

The background of the cover is a light yellow-green color. It is decorated with several stylized, light green leaf motifs that appear to be floating or falling from the top left towards the bottom right. These motifs are scattered across the entire cover, adding a natural and organic feel to the design.

# **BREAKING THE PHALANX**

---

**A New Design for Landpower in the 21st Century**

**Douglas A. MacGregor**

 **Greenwood**  
PUBLISHING GROUP

BREAKING  
THE  
PHALANX

*This page intentionally left blank*

# BREAKING THE PHALANX

*A New Design for  
Landpower in the 21st Century*

---

DOUGLAS A. MACGREGOR

Foreword by Donald Kagan

*Published in cooperation with the  
Center for Strategic and International Studies*

---

PRAEGER

Westport, Connecticut  
London

## Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Macgregor, Douglas A.

Breaking the phalanx : a new design for landpower in the 21st century / Douglas A. Macgregor : foreword by Donald Kagan.  
p. cm.

“Published in cooperation with the Center for Strategic and International Studies.”

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-275-95793-4 (alk. paper).—ISBN 0-275-95794-2 (PB : alk. paper)

1. United States. Army—Reorganization. 2. Twenty-first century.

I. Center for Strategic and International Studies (Washington, D.C.)

II. Title.

UA25.M13 1997

355'.02'09730905—dc20 96-34012

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

Copyright © 1997 by the Center for Strategic and International Studies

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, by any process or technique, without the express written consent of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 96-34012

ISBN: 0-275-95793-4

0-275-95794-2 (pbk.)

First published in 1997

Praeger Publishers, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881  
An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48-1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5

**For  
Major General Edward C. O'Connor, USA (Retired)  
and his wife  
Charley**

*This page intentionally left blank*

# *Contents*

---

<i>Illustrations</i>	ix
<i>Foreword</i> by Donald Kagan	xi
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xv
1. Introduction	1
2. Landpower and Strategic Dominance	9
3. Meeting the Demands of Revolutionary Change in Warfare	31
4. Organizing within the RMA Trendlines	59
5. Fighting with the Information Age Army in the Year 2003	95
6. Shaping Landpower for Strategic Dominance	141
7. Streamlining Defense to Pay for Strategic Dominance	185
8. Final Thoughts and Future Prospects	225



<i>Appendix A: Glossary of Military Terms</i>	239
<i>Appendix B: Military Abbreviations and Acronyms</i>	245
<i>Appendix C: Notional Corps Support Command (COSCOM)</i>	255
<i>Appendix D: Army Prepositioning Afloat</i>	259
<i>Selected Bibliography</i>	265
<i>Index</i>	277

## *Illustrations*

---

Figure 3.1	“All Arms” Formation History	53
Figure 4.1	Current Army Force Structure	60
Figure 4.2	Force XXI	61
Figure 4.3	1944 Combat Command Organization	65
Figure 4.4	Example of a C4I Battalion Organization	72
Figure 4.5	Command and Control Scheme for Employment in Combat	73
Figure 4.6	Organic C4I Structure	75
Figure 4.7	Structure of Heavy Combat Group	76
Figure 4.8	Structure of Airborne-Air Assault Group	77
Figure 4.9	Structure of Heavy Recon-Strike Group	79
Figure 4.10	Structure of Light Recon-Strike Group	80
Figure 4.11	Staff Structure of a Combat Group	81
Figure 4.12	Structure of Corps Rocket Artillery Group and Theater High Altitude Area Defense Group	83
Figure 4.13	Example of a Corps Headquarters Structured to Operate in a JTF-Based Army	84
Figure 4.14	Example of an Airborne-Air Assault Group Tailored for a MOOTW Mission	86

Figure 4.15	Intermediate Force Design	87
Figure 5.1	Operation Crusader	102
Figure 5.2	USCENTCOM Scheme of Maneuver	109
Figure 5.3	Iranian Plan of Action	113
Figure 5.4	Battle for Kuwait City	114
Figure 6.1	Army Overseas Presence	155
Figure 6.2	Top 20 Investment Program Comparison, FY96	175
Figure 7.1	Possible Strategic Reserve Corps Elements	193
Figure 7.2	Structure of Tier II Arng	193
Figure 7.3	Examples of How Individual Unit Costs Were Used to Establish Group Operating and Maintenance Costs	196
Figure 7.4	Headquarters Realignment/Reorganization	198
Figure 7.5	Results of Consolidation and Reorganization	198
Figure 7.6	DoD Investment Programs	200
Figure 7.7	Combat Equipment Estimated Costs	210

