



THE 2008 AUSA

America's Army:

ANNUAL MEETING

The Strength of the Nation

Following the Military District of Washington's prelude presentation at the Opening Ceremony, soldiers from the 3rd U.S. Infantry (The Old Guard), wearing period uniforms, and other Army performers receive applause from the audience as AUSA President Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, U.S. Army retired, opens the 2008 Annual Meeting.

By Dennis Steele
Senior Staff Writer

The 2008 Annual Meeting of the Association of the U.S. Army, held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C., had a total attendance of 32,697 and featured 324 exhibits by the Army's industry partners and 94 military exhibits. Preceded by several events, including the 24th annual Army Ten-Miler, the three-day core of the Annual Meeting offered a wide range of educational forums by the Institute of Land Warfare, presentations on specific subjects and professional development for soldiers and the entire Army family, including retirees, Army civilians, ROTC cadets and noncommissioned officers. There were also programs for AUSA chapters and sustaining members.

The keynote speakers at the three principal general-meeting events—the Opening Ceremony, Eisenhower Luncheon and Marshall

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The AUSA seal hangs above the entrance of the Walter E. Washington Convention Center, Washington, D.C., during the Annual Meeting.



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Dinner—were, respectively, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren, Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. and former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, the 2008 Marshall Medal recipient. In addition, Gen. David H. Petraeus, who had recently handed over command of Multi-National Force-Iraq and was in Washington before taking command of U.S. Central Command, made a special presentation at the Annual Meeting.

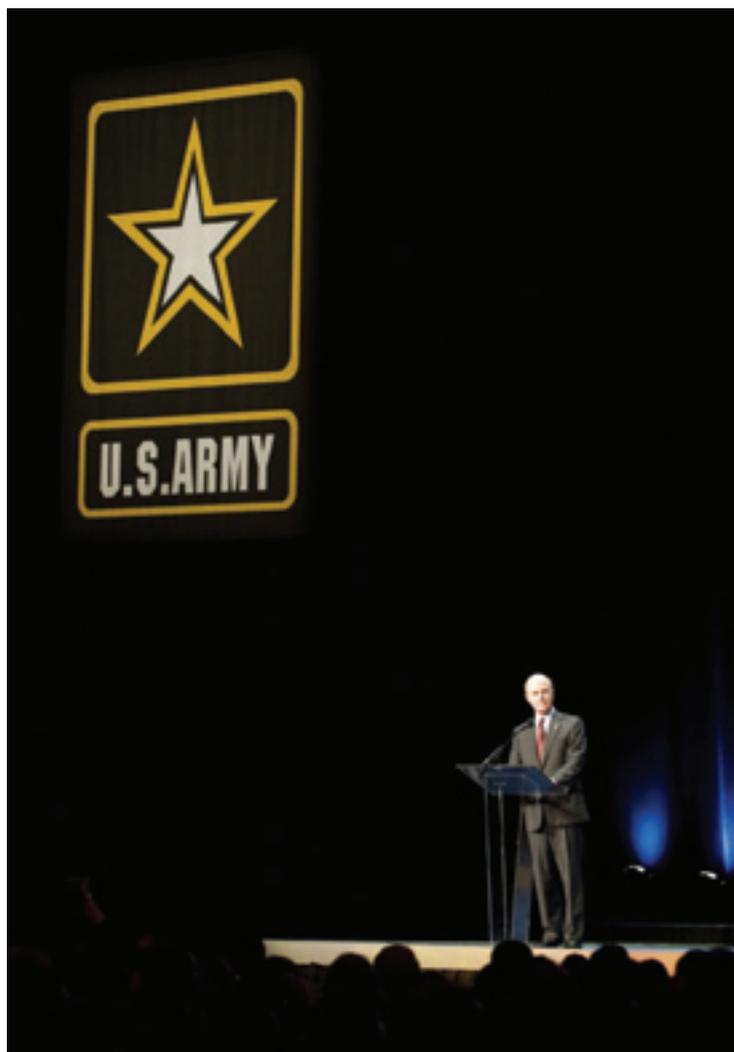
Secretary Geren, noting that the 2008 Annual Meeting would be his last as Secretary of the Army, answered his own question: “What should I say in speaking this last time to AUSA?” by listing many important subjects now facing the Army: supporting the global war on terrorism; growing the Army; key modernization programs; Future Combat Systems; modularity; Base Realignment and Closure initiatives; the new energy initiative; billions of dollars for new construction; new field manuals; and the fiscal year 2010 budget—all of which, he said, are “critically important to the present and the future of our Army.”

