

CSA's strategic intent: Delivering strategic landpower in an uncertain world

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WASHINGTON (Feb. 5, 2013) -- Over the past 11 years of continuous combat, the Army made great strides at the tactical and operational levels of war. We evolved our tactics, fielded new equipment, and modified our organizations, all while combating determined enemies. These changes were necessary, and they produced an Army without peer on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq. However, they do not fully prepare us for the diverse array of challenges our nation faces in the coming years. Changes in the character of modern conflict demand that we continue to evolve as an institution, even as we remain focused on our primary task -- to fight and win our nation's wars.

Throughout the course of history, world events have always presented militaries with both complexity and unpredictability. Today's environment sustains this norm, but adds the unprecedented speed at which events unfold and information travels. The pace of change is accelerating. There are emerging factors at work in today's strategic environment that we cannot ignore. The sheer number of connections between people and societies has increased exponentially. An ever-present global media can instantly elevate local actions to strategic import. Technology and weapons once reserved to states can now find their way into the hands of disaffected individuals and disruptive groups. International tolerance for civilian casualties and collateral damage from military operations has decreased while the capabilities to inflict such damage have spread to a growing number of illicit actors.

These factors call for an Army that is globally engaged and capable of rapidly employing scalable force packages from the smallest to the largest depending on the demands of the situation. We must be able to rapidly adjust our units and capabilities to meet the unique requirements of any situation, delivering precision results through the most capable, discriminate weapon system ever fielded --- the American

Soldier. At the same time, we must make thoughtful and forward-looking investments in our leaders and institutions to grow the Army from the operational force of today to a force of unparalleled tactical, operational and strategic excellence -- the nation's premier strategic force of tomorrow.

CHANGES IN THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Since the early 1990s, there has been no global threat that compares to the former Soviet Union, no peer competitor that threatens our nation or our way of life. We no longer live under the specter of an imminent nuclear war. None of us seek to return to those days, and our nation's strategic decisions will be strongly shaped in ways to help prevent the return of such a dangerous world.

Despite today's lack of superpower conflict, the world of the 21st century remains a dangerous place. The challenge of preserving a delicate balance between two superpowers has been replaced by the need to protect the nation from a myriad of less conventional, disparate global threats. Regional powers exert influence locally, relatively unconstrained by the actions of global powers. Loosely affiliated groups and movements, united often only by ideology, operate in ungoverned spaces, taking refuge in failed and failing states.

Technological advances have revolutionized the way people and governments interact. Access to global communications and the rise of social media connect more people in more ways across greater distances than ever before. Events that once went largely unnoticed are now viewed internationally, empowering local actors with potentially strategic effect. Simultaneously, the proliferation of advanced weaponry has resulted in the rise of a different sort of enemy. Combining unconventional tactics with advanced weapons, these emerging threats present a new and dangerous challenge. They do not diminish the more conventional threats posed by dangerous or unstable states such as North Korea or Iran, but they require our military to maintain a much broader range of capabilities to respond.

On the modern battlefield, enemies will intentionally mix with the civilian population, making discrimination between friend and foe extremely difficult. The moral expectations of our citizens and allies require that civilian casualties and collateral damage be limited to the greatest possible extent. Taken together, they impose a standard for discriminate lethality in the conduct of military operations that often cannot be achieved with precision strikes or purely technical solutions. Battlefields of today and tomorrow will be populated with a wide array of actors who are not directly involved in military operations. Non-governmental organizations, criminal groups, local citizens, and other regional powers may all exist and co-mingle in the same space as combat is unfolding. Each has their own goals, which may or may not align with our own. In either case, these actors frequently exploit opportunities presented to advance their respective causes. This diversity of actors must also be accounted for as we

plan for and conduct operations of all types around the world.

THE CHANGING CHARACTER OF CONFLICT

Together, these factors change the character of conflict. A few advanced weapons and some cell phones in the hands of a dozen determined men can achieve effects that used to require months of preparation and a well-trained force. Local clashes can escalate rapidly, unconstrained by borders, treaties, or government policy. Once conflict erupts, the battlefield is increasingly lethal. Access to precision weapons and sophisticated countermeasures impose increasing threats to our own forces that we must be prepared for. Finally, all these actions occur in an atmosphere of opportunism, where any issue or opening will be turned to the advantage of the groups that perceive it.

Despite these changes in how modern wars are waged, the fundamental nature of warfare remains the same. Conflict by its very nature involves people, whether over resources, territory, or ideology. Technological advances may increase our reach, but the last 12 years of war have reinforced that lasting results hinge on understanding and effectively influencing populations. As it always has, conflict also imposes high costs on all involved, in both lives and national treasure. There is no such thing as a clean or simple war.

