

Secretary of the Army Top Priorities


OCT 30 2014

Outlined below are my top priorities for Fiscal Year 2015. While these do not represent all the strategic issues that I deal with, they are the most important areas where I will focus my time and effort.

1. Prevent Sexual Assault
2. Balance and Transition the Army
3. Champion Soldiers, Civilians and Families
4. Continue to bolster Army activities in the Asia-Pacific region
5. Ensure personal accountability on and off the battlefield
6. Tell the Army Story
7. Implement Army Total Force policy
8. Prudently manage reset, modernization, research and development
9. Strengthen the defense of Army networks and build the Army cyber force
10. Strengthen installations through effective energy solutions

1) Prevent Sexual Assault

Every day around the world, the overwhelming majority of Soldiers and Army Civilians honorably and capably meet the standards embodied in our Army Values. Offenses by a few, however, are abhorrent to the values for which we all stand, and erode the trust that has been the hallmark of our success. Sexual assault is a crime, and cannot be tolerated at any level. The news on this front is not all bad, and we've been making tremendous progress. The Army's Special Victim Investigation Course is a DOD "Best Practice." Sexual Assault Response Coordinators and Victim Advocates are now credentialed through the DOD Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office, and SHARP's pilot schoolhouse is expanding their knowledge, skills and abilities. We enhanced the Evaluation Reporting System to assess how officers and NCOs are meeting their commitments – holding them accountable through mandatory comments on how those leaders are acting to foster a climate of dignity and respect and their adherence to our SHARP program. Most importantly, we've seen a dramatic increase in the reporting of incidents that happened in prior years, indicating that victims now feel more confident that they should report these crimes and when they do, the Army will act upon them. But we have an obligation to do even more to safeguard America's sons and daughters, as well as maintain trust between Soldiers, Civilians, Families and the Nation. The Army's leaders, at every level of the chain of command/supervision, will do this through prevention, education, investigation and, when appropriate, prosecution.

2) Balance and Transition the Army

The Army must change; this is a strategic and fiscal reality. We are facing unexpected challenges, and declining budgets. Consequently, we must find innovative ways to generate sustained landpower. Despite the reductions in end-strength and budget, the Army must remain globally responsive and regionally engaged to provide combatant commanders with versatile and trained forces for both on-going and contingency operations. As we transition, our guiding principle must be to keep balance: balance among readiness, end-strength and modernization. Regardless of the size of our budget or force, we can achieve balance through a thoughtful and appropriate mix of manpower, training and equipment. We must skillfully transition Army capabilities such as maneuver, special operations, cyber, and missile defense; this transition will affect both the operating and generating force. A smaller, well-equipped and highly trained force is better able to meet contingencies than a larger force denied modern equipment and training. Our imperative is to avoid creating a hollow Army. The 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) has provided some fidelity on our precise path forward and we will continue our dialogue with OSD, the Joint Staff, and the other Services while we conduct follow-on actions. Still, the broad outline of the next few years remains clear: we must adapt.

Secretary of the Army Top Priorities

3) Champion Soldiers, Civilians and Families

We have a fundamental obligation to take care of Soldiers, Civilians and Families. The unpredictable nature of cuts to the Army budget has already had an adverse effect upon our Army family. It appears these budgetary constraints will continue, forcing us to extend fewer resources to cover current operations, future readiness, and the well-being of those who serve as best we can – but with some degradation. I am always mindful of the human costs of these choices. As we reduce the Army's end strength we owe it to our Soldiers and their Families to ease their transition to civilian life. The Soldier for Life program brings together the Army, governmental, business and community efforts to facilitate successful reintegration of our Soldiers and their Families. Leadership, integrity and selfless service are the hallmark of our Soldiers, Civilians and Families and they stand ready to continue their service in communities and businesses across the nation.

4) Continue to bolster Army activities in the Asia-Pacific region

America will continue to engage emerging partners and affirm our commitment to enduring allies in the Pacific Rim. The Army is a key enabler to this national priority, building on its already strong and historic Pacific presence. Our opportunities to lead in this theater are natural given that seven of the ten largest armies in the world are located in the Asia-Pacific, and 21 of its 27 nations currently have an army officer serving as their Chief of Defense. To reinforce our commitment to the Asia-Pacific region, the Army has increased its presence and capability to project forces in the region through an expansion of exercises, the deployment of critical units, the regional alignment of forces and the upgrade of U.S. Army Pacific to a four-star command. In all areas of the world, we will build partnerships and strengthen alliances with other nations to ensure collective capability and to build capacity, serving our common interests.

