

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Battlefield Development Plan 2019



“Field Army, Corps, & Division in Multi-Domain Operations 2028”

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Introduction

An assessment of the Operational Environment (OE) through 2050 reveals that we are in a period where our adversaries are capable of challenging U.S. military forces across multiple domains and in some cases with superior or near equal capabilities.¹ To meet these challenges, the U.S. Army developed a new operational concept – *The United States Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028* – that discusses how the Army, as part of the Joint Force, will confront threats from potential adversaries in both competition and conflict.

To implement this new concept the Army revived the Battlefield Development Plan (BDP) to analyze how to fight and win against near peer adversaries. The BDP provides an operationally focused, campaign level approach with linkages from strategy and force structure to capability and program development to provide the Army and Joint Force with a comprehensive look not provided by recent Scenario Planning and Strategic Analyses.² This generates the details necessary to drive capability development; make informed decisions on future force structure; and—as we increase our understanding of how to execute multi-domain operations—concept refinement.

The *Battlefield Development Plan 2019: Field Army, Corps, and Division in Multi-Domain Operations 2028* is informed by previous efforts to determine the role and organization of echelons above brigade to enable the Joint Force to win against Russia. These efforts go back at least as far back as TRADOC's Russian New Generation Warfare Study, and builds upon the ARCIC Battlefield Development Plan initiated in the fall of 2017. This report is a comparative study of the Army Futures Command (AFC), Futures and Concepts Center's (FCC) experimentation and wargaming campaign, which had two objectives: defeat Russia's attempt to seize its objectives through a *fait accompli* campaign and to expel adversary forces from Alliance territory. Wargaming and experimentation using deep dive tactical vignettes or "plays" found in Book 3 of the Battlefield Development Plan-Russia validated this conceptual approach.

MDO at Echelon

Because of BDP experimentation and wargaming, the roles and functions of echelons above brigade have been redefined to support execution of MDO. The expansion the battle space and compression of time require new approaches to ensure that the Army is able to support Joint Force objectives in competition, and if necessary, in conflict.

Theater Army. During **competition**, the Theater Army provides the forward presence forces that enable interagency access, set the theater, enable expeditionary maneuver, and protect joint bases, nodes, and networks. It sets the conditions for operational and tactical convergence by calibrating force posture; converges offensive space control capabilities on behalf of all Army forces in theater; and is the main Army echelon converging capabilities to support joint and combined operations in the information environment.³ If deterrence fails, as the theater begins to **penetrate** and **dis-integrate** the adversary's anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) systems, the

¹ Unclassified, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-92, *The OE and the Changing Character of Warfare*, 7 Oct 2019.

² Unclassified, Michael Fitzsimmons, "Scenario Planning and Strategy in the Pentagon," U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute.

³ Unclassified, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028*.

Theater Army enables the rapid transition to conflict and facilitates the strategic movement of forces to theater; providing protection to key sites and facilities with attached air defense assets and organic theater-level forces to enable RSOI of forces. As theater forces begin to **exploit** success on the battlefield, the Theater Army maintains its focus on the adversary's actions outside of the CJOA and continues to facilitate the deployment and reception of personnel and equipment arriving in theater. As the theater begins a **return to competition**, the Theater Army continues to focus on the remainder of the theater to identify aggressive actions by the adversary, and/or other potentially hostile actors, elsewhere. The Theater Army also continues to facilitate the flow of personnel and equipment necessary for consolidation efforts and to assist in the return to competition.

Field Army. In regions that have a near peer threat during **competition**, the Field Army provides the standing forward presence forces, that includes an organic Theater Fires Command (TFC), that serve as the operational-level echelon providing focused opposition toward a specific threat within a distinct area of operations. Capable of commanding multiple Corps, the Field Army prosecutes the campaign by conducting intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB); enabling partners and SOF; deterring adversary aggression; and managing the transition to conflict. With a transition to conflict, the Field Army provides long-range fires to other component commanders against an adversary's long-range systems to **penetrate** and **dis-integrate**, converging capabilities to destroy an adversary's long-range ground fires and integrated air defense systems (IADS). It is the echelon responsible for converging national-level assets and linking sensors to specific shooters. As the Field Army opens windows of opportunity, enabling **exploitation**, utilizing semi-independent maneuver, it continues to converge effects on the adversary's long- and mid-range fires systems. It also provides sustainment support to Corps and below and facilitates the movement of additional forces to support Corps operations. As the Army begins to gain positional advantage over the adversary, the theater moves towards a **return to competition**. At this point in the conflict, the criticality of the Field Army's role in providing sustainment support of the combined joint operations area is immeasurable to sustain combat power to conduct operations that successfully end the conflict on terms favorable to the Alliance. The Field Army provides the bridge between operational and strategic level support to include access to national level capabilities. Field Army assets facilitate this support – providing protection, area-wide security, and maintaining Lines of Communications (LOCs) – while limiting Russia's efforts to target them and disrupt their ability to contribute to the fight.

