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Reconstitution: The Forgotten Element of Large-Scale Combat Operations

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## **Abstract**

### *Reconstitution: The Forgotten Element of Large-Scale Combat Operations*

The U.S. Military has mostly ignored the requirement for reconstitution operations since the fall of the Soviet Union. With a renewed emphasis on Large Scale Combat Operations and pacing threats like China and Russia, the Department of Defense acknowledged the changing operating environment faced by operational commanders. Large Scale Combat Operations between peer competitors will be increasingly fast and lethal, as both sides synchronize actions and weapons systems to achieve effects across all domains in an attempt to gain an advantage. Theater commanders will need to reconstitute forces after initial contact to regenerate combat power and build and maintain operational momentum. The U.S. Army has not adapted its reconstitution doctrine to reflect threats and changes in the conduct and character of modern combat within the current operating environment. Additionally, the U.S. Military's posture relies on force projection, which relies on small forward-postured forces and long lines of operation. This posture presents challenges for commanders to balance their forces in time and space. Finally, the Army lacks the organization, command relationships, and practice to conduct rapid and efficient reconstitution in the face of enemy threats. For these reasons, the U.S. Army is not prepared to reconstitute units during Large Scale Combat Operations against a peer competitor.

## Return to Competition

The world has entered a new period of great power competition, and advances in weapons, technology, and command and control methods have added to the lethality, complexity, and speed of international competition. This new state of continuous and adversarial competition between large and influential state actors undermines global stability and increases the threat of competition boiling over to become an armed conflict. China and Russia have invested heavily in their military forces and have achieved parity and even overmatch in many military capabilities. Rogue nations like Iran and North Korea have also sought to gain advantages by developing asymmetric capabilities. As powers pursue competition at levels just below the threshold for conflict, the potential for error or miscalculation leading to conflict becomes more likely.

In the event of a great power conflict, commanders will face lethal and determined adversaries with closely matched and asymmetric capabilities. Both Russia and China have weapon systems that match U.S. or NATO platforms, and they are developing and proliferating advanced cruise missile systems and cyber warfare capabilities.<sup>1</sup> In a heavyweight fight with

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<sup>1</sup>Russia is developing advanced armor and artillery systems that have overmatch against US and NATO systems and China has achieved parity by stealing intellectual property and producing cloned “Shanzhai” versions of military technology like the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter.

The Russian 2S35 system has higher rate of fire and longer range than US/NATO systems. The Armata family of armored vehicles signals Russia’s commitment to modernizing at least a portion of its ground forces. In addition to the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, China has cloned the Russian 2S19 (CHI PLZ-05) and BM-30 (CHI PHL-03), American HMMWV (CHI Dongfeng EQ2050) and FGM-148 Javelin (CHI Hongjian-12 Red Arrow), and numerous other land, sea, and air systems. China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran are among other nations investing in Land Attack Cruise Missile (LACM) and ballistic missile capabilities. Those countries have also invested heavily in cyber capabilities as a cheap, deniable, and asymmetric capability. Russia and China’s cyber programs are highly capable and well organized.

“China’s Military Built With Cloned Weapons,” USNI News, accessed 9 MAY 2020,

<https://news.usni.org/2015/10/27/chinas-military-built-with-cloned-weapons>

Gabi Siboni and Zvi Magen, The Cyber Attack on the Ukrainian Electrical Infrastructure: Another Warning, INSS Insight No. 798, 17 FEB 2016

Gabe Starosta, “Chinese, Russian capabilities expanding: New Threat Assessment Highlights Land-Based

another strong power, the U.S. military cannot rely on technological or material advantages to provide a competitive edge. The First World War demonstrated how attempts to gain a decisive edge through technology are fleeting, as adversaries eventually adapt to negate or counter advantages.<sup>2</sup> According to U.S. doctrine, during Large Scale Combat Operations (LSCO), the U.S. will structure land forces under a Joint Force Land Component Command (JFLCC) built around a U.S. Field Army.<sup>3</sup> Accomplishing operational objectives and victory will go to the side that can field, maintain, and reconstitute combat power despite high losses. Reconstitution will prove to be the most challenging of these requirements, as it is routinely ignored in plans, doctrine, and exercises.

