



Adaptability of Land Forces to 21st Century Security Challenges

The 2008 Land Forces Symposium, April 14-17, 2008, Stone Mountain, Georgia

BY PROFESSOR B. F. GRIFFARD

You can fly over a land forever; you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life but if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization you must do this on the ground, the way the Roman Legions did, by putting your young men into the mud.

—T. R. Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War*

When T. R. Fehrenbach wrote these words in 1963 he had in mind the classic Cold War mission of destroying the enemy and retaining terrain. Over the past 45 years changes in the strategic environment require land forces capable of more than just attacking and defending. Today combat power entails the simultaneous and continuous implementation of offense, defense, stability, and civil support operations. Shaping the civil situation to accomplish the strategic endstate is just as important as combat success. This changed environment increases the importance of land forces and their contribution. In this full-spectrum environment, improving security and bringing states back into the global community depends on trained and effective land forces to “defend..., protect..., and keep it for civilization.”

Transforming a nation’s military to face 21st century challenges requires recognition of the need for change and then taking action to accomplish that change. Neither component of this two-step process is easy, but adapting the national military culture and equipping the force for full spectrum operations is the hardest part. With this in mind, the 2008 Land Forces Symposium brought together Army commanders or their representatives from 23 countries within the U.S. Central Command region to discuss the *Adaptability of Land Forces to 21st Century Security Challenges*.

Co-hosted by General George W. Casey, Jr., Chief of Staff, U.S. Army, and Lieutenant General James J. Lovelace, Commander, U.S. Army Central, the 2008 Land Forces Symposium (LFS) was conducted April 14-17, 2008, in Stone Mountain, Georgia, just outside of Atlanta. This was an opportunity for Army commanders to meet and collaborate on mutual security concerns. The LFS fosters security cooperation by providing a forum for regional exchange of views, cultural understanding, and the establishment and enhancement of personal relationships. To stimulate these exchanges delegates participated in a series of panels addressing “Sub-regional and Regional Cooperation,” “Transitioning from War to Peace,” and “Military Support to National Security and Stability.” These topics were framed within the context of globalization. Each panel opened with a discussion that looked at the issue at large followed by regional presenters focused on national or sub-regional applications.

Identifying the 21st Century Security Environment

In their opening comments the hosts reinforced the symposium theme that today’s Armies must adapt to new realities. The 21st century security environment is impacted by three major elements—globalization, technology, and demographics. Globalization and its impact on information flow and personal mobility



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makes it difficult to deter, detect, and defend against destabilizing activities by state and non-state actors. Advances in, and the relatively easy access to, critical technologies increases the possibility of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) falling into the hands of terrorists who will exhibit no restraint in their employment. Both of these events are complicated by the 24 hour news cycle and rapidly changing demographics in both the developed and developing worlds. To meet these challenges, the region must capitalize on the strength of collective action.

No Security without Collective Action

General John P. Abizaid, USA (Ret.), former Commander, U.S. Central Command, reinforced the opening comments in his keynote remarks. He addressed four trends impacting the region: The Rise of Extremism, The Rise of Aggressive Iranian Power, The Israeli-Palestinian Problem, and Global Energy Supplies. Emphasizing that these issues require a collective regional response, General Abizaid posited that unilateral action in the 21st century will only occur as a result of desperation. Although national capabilities may vary greatly, he reasoned that collective operations make a positive difference even though they pose challenges as to how we share information and resources. Sharing the load across the region creates a unified front to deter, defend, and, if necessary, respond. It also makes it less likely that potential adversaries can exploit gaps in security. Learning to work together will pay dividends as demands for military forces increase to support disaster relief and to combat other transnational threats. Staying the course with regards to doctrine and equipment is not a solution. He stressed that success in the 21st century strategic environment requires that national militaries shift their focus from platforms to network solutions, and learn to leverage “soft power” in the region so that military action is no longer the default solution.



