

The Army of 2040

An Extension of the 2030 Goals

by Major Roye Locklear, Jr., U.S. Army National Guard



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Major Roye Locklear, Jr., currently serves as an Active Guard Reserve Soldier with the Florida Army National Guard. He has over 30 years of military service; he served as an enlisted Soldier for the first 18 years, attaining the rank of Sergeant First Class. He currently serves as the Battalion Executive Officer/Administrative Officer for the 927th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion. His previous full-time assignments include Resource Manager for the Florida National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion and Operations Officer for the Florida Counterdrug Program. He has commanded twice at the company level and has served as a Battalion Operations Officer (S-3) in a Brigade Support Battalion. His deployments include two tours to Afghanistan in support of *Operation Enduring Freedom* in 2005 and 2010. Additionally, he served as the Head Coach for the U.S. Army Men's Soccer Team from 2010–2018.

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Inquiries regarding this and future Land Warfare Papers should be directed to: Nzinga A. Curry, Director, Education & Programs, 2425 Wilson Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22201, email ncurry@ausa.org or telephone 703-907-2636.

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In Brief

- An annual evaluation of all requirements and capabilities is necessary to remain on track for the Army of 2040.
- As the Army currently marches toward 2030, lessons learned must be prioritized and applied where relevant.
- The Army of 2040 will be much more information-driven, enabled by artificial intelligence and more dispersed and disaggregated than our current Army.

The Army of 2040: An Extension of the 2030 Goals

Introduction

The U.S. Army is currently experiencing a challenging period, highlighted by potential shifts in the global balance of military capabilities, emerging technologies, increased threats to the U.S. homeland and other issues that impose new demands on the nation's premier land force. China and Russia continue to challenge the rules-based international order. Aimed at supplanting the United States in its role as the world's dominant military, both have become more assertive as they seek to advance their own global agendas. Defense leaders suggest that, by 2040, both countries will have positioned the instruments of their national power to undermine the global national security interests of the United States. The development and growth of the Army of 2040 must be manned, trained and equipped and must lead with a focus on readiness to conduct large-scale combat operations (LSCO). These types of operations are inherently joint in terms of scope and size of the forces committed, and they entail high tempo, high resource consumption and generally high casualty rates. Additionally, large scale combat introduces levels of complexity, lethality, ambiguity and speed to military activities not common in other operations.¹

To meet the evolving threat and to achieve readiness levels required to operate successfully in LSCO, the Army is undergoing a once-in-a-generation transformation to develop the capability to converge effects on land, in the air, sea, space and cyberspace. This transformation will enhance the joint force with the range, speed and convergence of cutting-edge technologies that will be needed to win on the future battlefield. This transformation will be highlighted by a new operational concept, reorganization of our forces, continued investment in our people, the development of new equipment and the adoption of new concepts on how to fight that allow the Army to maintain superiority over any potential adversary.² The commitment to transform today to meet challenges of tomorrow will ensure that America remains capable of assuring peace through strength, even in the face of our determined and capable great-power competitors.

Designing the Army of 2040

The current strategic environment is ever more concerning in that the United States faces an increasingly lethal and disruptive battlefield, across multiple domains and conducted at speed and reach—from close combat, throughout overseas theaters and reaching to our homeland. Joint-All Domain Operations (JADO) is the DoD concept that is being implemented to address the need for jointness across all services. JADO asserts that prevailing in the next war will require rapidly integrating effects across all domains—land, sea, air, space and cyberspace—to present adversaries with multiple dilemmas.³ The Army's contribution to JADO is Multi-Domain Operations (MDO).

