



# Cognitive Maneuver for the Contemporary and Future Strategic Operating Environment



UNITED STATES ARMY  
SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND



White Paper  
*Cognitive Maneuver  
For the Contemporary and Future Strategic  
Operating Environment*

31 May 2016

V2.0 - JAR



Briefer: Mr. Robert A. Warburg  
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# Strategic Challenges

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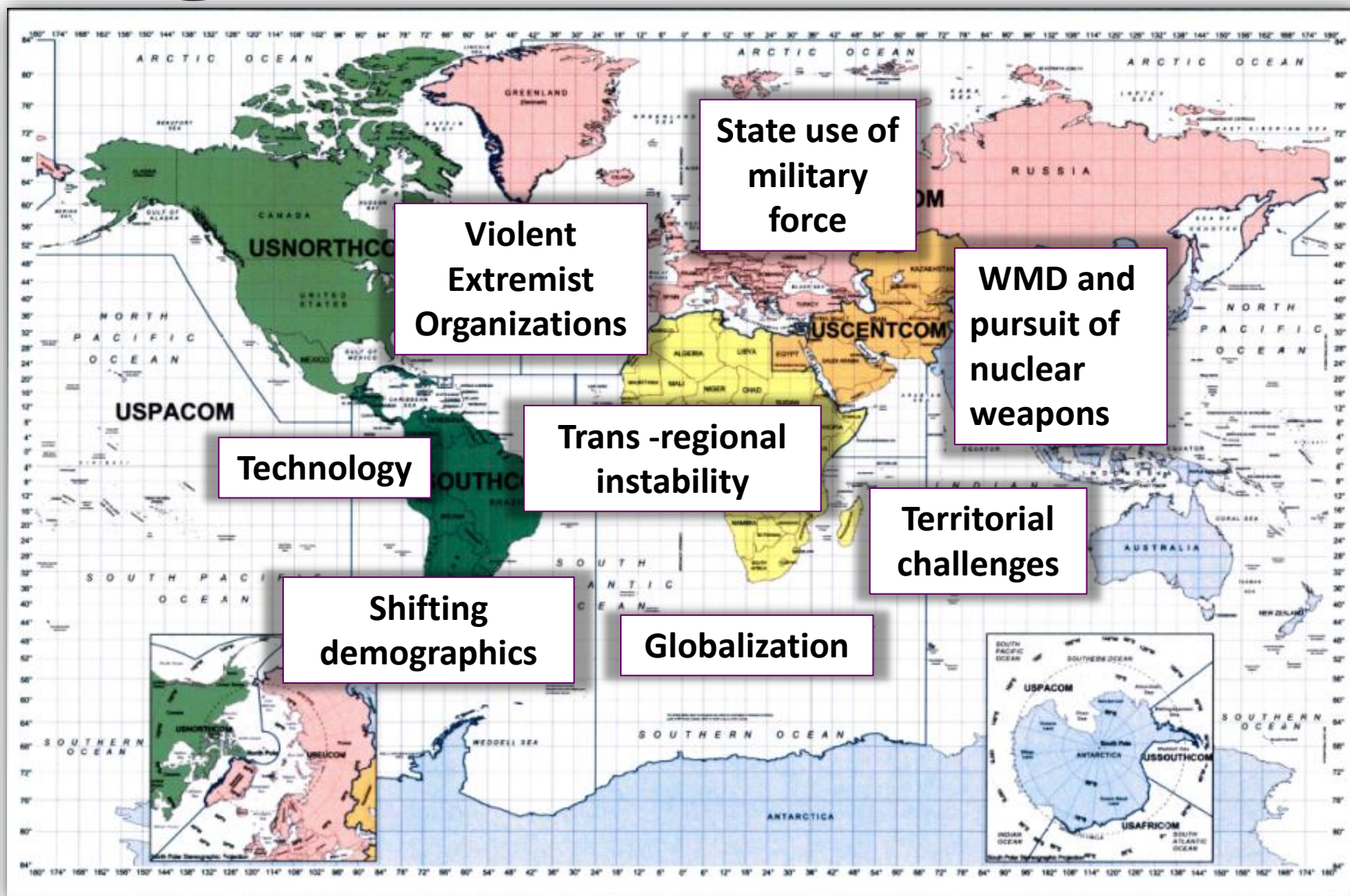
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Information Source: National Military Strategy, 2015





# Human Domain: Revealed by Technology

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**World population: 7.4 billion**  
**Connected by Facebook: 1.65 Billion**  
**50+% of the population is under 30 years old**

facebook

[www.statista.com/.../number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/](http://www.statista.com/.../number-of-monthly-active-facebook-users-worldwide/)  
[www.worldometers.info/world/population/](http://www.worldometers.info/world/population/)  
<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/183233.pdf>



# Rethinking Approaches to Conflict

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## NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

FEBRUARY 2015



- Power among states is more dynamic.
- **Power is shifting** below and beyond the nation-state.
- The Increasing interdependence of the global economy and **rapid pace of technological change** are linking individuals, groups and governments in unprecedented ways.
- A **struggle for power is underway** among and within many states of the Middle East and North Africa.
- The global energy market has changed dramatically.



DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
1010 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20305-1010

FEB 09 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS  
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
CHIEF OF THE MILITARY SERVICES  
CHIEF OF THE NATIONAL GUARD BUREAU  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS  
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION  
DIRECTOR OF THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT

SUBJECT: Wargaming and Innovation

I am using  
wargaming simulation  
as a tool to help us  
understand the  
complexity of the  
world and the  
challenges we face.

Military  
operations that  
require a high level  
of coordination and  
communication are  
essential to our  
success.

Our new  
mid-term (5-15)  
the executive and  
senior staff are  
working on a  
new approach to  
wargaming and  
innovation.

APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE



### Drivers of Conflict and Convergence in the Asia-Pacific Region in the Next 5-25 Years

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August 2015

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This white volume represents the views and opinions of the contributing authors.  
This report does not represent official US policy or position.

This white paper is approved for public release with unlimited distribution

1

SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMM



White Paper  
*The Gray Zone*

9 September 2015

Special Operations Forces Operating Concept



A Whitepaper to Guide Future Special Operations Force Development

Directorate of Force Management and Development

Concept Development and Integration Office

Version 3.0

1 February 2016

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USASOC Strategy -

29 February 2016

These conversations  
are about a different  
character of conflict.



# Current Approaches

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FUTURE THREATS

PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

EMERGING CHALLENGES

UNCONVENTIONAL CHALLENGES

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**Global Commons and Domain Interrelationships: Time for a New Conceptual Framework?**

Redden and Hughes, INSS, "Strategic Forum," NDU

**Capstone Concept for Joint Operations V3.0.** DOD

**Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020.**

Joint Chiefs of Staff

**Joint Operational Access Concept V1.0.** DOD

**Cross-Domain Synergy: Advancing Jointness.**

Odom and Hayes, "JFQ" 73, NDU

**Air-Sea Battle, the Challenge of Access, and U.S. National Security Strategy.** Kearn, "The Journal of the National Committee on American Foreign Policy"

**Cross-domain Synergy in Joint Operations Planners Guide.** Joint Staff J7

2009

2010

2012

2013

2014

2016

**Current institutional approaches address the need to do better with existing frameworks: "do joint better."**



# Senior Leader Demands

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PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

EMERGING CHALLENGES

UNCONVENTIONAL CHALLENGES

VISION

PRIORITIES

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“[W]ith a decision chain that cuts across the combatant commands only at the level of the secretary of defense, we're not postured to be as agile as we could be.”

— Ashton Carter, Secretary of Defense, remarks at CSIS, 5 Apr 2016

“The factors that are driving change – political, economic, social, and technological – are accelerating due to globalization. This, in turn, will increase the velocity of change and challenge our ability to understand and respond to events in the world.”

— Ambassador Thomas Shannon, 29 Oct 2015

“Our traditional approach is ... insufficient to deal with the actors that actually seek to advance their interests while avoiding our strengths. I don't find the current phasing construct for operational plans particularly useful right now.”

— General Joseph Dunford, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, remarks at CSIS, 29 Mar 2016

“[T]he most amazing information warfare blitzkrieg we have ever seen in the history of information warfare”

— GEN Phil Breedlove, SACEUR/CDR USEUCOM, remarks at the 4 Sep 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, UK, quoted by John Vandiver in *Stars and Stripes*, 4 Sep 2014,

“I believe the Russians are mobilizing right now for a war that they think is going to happen in five or six years—not that they're going to start a war in five or six years, but ... they will be in a war of some sort, of some scale ... within the next five or six years.”

— LTG Ben Hodges, USAREUR Commander, interview in the "Wall Street Journal", 6 Feb 2016





