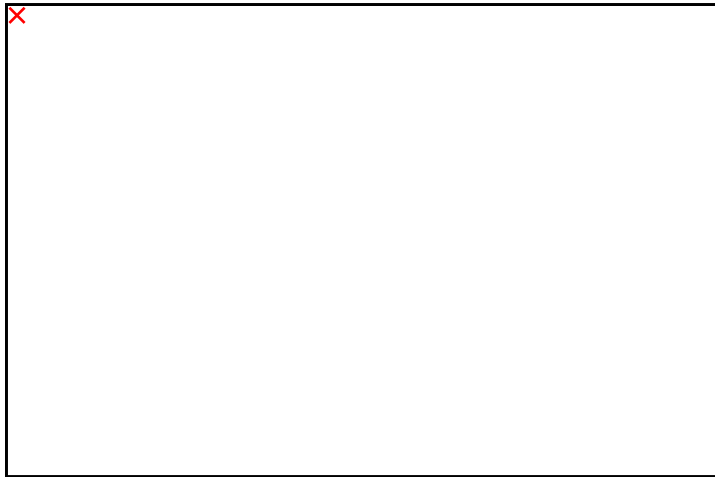


Dempsey talks TRADOC future at AUSA

Carroll Kim, TRADOC Public Affairs

Dempsey talks TRADOC future, leader development at AUSA



Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, commanding general of Training and Doctrine Command, gives a speech during the Winter Symposium for the Association of the United States Army in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., on Feb. 25, 2010. The speech was on TRADOC's perspective on the Army's need to adapt and decentralize while retaining the fundamentals that have succeeded throughout the Army's history.

Photo by Sgt. Angelica Golindano.

Feb. 25, 2010 -- Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, commander of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, delivered remarks on leader and concept development during the Association of the United States Army Winter Symposium and Exposition here today.

Dempsey began by explaining the conditions of the battlefield and its ramifications on the force and leader development.

"If you think about what was going on ... in the late 19th century, that was an age of discovery and science and how systems fit together and the Industrial Age was affecting the social fabric and so forth," he said.

"Systems are interdependent. And in their interdependence, if you want to keep up with the systems, then you have to evolve at least as fast as the system. And if you want to get ahead of the system, you have to evolve at least twice as fast."

A way that TRADOC has been focusing on these concerns is through the Army Capstone Concept, published in December. The Capstone Concept addresses the conditions of the battlefield and how the Army is evolving to meet those demands through technology.

"It causes [leaders] to reconsider, rethink and challenge the assumptions upon which previous capstone concepts were made," he said. "Some of the assumptions we've made about technology have just not been realized because adversaries, or potential adversaries, understand what it takes to deliver those first."

Dempsey continued, "They've decentralized ... they use the network and they've proliferated the

technology. They live among the population. Which means that you can't gain the kind of knowledge you think you can from a distance, and deal with it exclusively through precision."

In order to combat decentralization, the Army has also had to decentralize and provide more decision-making power into the lower ranks.

"We've done it remarkably well and for the most part, invisibly. There are implications to that decentralization. If you're on a path to build the network that affects echelons above [the brigade combat team], now you find yourself in a situation where what you really want is a network optimized at echelons below BCT."

However, decentralization has also been met with challenges, but Dempsey believes that systems have to be able to adapt to new audiences, situations and needs.

"Those kinds of challenges clearer to us today after the challenges of the past eight years, but it also means that though you should, in reaction to the changes in the world, decentralize, you also better recognize that at some point, you may have to have the ability to reaggregate those resources."

Dempsey also cited changes in leader development because of the different roles of Soldiers provided by full-spectrum operations.

"We've conceded that a leader must be grounded in not only tactics, techniques and procedures of force-on-force, but also in integrating his capabilities with other capabilities in a battle space that's increasingly crowded and increasingly transparent. So now we choose the term 'mission command' because we think it sends the right message on what we're about."

As decision-making abilities move down the ranks, Dempsey reinforced that junior leaders need to be empowered with orders that have a balance of guidance and room for the junior leader to critically think and apply their skills to develop the situation.

"We used to sit and think that the best information came from the top down, but this document implies that the best information comes from the bottom up. And if it does, you have to prepare young people to deliver it and you have to prepare them to prevail in it."

Dempsey assured a balance between preparing for future operations and maintaining a professional ethos will continue to be achieved through TRADOC schools.

"I'm worried about a drift in our fundamentals," he said. "We will not allow that to happen. So as we hurry helter-skelter we will never forget the fact that there are things that are fundamental to our profession."

Concluding his remarks, Dempsey took a look at the Army's role in national security in a quickly changing world.

"We've talked about an environment where competitiveness is the norm. We're in a competitive security environment. The dimension in which we have to prevail is the competitive learning environment because if we prevail here, we can make the changes and adaptations," he said.

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