## *Foreword*

---

The end of the Cold War has not brought an end to the need for careful thought about the defense of peace and security in the world. On the contrary, the collapse of the system on which international relations were based for a half-century, the rapid development of new military technology, and the predictable demand in the United States and among its allies for sharp reductions in expenditure for defense together require the most serious and penetrating consideration of what should be the shape and character of the forces needed to preserve the peace and defend American interests in the years to come.

There is broad agreement that we are probably in the midst of what is called a revolution in military affairs that is rapidly altering the character of warfare. Because this has been driven largely by the availability of new or greatly improved technologies, the tendency has been to look primarily to the application of advanced technology as the answer to current and future military challenges. The temptation is to seek victory through the use of accurate and deadly bombs and missiles fired from aircraft far above the ground or from ships far out at sea, to find a “silver bullet” that will achieve the goals of war without casualties and without, for the most part, any serious use of ground forces.

The development and use of such weapons will certainly be important, but it is wrong and dangerous to imagine they can do the job alone. The Gulf War showed the potentiality of such weapons, but they were no silver

bullet. Bombardment at a distance played an important role in the victory over Iraq, but it did not defeat Saddam Hussein's army. That crucial task was accomplished chiefly by ground forces, and it would be reckless to imagine that such forces will not be vital to success in wars of the future.

Ground forces must be equipped with the best weapons and equipment of the new era, but that will not be adequate if the new devices are merely grafted onto a military organization that is not designed specifically to use them to best effect. True revolutions in military affairs depend on the reconfiguration of forces to meet new conditions, and they require new fighting doctrines. Lieutenant Colonel (P) Douglas A. Macgregor's study *Breaking the Phalanx* economically and convincingly makes the case for the inescapable importance of land forces in wars of the future and, no less important, in deterrence of wars.

Colonel Macgregor brings a remarkable panoply of training, education, and experience to the task. A professional soldier, he is a graduate of West Point and an experienced leader of American combat troops in action during the Gulf War. Beyond that, he is a student of history and a scholar of the military art of the first rank. This rare combination allows him to understand current events and developments with the wisdom provided by a knowledge of previous human experience. His use of the victory of the Roman Legion over the less flexible Greek hoplite phalanx as an illuminating analogy to his own proposal for a new military organization is a good example, as are his analyses of military events from the 18th through the 20th centuries that show the special tasks for which landpower is required. This historical knowledge and understanding is tested and reinforced by Colonel Macgregor's direct experience with the latest weapons and tactics and the character of modern warfare. Few analysts of our current and future military needs bring to bear credentials of such value.

His study shows a deep knowledge and appreciation of the value of other forces, air, surface, and undersea, and fairly evaluates their strengths and weaknesses, but his focus is on ground forces. Having demonstrated their continuing essential role, he goes on to recommend a strikingly new organization for ground combat power, more flexible, mobile and self-sufficient, versatile and powerful, structured to operate as part of a Joint Task Force. Its purpose is not only to make the best use of the new technology, but also to unleash the potentialities of the human beings who use them. The new unit is meant to be a "smarter, smaller, faster and more technologically advanced warfighting organization," a central feature of a doctrinal engine on the joint level empowered to develop a unified warfighting doctrine at the strategic and operational levels of war. That is the sort of

thinking desperately needed, but not yet evident in the government's plans for the future of its military forces. Those interested in the defense of American security and the pursuit of its interest cannot afford to ignore Colonel Macgregor's innovative proposals and stimulating ideas presented in this study.

