

Major General B. B. Bell
Commanding General
U.S. Army Armor Center



Getting There From Here: The Mechanized Force Modernization Plan

The Army, and our mechanized force in particular, face a modernization/transformation program that is unprecedented in history. Meeting the challenges to America's national interests demands a robust set of land power options to face the uncertain operational environment of the 21st century. Decreased in size since the Persian Gulf War, the U.S. Army remains the premier land force in the world today and plays a pivotal role in carrying out the national security strategy. Despite the Army's preeminence, our leadership has recognized the need to transform the force to meet new challenges in a world that continues to change.

None of this should be news to any of you. The Army vision has been widely disseminated. We at the Armor Center fully embrace the vision. We have not, however, openly discussed the means by which the Army intends to achieve transformation of our current force into the Objective Force. In the previous issue of *ARMOR*, I gave you a due-out on the Mechanized Force Modernization Plan (MFMP). The MFMP is intended to be the bridge from today's legacy force and the Objective Force. The MFMP will provide the strategic framework to synchronize mechanized force modernization with Army transformation, as well as the investment strategies to achieve both.

For the past five months, a TRADOC formal Integrated Concept Team, under the direction of BG James J. Grazio-plene, the Armor Center's Deputy Commanding General, has been work-

ing to identify the way ahead for the mounted force. The ICT developed a strategic framework, proposed a modernization plan in the context of the Army transformation, and laid out the way forward. This was a significant undertaking, and was accomplished only because we had the full participation of each schoolhouse, TRADOC, and the Army staff.

Army Transformation and Modernization Strategy. The Army leadership, with our Armor and Cavalry forces at the core, is pursuing "a strategically responsive force that is dominant across the full spectrum of operations." The goals are lofty. Strategic responsiveness is defined as being able to deploy a combat-ready brigade anywhere in the world in 96 hours, a full division in 120 hours, and five divisions in 30 days. In today's terms, full spectrum dominance at every point on the spectrum of operations requires leveraging capabilities that are resident in uniquely specialized parts of today's force (light forces must be deployed to meet time standards for responsiveness and heavy forces must be deployed to meet the dominant overmatch standard in most METT-T conditions). The Army has embarked on a transformation campaign that will enable its organizations and equipment to better meet both requirements.

At the heart of the Army's Force Modernization Vision is a new kind of force that combines the lethality, survivability, and tactical agility of the heavy forces with the responsiveness,

deployability, sustainability, and flexibility of lighter forces. This modernization strategy has three key tenets:

- Transform now to interim capability in order to meet immediate war-fighting requirements, particularly in small-scale contingencies.
- Maintain legacy war-fighting capability through overmatch, digitization, and re-capitalization as a strategic hedge while the Army undergoes the turbulence of modernization and transformation.
- Focus science and technology to enable timely fielding of the Objective Force.

The long-term goal is to field an Objective Force that harnesses technological advances in a Future Combat System (FCS) that is lighter, more strategically and tactically mobile, and that requires less sustainment, yet offers the relative combat overmatch capabilities in lethality and survivability that heavy forces enjoy today.

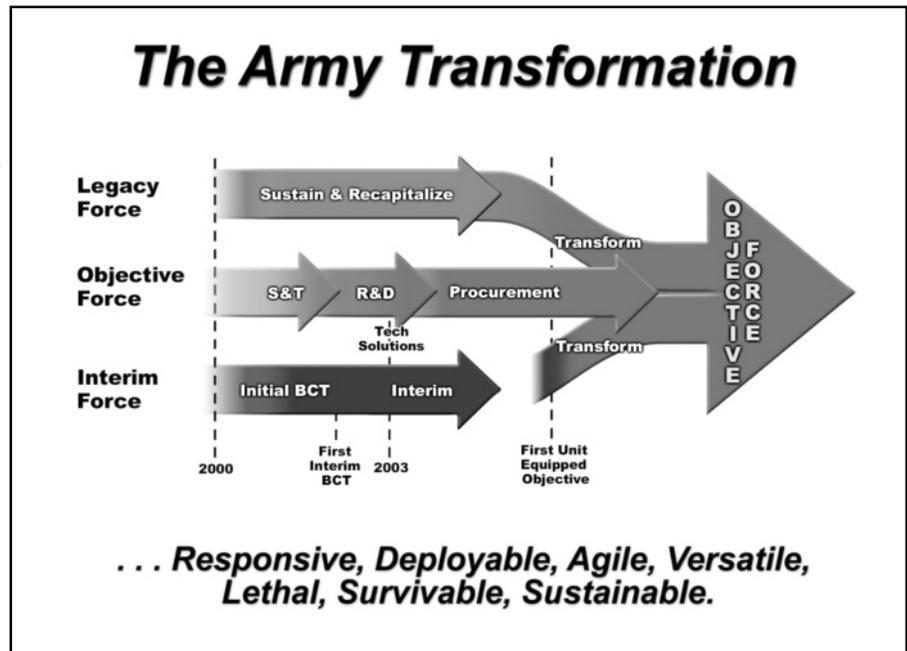
Realization of that goal could eliminate the sharp distinction we now see between heavy and light forces. But until the Objective Force and the Future Combat System are realities, the Army must maintain both the dominant combat overmatch the legacy force offers, and the capability to employ deployable interim forces to fight wars. To do so, it must retain a legacy force of the right numbers of heavy platforms and organizations, modernize or re-capitalize them, and continue to product-

