



Soldiers assigned to 3rd Platoon, Alpha Battery, 1st Long Range Fires Battalion, 1st Multi-Domain Task Force, fire an M142 High Mobility Rocket System on 2 May 2024 during Exercise Balikatan 24 at Rizal, Philippines. (Photo by Cpl. Kyle Chan, U.S. Marine Corps)

Continuous Transformation Deliberate Transformation

Gen. James E. Rainey, U.S. Army

Reform of an institution as large as our Army is problematic under the best of circumstances ... We may have analyzed ... and made some considerable progress ... But that in no way ensures either that change will occur or that it will be an easy, orderly process.

—Donn Starry, “To Change an Army,” 1983

This is the second article in a three-part series on Army transformation. The first article addressed how the Army can rapidly integrate new technologies, evolving capabilities on multimonth rather than multiyear timelines. This article is on how we drive and manage change in the midterm.

Nothing published in an Army strategy document ever happened unless it was also published in an order. And even what we direct in orders may go undone without tracking and follow-up. But the most draconian staff could not *impose* change on an organization the size and complexity of our Army. Army transformation involves coordinated action across doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P).

Change on that scale involves the entire Army. No one leader below the levels of the secretary and chief of staff can manage it all. The reality is that changing the Army requires winning teammates and building consensus. The question is not how to impose change but how to work together to accomplish it.

A new warfighting concept from Army Futures Command will not move the needle on DOTMLPF-P without Training and Doctrine Command determining how to put it into practice. A requirement document for new equipment is just a piece of paper until the Army headquarters funds the requirement and Army acquisition professionals begin developing the system. We need Army Materiel Command to ensure we get concepts and requirements right, help divest old capabilities, and support fielding and sustainment of new ones. And our best warfighters are in the operational force—Forces Command and the Army Service component commands. If they are not at the center of the process, what we give them will not be what they need.

This requires people to work across organizational boundaries and solve problems together. Transformation is not a relay race. We do not hand the baton from concept writer to requirement developer to organization designer and technology developer. Soldiers, scientists, engineers, acquisition, testing, contracting, and other professionals are working together throughout. Without that, plans laid in one stage will not be executable in later stages, and changes made in later stages will undermine earlier intent and parallel efforts. Who is in lead and who is in support changes, but no one organization truly *owns* any part of the pipeline. Managing change in a busy Army with multiple organizations working together to coordinate changes across DOTMLPF-P must be a deliberate effort. It starts with defining the objective.

Defining the Objective

The way to achieve any goal is to make it specific, give it a deadline, and tell people how you will measure success. The Army's stated transformation objective for the period of two to seven years—the time frame for defense budget planning—is delivering Army 2030.¹ So, what is Army 2030, and how will we know when we have delivered it?

Army 2030 is a force optimized to win in large-scale combat in a multidomain operations environment.² It is a realistic goal, based on a clear-eyed assessment of what the Army can accomplish within available resources, with technology we are confident we can field by that time. This requires not only delivery of signature modernization efforts but also concerted effort across DOTMLPF-P.

For large-scale combat, our divisions need division-level artillery, engineer, and other capabilities.³ We can address this by consolidating assets currently in brigade combat teams into division-level formations. This has the added benefit of unburdening those brigades. Moving complexity up to the division echelon frees brigade commanders and their staffs to focus on maneuver. But we must also give divisions new assets, such as air defense battalions.

While brigades and divisions focus on ground maneuver, corps headquarters must converge land, sea, air, space, and cyber capabilities. These corps must be staffed, trained, and equipped to synthesize vast amounts of data from multiple sources, integrating Army sensors, shooters, and sustainment systems with those of other military services and coalition partners.

Managing large-scale combat operations involving multiple corps

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and many nations requires a headquarters to serve as a combined/joint land component command. U.S. Army Pacific and U.S. Army Europe and Africa must have the assets to do this. That includes new, theater-controlled intelligence brigades, fires elements, security force assistance brigades, and multidomain task forces with the staff, training, and equipment to manage them.

We can say we have delivered Army 2030 when we have organized the right people into the new or transformed formations, equipped them, trained them, and validated that they can perform their wartime missions. Some of those formations we are building from scratch, like mobile protected firepower (MPF) battalions and additional multidomain task forces. Others, such as division artillery brigades, require mostly reorganization of existing units.

Turning Decisions into Action

The U.S. Army knows how to stand up or reorganize a formation and make it ready for war—no army in the world does it better. But the systems we use to do that do not kick into action until we formally allocate resources—people, equipment, and funds, including for sustainment, facilities, and training. The real work does

Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Randy A. George receives a demonstration on 18 March 2024 of next generation command-and-control system human-machine integration capabilities from a 1st Infantry Division officer during Project Convergence–Capstone 4 at Fort Irwin, California. Deliberate transformation focuses on developing program objective memoranda and Total Army Analysis to inform how the Army will leverage new systems, including by ensuring integration across DOTMLPF-P. (Photo by Sgt. Brahim Douglas, U.S. Army)

not begin until resources move in the Army Structure Memorandum (ARSTRUC) and the Program Objective Memorandum (POM).⁴

Making big changes in the ARSTRUC and POM can be an uphill climb. In practice, the decision to stand-up or reorganize a formation is not one decision. It is a set of interrelated decisions, made in separate forums, about resources that are managed in separate portfolios. Which units will lose personnel authorizations when others gain them? Where will the formations be stationed, and how will we provide their barracks and other facilities? Will we invest to accelerate procurement of the new equipment? What will we allocate for our maintenance enterprise to sustain it? How will we pay for fuel, ammunition, and other training expenses?