For all these reasons, preventing conflict is better than reacting to it, and to prevent it we must understand its causes. That understanding is only gained through human contact. Contact requires some form of presence. That presence can be small, and it need not be physical, but it must be within and among those societies where we aim to preserve stability and avoid conflict. Finally, it must always be backed by force. That force must be sufficient to deter our enemies, and overwhelming should they choose to act.

WHAT THE ARMY PROVIDES

Any discussion of where the Army is going must begin with a full accounting of what we provide the nation today. For good reason, our tendency is to focus on the higher end of the spectrum of military operations. Our first priority remains being ready to deploy rapidly and defeat any adversary on land in any corner of the globe. In the complex world of the next several decades, however, our national security increasingly depends on the broader range of missions and capabilities the Army also provides, often with much less fanfare.

Our national security requires an Army, as a member of the Joint Force, which can deploy, fight, and win our nation's wars. The Army contributes to global stability abroad and economic prosperity at

home by deterring aggression, responding to crises as they occur, and influencing the actions of others in ways that reduce the inevitable tensions in the international system. It is a force invaluable for conflict prevention in peacetime and irreplaceable for decisive outcomes in time of war. America's economic strength requires a functioning global market and unhindered transit of the global commons. Its safety demands preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Its security requires dismantling terrorist networks with the intent and capability to do us harm, deterring the ambitions of potential enemies, and decisively defeating them in time of war.

The Army represents one of America's most credible deterrents against future hostility, offering potential adversaries pause for restraint, while standing ready to defeat any adversary who chooses conflict. No other nation can match our ability to rapidly deploy large numbers of troops over extended distances, sustain them for as long as needed, and deliver precise, discriminate results. The successful conclusion of operations in Iraq and our pending transition in Afghanistan give us an opportunity to reorient the Army towards conflict prevention -- working through engagement with partners and allies across the globe. However, the ability to win wars on land remains our reason for being. Potential adversaries must never question whether this nation has the ability to spoil aggressive aims or ultimately reverse illicit gains. We do not seek war, but others must never doubt our ability to win decisively when it occurs.

The Army's contributions to shaping regional environments to promote peace and prevent the outbreak of conflicts are vitally important in an era where low-level conflicts can rapidly morph into global crises. As the only service designed to provide long-term and persistent presence, Army forces today partner with allies and demonstrate American commitment in key regions around the globe. From the 66,000 plus Soldiers stationed around the Pacific Rim to training missions in South America to the delivery of medical supplies and expertise in Africa, our Soldiers are uniformed ambassadors of the nation. Their efforts strengthen the capabilities of our partners, increase our understanding of local dynamics, and build lines of communication between militaries and nations increasingly necessary in a complex interconnected world. Soldiers standing side-by-side with foreign militaries provide the nation strategic access to places and societies that might be otherwise inaccessible.

In the modern era, it is difficult to envision a scenario where the United States would engage in military operations without allies. Forward stationed Army units from Europe to the Pacific demonstrate our longstanding commitment to maintaining close ties with our partners. Beyond combat formations, Army units also provide enabling capabilities to our allies, from command and control to intelligence support to logistics, bolstering their effectiveness as well as our own. The efficiencies gained through these partnerships lead to greater stability in peacetime and greater effectiveness in war...all at costs far below what would be required for any one nation to attempt to operate alone. In an era where regional

instability more and more carries global consequences these activities and others like them are increasingly crucial contributions to the nation's security.

There is a final set of capabilities the Army provides to the nation that, though no less critical, is often overlooked. It is embodied in the support we provide to our sister services and across the entire range of government, enabling these other organizations to perform their core missions. Army units build and operate the communications networks connecting our own units, the joint community, governmental partners, and the entire range of actors with one another on the modern battlefield. Soldiers deliver the food, fuel, ammunition, and medical support necessary to conduct nearly any operation by any service, from combat to humanitarian relief. They collect and analyze the intelligence that informs our actions and measures our progress. They deliver vital supplies to communities at home and abroad impacted by natural disasters. The Army provides more than half the Special Operations forces of our nation's military, an integral contribution to national counter-terrorism and security assistance efforts. In these and many other ways, the Army is the indispensable foundation of the joint force.

Put very simply, the Army exists to prevent conflict, shape the environment in the pursuit of peace and stability, and win the nation's wars when called upon. However, an objective assessment of what is required to fulfill our mission in a complex future environment against a constantly evolving range of threats demands that we continue to invest in the specific skills, equipment, and forces needed to do so effectively. This demands foresight and innovation, as well as a bottom-up engagement by our most valuable asset -- our Soldiers and leaders. It also requires recognition that the Army, like our nation, must be good stewards of our resources in an era of increasing fiscal austerity.