improve them to counter the most dangerous threats to the nation's freedom of action and well being.

The Role of Heavy Forces in Transformation. Transforming selected brigades to interim capabilities will resolve many of the challenges facing the Army today, but heavy forces will still be required during transformation. No other component of the force provides the capabilities that they bring, particularly to the higher end of the spectrum of conflict. They represent the indisputable hammer for Army offensive and counter-offensive operations. Until their capabilities can be replaced, today's heavy forces are the nation's insurance policy for deterring major theater wars and, should deterrence fail, provide the dominant land force for winning them, decisively and quickly. This makes them a vital part of the strategic hedge required to mitigate risk in the Army Transformation Campaign Plan.

The most recent genesis of the MFMP was the Army's submission of an initial Armored Systems Modernization Report (ASMR) to Congress in 1999. A resulting element of that change was in the number of vehicle systems and the methodology the Army uses to field these systems. For example, the tank fleet in 1990 was sized at over 13,000 platforms, while ASMR specified a requirement of 7,640 in 1999 and an end state of 5,526 platforms. The Army has also moved from fielding individual systems to fielding a system of systems, focusing on unit capabilities rather than platform capabilities.

Mechanized Force Modernization Plan (MFMP). In light of evolving goals and objectives, the modernization plan for the entire mechanized force is undergoing significant revision, affecting all maneuver, maneuver support, and maneuver sustainment elements. The MFMP examines the threat faced by the heavy force, identifies warfighting requirements (from the Army Universal Task List or AUTL) for meeting the threat and key programs that must be preserved, and codifies issues where lack of overmatch or vulnerabilities will place U.S. forces and interests at risk. The plan recommends adjustments to the requirements laid out in the original ASMR, studies changes in assumptions and requirements, and presents a program that allows transforma-



tion of the Army to the Objective Force through recommended solutions in the areas of Doctrine, Training, Leader Development, Organizations, Materiel and Soldier issues (DTLOMS).

The Mechanized Force Modernization Plan:

- Proposes adjustments to the heavy force (M1, M2, and M3) modernization programs consistent with acceptable levels of risk in order to preserve resources to the Future Combat System (FCS) Research, Development, Testing, and Evaluation (RDT&E) effort.

- Identifies prudent risk in recommending appropriate levels for our armored forces in the FYDP commensurate with transformation and refinement of AC / RC roles and missions.

- Proposes and assesses reductions in selected "out of position" Army Pre-positioned Sets (APS) commensurate with the Transformation Strategy and Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan (JSCP), as another means of conserving resources and posturing our strategic response capability.

- Assesses adequacy of current programs to provide a suitable platform for scouts and recommends a way ahead. Pays particular attention to lethality and survivability requirements.

- Integrates ARNG divisions and Enhanced Separate Brigades (ESBs) into the modernization strategy commensurate with RC re-missioning and new roles.

- Assesses Army efforts to produce the Tank Extended Range Munition (TERM) and other critical munitions

required to sustain lethality overmatch through ammunition development to ensure superiority against Threat protection and survivability technologies, such as explosive reactive armor (ERA) and Active Protection Systems (APS).

- Assesses requirements and alternative solutions for command and control (C2) on the move. Also, recommends and assesses solutions to address the inability to negotiate complex obstacles and gaps on the battlefield due to recent resource decisions affecting Grizzly and Wolverine.

- Assesses re-capitalization efforts throughout the force in order to reduce overall Operational and Support (O&S) costs and assures legacy equipment remains fit to fight.

- Assesses mounted force training strategy and requirements.

The Mechanized Force Modernization Plan provides a blueprint to ensure the United States maintains the combat overmatch that will deter its enemies from acting contrary to its interests and, should deterrence fail, ensures victory in defense of U.S. national interests. The central role of Fort Knox and the Armor Center in this effort provides assurances that the lethal and decisive nature of mounted combat, along with the *elan* and *esprit-de-corps* for which our branch is renowned, will be imbedded in the Objective Force, as well as in the "battle wagon" our future Armor and Cavalry Warriors will ride into combat.

**FORGE THE THUNDERBOLT...
AND STRIKE FIRST!**