Despite reconstitution being recently expanded in Army publications, there are few who understand how to plan, prepare, and execute reconstitution operations. Commanders must understand how to conduct reconstitution operations to regenerate units and restore combat power, particularly to continue offensive operations or to defend against formidable attacks by a closely-matched enemy.<sup>4</sup> Reconstitution of land forces will be particularly important, as land

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Cruise Missile Proliferation,” *Inside Missile Defense* 19, No. 15 (24 JUL 2013):3-4

Christopher F. Foss, “Artillery overmatch: Koalitsiya brings step change in Russian capabilities,” *Jane’s*, accessed 9 May 2020, <https://janes-ihs-com.usnwc.idm.oclc.org/InternationalDefenceReview/DisplayFile/idr18728?edition=2016>

Andrew Radin, Lynn E. Davis, Edward Geist, Eugeniu Han, Dara Massicot, Matthew Povlock, Clint Reach, Scott Boston, Samuel Charap, William Mackenzie, Katya Migacheva, Trevor Johnston, Austin Long, “The Future of the Russian Military: Russia’s Ground Combat Capabilities and Implications for U.S.-Russia Competition,” *RAND Research Reports* RR-3099-A, (2019): 45-51

<sup>2</sup>Militaries that seek decisive advantage through organization, technique, or technology generally gain a marked initial tactical advantage, however adversaries are generally quick to adapt. Even outmatched adversaries can counter material or technological advantages through simple and cheap weapons like Improvised Explosive Devices (IED).

Bill Nance, “The US Army’s High-Intensity Problem,” Modern War Institute, accessed on 19 MAR 2020, <https://mwi.usma.edu/us-armys-high-intensity-problem/>

<sup>3</sup> DOD, *Joint Publication 3-31: Joint Land Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Joint Publishing Directorate, 2019), V-4

<sup>4</sup> Current Joint Doctrine defines reconstitution as “actions taken to rapidly restore functionality to an acceptable level for a particular mission, operation, or contingency after severe degradation,” and it includes the regeneration and reorganization actions

DOD, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, D.C., DOD, 2020): 180

warfare tends to be longer in duration, attrition-based, and necessary to achieve most operational and strategic end states in conflict.<sup>5</sup> Simulations and Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations show that modern combat will be rapid and lethal, and an effective combination of targeting data and fires can destroy entire units in a matter of minutes.<sup>6</sup> Given these conditions, commanders will likely need to reconstitute land forces multiple times throughout a campaign or major military operation to preserve their combat power and prevent culmination prior to achieving objectives.

The U.S. Army, as the primary land force provider, must prepare for the reality that combat will be faster and deadlier than in previous conflicts in the Post-Cold War era. To arrest an adversary's advance, seize the initiative, and build and maintain the operational momentum and endurance required for a prolonged conflict, the JFLCC must be prepared to rapidly reconstitute forces in a theater of operations with limited assets in an increasingly complex environment. Currently, the U.S. Army is not postured to reconstitute units during LSCO due to three main factors. The leading factor is that the conduct and character of modern conflict have changed with the re-emergence of China and Russia as peer competitors. The U.S. has shifted to a CONUS-based force projection posture, and removed forces from contested theaters, making it harder for commanders to balance the factor of force in time and space. Organizationally, the U.S. military does not have a clear concept of how units will be structured to facilitate the rapid reconstitution of large units. Due to a combination of these factors, the U.S. Army is unprepared to reconstitute units during Large Scale Combat Operations against a peer competitor.

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<sup>5</sup> CAPT Wayne Hughes, RADM Robert Girrier, *Fleet Tactics and Naval Operations*, (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2018), 17, 166

<sup>6</sup> Ibid

## The Character of Modern War

The U.S. Army has not adapted reconstitution doctrine to match the threats or technological development and integration of the increasingly lethal and expansive modern battlefield. Recent Army reconstitution operations and exercises were limited to optimal situations and permissive environments.<sup>7</sup> Current reconstitution concepts rely on incomplete or flawed conclusions drawn from the results of these operations.<sup>8</sup> In 2006 a joint force reconstituted two battalions after a relatively low-intensity operation by employing theater-level sustainment assets and moving the entire unit to an established base at Kandahar Airfield.<sup>9</sup> This operation required strategic and theater-level sustainment assets to reconstitute a relatively small force after the conclusion of about one month of operations against an insurgent force. While the reconstitution effort was successful in this case, the resources needed would not have been enough to support the scale of losses anticipated during LSCO. This is particularly true in a theater where multiple dispersed units require reconstitution, especially in the face of a persistent

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<sup>8</sup> After the Gulf War some leaders touted a reconstitution concept referred to as Weapon System Replacement Operations (WSRO), but the examples they presented were all conducted under favorable conditions after the cessation of hostilities.

