**“Complex Operations and Counterinsurgency: Building the Army of the 21st Century,” Chief of Staff of the Army General George W. Casey, Jr.**

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…What I’d like to do is talk just for probably about 20 minutes here about how we are designing an Army to operate in [a much more demanding environment, ones that requires preparation for a wide range of contingencies, such counterinsurgency, stabilization, and reconstruction and from the high-end of nuclear threats to the low-end of improvised explosive devices;] because as we look to the future, it is a hugely challenging and different environment than the environment I grew up to – preparing to operate in.

And as we look to this environment, we’ve thought quite a bit about it. We believe that the Army that the country needs for the 21st century is a versatile mix of tailorable organizations organized on a rotational cycle that provide ready forces for operations across the spectrum of conflict and that provide forces that can hedge against unexpected contingencies, and done on a way that allows us to sustain the all-volunteer force. Now, that sounds – it is a mouthful.

And let me talk a little bit about how we got there and about the pieces of it. First of all, we had to start with the environment. And as we look out at the strategic environment, things hit you right in the face. First, we’ve been at war for over seven years. We’re almost in our – finishing eight years of war. I believe that war is a long-term, ideological struggle. It’s certainly not one that’s going to be won by military means alone. But it will be a long-term, ideological struggle.

Against that backdrop, we look out at the trends that we see around the globe. And the trends that we see, I believe, are more likely to exacerbate the conditions that we see now than they are to ameliorate them. What am I talking about?

Globalization – up until some months ago, the globalization was generating prosperity around the world, but it was generating it unevenly and creating have and have-not conditions, and the have-not conditions largely being in the southern hemisphere. And the have-not conditions contain people that are much more susceptible to recruiting by the terrorist and extremist organizations.

Technology’s another double-edged sword. The same technology that is being used to bring knowledge to anyone with a computer and a hook-up is being used by terrorists to export terror around the globe.

Demographics – demographics also going in the wrong direction. I’ve seen estimates that say that the populations of some developing countries like Pakistan are expected to double in the next decade. You imagine the attendant problems that that presents already strapped governments. Populations are increasingly moving to cities. I’ve seen estimates that by 2030, 60% of the population of the world will live in cities. That says a lot about where we’ll fight; and I’ve seen what it’s like to fight in the sprawling slums of Sadr City.

The other thing about demographics is that – I think it’s – some of the trends are going to lead to increased competition for resources. The middle classes in China and in India are already larger than the population of the United States. That’s a lot of two-car families.

And the two trends that worry me most are weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorist organizations and safe havens, countries or parts of countries where the local governments can’t or won’t deny their countries as safe havens for terrorists to plan operations.

And so as I look against that – those trends against the backdrop of the fact we’re already at war with a global extremist organization, I believe that leads us to the notion that we will operate in an era of what I call persistent conflict, protracted confrontation among state, non-state and individual actors who are increasingly willing to use violence to accomplish their political and ideological objectives. And I think – I think we’ve got a decade or so of that ahead of us. And that really drives us as an Army to say that, okay, that’s got to – we have to take that into consideration. And I believe we will have 10 brigades of Army and Marine Corps forces committed for the next decade in places around the world. Now, for us, that causes us to think differently about how we organize our forces.

The other element we have to take into consideration is not just the broad strategic environment, but we have to ask ourselves, what does war look like in the 21st century? What’s the character of conflict? And I got in a big discussion with my staff about – is it the nature of war that changes or is it the character of conflict that changes? Well, they argue that the nature of war is immutable, it never changes, but the character of conflict has and does change, and it’s changed over time.

And as we look at it, the types of operations and wars that I believe we will – our Army will have to fight in the next 10 to 20 years are much, much different than the types of operations that I grew up learning to fight, on tank – major tank battles on the plains of Europe. And I’ve served in Iraq, so I’ve got a good sense of that conflict, spent some time in Afghanistan.

