactly that – it's all about the whole of



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government. As Joint Task Force Commander, I had to remember and realize that those operations going on in cyberspace would reach much further and be broader than just my military forces.

We talk about having to be concerned about cyberspace operations in everything we do. I would say that, more than anything else, cyberspace is not something that you can just “turn on.” The defense of your nets and the defense of your capability to operate in cyberspace is something that starts far before any operations. The planning is key to getting it right.

NSCI: The recently-released Quadrennial Roles and Missions Review emphasized cyberspace areas such as force development, command and control, and exercises. Can you tell us a little bit about Austere Challenge 2009 (AC09) and how the exercise is expanding to include cyberspace operations?

BREEDLOVE: In UE08, I was the Joint Task Force Commander, so I was a level above where I’ll function in Austere Challenge. In Austere Challenge, I’ll be functioning as the Joint Forces Air Component Commander. Every service brings cyberspace capability to the field, but in a true Air Operations Center, the Air Force and the Joint Forces Air Component Commander will be charged primarily with leading our cyberspace operations. So, uniquely, the joint team that works in my AOC will have to bring together all of those contributing capabilities from outside the Air Force or from outside of the military and bring them to bear on our cyberspace operations – making sure the networks are up and usable and defending against the enemy’s attack.

NSCI: Do you have any thoughts on the balance of global and theater command and control as it relates to cyberspace operations?

BREEDLOVE: I think that the way the global command structure is put together is very important. I know that the Joint Staff and others are wrestling with how that structure plays out; our nation is still working with how the global command and control is actually going to shake out.

The good news is, in my situation, I am an operational warfighter. So my concerns now are how does that global command structure – how is that global series of suppliers, how do the new commands that are standing up – how do they bring their capability to bear? They bring it to bear through operational warfighters. So we, in the 3rd Air Force and through our Air Operations Center, will put out the request for capabilities to those that have those capabilities. Then, we will orchestrate how those capabilities are brought to bear on our operational problem.

My experience so far in UE08 and in the planning for AC09 is that there are incredible capabilities that are offered by our Air Force and other joint partners and interagency partners that do an incredibly good job of making capabilities available to me, as the warfighter, and then we integrate their operations and our operations to, I think, bring good effect to the battle at hand.

NSCI: How does 3AF organize, train and equip cyberspace forces in support of USSTRATCOM from a global perspective?



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BREEDLOVE: Essentially, we don't do a lot of the training and equipping; we do a lot of the organizing. I think that the 24th Air Force and Space Command have the responsibility for truly putting together the training and equipping of the larger force. Again, I have the luxury of being the operational warfighter, so I take their products and I bring them aboard and organize them to employ.

We take the people that they send us and we train them in the operational art of employment at our level. And we train them in how we work as a team. I think, if anything, one of the most important parts to realize is that cyber is not this new, huge, exciting, totally-separate entity over here. Cyber is just one more of those domains that my warfighting Numbered Air Force operates in. The interesting part about cyber is that, more uniquely than some of the others, it overlays them all. Everything that we do in our operational warfight is tied to and depends on operations in cyberspace. Our Numbered Air Force, the 24th, SpaceCom, and those other entities are doing the training and equipping piece. They send the capability to us, we organize it and employ it in the operational warfight.

I've heard other Air Force representatives speak about the cyberspace domain overlapping the other battlefield domains.

I shy away from saying it's the "next" battlefield; it is the *current* battlefield and overlaps everything we're doing right now. That is the key. Certain things that happen in our operational warfight, if you affect them, the effect is limited to that portion of the fight. If you affect cyberspace operations, you are literally going to affect every portion of our fight because we are so dependent on it.

NSCI: What about USEUCOM from a theater perspective?

BREEDLOVE: Again, I think that what we need to remember is that we are truly a Joint Forces Air Component Commander (JFACC), and for EUCOM, we are the JFACC. We are a joint entity that brings all the capability of the other services to bear. It would be ridiculous for us to think that just the Air Force is bringing this to the fight. As the JFACC, we are charged with bringing all of the capability that our services in EUCOM have to bear and to focus on what the EUCOM commander's mission at hand is. In Austere Challenge, for example, as the JFACC, when we have to defend and do the things that we do in cyberspace, we'll bring all the toolkits from our joint brothers and sisters and from the interagency and higher brothers and sisters. We'll bring all that capability to bear and present it as a joint task force.

NSCI: NATO recently stood-up the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Center of Excellence following the cyberspace attacks on Estonia. Does 3AF have any interaction with them, or other NATO entities, regarding international cyberspace operations and lessons learned?

BREEDLOVE: We are really in the infancy of that – so not yet, but we will be very soon. We have made the initial overtures, plans and contacts, but this is something that needs to mature. We certainly are going to be looking for those future avenues of collaboration. We have already seen that these kinds of attacks are going to happen in Europe, so how we will respond as a member of



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NATO is something that will be really important to us. We're just in the infancy of this and there's still a lot to do.

NSCI: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

BREEDLOVE: I would say the same thing I do about any other mission we have. Cyberspace, and the whole mission of how we operate and defend in cyberspace, is still a very new mission set. We are going to discover more than we know.

What makes that happen is really our people. My son amazes me in the ability that he has to pick up things like this and learn them. That's what's great about us: our young Airmen, our young NCOs, our young officers are so adept at this. This is the life they grew into; they understand it, where we older folks don't.

What is making cyber happen is truly the young Airmen warriors – both enlisted and officers. We, as senior officers, commanders and operational warfighters – need to paint the white lines on the road and tell them where we need to go, and those young people are going to take us there. I am proud of that because that's kind of the way the Air Force has been all along, with the young innovators putting us where we need to be. We need to train them, equip them and organize them and get out of their way and let them do it.

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