MISSION COMMAND OF MULTI-DOMAIN OPERATIONS

Mark Balboni, John Bonin, Robert Mundell, Doug Orsi
Faculty

Craig Bondra, Antwan Dunmyer, Lafran "Fran" Marks, Daniel Miller
Students—USAWC Class of 2019

The Army's emerging multi-domain operations (MDO) concept places new challenges on the recently revised Army doctrine for mission command. The United States has not fought against a peer competitor in 75 years; as a result, individual services have focused conceptually on fighting their own symmetrical domain wars and paid less attention to supporting other services in other domains. As technology changes and defense budgets shrink, services are quickly losing the capability and capacity to control their domains through sheer presence and numbers. As a result, services require an asymmetrical advantage from different domains to enable success in their domain operations.

The Army's approach to command and control is mission command. This approach requires commanders to have the ability to understand, visualize, communicate, and assess key decisions, risks, and critical intelligence and information requirements. Mission command of MDO will require commanders to maintain both single-domain excellence and knowledge across multiple domains and between and within the echelons of command. Equally as important, commanders must create, ensure, and sustain shared understanding of their own decision-making processes. Risk analysis and critical intelligence and information requirement processes are necessary for ensuring commanders can set conditions that empower subordinate leaders, enable disciplined initiative, and influence decentralized operations within the context of multiple domains. Thus, new frameworks for understanding and adapting multi-domain command relationships and staff structures will be required to meet these new demands.

These new frameworks will require a multi-domain synchronization process to provide commanders with a methodology for identifying and resourcing the new requirements. Unlike traditional operations processes that used the military decision-making process or the Joint planning process, both of which are focused on single-domain planning, a multi-domain synchronization process evolves from the continuous collaboration between commanders and staffs across all domains and environments throughout the planning and execution cycles. This evolution creates shared understanding of key decisions, associated risks, and critical intelligence and information requirements the commander has deemed essential.

This study supports the US Army War College's efforts to remain a recognized leader in the creation of invaluable ideas on strategic issues relating to the Army and the global application of Landpower. The study examines the application of the MDO concept with respect to how it affects the philosophy of mission command and the execution of command and control functions. The introduction of aircraft during World War I provides a context that is similar to the current circumstances because the Army of 1918 struggled with how to best provide command and control for large-scale ground operations against a peer adversary and how to integrate the air in support of land. While the Army tries to understand how to integrate across multiple domains, insights from General John J. Pershing's integration of aircraft

are illustrative. William Mitchell's roles during and after the war illustrate some of the challenges we will likely face when trying to execute MDO, such as defending the cyber and space domains during future large-scale ground combat operations.

An overview and analysis of MDO will provide the Army's definition of the concept and describe the role of the Army in the competition continuum. The MDO concept will require new organizational and staff frameworks to implement MDO across all aspects of the conflict continuum. The Army cannot remain a static organization; the Army must be able to both win armed combat in the land domain and help to shape competition to prevent future conflicts.

Operations below armed conflict have historically been a struggle for the Joint Force and the Army. The Army's mission command approach to command and control in combat will not be sufficient for organizing for competition below armed conflict against adversaries on a daily basis. The Army performs essential tasks—especially in the information environment—for the Joint Force during competition, and these tasks will expand under MDO.

Current operations processes focus on single domains and have limited applicability for supporting functions external to the given domain. We must have new processes that allow for the synchronization of assets across all domains to optimize our effectiveness while minimizing risk to those assets. Though applicable to all levels of command, the proposed process focuses on the planning and data collection required primarily at high operational and strategic levels.

The change of focus from single domain to multi-domain necessitates that Joint and Army doctrine be revised and updated. Joint professional military education curriculum and Joint doctrine will need to be adapted to teach the next generation of leaders how to integrate across the domains. Being aware of the other services is no longer enough; commanders and staffs will need to know how capabilities in other domains can support their efforts and what their requirements may be in supporting the other domains. The Joint Force has long been Joint in name only, with each domain fighting to win its own fight. The MDO concept allows the Joint Force to optimize its limited resources to both respond to a crisis and, in the best of circumstances, prevent a crisis from occurring during competition.

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