

INTEGRATION

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“Anytime you start talking about integrating anything, first see what you have, where you are, and where you need to go,” said Lt. Col. Patricia A. Spearman, 8th Army Operations Center day shift battle captain for Reception, Staging, Onward-movement and Integration 2001.

Soldiers of the Eighth U.S. Army have been following this analogy for the RSO&I 01 exercise. They are incorporating this approach to effectively mold U.S. and Republic of Korea combined forces.

“It’s like getting married. We have to sort out what I can do and what you can do. Everybody stays in their own lane. We have just one mission and one focus,” said Spearman.

The goal of the two forces is to create a common operating picture, according to Maj. Gen. Dennis E. Klein, 8th U.S. Army Chief of Staff (Individual Mobilized Augmentee).

“If I go to SROKA [Second Republic of Korea Army] Headquarters and look at their maps or get a briefing from them, I should hear the same information coming from their staff officers that I hear from ours here at Eighth Army,” said Klein.

Technological difference between the countries is not a major issue, however they do exist.

“We have to make sure our technology matches,” said Spearman. “If I bring an IBM [computer] to the table and you bring a MAC [computer] to the table, we have a problem. My IBM may be just as good as your MAC; we just selected different things. So, if moving down the road means we have to get something that’s compatible, it’s not that I have something that is inferior to yours. It’s just that we have to get on the same sheet of music.”

Klein said one way the two forces are working toward a common ground is by using the Global Command and Control System-Korea (GCCS-K) system. They have placed a concentrated effort on the system during RSO&I, using it to its full potential.

“At any major headquarters, we should be able to bring up current situational maps on the GCCS-K system. Ideally, it would tell us all the basic information related to that event,” said Klein.

The language differences have not suppressed efforts towards achieving this common operating picture. Korean Augmentees to the U.S. Army, called KATUSAs, are liaisons between U.S. and Korean units. KATUSAs help bridge the language gap.

“They are very sharp young people and do very good job for us,” he said. “They have to have a basic knowledge of English, and many of them have some college [education].”

According to Brig. Gen Lee, Kuang Dong, Chief of Operations branch of the Second Republic of Korea Army, the forces are working out language differences.

“I can’t say there are no language barriers. But we are conducting many combined exercises such as RSO&I and Ulchi Focus Lens (UFL) so that R.O.K. and U.S. soldiers can communicate effectively,” said Lee.