MAJ Thomas Richardson “Weapon System Replacement Operations Within a Heavy Division” (MA thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1993)

MAJ Bruce Reider, “The Implications of Weapon System Replacement Operations at The Operational Level of War” (monograph, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, School of Advanced Military Studies, 1995)

<sup>9</sup> Combined Joint Task Force, CJTF-76 was an operational headquarters and a subordinate command of Combined Forces Command – Afghanistan (CFC-A). It was responsible for Regional Commands (RC) South and East. The elements being reconstituted were two infantry battalions, Task Force Catamount and Warrior.

SFC Michael J. Rautio, “CJTF-76 Tackles Reconstitution in the Harsh Afghan Environment,” *Army Logistician Magazine* 39, No. 3 (MAY-JUN 2007): 10-13

enemy threat.<sup>10</sup> During a recent Warfighter Exercise, a U.S. Army brigade lost 35 percent of its combat power in less than 40 hours.<sup>11</sup> These levels of losses provide insight into the extent of losses that modern units will suffer in a fight with a peer competitor. In addition to fielding forces that can operate and survive in all domains, the U.S. military must adapt reconstitution processes and functions to be successful in the contemporary operating environment.

In the past 30 years, the wartime domains have expanded to include space and cyberspace, and land forces are building increased lethality by synchronizing effects across all domains.<sup>12</sup> For example, Russian units used Signals Intelligence (SIGINT) from phone apps to identify and strike Ukrainian artillery units with precise, preemptive fires in a recent case of military forces sequencing joint functions to enable tactical success.<sup>13</sup> Today, adversaries can use space and cyber assets to identify the sizeable physical and electronic signature of combat and support forces conducting reconstitution operations.<sup>14</sup> Adversaries could use techniques similar to what Russia employed in Ukraine to target reconstituting units and their support forces while they are vulnerable and concentrated. The U.S. military has not conducted reconstitution of a unit under enemy contact since the final days of World War Two when units generally had to be withdrawn from the front to reconstitute.<sup>15</sup> With the integration and synchronization of space

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<sup>10</sup> The reconstitution effort required that entire units be moved to Kandahar Airfield, and Army Materiel Command pulled forces from Kuwait and other locations within the Combined Joint Operational Area (CJOA) to assist in the effort.

Wayne T. Seidler, LTC Richard B. Dix, "AMC Support to Reconstitution in Afghanistan," *Army Logistician*, 39, No. 3 (MAY-JUN 2007): 14, 16

<sup>11</sup> Menter, "The fallacy and myth of reconstitution," US Army Sustainment, accessed 12 FEB 2020, [https://www.army.mil/article/219390/the\\_fallacy\\_and\\_myth\\_of\\_reconstitution](https://www.army.mil/article/219390/the_fallacy_and_myth_of_reconstitution)

<sup>12</sup> US Army Futures Command, "Multi-Domain Operations"

<sup>13</sup> Benjamin Jensen, Brandon Valeriano, and Ryan Maness, "Fancy bears and digital trolls: Cyber strategy with a Russian twist," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 42, no. 2, (2019): 227

Richard M. Crowell, "Some Principles of Cyber Warfare: Using Corbett to Understand War in the Early Twenty-First Century," *The Corbett Centre for Maritime Policy Studies*, London: King's College London, (JAN 2017): 39

<sup>14</sup> MAJ Charles Horner, "Reconstituting a Combat Force," *Army Logistician* 18, no. 4 (July-August 1986): 2-5

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

and cyberspace with the other warfighting domains, commanders will not have the relatively safe spaces to reconstitute forces that units enjoyed in the past.

Some may argue that the United States is unlikely to engage in large scale combat operations against a peer competitor and that any conflict will likely take place within the realm of gray zone or hybrid competition. Proponents of this mindset often cite drivers of international stability, such as the globalized economy and international organizations that bind great powers unlike any other period in history. Despite perceived stability, four factors push great powers closer to conflict. First, as the generation that experienced the horrors of the Second World War passes on, the world loses the “tragic memory of war.”<sup>16</sup> Additionally, due in large part to actions by Russia and China, international institutions that existed as a bulwark against conflict have steadily lost influence.<sup>17</sup> Third, many of the world’s leading and most belligerent powers have a government led by an individual who has remarkable control through a cult of personality.<sup>18</sup> Lastly, populism and nationalism are increasingly driving instability across many nations in the world as a reaction to humanitarian crises, terrorism, or other movements.<sup>19</sup> These factors, when combined with the return to adversarial competition, make for an increasingly uncertain environment where miscalculation could lead to armed conflict.