# USASOC Experimentation

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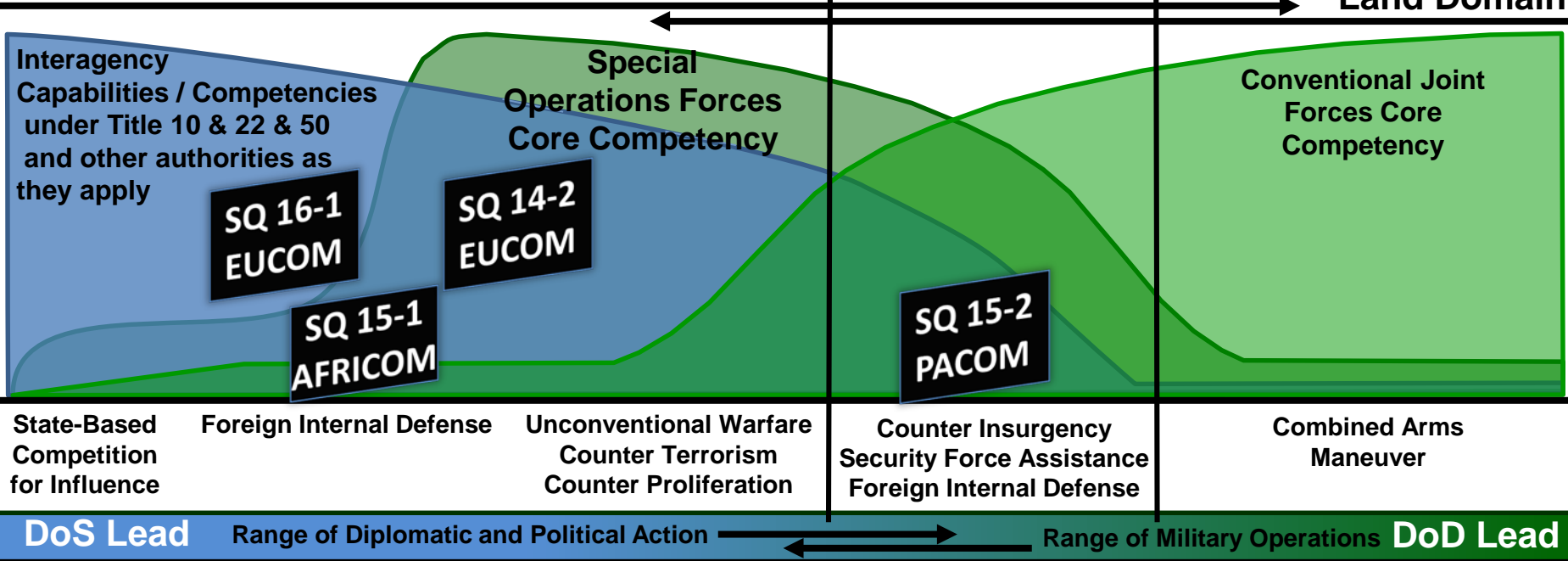
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**SILENT QUEST (SQ)** is a United States Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Exercise that assesses concepts, capabilities and capacities required to meet strategic and operational challenges that Army Special Operations Forces (ARSOF) can expect to encounter in 2020 and beyond.

## Human Domain

## Land Domain



**Silent Quest simulation platform continues to demonstrate:**

- Demands to shift how we understand conflict in the Gray Zone and beyond
- Gaps in ability to “campaign” in the Gray Zone need new framework, new approaches, structures and people
- Recognizing the nexus between geography and the human domain is a key component for addressing trans-regional threats



# Redefining the Win

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CAPABILITIES

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**We will retain and strengthen our power projection capabilities so that we can deter conflict, and if deterrence fails, win decisively against aggressors. p. 20.**

2

USASOC  
White Paper



**"Redefining the Win"**

06 January 2015

## Framing the Win

- Decision space preserved for our leaders with emphasis on providing decision-makers with scalable, cost imposing options to hold adversary interests at risk.
- Conditions set for an acceptable political outcome.
- **Positional advantage retained in terms of operational time, forces, ideas + perceptions, relationships and geography to advance U.S. and our Allies interests.**

## Defining the Win

- *Strategic Power Retained.*
- *Influence Expanded.*
- *Governance Increased.*

**Winning in a Complex World requires a proactive stance and centers on successful competition with State / Non-State Actors and others for the relative superiority over the physical, cognitive and moral security, and the adequate governance of populations.**





# Military Problem

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PRIORITIES

CAPABILITIES

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*Given an evolving global operating environment where human domain-centric factors are increasingly the decisive features of today's challenges, how can USASOC contribute to TSOC and GCC efforts to create and execute strategies that incorporate cognitive campaigning?*



***Cognitive maneuver is the tactics of a campaign to shape the conditions of the global environment and influence actors' decision-making behaviors. We shape and influence to continually maintain positions of advantage, adapting to the changing nature and character of conflict.***

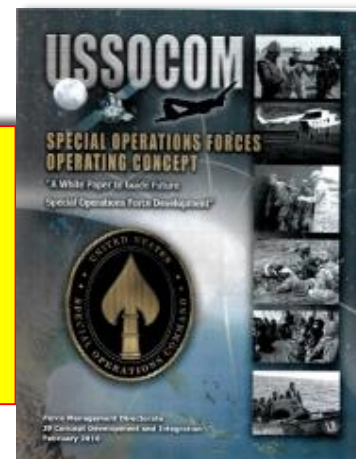


**Evolving operational demands require a force that is capable of impacting human decision-making and associated behavior and focus campaign design on creating desired effects to achieve success across all domains.**

