

Shaping the Future of Sustainment

The Combined Arms Support Command developed a white paper that identifies plans to help shape and prepare a globally responsive sustainment force for the next fight.

■ By Maj. Gen. Larry D. Wyche



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Through nearly 12 years of continuous combat operations, valuable lessons have been learned. Our sustainment formations have evolved in order to support operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere around the world. This evolution produced sustainers and sustainment organizations that are battle-tested, confident in their abilities, and mission-focused with an all-embracing desire to support the Soldier.

As we transition from an Army at war to an Army of preparation, it is important that we refocus our thinking with a mindset fixed on what we might have to do instead of what we have done. We must continue to analyze, adapt, and develop our Soldiers, Army civilians, and capabilities for the next fight.

A Document for Change

As the Army's premier sustainment think tank, the Combined Arms Support Command considered these challenges and opportunities in detail and developed a white paper that critically looks to the future. This paper identifies a wide range of plans to help shape and prepare a globally responsive sustainment force for the next fight.

The Globally Responsive Sustainment white paper is a key document for change in the sustainment community and discusses both the revision of the Army Functional Concept for Sustainment and the broader force modernization process. It leverages the Global Logistics 2020 effort by the Army Materiel Command and looks at the

contemporary issues driving change and the shape of the sustainment community in the future.

The white paper also provides a broader, integrated view of national strategic issues, the industrial base, the generating force, and the operating force that is responsible for executing sustainment activities in support of the warfighter. We cannot afford to take a myopic view of sustainment in the future. Thus, the paper considers broader issues such as fiscal austerity and support from the American industrial base and our strategic partners.

Globally Responsive Sustainment

The white paper proposes an approach called globally responsive sustainment. It is an approach that seeks to produce a sustainment system that is optimized, integrated, synchronized, affordable, and relevant to support unified land operations and the joint warfighter while minimizing redundancy. This is the purpose for our work and will focus our thinking in shaping the future sustainment force.

Globally responsive sustainment seeks to produce a future sustainment capability end state that is linked to a range of strategic guidance, such as joint and Army capstone concepts that include strategic land power. This end state will incorporate the following attributes: agile and flexible, integrated, protected, trained and ready, and precise and responsive. Both the generating and operating forces require these attributes in order to meet the needs of the future Army.

Big Ideas

The white paper also identifies a range of “big ideas” and capability focus areas that will enable our future efforts. These ideas and focus areas are derived from a range of events in the sustainment community, including the Global Logistics 2020 Decisive Action concept rehearsal held at Fort Lee, Va., earlier this year. These big ideas will help us realize globally responsive sustainment:

- Creative and adaptive leaders and Soldiers.
- Enabled mission command and training for sustainment forces.
- Institutional Army, operating force, and strategic partner integration.
- Special operations forces and conventional forces integration.
- Effective integration of the Ready Reserve.
- Maintenance of a viable industrial base capability and capacity.
- Integration of the Army into joint logistics capabilities.

- Maintenance of a globally deployable expeditionary Army.
- Enabled rapid global response through pre-positioned stocks, smarter positioning of assets, and the development of rapid expeditionary basing.
- Further development of a sustainment information system.
- Exploitation of sustainment capabilities to support shaping operations.
- Improved sustainment precision through the exploitation of technology.

The white paper will shape our ideas and sharpen our thinking as we evolve into a globally responsive sustainment force. Much of this work is already in progress, but there is still more to do. As we work through these big ideas and future capability focus areas, there are bound to be other challenges and opportunities. We also have to ensure that we quickly adapt and keep pace with the strategic land power concept.

These areas are only our first step; our success lies in our ability to contemplate and discuss the ideas in this paper and determine other opportunities for further exploration. We need help from you and every member of the sustainment community to analyze this document, think about the future, and help shape our future force.

I would like to thank all of our partners who have helped with this, especially the Army Materiel Command, the Forces Command, and the Headquarters Department of the Army G-4. The white paper can be found at www.cascom.army.mil. Please look for future articles that will provide updates as we move forward. I look forward to reading your comments.

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