He paused and added: “But Gen. Abrams told us that people are the Army, and today ... I’m going to talk about people—soldiers, Army families and civilians.”

“I came to the Pentagon late summer of 2001, and I was in the Pentagon the morning of 9/11,” he continued. “And for seven years, I’ve watched soldiers go off to war and watched their families stand with them. I’ve been inspired by the service of our soldiers and humbled by the sacrifice of their families—spouses and kids, moms and dads. And it’s the privilege of a lifetime to work with and for soldiers and Army families. And for this last time, let me say

first, and above all else, thank you—soldiers, Army civilians and Army families—for what you do every day, what you’ve done for generations and what you’ll do for generations to come.”

Secretary Geren went on to assert: “We’re committed to meeting with urgency the ever-changing life-and-death



U.S. Army/D. Myles Cullen

Secretary of the Army Pete Geren delivers the keynote address at the Opening Ceremony.



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Displays from Army commands and industry partners line the exhibit hall at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

needs and demands of our soldiers in Afghanistan and in Iraq. And not just meet their needs and meet the evolving threats, but anticipate and do everything we can to get ahead of the threat. And care for those who have borne the battle and their loved ones. These are moral duties of the highest order for our nation and our Army," he said.

The secretary repeatedly referred to the AUSA Annual Meeting as the Army's family reunion and said: "No family reunion would be complete without talking about the heart and soul of the Army family, the heart and soul that we call the backbone, the noncommissioned officer corps.

"At the front of every Army mission in the United States or overseas, you'll find a noncommissioned officer. They know their mission, they know their equipment, but most importantly, they know their soldiers," Secretary Geren said. "If you want to see what 'right' looks like, ask an NCO. Or better, *watch* an NCO. They are the keepers of our standards, a lofty phrase that has substantive meaning on the ground in every place around the world where you find an American soldier. From the recruiting station to basic training, over a career of service from Benning to Baghdad, combat, civil affairs, medics, logisticians, natural disasters at home, graveside at Arlington—active, Guard and Reserve, our NCOs lead. Our NCOs lead the way in education, in training and discipline, and they share their strength of character with every soldier they lead, every officer they support and every civilian with whom they serve."

To note the importance of the NCO in every aspect of Army life, Secretary Geren announced that 2009 will be "The Year of the NCO in the United States Army." [It is the second Year of the NCO celebrated by the Army. The first was in 1989.]

Secretary Geren said that during 2009, the Army will "accelerate NCO development of strategic initiatives; develop new initiatives that enhance the training, education, capability and utilization of our NCO Corps; showcase the NCO story to our Army and the American people; and honor the sacrifices and celebrate contributions of the NCO Corps, past and present."

Reporting on the 2008 spotlight on the Army family, the secretary noted that this year is the 25th anniversary of the Family Action Plan, and said: "Over this past year, we increased our investment in Army families with more personnel, resources and facilities. To reinforce our commitment to Army families, we signed Family Covenants and Community Covenants at posts all around the globe."

"We owe our families a quality of life equal to their extraordinary service, and that target will forever move," he continued. "Over the years ahead, our leaders—officers, NCOs and civilians—must ensure that these covenants remain living documents, responding to the demands of an unpredictable future, the needs of an expeditionary Army and the ever-dynamic needs of Army families."

