

# Milley addresses attendees of AUSA meeting

By Capt. Joshua Urness

The 2016 Association of the United States Army Annual Meeting and Exposition was held Oct. 3-5 in Washington D.C. More than 26,000 leaders from the Army, sister services and industry representatives were in an attendance.

## Chief of Staff of the Army guidance

Gen. Mark Milley, the chief of staff of the Army, reinforced his priorities throughout the AUSA event stating that “readiness remains our No. 1 priority, but we must simultaneously build the right force for the future.”

His second priority is to build an agile and adaptive Army of the future and his third priority is to continue taking care of Soldiers.

He said the Army mortgaged future readiness and modernization in order to adapt and sustain the fight in Iraq and Afghanistan. That modernization budget has been reduced by 70 percent in the last decade and by over 30 percent in the last three to four years.

He said acquisition reform is a top priority and the Army should focus on incremental adaptations and growth in existing systems, building new systems only by exception. He believes the Army’s ability to see the elements of future wars and adapt accordingly is the only way to achieve success.

He said the world remains volatile, uncertain and complex, demanding high readiness. He stated the Army is facing tough strategic choices, and that the world is on the cusp of a change in the character of ground warfare. He related this period of transformation to other significant developments in history.

“Think of the shift from guidons and flags and drums, to the telegraph, telephone, and radio. I suspect that the organizations and weapons and doctrines of land armies between 2025 and 2050, in that quarter century period of time, will be fundamentally different than what we see

today, and will likely have in the few years ahead.”

He said conflict between nation states is “virtually guaranteed at some point” and the Army needs to prepare to fight a “high-end, near-peer adversary,” in a likely “multi-polar future.” He said our ability to do that has eroded over the last 15 years.

With increased urbanization and over 60 percent of the world’s population living in cities by 2050, Milley said future wars will surely be fought in urban terrain. Finally, he said the proliferation of information technologies will diffuse state-based power and has created a new domain of warfare. Coupled with the rapid development of robotics and unmanned and human machine teaming, these issues will have a large impact on ground warfare, as well as the world economy.

## Capabilities

Exhibitors at the AUSA convention center used the event as an opportunity to demonstrate innovation and incremental advances in technology that seek to nest with future operational and functional concepts. Several of the demonstrated capabilities enhanced current or existing Fires platforms. This included a special focus on counter-unmanned aerial surveillance, using direct energy weapons mounted on mobile platforms currently in the Army inventory; as well as adaptations of current field artillery weapons, mounted on a vehicle that boasted a more rapid emplacement and march order, while still delivering the same firepower.

In addition to the capabilities listed above, there was an emphasis on unmanned vehicles, robotics/autonomous systems, such as an unmanned-Stryker, 40 mm grenade launchers and M240-B (which looked like a tripod mounted version of the Common Remotely Operated Weapon System or CROWS). There was also a trend of material solutions for the reduction of a platform or locations electromagnetic signature. These systems nested well with the “Third-Offset Strategy” discussion.

## The future of Fires: Multi-domain battle

The AUSA Exposition boasted almost 15 professional development forums and panel-based discussions each day, led by senior leaders from the Department of Defense, think-tanks and other key stakeholders in the Army’s future. Several themes dominated the week, to include readiness and modernization and the need for reform in the acquisitions process.

Of extreme significance to the Fires community was the discussion about a new concept for land warfare, currently pioneered by the Army Capabilities Integration Center, called the multi-domain battle. The concept highlights what land forces can contribute to future warfare from a joint-operational perspective and placed significant emphasis on the ability to project Fires across domains, over long distances.

Lt. Gen. H.R. McMaster described the purpose of the concept as “endeavoring to ... build capabilities into the Army to allow the Army what it used to do, and always has been able to do, which is defeat enemy forces on land, secure terrain to deny its use to the enemy, protect populations, consolidate military gains, but, increasingly, to project power outward from land into ... aerospace, maritime or cyberspace and across the electromagnetic spectrum.”

As described by the AUSA panel, the Army needs to be able to deliver Fires through artillery batteries with surface-to-surface capabilities, surface-to-air assets and a shore-to-ship capability. In order to achieve this, emphasis will be placed on a greater ability for land forces to perform long-range precision strike, enhanced air defense capabilities that fill the short range air defense artillery capability gap, and a method of engaging adversary forces in the maritime or sea domain, which was described as a sort of anti-ship cruise missile capability (manned by Fires Soldiers).

*Capt. Joshua Urness was an attendee of the 2016 AUSA meeting.*