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Clockwise: Soldiers of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, drift onto the drop zone during exercise Talisman Saber 2013 in Queensland, Australia, last summer; a medium extended air defense system launcher stands ready while behind it, another fires a missile; soldiers with 7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) hang from a CH-4 Chinook during special purpose insertion extraction training at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla.; the 25th Infantry Division and the Indian army's 31st Armored Division conduct a combined arms live-fire exercise during Yudh Abhyas 09 in India.

U.S. Army/SSG Jeffrey Smith

Core Competencies for

The U.S. Army's core competencies extend well beyond sustained land combat. They adapt over time based on national strategy, changes in the operational environment and advances in technology to provide focus for capability and leader development. To be clear, the Army's core competencies are higher-level organizational descriptions that are distinct from tactical missions and tasks. The Army currently recognizes two core competencies and seven enabling competencies, but these must be refined as the Army transitions from a force of *execution* to one of *preparation*.



U.S. Army/SFC Rodney Jackson



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an Army of Preparation



How the Army explains its contributions to joint and multinational forces is fundamental to how it prioritizes and develops capabilities, how combatant commanders decide to employ Army forces, and how national leaders perceive the relevance of the Army. The Army's role is often defined in terms of categories such as Title 10 requirements, strategic mission sets, warfighting functions and executive agent responsibilities. These areas, however, lack the operational framework that commanders can directly apply throughout the range of foundational activities, crisis operations and campaigns. Clearly

FM 1 (2001)	FM 1 (2005)	ADP 3-0 (2011)	ADP 1 (2012) <i>Enabling competencies shown in italics</i>
Shape the Security Environment	Combined Arms	Combined Arms Maneuver	Combined Arms Maneuver
Prompt Response	Joint Interdependence	Wide-Area Security	Wide-Area Security
Mobilize the Army	Full Spectrum Operations		<i>Support Security Cooperation</i>
Forcible Entry Operations	Mission Command		<i>Tailor Forces for the Combatant Commander</i>
Sustained Land Dominance			<i>Conduct Entry Operations</i>
Support Civil Authorities			<i>Provide Flexible Mission Command</i>
			<i>Support Joint and Army Forces</i>
			<i>Support Domestic Civil Authorities</i>
			<i>Mobilize and Integrate the Reserve Components</i>

Figure 1: Past as Prologue—The Evolution of Army Core Competencies

identifying the Army’s core competencies is the single most powerful expression of these contributions.

The idea of core competencies evolved from a management theory proposed in “The Core Competence of the Corporation,” a 1990 *Harvard Business Review* article by C.K. Prahalad and Gary Hamel. They describe core competencies as significant contributions of an organization that others find difficult to imitate. Core competencies are viewed as the collective knowledge and learning of an organization, which together increase opportunities for new markets and provide

value to the end user. Core competencies are not static. They can be lost if organizations cut internal investments in competencies or can become obsolete if organizations forgo developing new competencies when the market demands them. As Rita Gunther McGrath wrote in the June 2013 book *The End of Competitive Advantage*, organizations must adapt their core competencies based on systematic innovation and the constant testing of their assumptions in order to remain successful. In light of these facts, it is beneficial to provide a perspective of the Army’s ongoing analysis to adapt its core competencies.

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The Evolution of Core Competencies

Historically, the Army has identified core competencies to define what it contributes to national security. A history of these competencies is shown in Figure 1. The 2001 edition of Field Manual (FM) 1 *The Army* recognized six competencies that encompassed the range of military operations and the phases of joint operations. Although this initial list was described as “essential and enduring,” Army core competencies have evolved over time in response to the market’s demands: that is, new strategic guidance, threats and capabilities.

In the 2005 edition of FM 1, core competencies were relabeled as fundamentals of the Army’s operational concept,

full spectrum operations. Applying lessons from recent wars, the fundamentals took on a combat focus while still acknowledging the role of the Army in the homeland. These fundamentals also recognized the Army's contribution to joint operations.

In 2011, the Army reinstated core competencies. Army Doctrinal Publication (ADP) 3-0 describes how the Army's current operational concept—unified land operations—is executed through decisive action by means of two core competencies: combined arms maneuver and wide-area security. Relating those core competencies to the decisive action construct demonstrates how they contribute to a wide range of missions. Critics, however, view these competencies as too combat-centric.