Those who are more concerned with hybrid or gray zone competition also fail to account for the reasoning behind the U.S. strategic priority. The U.S. must prepare for the highest levels of competition and conflict so that the military can scale down as necessary rather than

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<sup>16</sup> Hal Brands, Frank Gavin, William Inboden, Colin Kahl, Kori Schake, and Ryan Evans, “WOTR Podcast: Is A Major War Coming?” Recorded, 31 JUL 2018 in Washington, D.C., podcast, 28:00

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

attempting to increase capacity to meet higher-tiered threats. The U.S. National Defense Strategy focuses on competing, deterring, and winning in the current operational environment.<sup>20</sup> To deter competitors, the U.S. must have credible capabilities and display the willingness and ability to use them and to be able to build and sustain combat power to win once that force deploys. The National Defense Strategy affirms the importance of fielding a “lethal, resilient, and rapidly adapting Joint Force.”<sup>21</sup> Reconstitution is instrumental in the U.S.’s fielding of lethal and resilient forces, and it will require adaptation and innovation.

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### **Risky Force Posture**

The current U.S. Army force posture is a tactical strength but an operational weakness, because it puts theater commanders at an automatic mismatch with regards to balancing the factors of time, space, and force.<sup>22</sup> In the early 1990s, the U.S. Army transitioned from a forward-postured orientation to one based on force projection that relies heavily on a mature theater and pre-positioned war reserve stocks at the outset of operations.<sup>23</sup> This force projection model relies on building forces before hostilities to defeat an overmatched enemy and does not take into account the contemporary threat and operational environment. The flexibility of highly mobile and specialized forces is undermined by the difficulty of achieving the mass necessary to

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<sup>20</sup> Mattis, *National Defense Strategy*, 1

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

<sup>22</sup> Dr. Vego presents his concept of balancing the Operational Factors of time, force, and space, with regards to a specific objective, as essential to a commander for maintaining freedom of action.

Dr. Milan Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare Theory and Practice* (Newport: U.S. Naval War College, 2007), III-3

<sup>23</sup> MAJ Mark Armstrong, “Reconstitution: Implications For A Force Projection Army,” (MA Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 1993), 99

balance the factor of force against time.<sup>24</sup> Force projection also relies heavily on limited strategic lift assets to surge troops into theater, which will cost operational commanders time as they attempt to procure replacements and additional forces.

The Army's force projection posture is efficient and provides a reasonable degree of flexibility, but for what it gains in time and space, it falls short when providing significant mass and resilience within a theater of operations. The force projection model relies on mobilizing forces before the outset of hostilities, where the US dictates the timing and location of a conflict.<sup>25</sup> Adversaries will likely use concentration to mass combat power in space and asymmetric capabilities to create and exploit conditions of strategic uncertainty, deception, and surprise at the outset of armed conflict. Operational commanders responding to heavy initial losses must reconstitute forces to maintain combat power and buy time for additional troops to arrive.

The U.S. military invested in pre-positioned equipment in crucial theaters and afloat to mitigate the time required to project and reconstitute forces in those theaters. Still, these stocks have several requirements that will delay their employment, putting the commander at a disadvantage with regards to the factor of time. The use of Army Prepositioned Stocks (APS) requires the mobilization of a drawing force from the Continental United States (CONUS); strategic lift to move the force; and sites to draw, sight weapons systems, and assemble into

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<sup>24</sup> Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare*, III-59

<sup>25</sup> The US military assembled metaphorical "iron mountains" prior to the two conflicts against Iraq in 1991 and 2003, which enabled commanders to employ maneuver and tempo to deliver a swift and overwhelming victory. In these cases and others, the US military relied on an advantage in time to bring forces into balance against objectives prior to the invasions.

Arpi Dilanian and Matthew Howard, "Ready Now: An Interview with Gen. Robert B. 'Abe' Abrams," *Army Sustainment Magazine*, May-June 2018, 10-12

tactical formations.<sup>26</sup> This lengthy process means that the first replacements into theater have to travel from CONUS, complete these actions, and move into assembly areas before the forward postured force culminates within 72 hours.<sup>27</sup> Combat potential generated from pre-positioned equipment will likely face significant delays and will have to be rushed into the Joint Operational Area (JOA) to replace attrited initial contact units. This operational pause will prevent commanders from building tempo and delay their transition to offensive operations to seize the initiative, allowing adversaries to consolidate gains.