GEN (Ret) John P. Abizaid, GEN George W. Casey, Jr., Chief of Staff, U.S. Army and LTG James J. Lovelace, CDR, USARCENT field questions during the LFS Opening Session.

Sub-regional and Regional Cooperation

As mentioned above, most threats are not isolated to just one country and require a joint/multinational response. Acting collectively, regional nations capitalize on their strengths while minimizing capabilities shortfalls. Such cooperation creates a credible deterrent, and if necessary, an adequate response. However, successful execution requires that effective instruments be in place to coordinate the collective effort. In support of this capability, regional plans and coordination centers, sustained by combined training and exercises, provide synergistic effects that promote readiness for cooperative action. These were the issues discussed during the “Sub-regional and Regional Cooperation” panel by Major General (Ret.) Gerald P. Minetti, former Chief of the USCENCOM Coalition Coordination Center (CCC); Lieutenant General (Ret.) Louis M. Fisher, former Commander, Botswana Defense Force; Brigadier General Aly Abdullah, Chief of the Combat Training Division, Egyptian Army; and Colonel Mohammed Jaradat, Commander, 99th Armor Brigade, Jordanian Army.

Building a coalition requires gaining the support of participating governments and their citizens, and sustaining that support for the duration of the campaign. By taking positive action towards greater staff integration, capabilities enhancements, and focused mission training for all forces, the coalition builds teamwork and gains the trust required for effective collective action. Since not all regional forces possess the same capabilities it is important to build capacity through combined training and exercises. These combined exercises develop and boost military cooperation and personal relations among participants. The opportunity to work on an integrated staff in an exercise command post is especially valuable because it provides the confidence that disparate militaries can work together for a common objective. At the sub-regional level, working with organizations, such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), strengthens multinational coordination capabilities. In an operational environment, as demonstrated by Jordan’s contribution to international peacekeeping operations, experience in multinational cooperation and military operations other than war (MOOTW) builds both national and collective capacity.



GEN Bismullah Khan (Right), Chief of General Staff, Afghan National Army, and COL Mohammed Jaradat, Commander, 99th Armor Brigade, Jordanian Army, share regional views.

In today's global environment societies are interlinked. Their talents and capabilities are assembled from a broad base of worldwide resources that maximize efficiency and economy. The "Sub-regional and Regional Cooperation" panel did an excellent job pointing out that national militaries are not exempt from these trends. No one nation has all the answers or required capacity, so training and exercising to respond as a collective entity is in both an individual country's and the region's best interest.

Transitioning from War to Peace

What happens when the fighting stops? Governments and military commanders must address this critical issue, or risk continued instability. The dominant force or government must conduct effective disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of the opposing forces. As the members of the "Transitioning from War to Peace" panel effectively illustrated, this is not an easy task. In their presentations Ms. Lotta Hagman, a Policy and Planning Officer from the United Nations (UN) Department of Peacekeeping Operations; General Bismullah Khan, Chief of General Staff, Afghan National Army; and General-Major Latif Faiziyev, Commander, Mobile Forces, Tajikistan, stressed that DDR requires a total interagency effort within which the military plays a critical role, but not necessarily the lead role.

The goal of DDR is to transform ex-combatants into stakeholders in peace. When the UN moves to stabilize a fragile post-conflict security situation, DDR contributes to the overall peace-building effort through reform of the security sector to establish rule of law, a functional economy, and workable political institutions.

Enabled by the international community, but following an "Afghan Lead Approach," UN, coalition and host nation forces in Afghanistan conducted DDR operations as the new Afghan National Army was formed and developed. The increasing capability of the Afghan National Army to assume responsibility for the security of Afghanistan reflects the effectiveness of the DDR program. In Central Asia, Tajikistan provides an example of successful DDR operations. Following the breakup of the Soviet Union, the independence process in Tajikistan devolved into civil war. For the Tajiks, DDR was a phased operation that that addressed military, political, legal and refugee issues. It brought the country out of civil war and re-integrated opposition combatants into the constitutional society.