**– Operating in the Human Domain Concept, 2015**

**Operational challenge: “develop a deeper understanding of the environment to see and act ahead of flashpoints of instability, inform the development of US options, and reduce operational and strategic blind spots.”**

**– SOF Operating Concept, 2016**





# Maneuver Occurs in Multiple Planes

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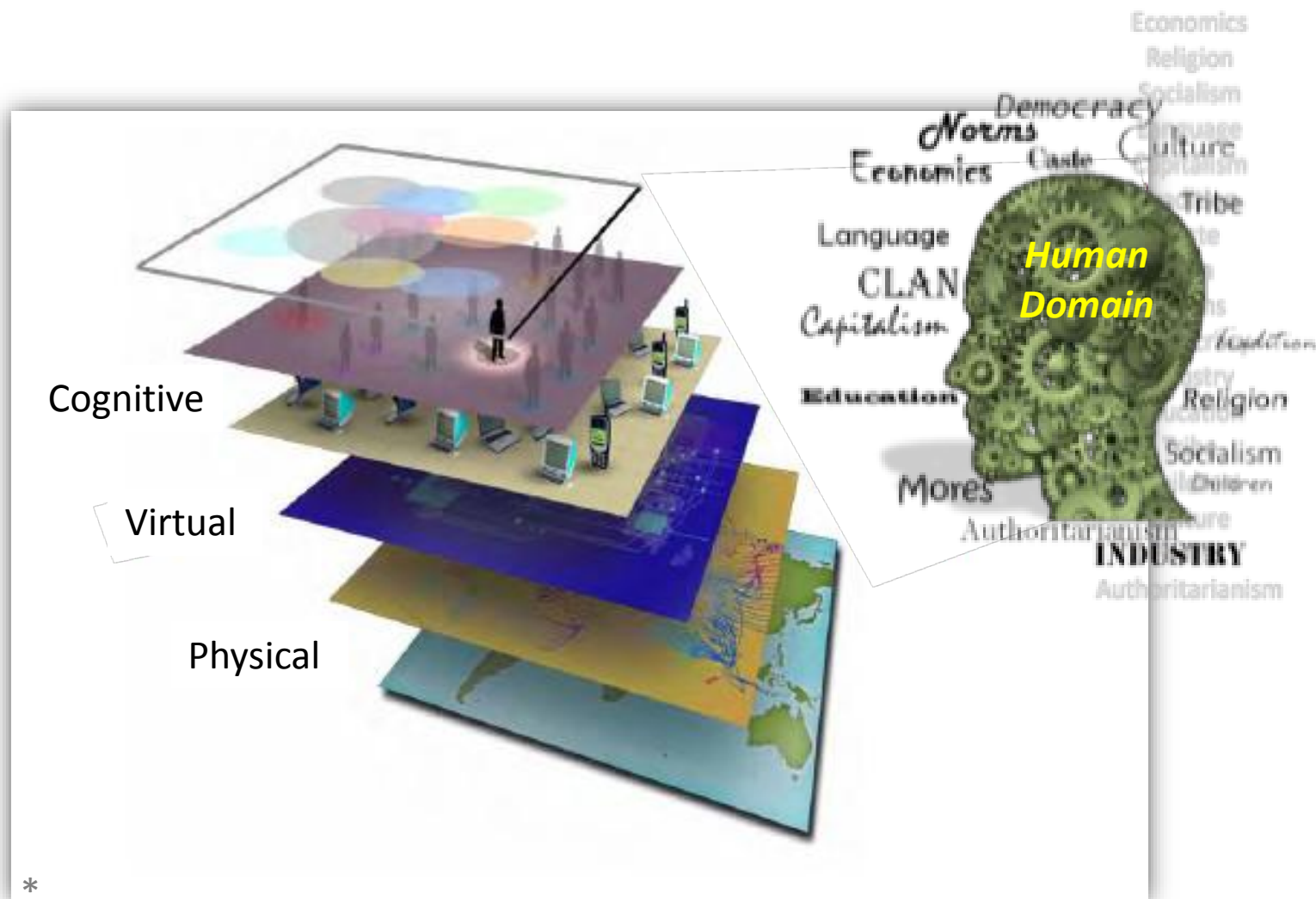
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\* Source: UK Doctrine Manual JDP 04 Understanding