Secretary Geren noted that 2008 also marked the 60th anniversary of the integration of the U.S. military under an executive order signed by then-President Harry S Truman, who "launched the Army on the path to the color-blind institution we know today. The Army moved slowly and stubbornly at first, but now stands as the model for equal opportunity in our nation," he said.

The secretary also reminded the audience that 2008 is the 30th anniversary of the disestablishment of the Women's Army Corps and gender integration as one Army.

"Today there are more than 120,000 women in the

Army—active, Guard and Reserve: more than 56,000 NCOs, nearly 25,000 officers and 32 general officers,” Secretary Geren said. “This year Lt. Gen. Ann Dunwoody will become the first woman four-star general in our nation’s military history,” he added.

“Since 9/11, nearly 90,000 women have served in Kuwait, Afghanistan and Iraq. One hundred and thirty women have received awards for valor, including two Silver Stars—SSgt. Leigh Ann Hester and Spc. Monica Brown

[recently promoted to sergeant]. One hundred and sixty-five have received Purple Hearts. Forty-nine women have been killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and 535 have been wounded,” Secretary Geren noted. “But in spite of their service, we are short of becoming the band of brothers and sisters that our values demand. In jarring contrast to the Army Values and the Warrior Ethos that bind our soldiers together, since 9/11, 1,800 American soldiers have been punished for sexually assaulting a fellow soldier. And experts estimate that only one in five sexual assaults ever gets reported. The rate of reported sexual assaults in our Army is twice the rate of other services—an Army at war, at war within itself, blue on blue.”

He continued: “Sixty years ago, we began down the long road to end racial discrimination and root out the remnants of racism from our Army [to] bring our attitudes, words and deeds in line with Army Values. We succeeded, thanks to leaders who gathered here today. This year we recommitted to do the same in regard to gender. We committed to eradicate sexual harassment and sexual assault from the life of our Army. As with equal opportunity, we will become the

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The U.S. Army exhibit at the Annual Meeting featured a “Faces of Strength” display to coincide with the Annual Meeting theme—America’s Army: The Strength of the Nation.



The U.S. Army exhibit also featured a "Hall of Heroes" display.

model for sexual assault prevention in our nation."

"Sexual assault is a crime everywhere, but blue on blue ... [is] much more. It's an assault on the core values of every American soldier," Secretary Geren said. He added: "American soldiers are bound together by [the] Army Values of duty and loyalty that set them apart from the rest of society, by a selfless commitment to each other that outsiders find incomprehensible, a willingness to sacrifice or even die for each other, even die for a stranger if he or she shares their uniform."

The Secretary of the Army said the service will "attack" the crime of sexual assault and the enabling offense of sexual harassment as it would "an enemy within our ranks."

"The brothers and sisters of our Army must be able to count on each other, wherever they are—in the battlefield or in the barracks—and whenever—on duty or off—no matter the cost," Secretary Geren explained. "We will create a climate of zero tolerance for gender-based misconduct—in attitude, word and deed—and become fully, as our values demand, a band of brothers and sisters. We will succeed in this effort. Army Values will lead us to our goal. Strip away everything else about our Army—at its core, soldiers take care of soldiers."

In closing, Secretary Geren said that this year also is the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the all-volunteer force and pointed out that the 1.2 million soldiers currently "on point for freedom at home and abroad" are all volunteers, engaged in the longest war in U.S. history fought by an American force of all volunteers.

"Ours is an Army filled with combat-tested and seasoned soldiers: 64 percent of the active component, 31 percent of the Reserve and 33 percent of the Guard have served in combat theater. These extraordinary men and women know why they're fighting. They have figured out how to win this

war, and these soldiers are reenlisting to go back, build on the lessons they've learned and finish the good work that they've begun," Secretary Geren said.

