

Armed Forces Information Service

Transformation Chief Outlines Strategy for New Battlefield

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 5, 2004 – Fighting on the new battlefield means a new strategy is in order, the Defense Department's director of force transformation said here Aug. 4 in an address to the Research and Development Partnership Conference.

The military is moving from the old monolithic, bounded Red Zone of the Cold War to a huge, diffuse and diverse Red Zone that is hardly monolithic and defies containment, said retired Navy Vice Adm. Arthur Cebrowski. This shift requires a change in strategy, Cebrowski added.

"It calls for a ... strategy of connectedness," he said. "So the issue then is not so much how one contains it, as how one, indeed, connects to it."

In this case, "connected" means not only tangibly, but, as Cebrowski put it, by becoming competent for the age.

The networking of troop communications, both within and among the services, is just one of the ways the director mentioned. Lightening the loads the forces carry and speeding transport abilities were also mentioned as methods to fight more effectively on a changing battlefield.

Cebrowski said the time has come to turn old models upside-down. The nation always has been strategically defensive and operationally offensive, he said. As problems like the possibility of weapons of mass destruction move in closer to home, he explained, it's becoming obvious that being operationally defensive is more advantageous. And because the consequences are so grave, strategic offense may be necessary, he added. "This is a switch. It defies all the thinking we've had ... for American diplomacy for a long time," he said.

The focus on intelligence has changed, too, he said. Social intelligence -- an in-depth knowledge of local culture and customs -- is being valued much more over military intelligence.

The issue of national security is all encompassing, Cebrowski said. "It is indeed global. It spans every element of human enterprise," he said. "It is social, it is political, it is technical, it is scientific, it is economic."

Being that it is a global concern, there is an increased movement to open up the defense industry to a different kind of international relationship, he said. Opening up the defense industry keeps it from being limited to the ideas, technologies and research that comes from within the United States.

These changes in the way wars are being fought are bringing about force transformations as well, Cebrowski said. More small units are becoming the norm, he added, and technology is making it easier and safer for servicemembers to do their jobs with greater effectiveness and accuracy.

"We're in the age of the small, the fast and the many," Cebrowski said.