To turn decisions into timely action, the Army must do five things. First, as we have done with Army 2030, set the objective. Second, as we will explain below, focus on the formations, which are the true source of battle-field capability. Third, account for all the DOTMLPF-P costs associated with creating or changing those formations. Fourth, present Army senior leaders with options explicitly framed in terms of the costs, benefits, and risks. Finally, ensure decisions are unambiguous, clearly communicated, and aggressively executed.

Focus on the Formations

Equipment is not, by itself, capability. A capability is the ability to do something on the battlefield.⁵ This requires having people organized, trained, and equipped to do it. In other words, it requires a combat-ready formation. Fielding a new capability always requires action across multiple elements of DOTMLPF-P. Often, it involves all of them.

It was about six years from approval of the initial capabilities document for MPF to the award of a contract for initial production of what would become the M10 Booker armored combat vehicle.⁶ In the beginning, the

Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 263rd Air Defense Artillery, 678th Air Defense Artillery Brigade, 263rd Army Air and Missile Defense Command, South Carolina Army National Guard, conduct short range air defense training 25 April 2024 at McCrady Training Center, Eastover, South Carolina. Soldiers, scientists, engineers, acquisition, testing, contracting, and other professionals all work together throughout the process of deliberate transformation. (Photo by Sgt. Tim Andrews, U.S. Army National Guard)

Army had plenty of time to decide whether to field the system in companies or battalions, where to station those units, and what occupational specialties would crew the vehicles. Nevertheless, on approach to fielding, we found ourselves racing to answer those questions and allocate resources. The tortoise nearly caught the hare. Some even thought we should slow the fielding. The answer was not to slow down delivery of the materiel. It was to speed up the rest of DOTMLPF-P.

In the future, nothing would prevent the Army from making those decisions in the same forums where we make decisions about equipment. We viewed MPF as a materiel solution with DOTMLPF-P implications, which were to be handled by separate Army processes.

If, instead, we had viewed it as a DOTMLPF-P solution with a materiel solution component, it would have been harder to neglect the big picture. Focusing on the formation accomplishes that. When we ask how to make the formation that fights with the new equipment ready for war, the full DOTMLPF-P picture immediately comes into view.

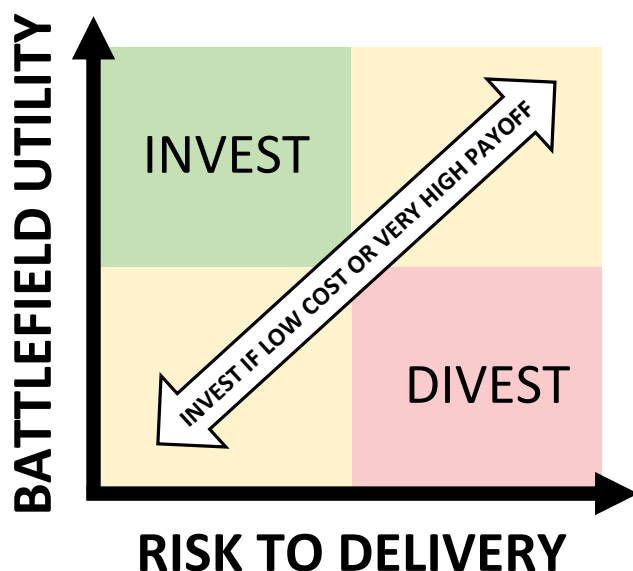
Show the Fully Burdened Cost

The Army is conscientious about forecasting the cost to develop and procure new materiel. We do this less well for the associated DOTMLPF-P. Battalions equipped with the M10 Booker need maintenance and training facilities. These do not yet exist everywhere they could be stationed. Since construction costs could vary widely depending on the station, we were understandably reluctant to budget for MPF facilities prior to an official stationing decision. Thus, for a time, there was no provision for this in the Army's budget plan for the two-to-seven-year time frame. This was a solvable problem. But there have been similar examples across DOTMLPF-P for many capabilities in the Army's transformation pipeline, and the unseen costs can add up.

Today, thanks to hard work by people in the Army headquarters, Training and Doctrine Command, and other organizations, we understand the costs associated with Army 2030. Going forward, we will make these costs visible to Army senior leaders earlier. Knowing the fully burdened costs of a capability early smooths implementation. But it should also be part of the cost-benefit calculus when we choose which capabilities to pursue in the first place.