# Alternative Forms of Maneuver

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PRIORITIES

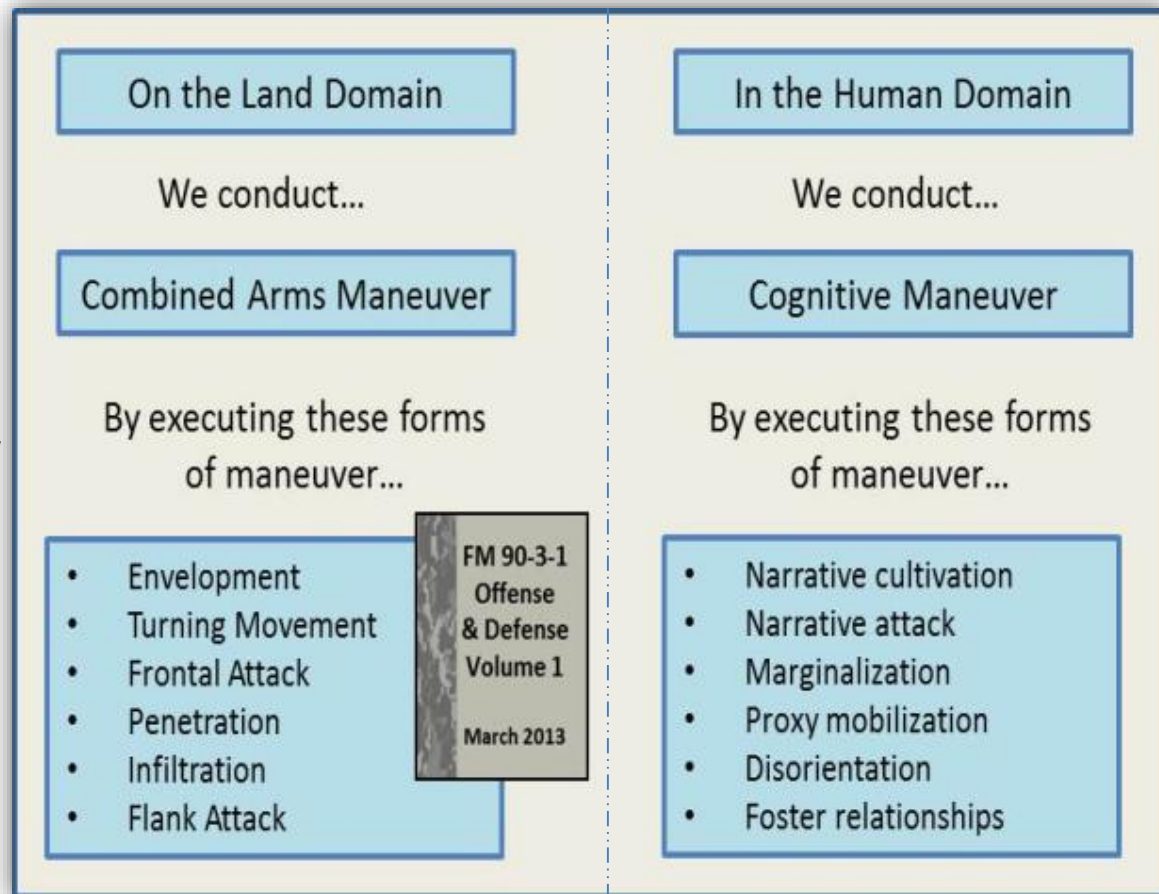
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## Comparison of Forms of Maneuver

- Looking at the challenge of understanding maneuver in an environment characterized by trans-regional, multifunctional, multi-domain considerations, conveying known doctrinal constructs to a new character of conflict may be problematic.
- Sequencing actions that follow old constructs may not address the true security problem. An alternative framework with a new lexicon might be required.
- The graphic compares an alternative framework with the doctrinal forms of maneuver.