Most of the United States' potential adversaries hold a distinct advantage in the factor of space, as most of them have the benefit of their initial geostrategic position. China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea concentrate their military forces close to their sources of power, and they will likely enjoy interior lines and shorter lines of operation at the outset of a conflict. Conversely, U.S. forces will have to route replacements and supplies over long lines of communication, which are within the range of enemy operational fires and Anti-access/Area Denial (A2AD) systems.<sup>28</sup> These weapons systems will cause large scale losses, requiring reconstitution, and they will contest air and seaports of debarkation. Commanders will have to attempt to reconstitute forces over long lines of communication while enemy forces attack their actions in all domains.

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<sup>26</sup> DA, *ATP 3-35.1: Army Pre-Positioned Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Army Publishing Directorate, 2015), 1-3, 3-1 – 3-2

<sup>27</sup> Army Brigade Combat Teams (BCT) are not designed or capable of conducting offensive operations for more than three days without significant replenishment or evacuation.

Menter, *Fallacy and Myth of Reconstitution*

<sup>28</sup> Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea have invested robust Anti-access/Area Denial (A2AD) systems that intend to capitalize on advantages in the factor of space to mitigate a potential force mismatch with the U.S. These systems provide physical protection as well as threatening to raise the cost of any anticipated U.S. interference within their spheres of influence.

US Army Futures Command, Futures and Concepts Center, "Multi-Domain Operations," Presentation by LTC Hiu to the US Naval War College, 11 FEB 2020

A contrary argument to the disadvantages noted above is that the U.S. has sufficient resources within the strategic mobility triad to handle any likely scenario until the national industrial base can mobilize. Pre-positioned stocks are well-resourced, and many of them are configured for rapid draw in the event of contingency operations. Additionally, the U.S. has a robust sea and airlift capability. While these assumptions are well-intended, they fall short in several key categories. Speed and throughput are the two most important factors for surging forces into theater to reconstitute attrited units, both of which are areas of weakness for the U.S.<sup>29</sup> The strategic triad relies on a combination of two legs of the triad, with one almost always being pre-positioned stocks. Pre-positioned stocks, however, are either located in static and identifiable locations or aboard Large Medium-Speed Roll-on/Roll-off transports.<sup>30</sup> These locations are subject to targeting by enemy operational fires before or during equipment draw or sea denial of port activities. At the same time, units must concentrate equipment and personnel in a relatively condensed and unprotected posture during unloading. The pre-positioned system is a good concept and strikes a cost-effective balance, but it sacrifices much in useable combat potential within a theater.

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### **There Is No Reset Button**

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<sup>29</sup> Depending on the theater of operations and enemy threat there may not be sufficient APOD/SPOD facilities to support the necessary flow of manpower and materiel into the JOA. Additionally, the U.S. Army has a maintenance capability gap with regards to retrograde flow of damaged equipment that will likely impede the movement of replacement items forward. The creation of a two-level maintenance system with mechanics assigned to forward units resulted in fewer resources to evacuate items.

Dilanian and Howard, "Ready Now," 11

<sup>30</sup> Department of The Army, *Army Regulation 710-1: Centralized Inventory Management of The Army Supply System* (Washington, D.C.: Army Publishing Directorate, 2016), 55

The U.S. Army is not postured to conduct reconstitution operations because command relationships, doctrine, and attitudes are inappropriate or non-existent. In 2017, a steering committee of Army General Officers recognized that reconstitution concepts were only superficial and failed to address modern force structure, policies, and principles.<sup>31</sup> U.S. Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is responsible for developing reconstitution doctrine for the U.S. Army, and Forces Command (FORSCOM) is responsible for training for and executing reconstitution operations. Still, neither command has emphasized the development of doctrine or training to address shortfalls.<sup>32</sup>

To develop effective reconstitution procedures and the U.S. Army should start by acknowledging that a shortfall exists and defining the problem that the steering committee identified in 2017. The Army has not conducted a major training operation that incorporated a reconstitution operation since Operation REFORGER in 1985.<sup>33</sup> Army leaders should focus on deliberately including and integrating reconstitution operations into LSCO training and warfighter exercises. The challenges of reconstitution are multi-dimensional and present a wicked problem, which requires an experimental approach to solving.<sup>34</sup> War games and exercises can be a crucial testbed of concepts to develop reconstitution doctrine while simulating an anticipated combat environment or enemy force.<sup>35</sup> By proofing concepts like individual, unit,

