



# Main Command Post-Operational Detachments (MCP-ODs) and Division Headquarters Readiness

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Researchers identify the effects of the Main Command Post-Operational Detachment on division headquarters (HQ) readiness. The authors reviewed Army history, doctrine, and documents to assess HQ deployment; interviewed participants in multicomponent HQs; analyzed how staffs prepare combined forces for employment as a single HQ; and developed a model to illustrate when a division HQ will experience increased risk as it tries to meet requirements.



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How does this design affect division HQ readiness to respond rapidly to contingencies and their ability to conduct mission command from alert through completed deployment in theater?
- Are there significant risks with FARG II that were not identified during the design process and thus unknowingly accepted by Army leadership?
- What additional steps might be taken to further mitigate both anticipated and unanticipated risks?



## KEY FINDINGS

MCP-ODs have demonstrated that, if they are given at least 270 days of advance notice, they can successfully deploy with an AC division HQ and accomplish their missions

- MCP-ODs affect the capacity rather than the capabilities of division HQ.
- Without substantial advanced notification of sourcing, MCP-OD personnel will not be able to deploy as quickly as the AC soldiers in a division's command posts.
- This limitation was known when FARG II was designed and explicitly accepted as a risk by the Chief of Staff of the Army.

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The instances of risks found in the research were adequately anticipated by the FARG II designers

- The FARG II and MCP-OD designs successfully mitigate the FARG I risks they were intended to address.
- Nonetheless, several implications of MCP-OD readiness and availability limitations might need further mitigation.
- Requirements to accomplish in-garrison tasks were inadequately considered in the FARG II design.

After applying various levels of MCP-OD readiness, mission requirements, and deployment time lines, the model showed that the new structure should be able to meet a range of contingencies

- MCP-OD personnel are unlikely to be fully deployable for short-notice missions, such as those in response to Global Response Force orders.
- In the worst-case scenario of a full HQ deployment on less than 90 days' notice, a main command post shortfall emerged.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

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- The Army should consider two different division designs: one fully manned by the AC, focused on short-notice deployments across the spectrum of conflict and without a MCP-OD; and one that accepts the risks of the FARG II design (as mitigated by the MCP-OD).
- The Army should reconsider creating division HQ as true multicomponent units and integrating the MCP-ODs accordingly, versus the current designation as partner units.
- Each division should develop a command post contingency staffing plan for filling critical position shortfalls if they are not sufficiently mitigated by their partnered MCP-ODs.
- U.S. Army Forces Command should consider promulgating an information paper or other communication on Army decisionmaking and division HQ force structure trade-offs.
- Training and Doctrine Command should consider including division HQ design in the curriculum for intermediate-level professional military education courses.
- The Army should consider designating one or more MCP-ODs as Focused Readiness Units and resourcing them to enable deployment within 60 days of notification.
- Division Chiefs of Staff and MCP-OD commanders should collaborate closely to synchronize AC and RC training management cycles to optimize MCP-OD readiness and integration into the division HQ.