



Sgt. 1st Class Grady Hyatt, with U.S. Army Africa, leads an after-action review with soldiers of the Ghana Army. Hyatt was in Africa as part of the Army's "regionally aligned forces" concept, meant to pair Army units with combatant commanders worldwide. (U.S. Army Africa Public Affairs)

Senior Leaders Identify Challenges Past 2020

By Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Piper

Army News Service

WASHINGTON — Senior leaders provided a snapshot of the challenges that the Army faces past 2020, during the 2013 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition, in Washington, D.C.

"In the last 12 years our Army has adapted remarkably well to the challenges we faced from Iraq and Afghanistan," said Gen. Robert Cone, Training and Doctrine Command, known as TRADOC, commander. "The challenge we face as we transition from an Army of

execution to an Army of preparation is [that] we must reallocate some of our energy toward the future."

Over the past year, TRADOC has conducted seminars, studies, experiments and war games to look at the decade of 2030.

"We have not written a concept for the deep future in over ten years, because we have correctly focused on the war," said Lt. Gen. Keith Walker, TRADOC deputy commanding general for futures.

The capabilities of today will continue to evolve fur-

ther in the future, Walker said. “The issue is, in 2030 or 2040, will those systems provide our Soldiers and leaders the tools they need to adapt in order to do whatever the nation asks the Army to do at that time.”

Dr. Kathleen Hicks, director of the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies believes “the United States will remain the preeminent military power beyond 2020, but we are doing so amid a growing multi-polarity, particularly in the economic and cultural spheres.”

Hicks explained that one thing she finds interesting is the impact of this on the international institutions that the United States helped build following World War II. Such organizations include the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other institutions that reflected a very Western European and North American view of the future security environment.

“I think you will see more stress on those (institutions) that will either make them stronger because they adapt, or they will fall apart due to that stress,” she said.

Globalization of economies and cultures will continue in the future and have both positive and negative impacts, Hicks said. Positively it creates interdependencies from a security perspective that may help to tamp down any desire to go into armed conflict. Globalization may also create brittleness because of the interdependency.

“The system, as we have already seen economically, can create single points of failure that can have catastrophic consequences across the system, so we have to ensure we have a resilient future as we globalize it,” Hicks said.

Projected growth rates for the world’s population predict that by 2040, about 65 percent of people — or six billion — will live in urban environments. About a third of those will live in slum-like conditions, Hicks said.

“When you combine those conditions with a very high potential for a lack of governance you sow the seeds for potential collapses, insurgencies and other effects that will increase as we get to the 2030s and 2040s,” Hicks said.

One of the things that may be more important according to Walker is what doesn’t change.

“What doesn’t change is [that] conflict is human,” he said. “We are already seeing this now, the momentum of human interaction increases exponentially through globalization and the internet.”

There is no “one” definition for asymmetrical warfare or hybrid threats, Hicks said. “I think it is always the enemy being smart,” she added. “For us it means that we have to be smart.”

Walker agreed.

“Our adversaries know what our strengths are and they are not stupid, so they will avoid our strengths. [And] there will likely not be an intermediate staging base where we can over months employ forces ... and get ready to go,” Walker explained.

The reason this becomes important, Walker said, is because when the nation asks the Army to get a force somewhere quickly, speed will be even more important. Continuous engagement with regional partners will be essential in the future.

“We will provide a deployable ... regionally aligned focused Army that has a depth of regional understanding, which allows us to move faster and more efficiently when called upon,” said Brig. Gen. Wayne Grigsby Jr., director of training for the Army’s G-3/5/7.

Physically and mentally tough leaders are going to still be needed in the future and the Army is going to continue to foster their growth, Grigsby said. “This physical and mental toughness builds this resilience in our leaders that allows them to lead in this complex environment.”

The Army’s No. 1 investment must be leadership development in the future, Walker said.

“Today’s fifth grader will be the company commander in 2020, the battalion commander in 2030, and a brigade commander in 2040,” Walker said. “The question, therefore, is what we invest in now so that they have the tools when the nation makes that decision to employ the Army.” ■



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