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U.S. ARMY EUROPE TRANSFORMATION IS ON TRACK, SAYS ARMY VICE CHIEF OF STAFF DURING GRAFENWOEHR VISIT

By **Dave Melancon**

U.S. Army Europe Public Affairs Office

GRAFENWOEHR, Germany -- The transformation of U.S. Army Europe will continue as planned and scheduled, said Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard A. Cody during a visit here May 10.



DAVE MELANCON

Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Richard A. Cody responds to a question during a press conference at the Grafenwoehr (Germany) Training Area May 10.

The plan laid out and refined by former USAREUR Commanders Gen. B.B. Bell and Gen. David McKiernan “is a plan that we are going to execute,” Cody said after observing exercise Austere Challenge 08 here.

Europe will continue to serve as a power projection platform for the Army’s efforts in the Global War on Terrorism while also providing state-of-the-art training areas for U.S. and allied Soldiers, the general added.

“It is about getting the (Army’s) footprint in Europe right north and south of the Alps, as well as Joint Task Force-East (in Romania and Bulgaria),” Cody said. “That footprint has been well thought out.”

The merging of the U.S. Army Europe and V Corps headquarters into the 7th Army is part of the Army’s overall transformation, Cody said, noting that the deployable portion of the new 7th Army construct was tested during AC08.

The exercise tested the 7th's command post concept and will provide Army leaders and doctrine developers a foundation for a deployable joint and combined headquarters and shows leaders what components are needed and how the command structure should be assembled, he said.

"We have a template, but we will learn from Austere Challenge," he said. "We have to glean the lessons learned and we will adjust our plans as we transform 7th Army."

Cody also spoke about how the entire Army is continuing to transform as it fights in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Part of that transformation includes about 50,000 Soldiers who are being restationed in the continental United States from South Korea and Germany, Cody added.

"We are transforming the Army doctrinally," Cody continued. "We have the new operations (field manual) that deals with the doctrinal underpinnings of the world we are going to be in for the next 20 years."

The general said the Army will also combine armor and infantry training at Fort Benning, Ga.; artillery and air defense artillery schools at Fort Sill, Okla.; and transportation and ordnance schools at Fort Lee, Va.

In addition to transforming the Army's structure, footprint and doctrine, the Army is continuing to maintain its inventory of equipment, he said, with Army depots around the world refurbishing seven brigades' worth of equipment annually.

"It is a very synchronized plan that we have, and all the while we are fighting the Global War on Terrorism," Cody said. "We have to get this Army modernized not just for this fight, but for the next fight. We have to invest in our infrastructure so we can retain our high-quality, all-volunteer force."

"We continue to refresh our equipment at the same time we're resetting our Soldiers and families."

Junior leaders are spearheading the Army's success, but every Soldier, civilian employee and Family member has part to play in the Global War on Terrorism, the general said.

"It could be a civilian worker in a depot, it could be a family readiness group advisor, it could be someone working in the Pentagon, it could be someone on the 7th Army staff," he said. "Everybody is in this fight and is contributing in some shape or fashion."

Speaking one day after Military Spouse Day, Cody took the time to salute Army spouses for their part in the Army's success.

"We could not be 'Army strong' if we did not have strong military spouses. They endure the hardships of 12- and now 15-month separations from their loved ones. They end up

having to take care of the children, maintain the household, as well as being part of a great Army community.”

The Army Family Covenant is starting to show results, Cody said, citing improvements to child care centers, chapels and other family support facilities as examples.

“We are going to put deeds as well as investment behind the words of the Army covenant,” he said.

“At the end of the day, what we are moving to is an Army that is in balance in all of its mission areas -- to include the Army Family Covenant, to include the infrastructure investments -- the center of gravity is the all-volunteer force.”



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