But the conflict that I think – that intrigues me most, and I think speaks more toward what we can expect in the decades ahead, is the one that happened in Lebanon in the summer of 2006, where you had about 3,000 Hezbollah operatives embedding themselves in the population centers just north of the Israeli border. They used improvised explosive devices to channelize well-equipped attacking Israeli forces into ambushes where they fired at them with state-of- the-art anti-tank guided missiles. Forty percent of the Israeli casualties were from those anti-tank guided missiles. Now, they used unmanned aerial vehicles to target the Israelis. They started the war with over 13,000 rockets and missiles – not just the small ones they shot at our bases, but the large, 220 millimeter ones they shot at Israeli population centers. They shot down an Israeli helicopter with a surface-to-air missile. They shot an Israeli corvette in the Mediterranean Sea with a cruise missile. They used secure cell phones and computers for command and control. And they got their message out on local television.

That’s a fundamentally more complex and difficult challenge than the challenges of fighting large tank armies on the plains of Europe. And I believe what we’re going to see is more of that and less of the other. And so that is – that is what we’re shaping the Army to be able to do.

So as I look at the environment and the character of the conflict, I come down to, what should the Army do? What should the land forces of the United States be able to do?

The first thing we have to do is we have to prevail in counterinsurgency campaigns. We have to win the wars we’re in, as the secretary of defense has said.

Second, we have to prepare ourselves to continue to engage with other countries’ security forces when we’re asked to help them build the capabilities they need to deny their countries to terrorists.

Third, we need to provide support to civil authorities both at home and abroad. And we work primarily through the National Guard here to provide support to civil authorities in the United States, augmenting them with our active forces as necessary. And we are continuing to provide support to other agencies of the government in Iraq and Afghanistan and helping them plan, integrate and execute the political and the economic and the information elements of the strategy. And you have all heard people say time and again that we will not win this conflict by military means alone. And if we are going to be successful, all of the elements of power have to be integrated effectively. And I suggest to you that it is the planning and organizational skills and, frankly, the integrating skills of the military forces that ought to be considered a national asset. We don’t have to be in charge all the time, but we have those skills and we can assist other elements of the government in integrating their efforts.

And then lastly, we have to be able to deter and defeat hybrid threats and hostile state actors. And frankly, I think we have to be able to do them in that order of priority, because those – that is the conflicts that we are going to be mostly fighting.

So after looking through all that, then I come back to what type of Army are we building, a versatile mix of tailorable organizations. The one thing we know about the future is that we never get it quite right, and that we can only aspire not to be too wrong.

So for 60 years, the central organizing principle of the Department of Defense has been major conventional operations, conventional war. I’m suggesting to you now that – I’m looking at it from an Army perspective – I think the central organizing principle has to be versatility, because we have to be able to do different things. Nothing ever happens exactly how you plan. And so you have to be able to tailor your forces to deal with the situation that you’re confronted with, deal with the reality you’re confronted with, not with the force as you’ve designed it.

And so we believe you have to have a mix of heavy forces, medium forces – strikers – and light forces. And the light forces will probably be more and more riding in up-armored Humvees and MRAPs because they must – they need to be protected as they move around.

And the tailorable organizations – the Cold War Army I grew up in, we were a division-based Army. And we had about – we had 18 divisions. And all of the enabling forces were parts of those divisions. So if you needed to send something less than a division, you had to start breaking the division apart. And it wasn’t good to – any good to you to do other things. Over the last five years, we have been moving to create modular organizations centered on brigades. And we’re 85 percent of the way through converting the Army to modular organizations. And that’s in a five-year period, while we’ve been deploying 150,000 soldiers over and back to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The other element of our reorganization to improve versatility is we’ve been moving away from Cold War skills to skills more relevant in the 21st century. By way of example, we’ve converted over 200 tank companies, artillery batteries and air defense batteries and changed those soldiers into Special Forces, civil affairs, psychological operations, military police and engineers, the kinds of skills that you hear that we need every day in Iraq and Afghanistan.

