

2025

Defining Force 2025



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While the Army of 2020 takes shape and we gain more fidelity on budget impacts and manning cuts, the Army is being required to meet the same responsibilities and conduct the same mission with fewer resources. One way we do that is through increased efficiencies and effectiveness in science and technology. However many of those breakthroughs are 20 or 30 years in the future. The CSA asked us to focus on 2025 as an intermediate objective for attaining improvements in the near term is the intent of Force 2025. The big idea for Force 2025 is to move towards the right mix of expeditionary capability that enables the most effective application of Strategic Landpower.

As a foundational concept, Strategic Landpower resonates with the defense and policy communities and is informing how we talk about landpower for the future. It clearly articulates how landpower supports national security and supports national influence and engagement strategies. To meet the security and engagement requirements of Strategic Landpower requires significant changes to Army force design, our science and technology focus, and our force employment decisions. We must look beyond the next POM cycle and apply our considerable intellectual resources deeper into the future.

The TRADOC effort to frame the Strategic Landpower concept has been an informative process for Army leaders. It has exposed weaknesses in our training, development, and organizations that were a result of the continuous deployment of forces focused on counter-insurgency the last 10 years. Science and technology efforts were consumed with meeting the unique needs of Iraq and Afghanistan, which were mostly short term requirements. The Army became a counterinsurgency, wide area security focused force. Iraq and Afghanistan were our battle labs and we lost our long term over the horizon focus as we concentrated on the close fight. The Army became out of balance with the long term national security requirements demanded of it.

Over the last few years the Army has devoted a significant amount of resources into exercises and experiments to better understand those future requirements. Army 2020 was the result. It re-shaped our force structure into a smaller force with more balanced capability, bringing the Army back from a counter-insurgency focused force to one better capable of fighting across the range of military operations. Our next evolution must look deeper, to span the period between Army 2020 and the Army enabled by technological innovation we expect by 2040.

Force 2025 is that next step. It answers the call from our leaders to get our head out of the sand, to stop looking at 50m targets and establish bench mark goals to guide our development and innovation. The Strategic Landpower operational concept provides a framework for those developments as we work to the way-point of 2025. It is the means for the Army to operationalize Strategic Landpower through regional engagement and increased expeditionary capability.

Force 2025 is composed of two main ideas. The first idea is to clearly outline future capability requirements to inform focused investment in science and technology. The second idea implements Force 2025 Maneuvers as a broad means to rapidly test, evaluate, and field new equipment for units in to the field. Force 2025 integrates recent science and technology developments to build a more expeditionary force in the midterm, buying time for scientific breakthroughs in 2030 and beyond.

Determining the appropriate capabilities for our Army requires a relatively good general understanding of the future operational environment. Since the Army has a weak track record of accurately predicting the next fight, the future operational environment does not focus on a single threat but rather predicts an overall environment based on broad trends. This allows developers to outline certain capability requirements that are more along the lines of a multi-tool instead of a bayonet. By taking a detailed look into our experiences over the last decade and combining with them capabilities the Army requires for the entire range of military operations our leaders are building an important and relevant blueprint for the future force.

That blueprint should shape the application of science and technology towards building a leaner and more expeditionary army. Force 2025 must use fewer resources

to get the same or better capabilities into the fight and then stay there longer. It must be a force that is as lethal and well protected as our current force, but more mobile and sustainable. Force 2025 needs the network capacity to operate in austere environments and the right leaders and Soldiers to bring these capabilities together to deter conflict and win wars. The Army will require the support of industry and the Defense Department to get us there.

Force 2025 requires a means to transition concepts and ideas into reality. The end of wars in Iraq and Afghanistan mean the loss of the battle labs we used for 10 years. What we have remaining is a limited Army experimentation capability focused at Centers of Excellence (CoE) battle labs and the Network Integrated Experiment (NIE). Participation in the process by Soldiers and leaders is narrow and limited to a few units, which allows for only a fraction of our talented human capital to contribute intellectually to what should be an Army wide effort.

Force 2025 Maneuvers broaden the framework scope and the means to conduct testing of concepts and fielding of solutions. They provide a venue to conduct “best fit” testing and evaluation of capabilities. Force 2025 Maneuvers, similar to the Louisiana Maneuvers of 1940, will encompass a series of exercises and experimentation events focused on Force 2025 requirements. This process begins with a transition of the Brigade Modernization Command’s (BMC) current Network Integrated Experiment (NIE) to Force 2025 Maneuvers. It will incorporate CoE Battle labs, Wargames, CTC rotations, and major objective experiments into a coordinated series of events that enable more rapid development, testing, and fielding of future capabilities.

Force 2025 Maneuvers will not be the same as 4th ID testing the Army’s Force XXI concept in 1998. It won’t use a single test unit where training is driven by the concept developer instead of unit commanders. The test venue will be dictated by the type or size of unit and capability being evaluated. By utilizing a range of venues from the Brigade Modernization Command at Fort Bliss to Wargame exercises held at Carlisle Barracks the Army can capitalize on existing training. A new-look on how we test, evaluate, and field is necessary to retain overmatch and meet the challenges we

anticipate in 2025. This is the change Force 2025 Maneuvers brings, a more effective method to build the Army.

Force 2025 provides an opportunity to maximize the use of the Army's diminishing resources. It allows the Army to check its work, make adjustments if required, but more importantly put the right mix of capabilities into the force as soon as possible. The concept of Strategic Landpower demands an expeditionary force, on-call and engaged for the next fight. Force 2025 gives our Army that mix of capabilities to be regionally engaged and if required decisively win on the battlefield, answering the nations call. 🌟