# Depicting Physical Maneuver

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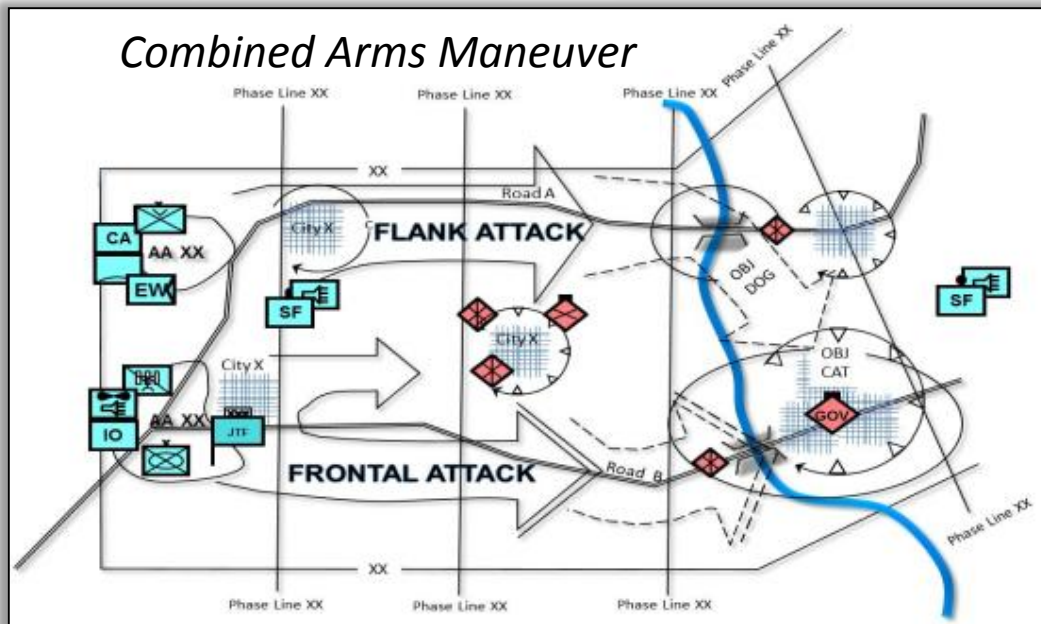
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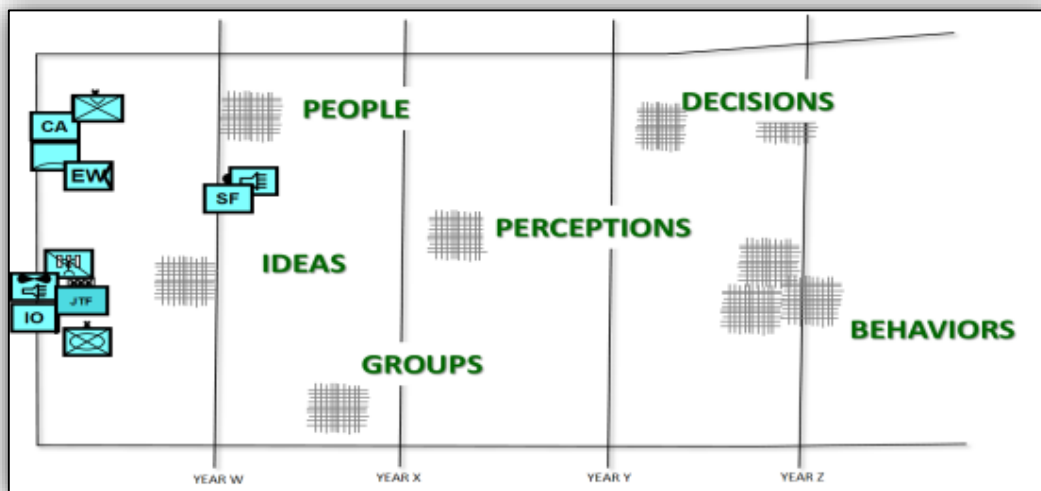
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This figure depicts combined arms maneuver using two forms against opposing forces. The sketch illustrates a frontal attack and a flank attack.



The figure depicts a changed view of the environment, which includes the Human Domain and the functions of time and intangibles, like ideas and decision making.

### *Changed View of the Environment*





# Depicting Cognitive Maneuver

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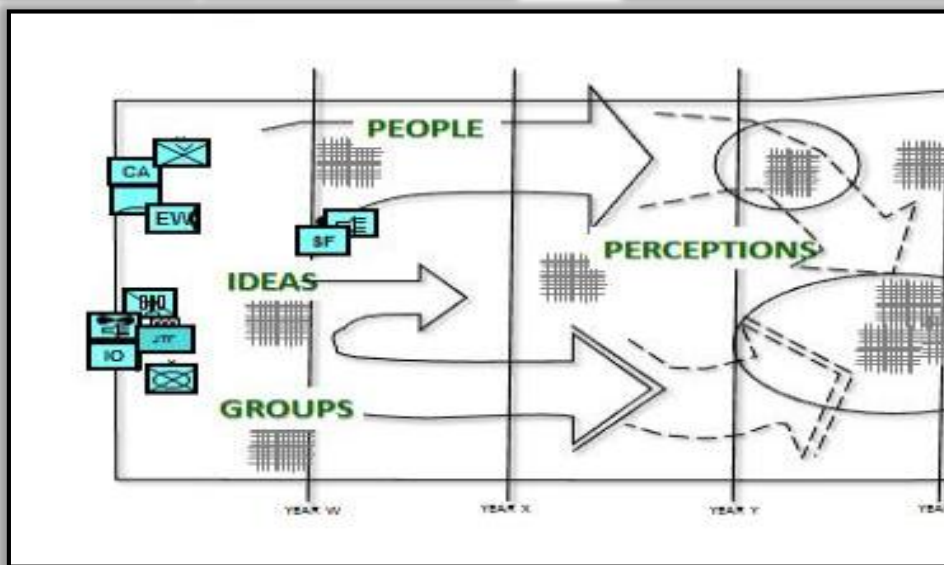
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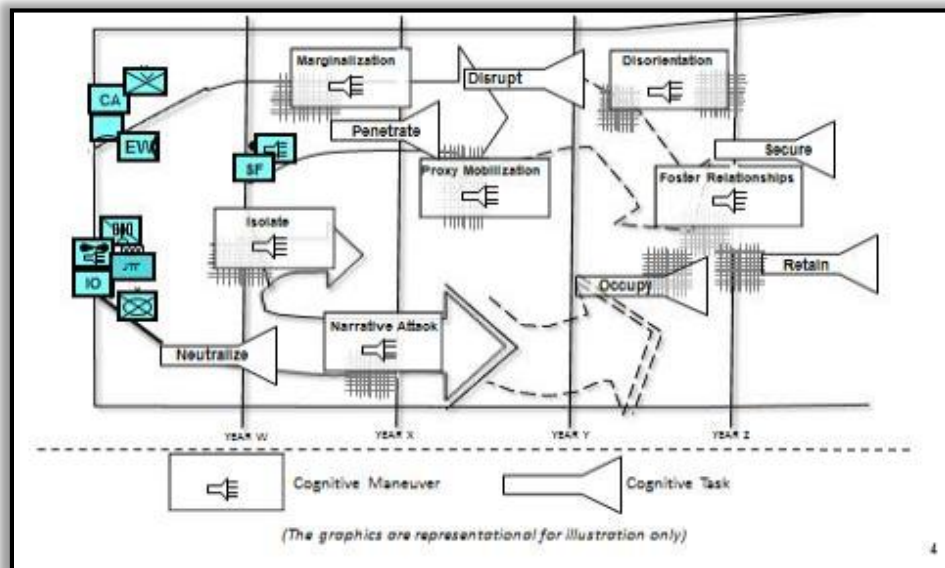
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The figure to the right illustrates a way we can view the environment through a human domain lens and consider how maneuver in this environment might be represented.



