

Sustainment's Next Challenge: Strategic Landpower

■ By Maj. Gen. Larry D. Wyche



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The Army is in a significant period of transformation. Its mission, focus, and resources are shifting to meet the needs of a global environment unlike any we have ever faced. Our leaders are determining how the Army will prepare for future conflicts.

Although our exact future challenges are unknown, we know strategic success lies in winning the clash of wills. This is accomplished by influencing human behavior through support or, if necessary, compelling our adversaries. These actions most often occur on land between humans face to face.

These physical, cultural, and social environments are referred to as the “human domain.” The Army, Marine Corps, and U.S. Special Operations Command have partnered to create the Office of Strategic Landpower to leverage their expertise within this domain.

The Office of Strategic Landpower

The Office of Strategic Landpower will explore the confluence of land, cyber, and human domains. It seeks to integrate the best lessons learned from our recent conflicts and add mechanisms to address the new and varying environments we will face. We know that our reflections must not be limited to the lessons from the past 12 years but must also include conflicts over our entire history. This includes the military conflicts in Vietnam, Bosnia, and Kosovo that highlighted the need for increased consideration of the human domain.

Accompanying the mission changes is an adjustment in regional focus. Strategic guidance has indicated a pivot in foreign policy efforts from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific region. Sustainment must be prepared to respond to this drastically

different strategic environment and develop appropriate capabilities—organizational structures, equipment, and sustainment practices. At the same time, each regional force, which is aligned with a geographic combatant commander, must be supported by a sustainment organization tailored to provide the appropriate sustainment support to match its assigned area and mission.

Strategic landpower requires continual support across the entire prevent, shape, and win framework. By focusing on how operations affect the human domain, strategic landpower provides a unique capability to prevent and shape conflicts, as well as win them.

For sustainment to be effective across the entire prevent, shape, win framework, we must be in tune with the needs of every combatant commander throughout the world. Responding to their demand signals, sustainers must recognize and support unique needs within each theater based on culture and language, training requirements, and equipment needs. Combatant commanders deserve support forces that are versatile and trained for both ongoing and contingency operations.

Globally Responsive Sustainment

Several initiatives within the Combined Arms Support Command have laid the groundwork for initial efforts to support strategic landpower. Chief of these is the globally responsive sustainment concept, which emphasizes six attributes that must define any sustainment system supporting our future force:

- Agile and flexible.
- Integrated.
- Protected.
- Trained and ready.

- Precise and responsive.
- Affordable.

Every tenet of globally responsive sustainment is essential for sustainment organizations to successfully support and execute strategic landpower.

Strategic landpower's requirements can be viewed through an analysis of how globally responsive sustainment will transform sustainment. As the Army returns to focusing on garrison operations and responds to overseas conflicts, sustainment must be agile and flexible to appropriately leverage personnel, support structures, and technology when required.

This demands the ability to support multiple operations in a variety of environments with vastly different infrastructures. These operations must be integrated and interoperable, not just within the Army but also across joint and strategic partners. Sustainment units must be able to defend their formations and safeguard their systems, to include shared mobility and communications, ensuring they maintain the firepower of the fighting forces they sustain.

Our leaders and Soldiers must be trained and ready. They must understand the equipment and systems on hand and the capabilities of our strategic partners, contractors, and the

global environment. Solutions must be precise and responsive, driven by forecasted requirements and deliverables. With a smaller and fiscally constrained force comes a smaller sustainment footprint, practical and affordable solutions, and the removal of redundancies and inefficient processes.

Leader Development

Leader development is the basis for success in strategic landpower. A properly trained leader will adapt to the rapidly changing environment and react quickly and precisely. Leaders must be capable of deeply considering the operational environment and the effects their actions will have on themselves, Army forces, partners, the enemy, and civilians alike.

As we transition, we have to fill some identified gaps. Over the past 12 years, we have experienced atrophy in some of our sustainment skills. We must repair those skills in order to support future requirements.

To facilitate becoming masters of our craft, we have published training support materials on the Sustainment Unit One Stop website to enhance units' operational readiness. Our efforts so far have been focused on brigade combat teams (BCTs) but will expand to the echelons above the

BCT in the near future. These efforts will eventually extend to training support systems so units can leverage live, virtual, and constructive capabilities. Realistic training will be paramount to creating adaptive and responsive sustainment units.

These are just the beginning of initiatives that will have an impact on strategic landpower and the direction for our future force. Despite the excellent accomplishments already made, the work is far from complete. A feature article in the next issue of *Army Sustainment* will discuss the impact of strategic landpower on the sustainment community. It will explain current initiatives and their compatibility with strategic landpower and explore a way ahead for future efforts. Supporting strategic landpower is an opportunity to better meet the needs of the future force—an opportunity that sustainers are ready for and prepared to accept.

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The Sustainment Unit One Stop can be accessed at http://www.cascom.army.mil/g_staff/g3/SUOS/index.htm.