According to U.S Army Training and Doctrine Command, MDO is defined as the rapid and continuous integration of all domains of warfare.⁴ As part of the joint force, the Army seeks to counter and defeat a near-peer adversary capable of contesting the United States in all domains in both competition and armed conflict. Field Manual 3-0, *Operations*, further defines MDO as “the combined arms deployment of joint and Army capabilities to create and exploit relative advantages that achieve objectives, defeat enemy forces, and consolidate gains on behalf of joint force commanders.”⁵ MDO provides combatant commanders with a variety of options for rapidly executing operations across all domains to present the enemy with multiple dilemmas. In addition to positioning itself to dominate a land fight, the Army must leverage its landpower to make impacts across each of the domains. By the time the Army of 2040 achieves full operational capability, the current version of MDO will be remembered as merely a step in the evolutionary process of operations doctrine. Army forces will continue to incorporate lessons learned from experimentation, training and operations. Technology will continue to increase the agility, convergence, endurance and depth that MDO seeks to achieve, and doctrine will continue to adapt to the capabilities of Army forces.⁶ The Army's idea for MDO is to prevail by competing successfully in all domains short of conflict, thereby deterring a potential enemy.

The Multi-Domain Task Forces (MDTFs) are the organizational centerpiece in the Army's operationalization of MDO for the Army of 2040. MDTFs are theater-level, multi-domain maneuver elements that synchronize long-range precision effects (LRPE)—such as electronic warfare, space, cyber and information—with long-range precision fires (LRPF). MDTFs integrate these capabilities under one commander while the unit's components conduct distributed operations to enhance survivability. The role of the MDTFs is to persistently compete to gain positions of advantage that it can leverage in crisis or conflict. By integrating non-kinetic effects and kinetic fires across all domains, MDTFs provide combatant commanders with an enhanced menu of counter-antiaccess/area denial capabilities.

The Army of 2040 will operate with the division designated as the decisive unit of action in large-scale combat. It will serve as the principal tactical warfighting formation during LSCO, with its primary function being a tactical headquarters commanding brigades. After two decades of focusing on brigades rotating in and out of Iraq and Afghanistan, the Army is shifting its organizational focus to larger formations that are more capable of working with sister services, allies and partners around the globe. Theater armies, corps and divisions will gain the personnel, organizations and equipment that they need to disrupt and defeat an adversary's ability to achieve their objectives. This will enable front-line leaders to concentrate on the close fight; division and corps commanders will have the responsibility to visualize the larger picture. When not committed for a specific operation, the division's mission will be to sustain readiness to prevail in future LSCO engagements.

The Army Reserve and National Guard

Citizen Soldiers of the Army Reserve will continue to contribute to the Army of 2040 by adding value and depth to the force, by way of the expertise and skills they bring to the table acquired through their careers in the private sector. These doctors, lawyers, engineers, cyber specialists and first responders will enable the Army Reserve to continue to provide sustainment and enabling forces to quartermaster and medical formations, petroleum distribution, water purification, port openings and railroad operations. Modernization efforts are central to the Army Reserve's ability to support the Army of 2040 as a multi-domain capable force. The Army Reserve Mission Force, or ARM Force, compliments the Army's Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model (ReARMM). Both models align units against competition requirements, providing predictable mission cycles that allow for training and modernization.⁷ With its dual-purpose capabilities, the Army Reserve will provide the Army of 2040 with a federal response partner that is postured to support Defense Support of Civil Authorities disaster response efforts during times of domestic emergencies and natural disasters.

Meeting shared challenges and potential threats across the globe will continue to be a defense priority for the Army of 2040. Strengthening and evolving our alliances and partnerships helps to solidify a strong national defense. The National Guard will continue to contribute to this effort through its innovative and cost-effective security cooperation program known as the State Partnership Program (SPP). Through the SPP, the National Guard conducts military-to-military engagements in support of defense security goals while also leveraging whole-of-society relationships and capabilities to facilitate interagency engagements spanning military, governmental, economic and social spheres. Additionally, as the primary combat arms of the reserve component of the Army, the National Guard will continue to provide trained and ready forces to fulfill all combatant commanders' and governors' requirements across the full spectrum of change, competition, conflict and crisis in order to defend the nation.