Corps. During **competition**, the Corps – which is the highest tactical level headquarters within the theater - consists of tailored expeditionary forces. Capable of commanding two or more Divisions and enablers, the Corps serves as the Army force within the joint force and with augmentation has the capability to serve as a joint task force (JTF) headquarters for crisis response and limited contingency operations. The Corps is the echelon that is most capable of adapting to the environment as its modular design allows joint, multinational, and interorganizational augmentation. The presence of a Corps and its subordinate units serves as a deterrent force capable of simultaneously engaging multiple enemy combined arms armies during competition and provides the means to shape the area of responsibility. The presence of the Corps' Operational Fires Command (OFC) enhances the deterrent effect and provides the Corps with the means to defeat an adversary's mid-range fires and IADS, and neutralize their

short-range systems in the event of conflict.⁴ The Corps conducts analysis to converge national, theater, and organic intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) collection to support tactical objectives and create conditions for convergence at lower echelons by allocating resources, sequencing Division maneuver, and incorporating it with deception.

During **penetration** and **dis-integration** the Corps' OFC supports Field Army efforts to open windows of opportunity in the adversary's A2/AD fires system. This creates opportunities for Corps units to conduct operational maneuver to gain positions of advantage against the adversary. Sustainment and protection operations keep the Corps and its units supplied and able to challenge the adversary's advance. As the Corps opens windows of opportunity during **exploitation**, it shifts focus to the defeat of Russia's conventional maneuver forces, the denial of key objectives, and the establishment of positions that give the Alliance an advantage during negotiations to end the conflict, the Corps directs the tactical fight against Russia. The Corps' OFC, supported by the Division Fires Commands (DFCs), continues to conduct operations to neutralize and/or defeat Russian mid and short-range fires. Additionally, the Corps begins integration of the third U.S. Army Division into combat operations and consolidation efforts. With the close fight at a critical juncture, sustainment of the tactical fight is the Corps' highest priority. The Corps and its subordinate units maintain, protect, and secure LOCs with dedicated assets, masked by obscurity and deception operations to ensure their survivability. As the conflict enters into negotiations and a **return to competition**, the Corps' efforts continue to focus on support to the formations in the close fight and consolidation of gains.

Division. Divisions can be part of either forward presence forces or expeditionary forces during **competition**, controlling multiple brigade combat teams (BCTs) and enablers within the theater. They make up the contact, blunt, and surge forces⁵ for a theater. The Division's headquarters enables independent maneuver, conducts expeditionary maneuver, commands multiple BCTs and enabling brigades, and upon transition to conflict defeats opposing forces in the Close Area. The Division trains for the close fight; working with allies to increase combat effectiveness to include interoperability.⁶ While the Field Army and Corps are engaged in the **penetrate** and **dis-integrate** fight, the Division enables independent maneuver, conducts expeditionary maneuver, commands multiple brigade combat teams and enabling brigades, and defeats a shaped adversary army in the Close Area. While not able to converge all five domains against a near peer adversary, the Division can converge aviation, fires, EW, maneuver support, and multi-brigade maneuver to achieve positions of advantage against a Combined Arms Army. The contact force Division consisting of permanent forward presence and rotational combat forces meets the initial

⁴ Unclassified, Army Combined Arms Operations Above Brigade, 2025-2045, Experimental Formation Capability Cards, Mission Command Center of Excellence (MCCOE), 11 October 2018, pages 4, 15, and 17.

⁵ As described in the TP: The *National Defense Strategy* "contact force" is composed of forward presence forces. The "blunt force" is a combination of forward presence forces and early-entry expeditionary forces. The "surge force" is follow-on expeditionary forces that arrive after the outbreak of armed conflict.

⁶ Unclassified, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028*, 6 December 2018, pages 23, 40, and C-6.

Unclassified, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-8, *U.S. Army Concept: Multi-Domain Combined Arms Operations at Echelons Above Brigade 2025-2045, Versatile, Agile, Lethal*, 6 December 2018, page 38.

Unclassified, Army Combined Arms Operations Above Brigade, 2025-2045, Experimental Formation Capability Cards, Mission Command Center of Excellence (MCCOE), 11 October 2018, pages 4, 19, and 21.

forces of an adversary to delay their movement. The contact forces' role is to provide the U.S. with sufficient time (up to 96 hours) to deploy combat elements of the blunt force Division to theater. Together these forces are to halt the advance of adversary forces, preventing them from achieving their strategic objectives. As windows of opportunity open, the Divisions begin **exploitation** to defeat Russian forces in close combat. In addition to providing sustainment and protection support to BCTs and supporting brigades', the Division reinforces the BCTs with the necessary support to ensure success in the conduct of operations. With the withdrawal of Russian forces or start of negotiations, the Divisions direct consolidation efforts of the BCTs to restore borders and assist host nations in the restoration of control.

Recommendations

Based on guidance and direction from the Army's senior leadership, AFC's FCC has and continues to conduct experiments and wargames to explore aspects of the MDO concept and examine the capabilities, formations, and posture needed to execute MDO and win against near peer adversaries. The results of these experiments and wargames have produced a number of findings and recommendations that have incrementally added greater fidelity to the concept and identified additional capabilities to enable the future force. Filling the 17 Large-Scale Combat Operations (LSCO) Gaps is insufficient; there must be a clear path from the present force to the MDO Ready and Capable Forces.⁷ Decisions made to fill these gaps should be within the context of how such a move affects the MDO force, and have a clearly articulated plan to move from the present force, beyond an interim solution, to create and field a force that can execute MDO and win against a near peer adversary.