"This year alone, 120,000 men and women reenlisted—active, Guard and Reserve—and nearly 175,000 enlisted, a number equal to the size of the Marine Corps. Over the past six years, in the middle of this war, a million men and women have enlisted in the Army, and over three-quarters of a million soldiers have reenlisted," he added.

"How did we build the extraordinary force that is our Army today—the all-volunteer force? Soldiers built it from the ground up," Secretary Geren said. "What makes a great soldier? ... A great soldier has intangible qualities ... that you cannot measure with technical precision—something deep inside that keeps him or her going when most quit, decide to risk

everything or give everything when others would not and step forward when most would step back," he said.

"In time of war, with an all-volunteer force, we have an advantage in building our Army, in picking the right men and women to be soldiers," he continued. "We have a character screen, a 'gut check' on everybody ... that you never have with a draft and don't have with a peacetime Army.

"You can call it the 1 percent factor—the 1 percent of Americans who step up in time of war and say 'send me' when 99 percent don't," Secretary Geren said. "It's an intangible, but it's better than any metric."

(The full transcript of Secretary of the Army Geren's Opening Ceremony keynote address can be found at AUSA's web site—www.ausea.org—by clicking on the appropriate link in "Articles from the 2008 Annual Meeting" under "Monday, October 6 Events.")

At the Eisenhower Luncheon, Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. reiterated the 2008 Annual Meeting's theme, "America's Army: The Strength of the Nation," and said that at no time in America's history has that strength been more necessary than it is today. He reminded the audience that the day of the Eisenhower Luncheon marked the seventh anniversary of the start of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

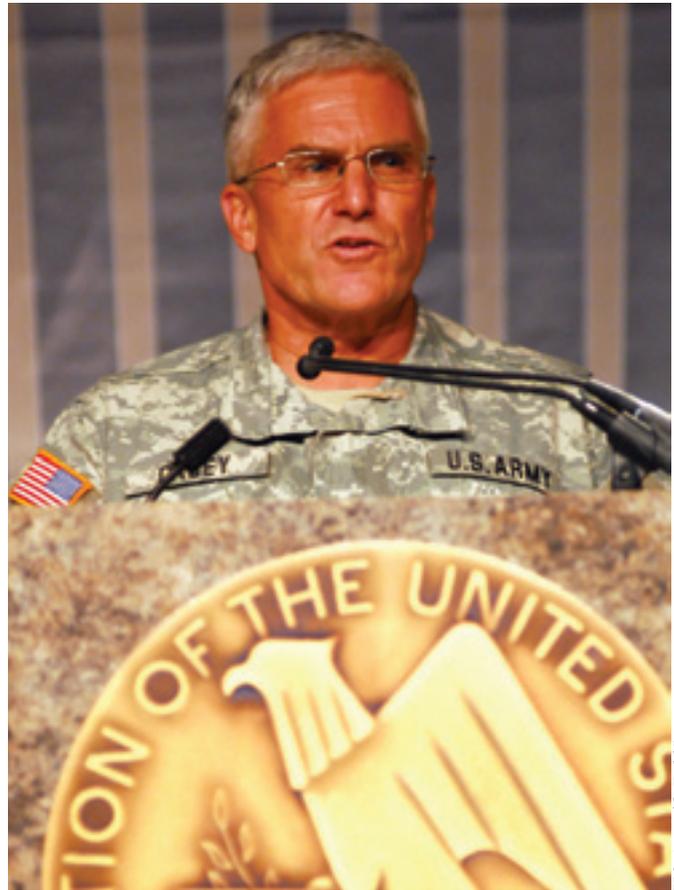
"We've been at [war] continuously for seven years. Over one million men and women have deployed to combat; over 4,700 have sacrificed their lives; over 11,000 have been decorated for valor—including two Medals of Honor, 14 Distinguished Service Crosses and over 500 Silver Stars," Gen. Casey said. "That our soldiers and families so willingly sacrifice to preserve our way of life and to secure a better future for others says much about the Army's

strength—a strength that comes from our [Army] Values, from our Warrior Ethos and from our people.”

