

# MANDATORY READING

## In a complex world, winning matters

By Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Mark A. Milley

Today, the Soldiers of America's Army are deployed and engaged around the globe -- in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Korea, Eastern Europe, Africa, throughout the Pacific, the Baltics and Latin America. Acting as part of one joint team, they are simultaneously deterring adversaries and assuring allies, building increased partner capacity and responding to regional challenges, providing humanitarian support and disrupting terrorist networks.

Wherever they are, America's Soldiers are displaying true courage, commitment, and character. They are demonstrating unparalleled competence and agility. And no matter the challenge, no matter how complex the environment, or how dangerous the situation, our Soldiers win wherever they are. We are, and must remain, the world's premier ground combat force, ready to fight today and prepared to fight tomorrow.

A timeless priority for our Nation is to ensure that our Army is ready and maintains its edge over our adversaries. Readiness to win in ground combat must remain the Army's number one priority. We were unprepared for the Civil War, Spanish-American War, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the post-invasion Iraq insurgency, and many other military operations throughout our history. In each of these cases, we paid the price. The price for our unpreparedness was the blood of our Soldiers and we placed at risk achieving our National objectives. We must recommit ourselves to avoiding our long National history of failing to anticipate and prepare our ground forces for the next war. We collectively owe it to the Soldiers we lead and the Nation we defend to ensure we organize, equip, man, train, and lead our Army to prevail in the unforgiving crucible of ground combat. In the summer of 1950, North Korea attacked across the 38th Parallel. The U.S. responded by deploying 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, known as TF Smith, to the Korean peninsula. They



*Russia's air strikes have mostly focused on areas of western Syria where most of the country has been lost to insurgents, including Islamic State (Isis). Men on motorcycles inspect a site hit by what activists said were airstrikes carried out by the Russian air force in the town of Babila, in the southern countryside of IdlibKhalil.*

were rapidly committed to combat and they were quickly overrun as the North Korean People's Army continued south to the Pusan Perimeter. The American Soldiers of TF Smith and many others in the follow-on units paid the price in blood because we failed them. They were undermanned, equipment was missing or in disrepair, and they were poorly trained for ground combat against a capable enemy. We can never have another TF Smith.

Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, ISIS, and radical violent extremist organizations that currently challenge the U.S. each in their own way will likely continue for some time into the future. These security challenges exist within a wider global context of rapid technological change, significant demographic shifts, economic uncertainty, and geostrategic power dynamics of historic proportions. These conditions intensify the level of uncertainty, the pace of change, and raise potential for significant inter-state conflict to higher

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*A U. S. Soldier works on marksmanship skills. U.S. Army released photo.*

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levels than at any time since the end of the Cold War.

The contemporary security challenges, paired with the lessons of history, require the U.S. Army to always be ready to deploy at any moment to fight and win. Therefore, America's Army must focus on three initial priorities: be ready today, prepare for tomorrow, and ensure we care for our Soldiers, Families, and Civilians.

My #1 priority is readiness across the Total Force. There is no other #1. Readiness to fight and win, in ground combat is -- and will remain -- an inviolate benchmark; no American Soldier must ever deploy to combat unready. The Army must also set the conditions to increase our effectiveness to meet challenges of the future. Our transformation to the future force begins now. We will set the conditions to maintain overmatch against future adversaries while enhancing our ability to adapt to unforeseen challenges. All of this is achievable because of our most valuable asset - our people -- the Soldiers, Families, and Civilians who dedicate their lives to the selfless service to their Nation. We will keep their faith.

### READY TO FIGHT TODAY

Winning the Nation's wars as part of The Joint Force is what the United States Army is all about. Which is why readiness is my #1 priority. Our Soldiers remain currently engaged in active contingency operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. And there exists a very real possibility we will be called upon in many other areas as well. The U.S. is a global power with worldwide responsibilities and interests, and consequently it is the solemn obligation of all leaders

to prepare our Soldiers for combat against multiple adversaries in varied locations. Our Soldiers, our Nation's sons and daughters, will have the necessary training, leadership, and resources to win. To do so, we will refine our training programs to execute tough, realistic training based on warfighting fundamentals that build capability in our Soldiers and leaders. We will discriminately apply our resources to sustain our current equipment, technological, and training overmatch. We will enhance our leadership development and education at all levels to produce adaptive, agile, innovative, and flexible leaders of character and competency. And we will do so as a Total Force in order to win anywhere, anytime, against any enemy.

The key to victory lies in building and maintaining readiness across the Total Force. The last 14 years of integrated operations have demonstrated that we are, in fact, one Army. Our Army readiness must reflect both sufficient capacity to meet the demand for Army forces and proficiency in the multitude of capabilities that enable the Army to accomplish its diverse missions. Given limited resources, we must strike the right balance of capacity and capability across the Active, Reserve, and National Guard forces, and train and work together as a team. Together we provide the criti-

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cal manpower depth, keep our edge over any adversary, and ensure the Army provides timely global response to support Combatant Commanders.

Building sustainable readiness is a long-term task. A unit that is ready today did not get there instantaneously. It took time and predictable resources. It involves individual and collective training, multiple exercises, and constant repetition. Units must be manned

at combat levels, and equipment must be upgraded, modernized, and maintained. Our goal is to ensure 60-70% of the Army is at combat levels of readiness as a routine steady state. Once achieved, we must do all we can to sustain the highest levels of readiness across the entire Army. That is a tall order, but to do less is to place our Soldiers and Nation at risk.