5) Ensure personal accountability on and off the battlefield

In today's environment, incidents on the battlefield and in garrison often have significant strategic implications for the Army, DOD and the Nation. We must continue working to instill good order and discipline throughout our ranks, and, when appropriate, hold people accountable. Holding ourselves and those we supervise accountable should not begin with an investigation, but rather, accountability should be an enduring principle reflecting shared Army values. While the Army and our sister military services remain the most trusted institution in the country, we must not take this for granted. Every one of us must live by the highest standards in all that we do at home and abroad.

6) Tell the Army Story

The long-term health of the Army depends upon its relationship with the public it serves. One hazard of the All Volunteer Force, particularly as end-strength declines from its recent peak, is that fewer citizens will have a personal connection to our Soldiers. Combined with factors ranging from stationing decisions to recruitment, the Army risks further isolation from the public it is sworn to defend. As an institution, all components of the Army (Active, National Guard, and Army Reserve) must communicate clearly within their communities to maintain public support for its core function: providing prompt and sustained landpower in support of national objectives and in defense of the homeland. As individual members of the profession, we must encourage our Soldiers to tell their personal stories and enable them to share their experiences in the broader context of what we provide for the Nation.

Secretary of the Army Top Priorities

7) Implement Army Total Force policy

After more than thirteen years of war, the Army's Total Force is better integrated than ever before. We must expand this integration, transitioning wartime necessity to enduring principles. We are organizing, training, manning and equipping our active and reserve components as an integrated operational force to provide predictable, recurring and sustainable capabilities. That integration will increasingly be manifested in new and innovative ways including: a single integrated personnel management and pay system that enables access to secure and reliable data regardless of component; a streamlined voluntary and involuntary call to active duty of reserve component personnel and units; and a greater use of multi-component units and solutions.

8) Prudently manage reset, modernization, research and development

America's longest war has damaged and destroyed vast amounts of equipment and systems, and fiscal austerity means we will not be able to repair, replace, or modernize the stock as desired. Even after our combat involvement in Afghanistan is complete, the Army will require funding for three years to reset our equipment from the harsh demands of conflict. As we restore our current capabilities, we must also look to the future. The *Army Equipment Modernization Strategy* provides a roadmap for how the Army will modernize equipment to meet future challenges. We will continue to prioritize programs and needs against diminishing resources, while maintaining critical research and development capability, especially for science and technology.

9) Strengthen Army networks and build the Army cyber force

Various well-publicized examples of unauthorized disclosure or theft of classified information underscore the critical national threat we face in the cyber domain. We will continue to assure the availability, security and integrity of information and the systems that process, store and transmit information – not only to support the Soldier but also to support the national cyber mission. We will rely on and leverage information technology to a greater degree than ever before. The recent establishment of the Cyber Center of Excellence and Cyber Branch (Career Field 17), and the evolution of Army Cyber Command, are important milestones that will help us build, train, develop, and sustain a highly talented and qualified cyber workforce. Everyone plays a role in cyber security. A weakness or unnecessary risk allowed by one organization results in a risk assumed by all.

10) Strengthen installations through effective energy solutions

Among the greatest expenses to our Army are the dollars and risk expended providing energy to the force. As such, in this period of declining resources, energy efficiency is crucial to our success. Even as we constantly evaluate our ability to use renewable and alternative power sources, we will continue with initiatives to reduce our energy footprint and look for new ways to be even more efficient. Ensuring our forces have the energy and water required to meet the mission is a fundamental enabler of our national security and underwrites our unique ability to rapidly deploy, employ, and sustain military forces around the globe. Energy efficiency will make us less dependent on foreign resources, while making Soldiers safer and more secure – lightening their loads through advanced portable power systems, lighter batteries, universal charging devices, water purifiers and smart grid technologies. Energy efficiency is everyone's responsibility.