Gen. Casey said that his remarks would address how the Army is doing and where the Army is going. “A year ago, I reported to you what you already knew ... that our Army—while a committed, resilient, combat-seasoned and professional force—was out of balance,” the Chief of Staff said. “The demand for our forces exceeded the sustainable supply, and we lacked sufficient strategic flexibility to respond to other contingencies as rapidly as we would’ve liked. We were unable to provide a sustainable deployment tempo for our soldiers and families. And our support systems, designed for a pre-September 11 peacetime Army, were stretched and stressed by the demands of repeated deployments. Overall, we were consuming our readiness as fast as we were building it.

“We initiated a plan last year to restore balance,” Gen. Casey continued, “and this plan was founded and based on four imperatives. We said that we had to sustain our soldiers and families; that we had to continue to prepare soldiers for success in the current conflict; that we had to reset them effectively upon their return; and that we had to continue to transform ourselves for the demands of the 21st century. At that time, we acknowledged that these imperatives would require several years, considerable resources and sustained national commitment because what we were attempting to do, and will attempt to do in the next three years, is to: one, complete our growth of the Army to 1.1 million people; two, to establish an acceptable balance between deployments and time at home; three, to substantially complete our modular reorganization and our rebalancing; four, to complete the Base Realignment and Closure activities and all of our restationing actions; and then finally, to fully implement the Army force generation model.”

He conceded that “that was and is a tall order” but added that the past year has seen good progress. “We are moving forward, and I think we are well on a path to bringing ourselves back into a state of balance,” Gen.



U.S. Army/C. Todd Lopez

Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. delivers the keynote speech at the Eisenhower Luncheon.

Casey said. “But there are still a few tough years ahead, and it’s going to take us next year and probably the year after until we start seeing the type of flexibility in our personnel and equipment systems that we’re used to. But for the first time, I’m starting to see daylight, and I see how the plans that we have put in place can move us over the next three years to a position of balance, so that we can continue to prepare for the uncertain future.”

He went on to say, “I see the main challenges that I face during my tenure as chief as first, to get us back in balance and second, to prepare for the future.”

“We have to continue to think and talk about the future security environment and about the character of future conflict, so that we can continually



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The U.S. Army exhibit at the Annual Meeting staged live presentations by soldiers to explain their jobs and missions. Here, Capt. Laura Peters, a civil affairs officer, talks about her tour of duty with a provincial reconstruction team in Iraq.

Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli, far left, and Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston, far right, stand with Spc. David R. Obray, U.S. Army Reserve, 2008 Soldier of the Year, and SSgt. Michael T. Noyce Merino, Army National Guard, the Army's 2008 Non-commissioned Officer of the Year.



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evolve our thinking and adapt ... because we believe that we are at war with a global terrorist network and that the emerging global trends will only exacerbate that struggle, and it will lead us to a period of what I call persistent conflict. I also believe that the United States and our allies will be increasingly confronted with complex and unanticipated challenges to both our national and to our collective security," he said. "And while these conflicts will be waged in each physical domain—air, land and sea—I believe they will increasingly be struggles between, among and for the allegiance of people. Twenty-first century conflict, therefore, will primarily be conducted, won and ultimately concluded on land."

"Landpower—the ability to achieve decisive results on land—will remain central to any national security strategy," Gen. Casey continued. "And to be successful in this environment, our land forces—the Army, the Marine Corps and our special operations forces, supported by our air and naval forces—must be capable of conducting full spectrum operations, with allies, with indigenous partners, and they must do this in operations ranging from peacetime engagement to major conventional war."

Gen. Casey said the Army should expect to deal with a range of diverse actors, frequently nonstate, and sometimes operating covertly or as proxies. "We also should expect to deal with what I call hybrid threats—diverse combinations of irregular, terrorist and criminal capabilities—that will be resistant to attack by conventional capabilities," he said. "We should expect civilian populations to permeate the operational environment. Our foes will seek to mitigate our conventional advantages by operating among the people to avoid detection and secure popular support. I believe the norm for us will be sustained operations in tough terrain and sprawling cities, challenging multicultural environments, and increased complexity for our leaders," Gen. Casey added.

