



By: General David Perkins

“Military failures are a result of three things: failure to learn, failure to adapt, and a failure to anticipate.”

The strength of the United States military – in fact, our asymmetric advantage – is our people. The creative and innovative solutions that result from true diversity of thought are the hallmarks of a learning organization. This creativity and innovation, when nurtured by an organizational culture that encourages prudent risk taking, is both a force multiplier on the battlefield and the only effective response to the inevitable “fog” of war.

It is critically important that leaders at all levels think about, and discuss, “how we fight.” We must continue a diverse dialogue that captures lessons learned from our individual experiences and applies that knowledge to our understanding of the evolving nature of the operational environment we will encounter in the future.

Very seldom have we had the luxury for deliberate preparations for war. Previous generations have been called upon to fight and win without a significant train up or

augmentation of personnel or materiel. It is our responsibility as leaders to ensure that our current state of training and our own preparation for leadership is as thorough as we can make it.

This discussion series on training for Decisive Action is an important contribution toward our collective responsibility to learn, to adapt, and to anticipate. I encourage you to enter the dialogue on how best to train our soldiers and staffs now - at home station; how to continually improve our lethality, sustainability, and mission command in the context of the evolving threats to our vital National Interests.

We have been a military at war fighting an insurgency for most of our careers. In that light it is important to recognize that often it isn't what we know that leads to failure - it's what we know that isn't so. This discussion series is an excellent opportunity to think about, discuss, and vet our evolving doctrine and how to operationalize it based on a diverse set of experiences and perspectives. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and I encourage your participation in helping our military to learn, to adapt, to anticipate - and most importantly, to win in the complex world we find ourselves.

General David Perkins is currently the Commander of Training and Doctrine Command for the US Army. He has commanded at every level from company to division.

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