

Make Army Futures Command Great Again

3

1

Save



Colonel Don Campbell with members of the United States Army Fourth Infantry Division stand in front of the American flag prior to the home opener between the Anaheim Angels and the Texas Rangers at the Ballpark in Arlington, Texas, on April 9, 2004. The U.S. Fourth Infantry, was instrumental in the capture of Saddam Hussein. Ronald Martinez/Getty Images

OPINION

By Michael McInerney

11/21/2024 Updated: 11/21/2024

A A Print

Commentary

When President Trump takes office in January, his Army Secretary will need to refocus and re-energize the Army while eliminating bureaucratic waste. Among the many complex tasks ahead, one move is simple and clear: return Army Futures Command (AFC) to the purpose it was created for during the first Trump administration. Restore its authority, restore its power, and let AFC do what it does best—modernize the U.S. Army for the battlefields of tomorrow.

Established in 2018, AFC was envisioned as the spearhead of Army modernization. Backed with budget authority, AFC wielded real influence over investment decisions. Then-Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy and Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Milley created AFC to break free from two decades of failed modernization efforts. Years of over-budget, underperforming development projects prompted McCarthy and Milley to create a streamlined, fast-moving command able to dodge bureaucratic bottlenecks, cut through “analysis paralysis” and deliver next-generation capabilities. An empowered AFC began immediately to eliminate unnecessary programs and deliver the Army that we need—one equipped with state-of-the-art technology and ready to deter future adversaries.

But in late-2021, AFC’s momentum ground to a halt. The Biden administration issued two memos that stripped the command of its budget authority and effectively neutered its mission. The argument? That this move would restore “civilian control” over military spending. In reality, it threw AFC back into the tangled arms of the Pentagon’s infamous “acquisition blob”—a web of civilian bureaucrats, entrenched contractors, and out of touch acquisition officers. AFC’s loss of budget authority meant it no longer had the power to influence Army modernization decisions. Its voice—one that had cut through the red tape to make real progress—was practically silenced.

Without budgetary control, AFC became a figurehead, forced to provide unwanted advice from the sidelines while Army



modernization returned to the same slow, bloated, and ineffective Pentagon bureaucracy it was meant to disrupt.

Returning AFC's authorities is not about rolling back civilian control. Before 2022, AFC's 4-star Commander shared acquisition budget authority with the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisitions, Logistics, and Technology, a civilian leader. Additionally, the civilian Secretary of the Army maintained final say over the Army's annual budget request. This was a balanced system that empowered uniformed operationally focused military leaders while keeping civilian oversight intact.

Revoking budget authority left AFC's role in the acquisition process up in the air, leaving it unable to execute its original vision. This was not what visionary leaders during Trump's first administration had in mind. The bottom line? Restoring AFC's authority means restoring the voice of uniformed leaders in Army modernization.

The stakes couldn't be higher. As threats around the world multiply, from an aggressive Russia to a rising China, the U.S. Army must be ready. AFC was designed to deliver the weapons, technology, and capabilities needed for future conflicts. But without real authority, AFC remains little more than an advisory body—a high-level think tank when what we need is a lean, capable, and empowered modernization engine.

The incoming Trump administration has an opportunity to revive its original vision. Reinstating AFC's budget authority would re-arm it in the battle against bureaucratic inertia and give it the tools needed to shape the Army of the future. Let's make AFC great again, and in doing so, make our Army a force to be reckoned with for decades to come. The future of U.S. military superiority depends on it.

From [RealClearWire](#)

Views expressed in this article are opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times.

Sign up for the Morning Brief newsletter. Join 200,000+ Canadians who receive truthful news without bias or agenda, investigative reporting that matters, and important stories other media ignore. [Sign up with 1-click >>](#)



Michael McInerney

Author

Michael McInerney is a retired Army Colonel who served as Chief of Programs and Force Management for Army Futures Command.

Copyright © 2000 - 2024 The Epoch Times Association Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Cookies Settings](#)