"I believe conflicts will become more unpredictable, arising suddenly, expanding rapidly and continuing for uncer-

tain durations in unanticipated and austere locations. I would expect they will expand to areas historically immune to conflict, primarily space and cyberspace. And conflict resolution will require not only rapid response, but the capability to build sustained security and social, economic and governance capabilities. It will definitely require our forces to operate with indigenous governments and indigenous forces ... things we're learning today, but things I believe will dominate the upcoming security environment," Gen. Casey said.

"Telecommunications technologies ensure that global coverage will occur for every one of our local conflicts, and this offers the potential for spillover and the concomitant regionally destabilizing effects. And, since the means of violence will no longer be in the hands of state actors, military forces alone will be insufficient to establish the conditions for lasting stability, thus requiring the integration of interagency and intergovernmental capabilities for success," he added.

Gen. Casey pointed out that the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict of 2006 illustrates several emerging characteristics: "The conflict pitted Israel against a terrorist group and a nonstate actor, Hezbollah, that was operating inside another state, Lebanon, and supported by yet another state, Iran. Hezbollah embedded itself in the population, employed modern civil technology and advanced military weaponry, which it combined with IEDs [improvised explosive devices] and other asymmetric techniques, and it basically denied Israeli forces their objectives."

Gen. Casey added that precise requirements for land forces will continue to evolve throughout this century and that the emerging character of conflict points to several distinct qualities that land forces must possess. He talked about six of them.

■ Land forces must be versatile because predicting the conflicts of the future is, by nature, imprecise, and versatility will enable land forces to respond to the future as it actually presents itself. Versatile forces are multipurpose and

can accomplish a broad range of tasks, moving easily across the spectrum of conflict as the situation demands.

■ Land forces must be expeditionary because the dynamic and global character of future warfare will require the ability to respond rapidly to unanticipated conflicts and to be able to fight upon arrival. Land forces must be organized, trained and equipped to go anywhere in the world, against any adversary, to accomplish any mission, requiring a flexible force generation model that can generate forces both to meet the demands of current operations and to hedge against contingencies.

■ Land forces must be agile to have the capability to adapt quickly to exploit opportunities in complex environments, requiring not only agile units but agile minds and institutions that can rapidly adapt by adjusting training, manning and equipping priorities to ensure units have both

ment reliability, fuel efficiency, battery longevity and other technological advances that improve both sustainability and performance. Sustaining long-duration missions also demands the continued transformation of the reserve components to an operational force with predictable and assured access to their capabilities at sustainable levels.

■ Land forces must be interoperable with all other elements of national power, using their exceptional planning and organizational capabilities to integrate efforts of the range of U.S. agencies with allies and indigenous forces.

“In an era of persistent conflict, landpower will be indispensable in achieving lasting and decisive results for our nation,” Gen. Casey said. “Versatile, expeditionary, agile, lethal, sustainable and interoperable forces will be essential to providing the prompt, sustained and dominant responses across the spectrum of conflict that will be neces-



Soldiers offer a presentation at the Army's Future Combat Systems exhibit.

the physical and intellectual tools necessary to succeed.

■ Land forces must be lethal. Lethality in this era requires the ability both to mass effects to defeat enemy forces and to apply lethal and nonlethal effects precisely in stability operations, calling not only for precision weapons, superior intelligence and situational understanding, but leaders with an offensive mind-set—a mind-set that allows them to see opportunities and challenge and have the courage to take action.

