



**UNITED STATES ARMY**  
**THE CHIEF OF STAFF**

20 Jan 2016

**MEMORANDUM FOR ALL ARMY LEADERS**

**SUBJECT: Army Readiness Guidance, Calendar Year 2016-17**

**1. Purpose:**

This guidance provides the purpose, direction, and motivation for the Army to regain combined arms capability in tactical formations while improving key aspects of overall strategic readiness.

**2. Global Security Environment:**

a. Today, we are globally engaged with more than 190,000 Soldiers assigned or allocated in over 140 countries around the world. These Soldiers are conducting combat operations, deterring aggression, or reassuring our allies and partners. We continue to engage the enemy in Afghanistan as we work with allies and partners to train, advise, and assist the Afghan National Defense Security Forces. We are building partner capacity in Iraq to fight the ruthless terrorism of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). We are engaging our partners in Africa, and throughout the Americas, North and South. We have almost 100,000 Soldiers committed to the Pacific and we are deterring aggression in the Korean peninsula as we have done for 60 years. In Europe and Asia, we are actively reassuring allies in the face of emerging challenges, deterring Russian aggression, and in every circumstance and every region of the world, our Army stands ready.

b. Though the U.S. Army continues to protect the United States and its allies at home and abroad as it has for over 240 years, instability is increasing across the globe. In the Middle East, South Asia, and beyond, ISIL and other radical groups present a significant threat to regional stability with a reach that is not only deadly, but long. The war against radical terrorism in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, North Africa, and elsewhere will require considerable time and resources. For this reason, we must sustain our capabilities to fight terrorists, guerrillas, and insurgents, and help our partners develop increased capabilities to do the same.

c. While COIN is a continual challenge and we must sustain our capabilities, we cannot solely focus on only one typology of war. The United States is a global power with global responsibilities. As such, we must maintain capabilities to execute an entire range of military operations, from humanitarian assistance, to fighting guerrillas and terrorists, to conducting cyber operations, to engaging nation states in conventional and hybrid warfare. The ability to conduct decisive action in support of Unified Land Operations to deter, deny, compel, and / or defeat the threat of hybrid warfare posed by

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nation-states represent the most demanding challenge and is the benchmark by which the Army's Readiness will be measured moving forward.

3. Army Readiness Priorities:

a. Strategic Readiness:

(1) Remain regionally engaged and ready to meet Combatant Commander requirements to include *shape the security environment* missions.

(2) Be globally responsive and balance readiness across the Total Army Force to optimally posture our Army for contingency surge demands; deliberately pilot several multi-component construct options for improved Active Component (AC) / Reserve Component (RC) integration.

(3) Implement Sustainable Readiness by Fiscal Year (FY) 2017.

(4) Improve our Army's *set the theater* capability and properly balance readiness investments, especially with the RC where much of the capacity resides.

(5) Improve our ability to *project national power* quickly by optimizing our Army's prepositioned stocks; implementing expeditionary mission command systems and concepts; training / evaluating unit, installation, and Army-wide processes through Army Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercises (EDREs); and ensuring installation power projection platforms are well maintained.

(6) Increase Army *Cyber operations* capacity and capability while also preserving our *special operations* interoperability.

b. Unit Readiness:

(1) Continue to aggressively rebuild *combined arms maneuver* capability and preserve *wide area security* competency in support of Unified Land Operations through home station training and combat training center rotations.

(2) Prioritize and protect home station training environments through disciplined tasking governance, improved management of mandatory training, and reinvigorated unit training management across all echelons of command.

(3) Establish a common, objective standard for assessing and reporting training readiness for decisive action, or assigned missions across the total Army force.

(4) Improve personnel readiness by significantly reducing medical and

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administrative non-available Soldiers to maximize our Army's combat power.