ADP 1 *The Army*, published in 2012, expands the Army's competencies by identifying seven enabling competencies. While core competencies are described as the Army's "indispensable contributions to the joint force," enabling competencies are "fundamental to the Army's ability to maneuver and secure land areas for the joint force." Linking core and enabling competencies is an attempt to better address the Army's contributions to unified action partners across the range of military operations. Creating a framework of both core and enabling competencies, however, complicates the Army's dialogue with its partners. As the Army transitions, it must communicate an easily understood message both internally and externally.

Other Services' Core Competencies

The 2012 *Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020* states that the strength of the joint force is the ability to combine the services' unique capabilities. Combining current and emerging capabilities in new ways allows for greater military effectiveness, efficiency and synergy. Therefore, before considering new core competencies for itself, the Army should understand those of the other services.

The U.S. Navy identifies six core capabilities of maritime strategy: forward presence, maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, sea control, power projection, and deterrence. The U.S. Marine Corps provides joint commanders with forces and capabilities to effectively carry out its two core missions of assuring littoral access and fighting "small wars," which require a "high degree of adaptability." The U.S. Air Force describes its 12 core functions as those ways in which it is particularly suited to contribute to national security. Its core functions include nuclear deterrence operations, air superiority and rapid global mobility. Although this mix of capabilities, missions and functions is

not completely analogous to the Army's view of core competencies, it is useful to identify gaps among the other services that the Army can address, such as establishing a theater infrastructure.

Partner Nations' Core Competencies

Accounting for other armies' competencies enhances interoperability and more effective land operations. For example, the British Army's future core functions are contingent capability for deterrence and defense, overseas engagement and capacity building, and civil engagement and homeland resilience. The Canadian Army's core competencies include the capability to conduct, and to set the essential conditions to enable success in, close combat and close engagement. The Australian Army identifies five essential lines of operation in *Adaptive Campaigning*, a conceptual response to the complexity of the future security environment: joint land combat, population protection, information actions, population support and indigenous capacity building. Considering these armies' functions, competencies and lines of operation, it is clear that the U.S. Army's core competencies must span from peacetime to war, give pause to adversaries and support partners, thereby ensuring that unified action is effectively applied across the range of military operations.

The Need to Change

The Army Chief of Staff's annual future studies program, *Unified Quest*, has repeatedly explored what the future Army must do and how it will operate. This investigation included a reassessment of Army core competencies. This multiyear effort concluded that the Army must expand its



U.S. Army/SSC Jeffrey Smith

Australian Army Maj. Gen. Stuart Smith, commanding general of the 1st Division/Deployable Joint Force Headquarters, and U.S. Army COL Matthew McFarlane, commander of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, discuss military operations during *Talisman Saber 2013*.

Current Core and Enabling Competencies (ADP 1)	Proposed Core Competencies	Why Change?
Combined Arms Maneuver	Combined Arms Maneuver	No change required.
Wide-Area Security	Wide-Area Security	No change required.
Support Security Cooperation	Shape the Security Environment	The purpose is to shape the environment through multiple methods, not just through security cooperation. Recognizes benefit of regional alignment and special operations forces.
Tailor Forces for the Combatant Commander		No parallel competency offered. This is a method of employing forces, not a competency. Forces are tailored for missions and combatant commanders' needs.
Conduct Entry Operations	Project Power	Addresses all domains across range of military operations and expeditionary gains.
Provide Flexible Mission Command		No parallel competency offered. Mission Command is the overarching philosophy for how the Army operates. How the Army designs and allocates headquarters is a function of how it operates, not what it provides.
Support Joint and Army Forces	Set the Theater	The key to supporting the force is establishing effective theater infrastructure, including appropriately located and provisioned Army prepositioned stocks.
Support Domestic Civil Authorities		No parallel competency offered. Defense support of civil authorities is a task within the Army's doctrinal decisive action framework.
Mobilize and Integrate the Reserve Components		No parallel competency offered. All services have reserve components—this is not a unique Army contribution. The more critical issues are access to low-density enablers and ensuring reserve components are properly manned, trained and equipped.
	LandCyber Operations	Recognizes the joint conceptual idea of cross-domain synergy and importance of emerging capabilities.
	Special Operations	Recognizes the Army's significant contribution to generate and provide special operations capabilities to the joint force.