■ Land forces must be sustainable because neither the duration nor the character of military campaigns is predictable, and land forces must possess campaign capabilities to sustain operations as long as necessary to achieve national objectives. They must have the logistical capability to conduct operations over extended periods, presenting a minimal “footprint” to reduce the exposure of support forces while reducing demand through increased equip-

sary for our security in this environment. While we already possess many of the qualities that we need for the future, we must continue to transform to realize the full potential of our experiences and to stay ahead of our enemies.”

“Throughout our history, our Army has served our nation by winning its wars and securing peace,” Gen. Casey continued. “Today, faced with a future of persistent conflict, the nation requires an expeditionary Army with campaign qualities, adequately sized and supported to enable Joint force commanders to be successful across the spectrum of conflict. We are building that force, and we will continue to adapt as we go forward to ensure that we overmatch any threat.”

(The full transcript of the Army Chief of Staff's Eisenhower Luncheon address can be found at AUSA's web site—www.ousa.org—by clicking on the appropriate link in “Articles from the 2008 Annual Meeting” under “Tuesday, October 7 Events.”)

Former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright was awarded the 2008 Marshall Medal, AUSA's highest award. She received the medal at the Annual Meeting's closing event, the Marshall Dinner.

In her acceptance speech, Dr. Albright said she was "extremely grateful and honestly thrilled" to accept the honor and noted that the Annual Meeting serves as a reunion for the Army family.

"I cannot claim official membership in your family," she allowed, "but I'm happy to say that whenever I crash one of your parties, you make me feel at home. In my heart, there will always be an emotional connection between your soldiers and me."

She explained that when she was a young girl, her family was forced by the Nazis to flee their native Czechoslovakia. "I spent the war in England, where we huddled in air-raided shelters as the *Luftwaffe* flew overhead," Dr. Albright said. "Sitting in the darkness, we listened to the radio, and one day we heard extraordinary news: An army from across the sea was coming to the rescue of Europe and freedom. That's when I first developed a passion for world affairs—and fell in love with Americans in uniform."

day bears his name, and she pointed out that Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey Jr. is a distinguished alumnus of that program.

"Under the circumstances, it was natural that my interest in foreign policy would remain strong. ... However, I never imagined back then that I might one day become Secretary of State. It's not that I lacked ambition. It's just that I had never seen a Secretary of State in a skirt. I will not forget actually being sworn into that job and walking for the first time into my new office. To get there, I had to go down a long hallway lined with the portraits of former secretaries, most of whom had beards. I imagined I could feel the walls shake—just a little."

Secretary Albright explained that each Secretary of State is allowed to choose the portraits for the outer office. "Some reach back to Thomas Jefferson, while others look to a more recent figure, but every secretary I know has wanted to have the portrait of George C. Marshall watching over them," she said. "As our ceremony tonight attests, Marshall was a hero not just to Democrats or Republicans, but to all Americans and to millions of people across the globe. In time of war, he was a soldier's soldier. In time of peace, he was a statesman whose vision helped lift a devastated world from its knees. Whether as Army Chief of Staff or as our country's chief diplomat, he exemplified America at its best."

She said that the qualities that made George Marshall an incomparable leader will never go out of style, but for succeeding generations, trying to emulate him is not sufficient "because the years bring forth new dangers and there is no going back to the past."

"Today we are embattled on many fronts," she continued. "People on every continent are threatened by the devil's marriage between technology and terror. Iran may be developing nuclear weapons and North Korea already has. From Caracas to the Caucasus, the historic rivalry between democracy and autocracy has been renewed. The global economy seems to be undergoing a nervous breakdown. And the next President will be called on to manage hot wars in Iraq and

Afghanistan. As I'm sure Gen. [David H.] Petraeus can attest, these countries are difficult places in which to fight because the enemy wears no uniform and the social and political landscape is treacherous. The result has been a roller coaster, with victories intertwined with setbacks and frequent shifts in tactics and approach. Throughout, our armed forces have performed magnificently, but unconventional wars are notoriously hard to conduct and slow to end."