So a versatile mix of tailorable organizations – and we’re well on our way to achieving that – organized on a rotational cycle. We are moving to put the Army on a rotational cycle much like the Navy and the Marine Corps have been on for years. Why? One, again, I believe that we will – we’ll have a sustained commitment of forces over the next decade.

Two, when you have forces organized on a rotational cycle, you have some forces at a level of readiness that could be committed when you have unexpected contingencies. And third, we have to do it because we have an all-volunteer force and because they need to be put on a sustainable deployment tempo. And we’ve been deploying for four years or so, one year out, one year back. That’s not sustainable for us over the long haul.

We are – with the changes that we’re making in the Army and with the president’s announced drawdown plan in Iraq, I expect we will achieve our goal of getting to a one year out, two years back by 2011. And that would be a very, very good thing for us. To sustain this over the long haul, though, I believe we get – need to get to a one year out, three years back tempo, which is what the Navy and the Marine Corps have been on for quite a while. I believe that’s sustainable indefinitely.

And so what we’re doing is organizing the Army, really, into four bins. And the first bin is always available. It’s fully manned, trained and equipped. And in that bin you have an operational headquarters, you have four tactical headquarters, 14 or 15 brigades and then about 70,000 what we call "enablers," military police, engineers, civil affairs, psychological operations, other things that enable the force. That’s a very significant force. About 120(,000), 130,000 total folks could almost meet the demands in Iraq and Afghanistan today – not quite.

Same force in the second bin; same force in third bin; same force in the fourth bin. But as you go to the left, there are different levels of readiness. The second bin, the forces could be pulled forward for unexpected contingencies. The third bin could come, but they’re more of a strategic reserve, as is the fourth bin. It would take them longer – 90 to 180 days to prepare.

So what you see is you have committed forces, you have an operational reserve and then you have a strategic reserve to use in an emergency. And that’s how we’re working to array our forces. And we think that allows us to generate the sustained flow to hedge against contingencies and to do it in a way that sustains the all-volunteer force. That then gives you the versatile mix of tailorable organizations on a rotational cycle to allow you to meet your requirements, hedge against uncertainty and sustain the force. So that’s the direction that we’re headed. We believe that is the right force and the right organization for the challenges that I described to you that we see coming in the 21st century.

Let me just close here with a brief story, because you get a lot of questions about the quality of the force and how the – how the men and women of the Army are doing. I did – I did two commissionings in the last couple of weeks, one at Georgetown, one at George Mason. And then I went to West Point last Friday night, and I spoke to all the graduates and their families the night before commissioning. And I can tell you, when you look in the eyes of these young men and women, you can feel pretty good about the future of the country. They’re committed, they’re focused and they’re ready to go out and make a difference in the world.

And at West Point, I told them the story about one of them who had been in that audience two years ago, in 2007. And his name was Lieutenant Nick Eslinger. Nick was a platoon leader in Samarra, Iraq. And he was leading his patrol – his platoon on a patrol of downtown Samarra in the middle of the night. In some of the Iraqi cities, you have large courtyards that are surrounded by high walls, and it makes the street look like a tunnel, because you have all the high walls butting up on the street.

As the patrol was walking down the street, a grenade comes over the wall, lands in the center of the patrol. Lieutenant Eslinger, seeing it, realizing it would harm his platoon, he dove on it. The grenade didn’t go off. He had the presence of mine to reach down, grab the grenade and throw it over the wall. When he threw it over the wall, it went off.

I said, Nick, what the heck did you think when the grenade didn’t go off? He said, I don’t know, sir. I just reacted.

I said, Nick, what did you think when the grenade did go off? He said, I don’t know, sir. I just reacted.

But that’s the type of men and women that you have not only in the Army, but in the armed forces of the United States, and you can feel pretty good about it.

And so with that, I’ll close and I’ll be happy to take any questions that you have. Thanks.