Based on history and recent trends, my estimate is the demand for U.S. ground forces will increase as the global environment continues to be uncertain and increasingly unstable. This demand is not limited to responding to conflict or war, but also includes an increase in demand for forces to assure allies and deter adversaries. U.S. Army readiness is related to the readiness of our allies as we integrate to achieve shared security interests across the globe. It is imperative that we continue to train, develop, and fight alongside our



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allies because our combined efforts strengthen resolve and enable deterrent effects. Operating by, with, and through our allies and partners is a reality and necessity, and it is likely to grow in the future.

U.S. Army readiness is also directly related to our Nation's ability to deter adversaries. If our adversaries know that the U.S. Army can rapidly project combat power and will overmatch them in any conflict, then they are less likely to militarily confront the U.S.

The Army will always operate as part of the U.S. Joint Force. We provide Joint Force commanders with the force uniquely capable of winning decisively on land and sustaining operations over time. Equally important, we provide the foundation of the Joint Force

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in communications, intelligence, sustainment, mission command, and many other critical functions. Additionally, we will continue to integrate personnel and units from all three components to provide our Joint Force commanders with the best Army force composition for the mission. And finally, we provide Combatant Commanders with those capabilities needed to provide depth and versatility to The Joint Force in order to provide more effective, interoperable, flexible and rapidly deployable forces for employment.

## **FUTURE FORCE -- PREPARING TO WIN TOMORROW**

The coming years will bring to the forefront the challenge of maintaining tactical and operational advantage over our adversaries. The Army currently benefits from an overmatch that enables a historically small number of Soldiers to accomplish significant objectives while minimizing casualties. However, this advantage has a shelf life and our adversaries are sufficiently wary to avoid our strengths. The technologies that give us the advantage today are increasingly available to state and non-state adversaries at dramatically lower cost than even a decade ago. As this overmatch degrades, the risk to Soldiers and mission increases.

A decade and a half of war has taught us that the Army must constantly adapt to the missions assigned and the operating environment. Our adversaries recognize the limits of our capabilities and capacity and have employed novel countermeasures, created by combining increasingly available military and commercial technologies. Accordingly, our enemies are increasingly using "hybrid warfare" methods that blend aspects of conventional and irregular warfare to threaten neighbors and destabilize regions across the globe. As our Army continues to demonstrate the ability to innovate in Iraq and Afghanistan, our future force must also leverage this knowledge to adapt and expand our training to include conventional core skills, truly preparing us for the full spectrum of conflict.

We have been fighting for over a decade in a singular typology of war -- counterterrorism and counterinsurgency primarily in the defined specific geographic areas of Iraq and Afghanistan. We must not repeat the reflexive mistake of making the linear assumption that our next conflict will look like the fights we all have been engaged in for so long. Future warfare may well take on similar characteristics, but it is more likely

that it will not. We as an Army must make a rigorous analytical assessment and refocus to the new realities and be flexible enough to change quickly if or when we get it wrong.

I envision carrying this spirit of innovation forward by setting the conditions and climate for a robust culture of innovation, inquiry, and rigorous experimentation to determine the optimal future force. This includes enhancing the organizational foundation and nurturing the intellectual talent of the Army to explore in depth what the future might be and the possibilities that could present themselves.

Establishing this culture starts now with the development of a deliberate science and technology strategy that seeks to exploit research that has the potential for leap ahead capabilities. There are a wide variety of emerging technologies that may have significant impact on ground warfare including technologies in communications for mission command, robotics, nano-technologies, human performance, explosives and propellants, hypersonics, directed energy, cyber, protective materials for personnel and equipment, and a variety of developments in weapons technologies. The Army will explore these in depth to assess applicability.

## **CARING FOR OUR MOST VALUABLE ASSET -- OUR PEOPLE**

I have huge confidence in our Army and it reflects the strength of our Nation as it has since June 14, 1775. Right now, we have an incredible generation of combat-proven leaders and Soldiers that have shouldered the challenges of 14 consecutive years of war. Soldiers and leaders that know first-hand the challenges, complexity, and sacrifice of real war. We have the most combat experienced leaders and the most skilled Army in our Nation's history. We recognize this and will harness this decisive advantage for the future. We will keep trust with our Veterans, Soldiers, and their Families. The Soldiers of our All-Volunteer Army have not been through this alone. Our accomplishments are strengthened by our Families and supported by a cadre of Civilian professionals. It is this shared, unshakable commitment that enables our Army to be where we need to be, when we need to be there. People are our

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most valuable asset and their well-being of absolute importance. All deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and be afforded the best quality of life, health-care, and an equal opportunity to excel based on their merit.

### **Winning in a Complex World**

We are the best-equipped, best-trained, and best-led Army in the world. But we cannot rest on our laurels. We must get better. The world is rapidly changing and the future is unpredictable and uncertain. We will adapt, we will change - that is a given for our Army. We will build capacity now to set conditions for future

growth and capability to respond to any threat. We are an organization that has changed to meet the challenges for over 240 years and we will change yet again to meet the challenges of the future. When called upon, we will be ready to win with tough, ethical, competent, and well-led Soldiers who will fight anywhere, anytime, against any foe as the world's premier ground combat force - an Army that remains the most versatile and lethal land force on earth, valued by our friends and feared by our enemies. The Army delivers mission success in this complex world. Winning matters; there is no second place in combat. 