Enhancing The Army's Arctic Strategy

The Army of 2040 must possess the capabilities and resources to operate successfully in the Arctic region. The United States seeks a stable Arctic region whereby adherence to internationally agreed upon rules and norms is universal. Russia and China, long identified as rivals in the new era of great-power competition, will pursue military and economic advantages to gain a foothold in the region at the expense of the United States. Russia seeks to consolidate sovereign claims and to control access to the region by reconstituting its military posture in the Arctic. China aims to gain access to Arctic resources and sea routes to secure and bolster its military, economic and scientific ambitions. Army forces of 2040 must be able to rapidly deploy from capable power projection platforms ready to fight on a moment's notice and win in any environment, including this Arctic region. The Army will regain cold-weather and high-altitude dominance by adapting how it generates, postures, trains and equips its forces to execute extended MDO in extreme conditions. Restoring dominance mandates an inherently multi-component approach with significant contributions from the Army Reserve and National Guard.⁸

Sustaining the Army of 2040

At U.S. Army Materiel Command (AMC), the availability of supplies and equipment readiness will continue to be critical to the success of units in battle. They are the foundation of materiel readiness, ensuring that Soldiers and units have the right equipment, parts and

materiel to achieve their mission, at any time and in any place. Sustainment in the Army of 2040 will continue to determine the depth and duration of Army operations. Successful sustainment enables freedom of action by increasing the number and quality of options available to the commander; it will remain as a key enabler to retaining and exploiting the initiative. LSCO will test the Army's ability to sustain forces in various operational environments across multiple domains. These types of operations will require greater sustainment due to their higher operational tempo, greater lethality and significantly increased consumption rates of supplies and equipment. Requirements for mortuary affairs (due to the increased likelihood of mass casualties), the need for robust medical capabilities and infrastructure, and large-scale personnel and equipment replacements will be stressed by the nature of LSCO. Enhanced speed and precision to deliver at the point of need will impact success in these types of operations. The reorganization of several key strategic support areas within AMC will enable successful sustainment efforts for the Army of 2040.

Industrial Base Readiness

The majority of weapon systems and gear used by the Army are built by the commercial industrial base. The Army's internal organic industrial base (OIB) is a collection of depots, arsenals, shipyards and ammunition plants that repair and maintain military weapon systems and equipment. All serve as vital links in the national defense structure, providing manufacturing, maintenance, supply and technical support services for the joint services and our allies. The Army and the commercial industrial base must continue to resource existing partnerships and must seek opportunities to collaborate on new ones to improve sustainment capabilities for the Army of 2040. The Army of 2040 in the era of great-power competition will require the OIB to evolve to maintain relevance and to build future readiness while gaining efficiencies. Furthermore, the OIB must continue to receive resources at optimal levels in order to provide the support as needed. The Army must continue to make deliberate efforts in the program objective memorandum cycles to increase funding for both government-operated and contractor-operated facilities.

Installation Readiness

Installation readiness is an essential element for projecting combat power and will remain an important platform for building and sustaining readiness for the Army of 2040. Our installations must continue to support all missions, both within the United States and overseas, by enabling training and deployment to supporting mobilization and civil authorities.⁹ From on-post housing for Soldiers and their families to airfields, railheads and motor pools, installation readiness must remain focused on the facilities and infrastructure that enable the Army to remain at high levels of deployability. "We must modernize our installations for high volume rapid mobilizations and deployments. We must provide world-class training venues for current and future forces, and the weapons that are being developed for the future," said General Gus Perna, former commander, AMC.¹⁰ Future Army installations will be challenged by increasing urbanization and by expanded missions at an increased pace and with reduced resources. Our adversaries are aware of the installations where we generate and deploy combat power. They are also keenly aware of our vulnerabilities and know the impacts if they are able to attack. The Army of 2040 must be supported by an installation management enterprise that has the necessary capabilities to be effective in a complex, unknown and constantly changing strategic environment.

Logistics Information Readiness

Information drives all decisionmaking, on and off the battlefield. Data that is visible, accessible, understandable and trusted enables commanders and leaders to develop and carry out the most effective courses of action. The Army of 2040 will be the recipient of three new data transport programs that comprise the Sustainment Transport System (STS): STS Satellite Communications (SATCOM), STS Line-of-Sight and STS Wireless-Fidelity (Wi-Fi). These new systems will improve logistics data exchange through enhancements in network security, capacity, resiliency, range and mobility. “The STS will enable our Soldiers to access critical sustainment tools that ensure that our forces always possess the supplies, personnel, medical and force protection when and where they need it, in any future fight, against any adversary.”¹¹ Additionally, they will enable global data exchange between many of the Army’s primary logistics systems, to include Enterprise Resource Planning, Global Combat Support System-Army, Integrated Personnel and Pay System-Army, Medical Communication for Combat Casualty Care and the General Fund Enterprise Business System.

