

# Sustaining the Force in Multi-Domain Battle

In the Multi-Domain Battle environment, sustainers must develop their fundamental Soldier skills while also harnessing technology and innovation.

■ By Gen. Gustave “Gus” Perna



**N**o one can predict with certainty where our next war will be. But we must be prepared for a near-peer adversary who will challenge our assertions and alter our response within a Multi-Domain Battle environment. Our traditional battle zones have transformed to a layered schematic that calls for us to project forces and equipment in a way that is synchronized and integrated across combatant commands—all while these battle zones are being contested by our enemy.

We can no longer assume continuous superiority across any domain; we must be prepared to react from a position of disadvantage. Before the first shot is fired, we must anticipate suffering a hit that could take out a brigade's equipment set, a major supply line, or a full ship.

The battlefield of the future is difficult to visualize. It challenges our current mindset of retreating to a

forward operating base and relying on contractors for life support and equipment maintenance— notions that will likely be absent in the next war. The charge to logisticians is to draw the conceptual line from the new battlefield to the sustainment force and help others do the same.

While technology will offer many solutions, we must also rely on our fundamentals. By reviving Soldier tasks, skills, and responsibilities, we develop warriors who not only can maintain their equipment to a high standard but also can think their way through unforeseen obstacles. At the same time, we must cultivate innovation to increase efficiency, improvise solutions, and develop methods that identify and exploit our adversaries' vulnerabilities.

Sustaining the Multi-Domain Battle force is a tall order. We can answer the call if we clearly understand and define requirements, identify and assess risk, and focus efforts on outputs and end states. We now have more data and information available to us than ever before.

However, we cannot get consumed by logistics statuses, figures, and numbers to make decisions. We have to rely on our professional intuition and leaders and then use logistics data to have a greater understanding of our comprehensive capabilities.

For leaders and commanders, this means understanding the leading indicators across all echelons, anticipating requirements, and incorporating the most useful information.

Leaders must understand how our available facts and figures inform decisions, and then they must follow through on execution.

As sustainers tackle their dual roles as stage setters and innovators, each organization's contribution is critical to our next fight. From transportation solutions, to life cycle management, and to research and development, all sustainment efforts are important to ensuring our force has what it needs today, is sustained in the highest working condition, and can anticipate needs for the future.

Multi-Domain Battle—across air, land, sea, space and cyberspace—brings both exceptional opportunity and vulnerability. As we prepare to sustain a mobile and expeditionary force, we must ensure effective training and the ability to respond to and exploit our adversaries. We must keep our skills sharp through repetition, challenge the status quo, and anticipate our logistics delivery posture in a degraded environment.

The Multi-Domain Battle environment will tax our logistics management and delivery systems and stretch our sustainment forces thin. With that understanding, each part of our vast materiel enterprise has an important role to play as we transform logistics operations to react to future wars.

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