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<sup>31</sup> Menter, *Fallacy and Myth of Reconstitution*

<sup>32</sup> Department of The Army, *Army Regulation 600-8-111 Army Mobilization Manning and Wartime Replacement Operations* (Washington, D.C.: Army Publishing Directorate, 2019), 3-4

<sup>33</sup> Horner, "Reconstituting a Combat Force"

<sup>34</sup> Joyce Yukawa, "Preparing for Complexity and Wicked Problems through Transformational Learning Approaches," *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science*, 56, no. 2 (Spring, 2015): 160

<sup>35</sup> Developing reconstitution doctrine provides operational commanders with a "comprehensive and practiced plan of action" that provides "unity amid chaos."

Hughes, Girrier, *Fleet Tactics and Naval Operations*, 16

and small-team replacement operations, the Army can gather data on best practices. The Army can also test other methods, like Weapon System Replacement Operations (WSRO), under current conditions.

By forcing commanders and staffs to consider planning factors and realistic reconstitution requirements, exercises will provide a clearer picture of the operational tempo and phasing required for modern operations. Commanders and staffs are unaccustomed to planning for reconstitution as an operation, rather than merely a logistics and personnel function.<sup>36</sup> This process is further complicated by the fact that it requires assets and inputs from the generating and operating force and different levels of support throughout the theater.<sup>37</sup> During Training, reconstitution requirements should be as realistic as possible so that commanders see the effects of assuming risk in the pursuit of rapid and ambitious courses of action. An added focus on training will also build habitual relationships between supporting and supported commands. These efforts will enable interoperability and allow commanders to rebuild combat potential quickly and effectively.

Reconstitution operations, by definition, require drastic changes in unit command relationships through reorganization or support relationships for regeneration. Reconstitution is a complex process that requires precision and speed to rebuild and maintain combat power. This process is further complicated by the fact that it requires assets and inputs from the generating

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Bob Work and GEN Paul Selva, "Revitalizing Wargaming is Necessary to be Prepared for Future Wars," War on The Rocks, accessed 27 April 2020, <https://warontherocks.com/2015/12/revitalizing-wargaming-is-necessary-to-be-prepared-for-future-wars/>

Ellie Bartels, Ed McGrady, Peter Perla, and Ryan Evans, "WOTR Podcast: The (War) Games We Play" Recorded, 2 DEC 2019 in Washington, D.C., podcast, 27:00

<sup>36</sup> Menter, *Fallacy and Myth of Reconstitution*

<sup>37</sup> Ibid

and operating force at different levels.<sup>38</sup> Exercises enable commanders to establish clear command relationships that will achieve unity of command and unity of effort during reconstitution operations, enabling speed and cohesive activity.<sup>39</sup> Without systems in place, the services will face delays and disadvantages from a lack of interoperability at the outset of operations. The beginning of a conflict is a dangerous time to discover that untested systems and concepts in place are poorly designed, particularly in an environment of increased uncertainty and fog of war.

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### **Modern Problems Require Modern Solutions**

Despite the challenges presented in this paper, including the return to great power competition and the changes in the modern operational environment, the United States Military is likely postured for eventual success in the event of large-scale combat operations against a peer competitor. Commanders must ensure that combat power is optimized to enable offensive actions and achieve victory at the lowest cost to blood and treasure. The Army should lead the way in focusing on developing reconstitution doctrine for the first time in 20 years.<sup>40</sup> By developing doctrine and concepts relevant to the modern operating environment, exercising the systems needed to reconstitute forces, and developing optimal command and support relationships, the Joint Force can optimize reconstitution processes. Efficient and speedy

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<sup>38</sup> Menter, *Fallacy and Myth of Reconstitution*

<sup>39</sup> Deployable Training Division, “Insights and Best Practices Focus Paper: JTF C2 and Organization.” (Suffolk, VA: Joint Staff J7, January 2020)

<sup>40</sup> Menter, *Fallacy and Myth of Reconstitution*

reconstitution systems provide operational commanders with the combat power necessary to conduct sustained campaigns in pursuit of strategic objectives.

The Army must focus on an analytical and experimental approach that identifies challenges and friction points to reconstitution. Additionally, a focus on exercising reconstitution tasks will reinforce processes and build competence. Finally, having developed and applied appropriate doctrine and concepts, the U.S. Army can establish command relationships and responsibilities that facilitate rapid and effective reconstitution processes. By improving these elements, the Army can modernize reconstitution operations and concepts to enable success during LSCO.

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