Courtesy of the authors

Figure 2: A Case for Change—Adapting Army Competencies for the Future

core competencies in response to a complex operational environment, the demands of the nation and the ever evolving joint force. Select reasons behind these changes are included in Figure 2. As recently highlighted in “Reshaping the Army,” a November 4, 2013, *TIME* article by Mark Thompson, failure to change will result in an Army that cannot offer suitable options in defense of the nation.

Serving as the starting point for the 2014 Campaign of Learning, the following competencies will continue to be evaluated against multiple scenarios between 2020 and 2040. These proposed core competencies focus on what the Army provides in terms of capabilities and capacities beyond what other services and defense agencies provide. While not a definitive list, these seven competencies serve as the starting point for a much needed dialogue within the Army.

Combined arms maneuver. Combined arms maneuver encompasses the tactical tasks associated with offensive and defensive operations, security operations and special-purpose tasks.

Wide-area security. Wide-area security is the ability of land-power to secure and control populations, resources and terrain within a joint operational area.

Shape the security environment. Shaping the security environment manages regional tensions, maintains or enhances stability, prevents or mitigates crisis, and enables other operations when a crisis occurs.

Project power. As a largely continental United States-based force, the Army is projected—or projects power—in and through multiple domains. Power is physically projected through the land, maritime and air domains, but cyberspace and space capabilities are also employed to influence the land domain.

Set the theater. The Army is the only service with the capability and capacity to provide the combatant commander with many theater framework capabilities, including Mission Command systems, logistical preparation, and the integration of fires and protection.

“LandCyber” operations. LandCyber operations are those that generate and exert combat power to enable freedom of maneuver and action in both the land and cyberspace domains to deliver decisive effects.

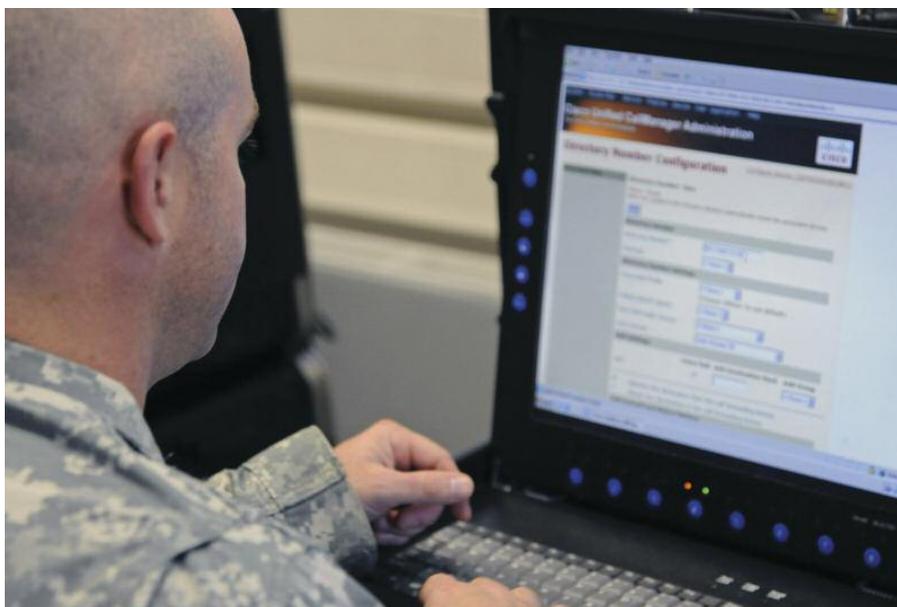
Special operations. Special operations provide discreet, precise and scalable options for joint force commanders and ambassadors to assess, shape and influence foreign environments.

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In order to remain the world’s preeminent land force, the Army must be in a constant state of self-evaluation and change. Major changes, however, largely occur as a result



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Top, SPC Joseph Gonzalez provides wide-area security from a rooftop in Afghanistan’s Farah Province; SGT Ryan Lalk, 72nd Expeditionary Signal Battalion, works on a connection with the call manager during Cyber Endeavor, an element of Combined Endeavor 11, the largest communications exercise in the world.

of the ebb and flow of conflict and available resources. An Army of preparation has to provide more for the nation and joint force than the more focused requirements of the past 12 years of war allow. The Army contributes more than combined arms maneuver and wide-area security. Indeed, it also shapes the environment, projects power, sets theaters, and conducts LandCyber and special operations. Collectively, these core competencies reinforce the Army’s commitment to the nation and joint force while it prepares for a complex and uncertain future. ★