4. Readiness Defined:

a. Readiness determines our ability to fight and win our Nation's wars. More specifically, it is the capability of our forces to conduct the full range of military operations to defeat all enemies regardless of the threats they pose. While the violent and skillful application of land power is the way in which these ends are achieved, ready units, units that are properly manned, trained, equipped, and led, are the means by which the Army generates this capability.

b. These ready Army formations are the foundation of the Joint Force and essential to accomplishing our nation's military objectives. Army units set the theater, sustain joint warfighters, provide situational awareness, and project power, all while leading joint, interagency, and multi-national teams through the exercise of mission command. Ultimately, the Army is judged by how well our units integrate with the Joint Force to control all domains and prevail against all threats to the homeland, our interests, and our allies.

c. The outstanding performance of 3rd Infantry Division (3ID) and the 101st Airborne Division (101st) at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom in March 2003 is an excellent example of ready Army units enabling the Joint Force to achieve victory. These units exemplified what readiness means: adaptable Army forces that demonstrate overwhelming capabilities. This readiness was not developed quickly, it was built long before these units ever crossed the line of departure and was key to their success. Due to the many years of combined arms maneuver preparation and training these units conducted, 3ID and the 101st succeeded in dismantling a larger army, achieving their objectives with minimal casualties, and doing so with a speed many thought impossible.

d. Generating the combat proficiency for decisive action is an Army-wide enterprise that engages leaders at every level. Our tactical units must manage personnel and equipment to produce trained formations and leaders ready to execute decisive action and assigned missions, the Army Service Component Commands must ensure Combatant Commanders (CCDR) receive the operational capabilities necessary to support joint requirements, and the Army must generate the strategic readiness needed by the Joint Force to meet the objectives of national strategy. This process, properly executed, is the foundation upon which the Total Army Force builds the readiness and capability required to meet the challenges of a complex world now and into the future.

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5. Generating Readiness:

a. Today, the Army is a combat-seasoned force. However, both our capacity and capability could be seriously challenged in a future conflict and our Army-wide readiness is not where it needs to be to ensure success. This risk is unacceptable and must be mitigated through rapid and significant improvement in sustainable readiness.

b. Accurate reporting is the first requirement to generating such readiness. Recently, units have reported readiness levels that indicate an ability to deploy rapidly, fight, and win decisively against a near-peer enemy capable of employing conventional and irregular capabilities. However, over the past 14 years, we have neither had the training opportunities nor gained the strategic depth to conduct decisive unified land operations against a contemporary hybrid threat. To address this deficiency, the Army must make a Total Army Force effort to generate readiness through the Sustainable Readiness Process (SRP).

6. Sustainable Readiness:

a. Sustainable Readiness is the Army's force generation concept, supported by a comprehensive resourcing strategy, that is adapted to the needs of a globally responsive and regionally engaged contingency force. Given the resources available and planned for our Army, SRP will build and preserve the highest possible unit and strategic readiness across the total force enabling the Army to effectively manage risk.

b. With the implementation of SRP, our Army will shift from a regimented, event driven resource strategy to one that is synchronized and fluid with the overriding objective of maximizing the readiness posture of the total Army. The end state is an enduring process that allows the Army to clearly analyze and evaluate its progress and provides the decision analysis capability to optimize resources and unit activity to minimize risk to the Army's mission.

7. Readiness Objectives:

a. SRP will generate the readiness the Army needs by ensuring that units are well-manned, well-equipped, and competently led to conduct realistic training. Underpinning this process must be a culture where leaders in both the operating and generating force continuously seek opportunities to build and sustain readiness along these pillars. Our objective is to sustain over 66% of our aggregate Regular Army units in a combat ready status at any moment in time in order to rapidly respond to any global contingency. We are currently working to define the exact unit readiness goal for the National Guard and Army Reserve and it will be published at a later date. The readiness goal for the

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Regular Army includes all our combat, combat support, and combat service support units.

b. Manning:

(1) We are downsizing the Army and restructuring our Force. Regardless of the number and types of units we have, we will keep them manned commensurate with a level of readiness that enables them to meet current and future demands. Our ability, however, to fill units above authorized strengths in order to meet these demands will no longer exist. Every Soldier in every unit counts and must be able to perform their mission at home or abroad, in peace and in war. Commanders at every level are responsible for the readiness of their formations and must be committed in ensuring the individual readiness of each and every Soldier in their formations.