Present Costs, Benefits, and Risk

Army resources are finite. To invest in one opportunity, we must forgo another. So, we should frame investment options explicitly in terms of their full DOTMLPF-P cost, the battlefield utility of the capability, and the risk that we fail to deliver. On the one hand, if a new capability has great potential but will require costly research and development, and we will also struggle to recruit and train enough soldiers for the formations, those resources might do more for the Army elsewhere. On the other hand, if a capability is a moon shot, but it could be game-changing and the cost of taking that shot is low, why not try (see the figure)?



(Figure by author)

Figure. Cost-Benefit

Most of the Army's signature modernization efforts do not, by themselves, fit neatly into either category. In 2017, the Army set out to develop systems we knew we needed and could realistically deliver.⁷ Today, a few have been responsibly off-ramped, but most are succeeding, which means they will eventually compete with one another and with other Army priorities for procurement dollars. However, considering every DOTMLPF-P change necessary to deliver the capability, and its battlefield utility given our updated assessment of the future operational environment, some capabilities will stand out.

Assessing the full DOTMLPF-P cost of a new formation with new equipment, the utility of that formation in different scenarios, and the risk if we fail to field it is both science and art. But it can be done. There will be disagreement about planning assumptions. Nevertheless, presenting information in that cost-benefit frame focuses the dialog on the right questions. Staff will know what information decision-makers need before they ask for it, and the Army will be better prepared for discussions with industry and Congress.

Undeciding

Force structure and budget are arenas of continuous competition for the Army's branches and parts of

the Army bureaucracy. For example, the infantry and armor communities take an understandable interest in decisions affecting infantry and armor people, organizations, or equipment. The Army's many headquarters—and even different parts of the same headquarters—have different priorities, based on their unique perspectives and areas of responsibility. Different communities view themselves as custodians of important institutional imperatives. Sometimes this leads them to work at cross-purposes.

When the Army makes a hard decision about force structure or modernization, it must be documented and unambiguous. Rarely can a decision be implemented without cooperation among midlevel people in different organizations and staff directorates. If a decision appears tentative, some will simply take no action. If it is unclear, some will act according to their own, best-case interpretation. This is *undeciding*. People are usually acting in good faith—they do not always know they are undeciding. But the result is a time-wasting delay and relitigation of decisions already made.

Putting It All Together

Given the size and complexity of the Army, that transformation is executable at all is a testament to incredible Army people and sound Army processes. Once unleashed, our transformation machine will execute. We should not wait for the publication of an annual document to start necessary movement. We should do the opposite—take Army senior leaders' intent and move fast. But the decisive point for changing the Army at scale is fully capturing the plan in the ARSTRUC and the POM. We are doing that by defining the objective; focusing on the formations holistically; accounting for all the DOTMLPF-P costs; framing options in terms of the costs, benefits, and risks; and then ensuring Army senior leader decisions are clearly understood by all who have a role in implementation.

This is how the Army will succeed in *deliberate transformation*, making changes across DOTMLPF-P to turn the Army we have into the one we need in the midterm. How we set the course for longer-term transformation is the subject of the final article, *concept-driven transformation*. ■

Notes

Epigraph. Donn Starry, "To Change an Army," *Military Review* 63, no. 3 (March 1983): 21–27, <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p124201coll1/id/292/rec/5>.

1. *To Receive Testimony on the Posture of the Department of the Army in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2024 and the Future Years Defense Program Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services*, 118th Cong. (30 March 2023) (statements of Christine Wormuth, Secretary of the Army, and James McConville, Chief of Staff of the Army), 7, <https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/hearings/to-receive-testimony-on-the-posture-of-the-department-of-the-army-in-review-of-the-defense-authorization-request-for-fiscal-year-2024-and-the-future-years-defense-program>.

2. U.S. Army, "Army of 2030," Army.mil, 5 October 2022, https://www.army.mil/article/260799/army_of_2030.

3. James Rainey and Laura Potter, "Delivering the Army of 2030," *War on the Rocks*, 6 August 2023, <https://warontherocks.com/2023/08/delivering-the-army-of-2030/>.

4. Louis Yuengert, ed., *How the Army Runs: A Senior Leader Reference Handbook* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 2021), 3–29, 8–33, https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021-2022_H TAR.pdf.

5. J-8/Joint Capabilities Division, *Manual for the Operation of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, 30 October 2021), GL-15, <https://www.dau.edu/sites/default/files/2024-01/Manual%20-%20JCIDS%20Oct%202021.pdf>. This manual defines capability as the "ability to complete a task or execute a course of action under specified conditions and level of performance."

6. The Initial Capabilities Document for Mobile Protected Firepower was approved 18 August 2016, though it had been in Army staffing since 2013. The Capability Development Document was approved 4 June 2018. The contract for low-rate initial production was awarded 28 June 2022. It is projected to begin fielding in 2025.

7. Mark A. Milley and Ryan McCarthy, memorandum, "Modernization Priorities for the United States Army," 3 October 2017, 1–2, <https://sdc.mit.edu/sites/default/files/documents/Army%20Modernization%20Priorities.pdf>.