Cognitive maneuver is shown using a different framework to graphically portray narrative attack supported by marginalization and disorientation. These maneuvers include tactical cognitive tasks sequenced over time rather than space.





# Cognitive Maneuver Campaigns

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FUTURE THREATS

PERSISTENT CHALLENGES

EMERGING CHALLENGES

UNCONVENTIONAL CHALLENGES

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PRIORITIES

CAPABILITIES

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## Physical Campaigning

- Purpose - effect
- Objective - specific
- Time - bounded
- Environment – select geographic AOs
- Shape to dominate
- Arrange operations

## Cognitive Campaigning

- Purpose - advantage
- Objective - adaptive
- Time - unbounded
- Environment – global human AO
- Shape to position
- Arrange narratives

**Redefining the Win Success: (1) Decision space has been preserved for our National leaders. Of note, decision space is characterized as providing decision makers with scalable, cost imposing options to hold, either unilaterally or with our partners, potential adversary interests at risk. (2) Conditions are set for an acceptable political outcome in the areas that matter to the United States. (3) Positional advantage is retained in terms of time, forces and relationships to advance U.S. interests.**

**The human domain necessitates a cognitive campaign approach characterized by: understanding, engagement, shaping conditions, influencing decision behaviors, action, and reframing perceived baselines.**



# Deterring Through Historic Transitions

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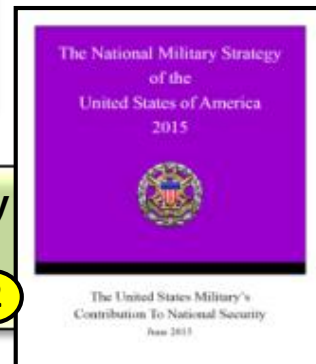


1

A struggle for power is underway within many states of the Middle East and North Africa. This is generational...combustible, especially in societies where ...rulers reject democratic reforms, exploit their economies, and crush civil society.

Iran's actions have **destabilized the region** and brought misery to countless people **while denying the Iranian people the prospect of a prosperous future.**

2



3



Population Based Power

4

## Deterrence Mechanism

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action buys operational time to allow historic transitions within the Iranian people to moderate enduring regime objectives.

5

1979 Revolution

2015

2018

2020

2021

2030

6

Operational Time - is US, partner, and adversary full appreciation of the impact of time on the physical, military, and civil aspects of the environment, with a contextual understanding of all stakeholders' perspectives and equities, and leveraging that understanding within a campaign; it considers time required to build operational trust, partner and/or population based power, and build or disrupt physical, cognitive, and/or moral security.