From left, Gen-Maj Latif Faiziyev, Tajikistan; MG Ali al-Kaabi, UAE; and MG Ali Taleb, Yemen, discuss the Tajik DDR program.

Economic growth and the rule of law are the result of political stability and the creation of networks across national boundaries. This is the milieu that allows both nations and individuals to thrive. When the fighting stops, planned DDR programs plant the seeds from which secure environments and working governments grow.

Military Support to National Security and Stability

The "Military Support to National Security and Stability" panel looked at the politico-military environment of the 21st century. Mr. Peter Bergen, a Senior Fellow at the New America Foundation; Lieutenant General Augustino Njoroge, Commander, Kenyan Army; and Lieutenant General Khalid Wynne, General Officer Commanding (GOC), 12th Corps, Pakistan Army addressed the asymmetric, non-traditional, and transnational challenges impacting on military doctrinal and force structure development.

Over the next five years, how the military fights and equips itself will be influenced by three major challenges. First, they must develop responses for the evolving asymmetric efforts to level the playing field developed by al-Qaida and other terrorist groups. Second, natural disasters such as Cyclone Nargis, the Indonesian tsunami, major earthquakes and floods will stretch the military's disaster response capabilities forcing tradeoffs with the requirements of traditional military missions. Finally, through their nexus with international terrorist organizations and their economic enterprises, transnational criminal networks will pose real national security threats.



LTG Khalid Wynne, Pakistan speaks during the "Military Support to National Security and Stability" panel.

Given the global, trans-national nature of these challenges, collective action is required. In the near term, arrangements for global intelligence exchanges, information sharing, and enforcement networks are essential. The most effective long-term solution is to build capacity in existing regional organizations by standardizing doctrine and standard operating procedures, researching vulnerabilities, increasing inter-operability, and developing strategic plans within regional frameworks.

Globalization

In the final presentation, Dr. Gebhard L. Schweigler, U.S. National War College, placed the discussion of regional and international cooperation within the context of globalization. Inequality, competitiveness, consumption, political control, cultural tension, ethnic conflicts, and the environment are all globalization issues that impact security and stability. Because of interlinked societies, chaos, strife, violence, and suffering in one part of the world have a ripple effect across the entire world. Where national and international response is lacking other organizations, which may have underlying agendas that run counter to long-term stability, will fill the void. Just as our economies and societies have evolved due to globalization, our militaries must do the same.

Meeting the Transformational Challenges

During the Executive Sessions there was consensus that adapting regional land forces to address the identified 21st century security challenges required greater emphasis on collective action. Delegates highlighted the existing African Union Regional Standby Forces as evidence of such cooperation. However, with the exception of the wealthier nations in the region, participants require capacity building resources. Logistics and equipment shortages can impact cooperative efforts.

Echoing General Abizaid's keynote remarks delegates emphasized the criticality of intelligence and information sharing to any cooperative effort, but in practice there is limited progress in this arena. Although the United States, with its restrictions on intelligence and information sharing, is often seen as the major impediment in this area, in fact, the national interests of all regional nations are in play. This will continue to be a contentious subject as greater regional cooperative efforts are encouraged.

Although the value of multinational exercises as capacity builders for collective action was undisputed, the question of what type provided the best return on investment was open for discussion. Bilateral exercises versus multi-lateral? U.S.-sponsored exercises versus non-U.S.-sponsored? Existing events versus new exercises? As resources become constrained, the answers to these questions become critical.

Fostering Security Cooperation

The major goal of this third Land Forces Symposium was to provide a forum for the region's land force commanders to meet and collaborate on mutual security concerns. Given the diversity of the Central region's members, such an exchange of ideas is invaluable in moving towards increased cooperation. Though faced with similar problems the context and solution sets differ greatly from one sub-region to another. It is important that these differences be recognized, and as this forum matures it should lend itself to more detailed discussion of regional and sub-regional cooperative issues. Such discussions, though not leading to immediate remedies, will prove valuable in shaping security cooperation efforts.

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