(2) Although we have seen significant improvements in our non-deployable rates and a decline in the Disability Evaluation System population, much work remains. To support in this effort, we will provide commanders the necessary tools to manage their formations. We are currently working on medical readiness transformation that will allow commanders to view medical readiness and make deployability determinations. We are reshaping deployment incentives and redefining deployable and non-deployable; and we will field the Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army (IPPS-A) that will integrate all components and improve a commander's ability to accurately convey their readiness status.

(3) Readiness begins with our Soldiers. We must assess our nation's very best, train them, manage their talents and instill in them the warrior ethos. In doing so, we will build a cohesive team of trusted professionals, resilient, fit, and ready to fight and win our nation's wars.

c. Equipping:

(1) We must equip our units with the best that our organic industrial base can produce. We must demonstrate discipline in keeping this equipment properly maintained and sustain the foresight and resources to continuously modernize to prepare for both the current and future fights. Equipment readiness is and will continue to be a critical component of overall unit readiness. Fiscal realities may not allow all units to be modernized at the same time or to the same level, but all units will be equipped to their current Military Tables of Organization and Equipment authorizations and capable of performing their decisive action mission.

(2) As the Army is reducing end strength, it is simultaneously converting maneuver brigades, aviation, field artillery, and sustainment organizations to more efficient designs. Commanders can assist in this process and improve equipping



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readiness at the unit level by managing Command Supply Discipline Programs, establishing property accountability of equipment, attaining and sustaining 10/20 standards, and by filling shortages through the redistribution of excess equipment. Additionally, divesting unused, excess equipment and minimizing reliance on contractors can prevent waste and increase unit level capability while the implementation of Critical Enterprise Resource Planning programs will further enable commanders to make decisions based on near real-time logistics data that is both reliable and accurate.

(1) Another crucial component of Army Equipment Readiness is the Command Deployment Discipline Program (CDDP). The CDDP is a tool for commanders to evaluate their unit's deployment readiness. To support this assessment, the Army is reinvigorating the Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise Program (EDRE). The intent of the EDRE program is to ensure that units have considered and are capable of conducting short or no notice deployment operations. The Army Staff will execute Level III EDREs of select units throughout FY16.

(2) Over the next two years, Army Modernization will continue to be challenged by budgetary constraints. However, modernization of mission command capabilities is critical and facilitates the decision-making of leaders and Soldiers across all tactical echelons for Unified Land Operations in support of the Joint Force and allies. To support this effort, the Army will develop and field a robust, integrated tactical mission command network linking command posts across platforms at each echelon.

d. Leader Development:

(1) We must continue to adapt and produce the best leader development programs and institutions. We must create leaders of great competence and of great character. We must also reduce the administrative burden on our units and our leaders by focusing them on mission essential tasks. Maintaining this battle focus for our leaders and our units is paramount to unit readiness.

(2) Professional Military Education serves as the principal way Soldiers and Officers build upon training, education, and experiences gained in units while broadening their skills without affecting career progression. The U.S. Army is reorganizing its education enterprise into a university structure. Branded "the Army University," this system will increase academic rigor, create greater opportunities for accreditation, and enhance the quality of the force. This university system will align the officer, warrant officer, noncommissioned officer (NCO), and Army Civilian education programs. The Army is executing this change now as an investment in developing leaders of competence, character, and commitment who can rapidly adapt to new and unpredictable threats in today's complex world.

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(3) Beginning in January 2016, the Army will also institute the new Select, Train, and Promote (STEP) policy. The STEP initiative will directly link certification and qualification of our NCOs to promotions, ensuring that they are professionally developed prior to assuming key leadership roles. Additionally, the Army is transitioning from an NCO Education System to an integrated NCO Professional Development System to prepare the NCO Corps to support national security requirements for the year 2020 and beyond. Within the Warrant Officer Corps, the Army is developing a Warrant Officer 2025 (WO2025) Strategy to address gaps in warrant officer lifecycle management, leader development, and accessions.

e. Training:

(1) Army leaders will ensure that our force is well prepared by adequately manning, equipping, and developing leaders to execute realistic combined arms and joint training. This training, without exception, will include elements of the Army Reserve, National Guard, and the active Army. We must maintain a qualitative edge in combat. Rigorous, battle-focused training builds trust and confidence throughout the depth of our formations. It is the most important thing we do to prepare for conflict.