Modernizing the Army of 2040

Since 2017, when the Army announced its initiative to update its forces and equipment with improved capabilities, it has prioritized six broad areas of capability needs, established and assigned within eight cross-functional teams, to oversee how these needs would be addressed, and it has established Army Futures Command as the focal point for modernization efforts. These six modernization efforts are focused on the following areas:

- **Long-Range Precision Fires:** The goal of this priority is to deliver cutting-edge, surface-to-surface fires systems that will significantly increase range and effects over currently fielded U.S. and adversary systems.
- **Air and Missile Defense:** In an effort to retain the ability to defeat the full range of air and missile threats, this priority seeks to rapidly integrate and synchronize the requirements and acquisition processes to deliver capabilities to the warfighter faster.
- **Future Vertical Lift:** Leaders are committed to the development of critical combat systems, ensuring that Army aviation maintains vertical lift dominance over enemy forces.
- **The Network:** The men and women working on improving network capabilities are responsible for enabling Army formations to reliably communicate anytime, anywhere and in all domains.
- **Next-Generation Combat Vehicles:** The mission of this priority is to address maneuver capability gaps by developing requirements for the Army’s next fleet of combat vehicles.
- **Soldier Lethality:** Researchers working on this priority seek to address combat capabilities required to achieve and sustain overmatch against enemy forces with a strategic focus on the fundamentals of shooting, moving and mobility, communications and protection.

These efforts have positioned the Army to deliver several key capabilities in Fiscal Year 2023. Hypersonic missiles, part of the long-range precision fires priority, are on track to be fielded, as is the Precision Strike Missile, which has a range of 500 kilometers. The Sig Sauer XM5 will replace the M4 carbine, and the XM250 will begin replacing the M249 SAW in 2023. Other systems include both autonomous and crewed vehicles, such as the Robotic Combat Vehicle, an unmanned sidekick for other combat vehicles, and the Mobile Protective Firepower, the Army’s new light tank. At the conclusion of 2023, Soldiers will have at their disposal 24

new weapon systems and other prototypes—or fully operational equipment.¹² From the actual Soldier to the weapons they carry to the missiles that fly overhead, the Army is rapidly transforming into a more lethal force.

ReARMM

Lieutenant General Leopoldo Quintas, formerly the Deputy Commanding General of U.S. Army Forces Command, once described the challenge of readiness and modernization as follows:

Army units operate in an environment of unpredictability, and arguably even instability. Units are placed on rotational missions based on their availability, and these missions vary in location, length, manning, readiness requirements and equipment just to name a few. Modernization today occurs when we can find a window to fit it in, or simultaneous with other activities. Every week, month and year is filled with constant change and high tempo for soldiers. Our soldiers and families can deal with a lot of tempo, but unpredictability results in an incredible amount of stress on the force.¹³

The Army's new force generation model, ReARMM, was designed to better balance the operational tempo by identifying dedicated periods for conducting missions, training and modernization. ReARMM will posture the Army of 2040 to support national security objectives by establishing habitual relationships to specific missions and theaters and to create a predictable environment to support modernization, maintain increased levels of readiness and modernize into a multi-domain capable force—all while maximizing talent management.

Transforming the Army of 2040 by Investing in People

People will continue to be the Army's greatest strength and its most important weapon system. Understanding people's individual talents allows us to build teams of commanders, executives, advisors and technical experts that have a wider diversity of talents to better enable commanders and leaders to understand complex and vague problems. Whether Regular Army, Guard, Reserve, families, Department of the Army Civilians, veterans or retirees, the Army will continue to invest in its most precious resource. The Army of 2040 will be a recipient of the Army's 21st century talent management approach, which will be grounded in a shift from simply "distributing personnel" to more deliberately managing the talents of our Soldiers and civilians. This requires a system with policies, programs and processes that recognize and capitalize on the unique knowledge, skills and behaviors possessed by every member of the Army team, allowing it to employ each to maximum effect.¹⁴

Integrated Personnel and Pay System Army

The Integrated Personnel and Pay System Army (IPPS-A) will be a seasoned human resources platform in its support to the Army of 2040. It will enable commanders and leaders to better manage the unique talents of Soldiers across the Total Force by enhancing decision-making and search-and-match capabilities. It will also continue to support the Army's talent management initiative and remain competitive for our nation's best talent. Leaders in the Army of 2040 will have the ability to leverage the "real-time" data in IPPS-A to seek out Soldiers with skill sets required to complete their unit's unique mission sets.