Major findings and recommendations that require senior leader guidance to set the way forward for the U.S. Army cover a number of areas. **Enabling Capabilities**⁸ recommendations are to develop, resource, and field key enabling capabilities to enable MDO. Recommendations for **Sustainment and Protection** concern development and experimentation with innovative concepts, formations, and technologies to sustain and protect the Joint Force. **Gap** recommendations are to develop solutions that address identified gaps in capability and/or capacity. Findings related to **Structure** focus on the development and fielding of formations that possess those capabilities necessary to deter, and if necessary, defeat near peer threats and provide the Army with the necessary command and control (C2) nodes, and force capacities and capabilities currently non-existent or resident in dispersed formations not capable of supporting the requirements of MDO. **Posture** findings relate to capabilities that should be resident within European Command (EUCOM) to deter Russian aggression and if necessary immediately contest a *fait accompli* campaign. Finally, **Conceptual** findings recommend revising doctrinal definitions, and time and distance planning factors for each echelon in order to adequately express the size and scope of the MDO fight and aid in the planning and conduct of operations by echelon. A detailed list of findings and recommendations can be found in Chapter 9 – Recommendations in the full report. Access to BDP-Russia products is available on classified

⁷ Unclassified//FOUO, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, *CSA Brief*, 30 Nov 2018.

⁸ Unclassified information on enabling capabilities are drawn in whole or part from *BDP-Russia, BDP-R Book 2* which can be accessed at <https://dodtechspace.dtic.smil.mil/dodtechspace/groups/bdp-r-products/content?filterID=contentstatus%5Bpublished%5D~category%5Bbdp-russia-books%5D>

Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC):
<https://dodtechspace.dtic.smil.mil/dodtechspace/groups/bdp-r-products>.

Conclusion

A testament to the overwhelming dominance that the U.S. has achieved over the last thirty years, is the deliberate and leisurely attitude towards the planning, preparation, and conduct of operations of the military. As a result, systems, equipment, and processes continue to be developed and operated with a presumption of the luxury of time that battlefield dominance allows.

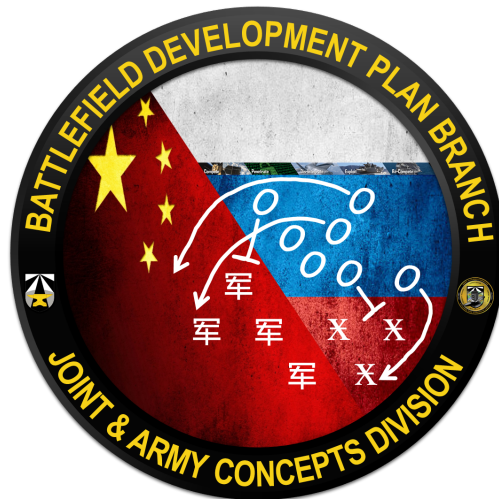
However, during the past decade, the appearance of near peer and regional threats that repeatedly demonstrate novel approaches to operations, threaten to deny or severely degrade our current capabilities and dominance of the physical domains. Threats to the physical domains and expansion to the cyber domain and the electromagnetic spectrum (EMS) have spatially expanded and temporally condensed the battlespace dictating the need for new methods rather than a repackaging of current ideas and thoughts. Additionally, Russia's and Communist China's approaches are forcing the U.S. and its allies to reassess long held views on peace and conflict and adopt a more holistic approach.

The combination of our adversary's ability to deny access and use of areas plus the speed at which operations will occur, create a number of dilemmas. Using MDO, the Army's contribution requires a more agile, flexible, and integrated approach than currently exists. It will require permanent forward stationed forces and the use of rotational and expeditionary forces to deter aggression and if necessary quickly transition to armed conflict. Investments in science and technology as well as equipment and personnel are necessary to improve lethality, survivability, resilience, and speed of operations.

Integrated, resilient, AI-enabled systems required to support the faster tempo of operations will perform no better than today's systems if they are tied to overly bureaucratize planning and targeting processes. Success on the MDO battlefield requires the ability to quickly assess information, configure chains of command, and employ effects meet the compressed timelines of the future battlefield. Operations will utilize a hybrid of deliberate and dynamic processes to converge effects to effect an adversary's systems that enables maneuver warfare vice an attrition fight. Tacit acceptance and continued reliance on current bureaucratic and plodding methods hinders and retards our ability to be responsive and promote new solutions to gain advantage – even if only episodic and temporary.

Access to BDP-Russia products is available on classified DTIC:
<https://dodtechspace.dtic.smil.mil/dodtechspace/groups/bdp-r-products>.

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For additional information on the Multi-Domain Operations Concept and/or the Battlefield Development Plans for Russia and/or China, Contact the
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