(2) Recently, the Army successfully began the transition from a decade-long counter-insurgency campaign. With this change, the Army is moving from a COIN-based training environment to one that prepares our units for the entire range of Decisive Action tasks in support of Unified Land Operations. To facilitate this training shift, by FY16, a majority of the Army's AC Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) along with some ARNG BCTs completed a Decisive Action Combat Training Center rotation. Continued execution of these rotations will build increased depth for trained and ready leaders and units. Revitalized participation in CCDR joint exercises and European Response Force training will expand exposure to Unified Land Operations throughout the depth of the Total Army Force.

(3) Over the next two years, the challenge for the Army's operating force is to balance the requirements of remaining regionally engaged while simultaneously preparing to meet the demands of a globally responsive contingency force. The key to doing both is rebuilding the Total Army Force for Decisive Action to achieve success in Unified Land Operations (DA/ULO). This will require absolute proficiency in combined arms maneuver and an organizational shift in training focus to be effective. As in previous conflicts, mastery of the fundamentals and the skillful combination of fire and maneuver will be essential. Well-rehearsed mission orders, battle drills, and commonly understood standard operating procedures will translate into rapid and violent execution that minimizes resistance and assures success in battle.

(4) Although we've made strides in the transition from a narrow focus on COIN to a broader emphasis across the entire range of Decisive Action tasks, the standards

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by which we currently assess and report our training readiness have not kept pace. To correct this inadequacy, the Army is taking immediate steps to establish more objective and uniform readiness standards over the next two years. Mission Essential Task Lists for like units below Brigade level will be standardized and supported by objective evaluation criteria. The Army will also implement a clear task hierarchy that allows Commanders to assess subordinate unit proficiency for the conduct of supporting collective tasks associated with a unit's Mission Essential Tasks. This standardization will facilitate accurate and uniform readiness evaluation through objective "T" assessments and will enable senior leaders to make risk-informed resourcing and force allocation decisions.

(5) As the Army's resource position becomes increasingly difficult over the next few years, commanders and trainers have the responsibility to maximize funding to the greatest extent possible. By conducting smart multi-echelon training and integrating live, virtual, constructive and gaming training environments, Commanders will creatively generate the highest possible training readiness. At the Army level, we will deliberately assess the risk to readiness and mitigate where feasible. As Commanders become attuned to the cost of training events, the Army will work to link unit training activity, the cost of that activity, and the readiness delivered. Understanding the cost of training readiness will allow our Army to better align training readiness dollars and ensure we maintain proper balance against our modernization and manpower accounts. To this end, we are seeking predictable and consistent funding so that we can appropriately plan and synchronize activities to generate the readiness required.

8. Conclusion:

a. The Army will achieve fiscal balance across modernization, end-strength, and readiness in FY18/19. This will stabilize the main resource elements of Army readiness: Manning and Equipping. This stability, coupled with gains in DA/ULO proficiency through tough, realistic training, and professional leader development will allow the Army to address current global demand while maintaining the readiness to support National Military Strategy contingency requirements by FY 20/21.

b. Our continued readiness growth will be guided by SRP, which will raise overall readiness levels and increase the duration of unit availability. This will ensure that Army force generation is efficient and timely in fulfilling our responsibility to provide ready units to CCDRs.

c. In FY18 and beyond, the Army will rebuild and restore depth in our surge force that supports CCDR contingency requirements. We will optimize the capacity and capability necessary to execute the war plans crucial to our national strategy in order to address residual risk. While Army modernization must remain constant as we strive to



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achieve and maintain overmatch, the majority of our reorganization as a DA/ULO force will be complete. With renewed combined arms maneuver proficiency, we will expand readiness gains in critical capabilities to execute the full range of military operations across the continuum of conflict into the foreseeable future.

*Readiness is  
#1... And  
there is no other #1*

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