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WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Oct. 23, 2012) -- The Army has revised much of its doctrine over the last year and will release more top-level doctrine over the next 10 months, said Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond T. Odierno.

Speaking at the Association of the U.S. Army's congressional staffers breakfast Tuesday, he said the force is in the midst of the biggest revision of doctrine he's seen in at least the last 30 years.

Doctrine is the blueprint the Army uses to educate the force and execute in a complex environment, he said, adding the Army of today and the future will operate in an "extremely complex environment."

"The environment will not be easy," he continued. "It will be one that has varied threats: conventional threats, unconventional threats, terrorism and criminality, all in an environment of instantaneous movement of communications."

To understand and better respond to those threats, he said the Army has poured over lessons learned in the past 11 years of war and also examined all possible scenarios of future crises. The culmination of all this is massive doctrine revision

"We've worked hard and rewritten every piece of doctrine over the last eight to 12 months and are releasing the top-level documents in this doctrine over next eight to 10 months," Odierno said.

BUILDING FLEXIBILITY

Operating smarter and having greater agility and flexibility of worldwide response, Odierno said, requires continued efforts at regional alignment; the right type and mix of units, training and equipment; and proper balancing of the forces.

The Army is developing a readiness and training model for units operating in the complex environments and making "constant adjustments," he said, providing some examples, including a decisive action rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center, Fort Polk, La., last month; doctrine and training validation at the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, Calif., next month; and current training in Europe involving the Joint Mobilization Training Center.

He said the Army needs the right balance and flexibility of units and equipment, including a "mix of armored medium and light airborne units that can be tailored and scaled to a range of missions (that) we can deploy rapidly in complex environments to accomplish many missions."

The Army must continue building a headquarters capable of commanding joint task forces, he said.

"Over the last eight or nine years, we proved we can do this," he explained. "Our corps have deployed multiple times in a joint, multinational environment."

Odierno said it is important that Soldiers have the flexibility, protection and speed needed to move with agility around the battlefield.

"To be networked, mobile and survivable, we will continue to use the JLTV (Joint Light Tactical Vehicle) for light force, the Stryker for medium forces and the Ground Combat Vehicle," he said.

Modern communications is vital to future warfare, he said.

"The single Soldier and his squad must be connected to major commands so they can make the right decisions to apply the right capabilities, wherever that might be. So we're going to develop a network that allows them to be connected and we're making tremendous progress on that," he said, citing ongoing communication network exercises taking place at Fort Bliss, Texas.

As the Army reduces its active end strength by 80,000, Odierno said it must adjust its forces accordingly, continuing to engage in Afghanistan, while adapting to meet the new Defense Department 2011 National Military Strategy, which states that the military must work with "government and interagency partners, and our friends and allies, as we meet our 21st-century responsibilities in a dynamic, yet uncertain, future."

To do this, Odierno said, requires the Army to regionally realign its forces "to better support combatant commanders so they can shape their own operational environments." Regional alignment refers to focusing on military-to-military partnerships in a specific world region, and includes receiving cultural

and language training and familiarity with that area's people and Soldiers and enhanced joint/combined military interoperability.

"We'll do our first regional alignment this year," he said, with a brigade in U.S. Africa Command. "We already identified 93 separate missions (for the brigade), broken up into small, scalable, tailorable pieces that will be used in the active operational environment. Rotational units will be there to host alliance and partnerships such as the NATO response force.

"We'll continue to develop our partners who've helped us in Afghanistan and other parts of world," he continued. "We'll continue to develop relationships through interdependence and using the strengths of each other's capabilities. That's what the future will look like."

Odierno said the Army must have the right mix of active and reserve-component troop strength.

"The active component retains the required agility, readiness and capacity to rapidly respond to crises and can be engaged in complex, selective training.

"The reserve component provides depth and unique capabilities -- operational reserve in strategic depth, a strong state partnership program, specialized expertise in civilian skills, operational reserve in strategic depth and connection to the broader U.S. population.

"It's not one or the other (components). We've got to have both of these entities working together."

SOLDIERS CENTERPIECE

Odierno lauded the quality of the force, noting that today's Soldiers are the "most experienced combat ready forces we've ever had." He said the entire modernization and transition effort of the Army is centered around the Soldier.

Good Soldiers must continue to have good leaders, he added. He said a lot of work is going into improving leader development programs at all levels for officers and enlisted. He admitted that when he was a young officer times were simple and Soldiers must now think about the "socioeconomic aspects of what goes on around them" so they can make correct and rapid decisions at the right time and place.

"Our leaders have been asked to do extraordinary things and we're going to keep a lot of these leaders and young men and women who understand where we've been and where we need to go, so I'm very encouraged," he said.

Odierno touched on how the Army's Ready and Resilient campaign and Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness program is vital to improving performance and readiness of Soldiers and families through "enhanced physical and mental performance that improve Soldiers' ability to bounce back in face of adversity, to build resilience, and to help Soldiers and families deal and understand the complex nature of what we ask them to do."

He said the Army will continue to work hard on its sexual harassment and assault prevention and response programs, disability evaluation system and transition programs throughout the Soldier's lifecycle.

Odierno concluded his remarks saying, "the strength of the nation is our Army. The strength of our Army is our Soldiers. The strength of our Soldiers is our families. And that's what makes us Army strong."

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