To prepare for the Marshall Dinner, Dr. Albright said she "inquired about the Army's collective mood in this



U.S. Army/C. Todd Lopez

Former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright accepts the 2008 George C. Marshall Medal, AUSA's highest award, from Gen. Sullivan as Nicholas D. Chabraja, chairman of the AUSA Council of Trustees, looks on.

She went on to say that when she was eight years old, World War II ended, and her family returned to Prague, expecting to be able to settle in.

"But within a couple of years, the government of Czechoslovakia was taken over by communists [and] once again, my family was forced into exile, this time sailing across the ocean, past the Statue of Liberty to a new and welcoming home," she said.

Her father went to the University of Denver, where he founded a graduate school of international affairs that to-

moment of ongoing struggle. I wanted to know whether you were feeling weary or worn down.

"I was told that younger soldiers are full of enthusiasm, anxious to succeed in their missions, proud of their jobs and expecting to win," she said. "I was told that more senior officers shared that enthusiasm, but were concerned about a lack of balance between what the Army is being asked to do and what it can indefinitely sustain—this in terms of support systems, operational tempo and the ability to respond to other contingencies. My conclusion is that the Army remains a mighty engine, blessed by strong leaders and high morale—but that even the mightiest engine needs a little maintenance from time to time."

Dr. Albright added: "This need is a factor our new Commander in Chief must take into account when he considers how to redeploy responsibly from Iraq, how to develop a more effective game plan in Afghanistan and how to deny safe havens for al Qaeda across the border in Pakistan. More broadly, our next President must find the right mix of forces to project power in a world of diverse and fluid dangers."

She continued: "There should be no question that America still needs the globe's best Navy to keep our sea lanes free. We still need the best Air Force to ensure supremacy in the sky. But we should also recognize that, in many arenas of contention, the new strategic triad is land-based—consisting of soldiers, marines and Special Forces; I strongly recommend that we plan and invest accordingly. As Gen. Casey has warned, we are in an era of persistent conflict. Because our enemies have long-term strategies, we will have to make long-term commitments. And because our adversaries rely on a popular base, we must integrate our military initiatives with effective diplomacy and with civilian programs that work."

Dr. Albright added: "Success in an unconventional war depends on the ability of our armed forces to create a climate of security; but it depends, as well, on the capacity of civilian leaders to foster a climate of trust. This means that one of the great challenges our next President will face is to restore a sustainable balance. Because if America continues asking our military to do what others can and should do, we will ultimately put at risk the ability of our armed forces to do what they do best. We need every component of American power to operate at full strength."

She noted that the U.S. Army has kept up with a world that is constantly changing. "But what matters even more is what has not changed—your professionalism, your sense of honor, your commitment to duty, your spirit and your love



Soldiers attending the 2008 Annual Meeting check the leadership board at the Washington Convention Center.

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for the United States of America," Dr. Albright said. "You are without question the strength of our nation, and—speaking as one American—I am truly grateful."

She said: "More than half a century has passed since I first came to this country, but I have not forgotten the fundamental lesson taught to me by my parents. And that is to honor and value liberty, and never to take for granted the blessings that come with living in the world's greatest democracy. Over the years, I have seen this message reinforced countless times in the lives not only of immigrants and refugees, but also those of millions abroad who have been shielded by American soldiers, aided by American assistance and inspired by American ideals."

"The American journey is an upward journey," Dr. Albright continued. "Together our nation defeated Hitler, outlasted Stalin and helped make the democratic tide a rising tide. Today we look forward, not with trepidation, but with determination to see that our adversaries fail in their purpose of destruction. And that we prevail in *our* purpose of building a freer and more just future for ourselves and for all people. To every member of the Army family who is here tonight, let me say that for all you have done for our country in the past, I applaud you. For all you will do in the future, I salute you."

(The full transcript of former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright's Marshall Medal acceptance speech can be found at AUSA's web site—www.ausa.org—by clicking on the appropriate link in "Articles from the 2008 Annual Meeting" under "Wednesday, October 8 Events.")