Command Assessment Program

The Army's Command Assessment Program (CAP) will continue to provide qualified leaders and to ensure that the most talented Soldiers are selected for command and other key assignments in the Army of 2040. As of the date of this writing, CAP currently consists of the following programs:

- the Colonels Command Assessment Program;
- the Battalion Commander Assessment Program;
- the Acquisition Leader Assessment Program;
- the Medical Command Assessment Program;
- the Colonel & Division Chaplain Assessment Program; and
- the Sergeant Major Assessment Program.

Originally designed by the Army's Talent Management Task Force, these assessment programs were implemented to address the challenge of selecting the best officers and NCOs to command battalion- and brigade-sized formations. Executed properly in the coming years, these programs will have significant impacts on the Army of 2040. First, they greatly assist in identifying toxic leaders and prevent them from consideration for key billets. Second, they will identify those officers and NCOs most deserving of command—who, for whatever reason(s), did not fare well on selection board results—to be presented with opportunities to command. Third, it will send a message across the force that the values and skillsets required for tomorrow's strategic leaders will be afforded the highest levels of consideration.

Positive Command Climates

In 2022, Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth identified six objectives to help guide the force through the inflection point it currently faces. Her fourth objective outlined her intent to build positive command climates at scale across all Army formations; the fifth was aimed at reducing harmful behaviors in our Army.¹⁵ As a result of an enormous commitment in resources and education, the command climates across the Army of 2040 should favor more positively in all metrics. Positive organizational climates require persistent care, dedicated focus efforts and maintenance. Current discussions and recommendations aimed at improving command climates include the development of a "people metric" that would serve as a tool for future commanders; the incorporation of a mission-essential condition designed to build cohesive teams; and an in-depth review of command climate assessments and how they are used. Other suggestions have indicated that the Army should consider discussing command climate results in officer and NCO evaluations as a mechanism for driving behavioral change and for holding leaders accountable.

One of the most important takeaways is that the military must raise the bar for its leadership. Military commanders must be capable of achieving success in warfighting while fostering a climate that is consistent with Army values of respect and esprit de corps, leaving no Soldier behind, whether on the battlefield or in garrison. Sexual assault and sexual harassment, a form of bullying, is fratricide. A climate of zero tolerance must be driven deep into the ranks. An additional takeaway is that the Army must continue to synchronize installation efforts to achieve effects that improve readiness and that help prevent deaths by suicide. The fundamentals to achieve suicide prevention are engaged leadership and honest concern by leaders for Soldiers, their families and Army civilians.

Conclusion

The Army is four years into its largest transformational change in over forty years, modernizing and building a multi-domain-capable force that delivers speed, range and convergence of emerging technologies. Modernization is part of transformation, but modernizing without transforming could leave the service well equipped but short on critical resources. To be clear, the Army will never be “done” modernizing. As we deliver Army 2030, Army 2040 and beyond, we are laying the foundation to persistently modernize in response to emerging technologies, evolving challenges and our adversaries’ actions. Doing so will allow us to remain out in front of near-peer adversaries, such as China and Russia. The Army of 2040 will benefit from the current ongoing modernization efforts that seek to change how we fight, what we fight with and who we are as a force.

Notes

- ¹ Department of the Army (DA), Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, August 2022), 11-12.
- ² DA, *CSA Paper #1: Army Multi-Domain Transformation, Ready to Win in Competition and Conflict*, 16 March 2021, <https://api.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/2021/03/23/eeac3d01/20210319-csa-paper-1-signed-print-version.pdf>.
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2425 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

703.841.4300 ★ www.ausa.org