

CG talks about Army future

Adaptive, modular force needed to win

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The Army is changing and changing drastically — get ready. That was Commanding General

Brig. Gen. Benjamin Freakley's message as he addressed more than a thousand Fort Benning Soldiers and civilians in Marshall Auditorium at Infantry Hall Tuesday afternoon.

Freakley's State of the Army address came in the wake of a meeting with the vice chief of staff of the Army last week in Washington, D.C.

"When you read history, it's clear that the force that adapts first —

because each side is going to the fight with a certain doctrine, organization, leaders and notion about how they'll fight — but the first force that adapts quickly to the environment wins the war," Freakley said.

As a nation that has been at war since 2001, as an Army with hundreds of thousands of Soldiers deployed around the world, the Army must adapt to face the

continued threat against American forces, Freakley said. That means reshaping the Army.

Increasing armed force capabilities.

Although the Army is already about 11,000 Soldiers above its allowed strength of 480,000, Congress has allowed the Army to "plus up" to 510,000 Soldiers in

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light of the Army's continuously growing area of responsibility.

What many may not realize, Freakley said, is that of the 30,000 Soldiers added to the Army's roster, a substantial number will be infantrymen.

With the 480,000-Soldier limit, the Army's readiness is decreased by the large number of Soldiers in the TTHS account — transients, trainees, holdovers and students — taking as many as 30,000 Soldiers out of the fight. With the plus-up, the Army can maintain 480,000 Soldiers ready to fight and win, despite those in the TTHS account.

Increasing force capabilities will also call for the demilitarization of Soldier slots, Freakley said.

"Already, 5,000 military slots have been turned over to civilian pay grades, and those

Soldiers will move back into our formations where we had shortages," he said.

Between this year and next, 5,000 more military slots will be turned over to civilians.

Building a modular force.

In the past, when there was a conflict, the Army fought in division-size engagements, Freakley said. This essentially wastes valuable Army resources.

He used the chief of staff of the Army's analogy of the Army as a stack of \$100 bills to explain: Each division is a \$100 bill. The Army only needs a \$20 bill, but all it has is \$100 bills, so it spends that \$100 bill, puts the four extra \$20s in its pocket and keeps using the \$100s.

The tentative solution? A modular force with more brigades, Freakley said. But not just brigades — brigade units of

action.

The brigade units of action will be self-contained and organized to include the equipment and personnel they need to perform the full spectrum of operations.

The Army's current "one-to-one" model calls for taking a brigade out, and putting another one right back in, Freakley said. But with more brigades moving, units' rotational tempos are decreased while keeping them trained and ready to fight.

Increasing stabilization.

Decreased deployments may allow for more training, but that training can be worthless without stability, Freakley said.

By keeping Soldiers and leaders in their units longer, they gain experience.

That experience in turn contributes to the stability and capabilities of those units, he

said.

As it stands now, units are working through their individual and collective tasks, building their units to a capable level through training at the Army's various training centers, only to come home and lose Soldiers to PCS and ETS, Freakley said.

This forces units to start from scratch each time.

Increased stabilization would keep these units together for longer periods of time, allowing them to build past a capable level and maintain their readiness.

Stabilization would also benefit families, providing more stability for children in school, spouses who work and homeowners building equity, Freakley said.

Working as a joint force.

Experiences in Afghanistan

and Iraq have shown the world what America's armed forces are capable of when they work as a team, Freakley said. And that is how they will fight from now on.

"We will not go to the fight by ourselves — the joint team will go," he said. "We as an Army will be interdependent, completely reliant on the other forces to get us there and to help us in the fight.

"We've got to continue to enhance and move along the capability to use the strength of each service as a fist and strike it in defense against our adversaries."

Remain ready for future operations.

The world is an unstable place in which terrorism, the drug trade and weapons of mass destruction persist around the world, Freakley said.

But America is engaged in a war of ideas, facing an adversary who hates the American way of life and any tenet of democracy or freedom. It is a war in which the armed forces' enemies and destinations will remain unpredictable, Freakley said.

To counter this, the Army must be adaptable and flexible, he said.

The Army has to be a force that understands uncertainty and the unknown environment it goes into. It must be ready to go, ready to fight as a team, ready to be an expeditionary force.

"We are a nation and an Army at war that will be surprised from time to time when we have periods of peace," Freakley said. "We are at war, we will remain at war ... until we win — and *we will win* — the global war on terrorism."