ADAPTING TO THE FUTURE

This vision of the future describes a strategic landscape that is complex, technologically interconnected, and politically fragmented. It presumes that maintaining stability will require a concerted, sustained effort. Our long-term strategic focus has shifted to the Pacific, but tensions in the Middle East require constant attention in the present. The temptation is to attempt to be prepared for everything, but fiscal realities demand greater strategic clarity. All our initiatives must contribute to maintaining a force that is prepared to deploy, fight and win despite uncertainty about where, when, and against whom it may be deployed.

As our current commitments in Afghanistan are reduced, we must take the opportunity to refocus. This requires first reestablishing our core warfighting competencies in combined arms maneuver and wide area security. These skills serve as the foundation upon which our Army is built, underpinning our credibility as a deterrent and ensuring defeat of any enemy once engaged. We were right to focus on

building counterinsurgency expertise given our mission over the past twelve years, and we will not walk away from that experience. However, irregular warfare represents one subset of the range of missions that the Army must be ready to perform. We must reinvest in those fundamental warfighting skills that underpin the majority of our directed strategic missions, from deterring and defeating aggression to power projection.

To posture the force for the complexities of the strategic environment, we must simultaneously reform our processes and training to generate forces scalable from squad to corps. We cannot afford to limit our planning to brigade combat teams. Our success going forward will be built on deploying the right Soldiers, with the right training, in the right size units, at the right time. Small unit leadership will be at a premium in this potential environment of dispersed, decentralized operations. In some circumstances that may require small teams of Soldiers engaged in partnership activities. Others may require the combined mass of brigades, divisions, or corps. This does not necessarily suggest a smaller force, but an Army capable of deploying tailored packages to the point of need, while retaining the ability to rapidly reassemble into larger combat formations as requirements change or small conflicts expand.

The complexity of this environment requires a deliberate investment in our leaders. The need to adapt to rapidly changing situations and identify underlying causes of conflict calls for mental agility and strategic vision. History has shown that no amount of planning or analysis can accurately predict where conflict may arise. However, our ability to respond effectively when it does hinges in large part on the quality of our Soldiers and leaders.

Our experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan clearly reinforce that lasting strategic results are achieved only by effectively influencing people. Conflict, in all its forms, remains a fundamentally human endeavor. Destroying infrastructure and weaponry can shape an adversary's decisions, but rarely delivers a decisive outcome. Success depends as much on understanding the social and political fabric of the surroundings as it does on the ability to physically dominate them. In an environment defined by the intermingling of friends, enemies, and neutral parties, understanding social and cultural networks becomes just as important as the weapons we employ. Only then can we isolate enemies, identify centers of gravity, and achieve lasting results.

We must also keep pace with technology. The cyber revolution has created new ways for people to connect. Information passes instantly over great distances, and entire virtual communities have been created through social media. Many of our adversaries lack the ability to confront our forces physically, choosing instead to employ virtual weapons with potentially devastating effect. We must take full advantage of these technologies, building our own capabilities to operate in cyberspace with the same level of skill and confidence we enjoy on the land. We will either adapt to this reality or risk ceding the

advantage to future enemies.

THE STRENGTH OF THE NATION: TODAY AND TOMORROW

A fast-moving combination of trends are shaping the world of today, and will continue to evolve in often unexpected ways to shape the world we will live in tomorrow. The role of the Army and decisions about its future must be made within the context of this reality. We remain the only nation with global reach, but our resources are not unlimited -- and in fact are decreasing. In such a setting, the Army cannot fully prepare for every conceivable mission. Yet the Army must support national efforts aimed at preserving stability and promoting peace in an unstable and chaotic world, judiciously investing in those capabilities best suited to the task.

To be efficient, our forces must be responsive. As more of the force is based within the United States, we must preserve and invest in the ability to rapidly deliver units anywhere in the world. Army forces must be tailored to local requirements and rapidly deployable from the lowest to the highest levels. To be effective once deployed, they must be familiar with local cultures, personalities, and conditions where they are operating. We cannot afford to gain this knowledge under fire. Through the regional alignment of forces, we will meet both these imperatives, ensuring that our Army remains globally responsive and regionally engaged.

This effort requires equipment that gives our squads, as the foundation of the force, capabilities that overwhelm any potential foe, enabled by vehicles that improve mobility and lethality while retaining survivability. It needs a network that connects all our assets across the joint force together in the most austere of environments to deliver decisive results in the shortest time possible. It demands leaders with the ability to think broadly and critically, aware of the cultural lenses through which their actions will be viewed and cognizant of the potential strategic ramifications of their decisions.

Finally, we must refocus on our core warfighting skills while improving our ability to distribute and reassemble our forces rapidly, building the mass necessary for our central mission: to fight and win the nation's wars. In pursuing these goals, we ensure that the Army delivers truly strategic landpower to the nation in a complex, uncertain world.