# What We Maneuver? or Where We Maneuver?

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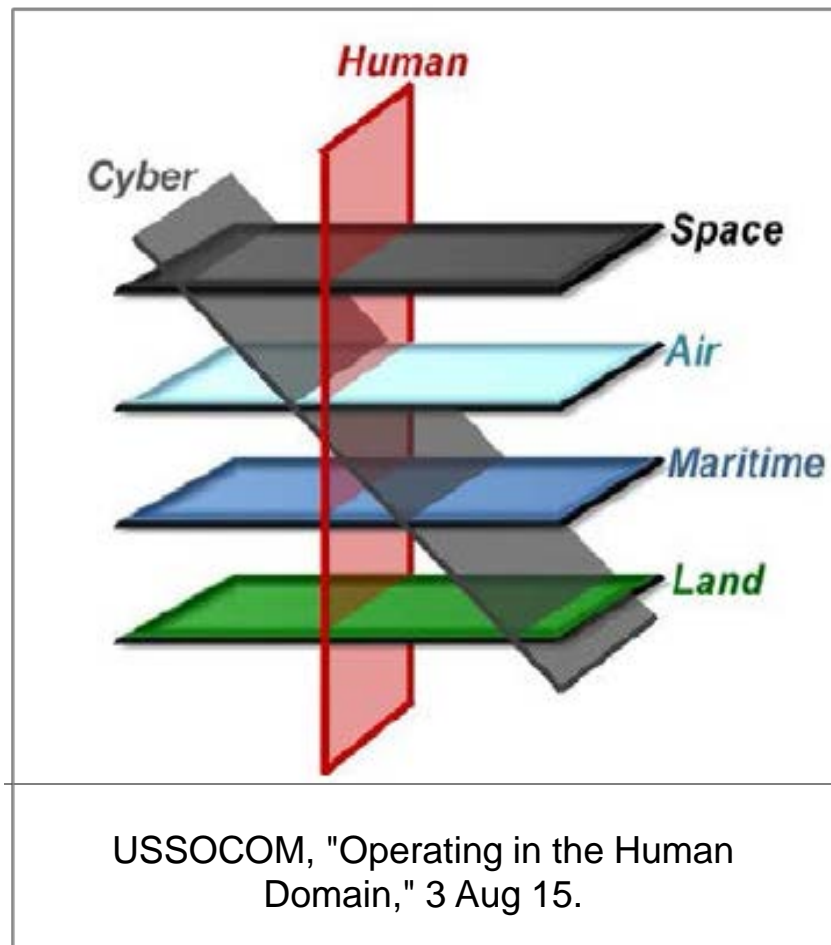
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- Are we potentially looking at **a wholly new approach to maneuvering**, one that is a synthesis of domains and functions?
- What if the question was not so much, what we maneuver? Rather, what if the question we should raise is where we maneuver?
- By distinguishing physical and cognitive maneuver in a security context witnessing a changing character of conflict, a new thought paradigm of Multi-domain Maneuver (MDM) transcends what we maneuver to underscore where we do it.





# Maneuver in Multiple Domains

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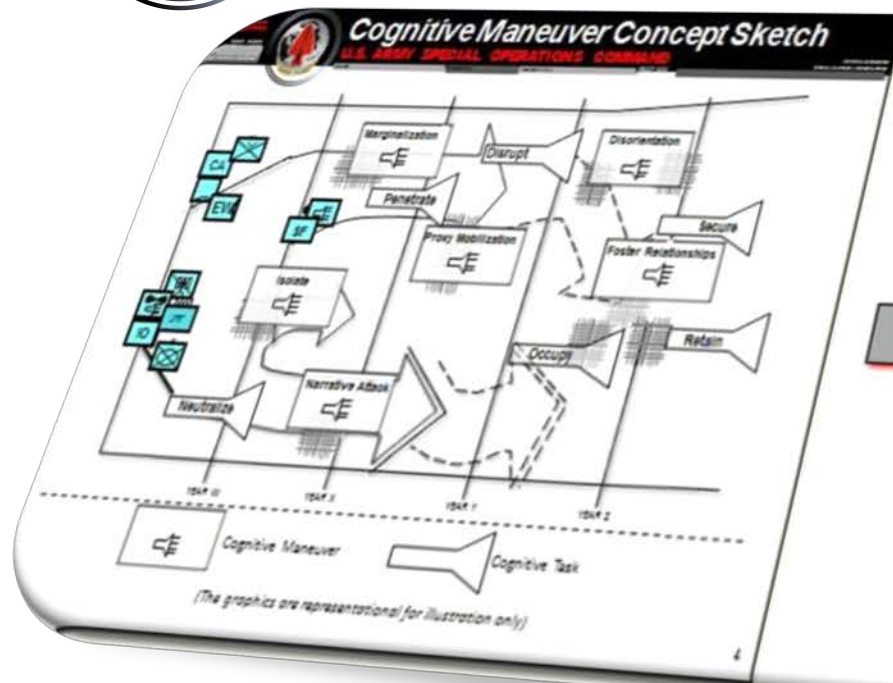
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**Combined Arms  
Maneuver  
"2.0" ?**

**Does the inclusion of the Human Domain bring changes to current forms of maneuver?**

**How is maneuver in the Human Domain synchronized with the other domains?**



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