Donald Kagan

*This page intentionally left blank*

## *Acknowledgments*

---

A great many people and organizations have helped me in researching and writing this book. I am indebted to the Department of the Army for the opportunity to spend my war college year as a military fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C. I also want to thank Dr. William Taylor, senior vice president, International Security Affairs, and director of Political–Military Studies at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), for providing me with the facilities and support to write this book. I am equally indebted to Dr. Dan Gouré, Dr. Ahmed Hashim, Mr. Dave Earnest, Mr. Ed Peartree, and Ms. Meg Keough—all of CSIS—for their helpful comments and suggestions. They made the year at CSIS a special pleasure for me.

I am further indebted to a host of friends and associates in the Department of Defense. This list includes Brigadier General Bill Lay, USAF; Colonel V. J. Warner, USA; Colonel Tom Davis, USA; Colonel Mark Kimmitt, USA; Lieutenant Colonel Mike Ford, USAF; Lieutenant Colonel Reggie Gillis, USA; Lieutenant Colonel Mike DeMayo, USA; Lieutenant Colonel John Gordon, USA; Lieutenant Colonel Steven Scroggs, USA (ret.); Commander J. Navarro, USN; Commander Doug Smith, USN; and Major Darrin Irvine, USA. I am equally indebted to Dr. Craig College, deputy director of Program Evaluation and Assessment, Department of the Army, and to his colleague Colonel Tony Hermes, USA, for their assistance with the cost estimates of the current and proposed Army force designs. I also owe thanks



to Dr. John Hillen, Defense Analyst at the Heritage Foundation, for his advice and support.

The ideas and professional accomplishments of Army Captains Bill Prior, Chris Hoffman, John Gifford, Steve Pinette, Eric Wang, Jim Gentile, and David Jones, along with CSM Charles “Landshark” Smith, USA (ret.); CSM Roger Stradley, USA; SFC William Burns, USA; and SFC Scott Pear, USA; and numerous others were vital to this work. I also owe thanks to Dr. Fred Kagan, assistant professor of military history, and Major H. R. McMaster, USA, in the Department of History at the U.S. Military Academy. I am most indebted to Colonel David Shanahan, USA, and Lieutenant Colonel Frank Finelli, USA, for their insights and friendship. Without their interest, encouragement, support, and patience, this book would never have been completed.

Because the book had its genesis during my command of the 1st Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry in the 1st Infantry Division (Mech) at Fort Riley, Kansas, I owe special thanks to Colonel Mike Crews, USA; Colonel Tom Metz, USA; Brigadier General Michael Dodson, USA; Brigadier General Huba Wass de Czege, USA (ret.); Major General David Ohle, USA; and General William Hartzog, USA, all of whom allowed me and my subordinate officers and noncommissioned officers to put into practice at Fort Riley and the National Training Center the tactical theory which underpins much of the thinking in this book. As always, I can never sufficiently thank all of the junior officers, noncommissioned officers, and soldiers whose selfless service and devotion to the Army and the nation inspired me throughout this effort. However, the customary disclaimer that a book’s errors and shortcomings are the author’s alone applies with particular force in this instance. The responsibility for this analysis and interpretation is, for better or worse, truly my own.

## *Introduction*

---

In the perspective of history, there are very few models for a 21st century American Army designed to dominate areas of American strategic interest, convey ideas, exert influence, and control the pace of human events through superior organization, leadership, discipline, and technology. However, one stands out.

In 200 B.C., the Macedonians in alliance with Sparta and Syria set out to regain control of Greece and the Aegean coast of Asia Minor from Rome's Greek allies. After two years of inconclusive fighting, the Roman and Macedonian armies finally met in the hill country of Thessaly. When the two armies collided in battle, the Macedonian right wing drove back the Roman left, but while the Macedonian left was deploying from march column on uneven ground, it was struck in the flank and routed by the Roman right. Part of the advancing Roman right suddenly swung around—apparently without orders—hitting the Macedonian right wing and driving it from the field in confusion. Macedonian losses were about 13,000; Roman, a few hundred. Without the means to continue the war, the Macedonians renounced all claims to Greece and the Aegean coast. Rome's victory made Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean an integral part of the Roman Empire for half a millennium. And the Phalanx, the backbone of the Macedonian military system, was broken.

Until the smaller, more agile Roman Legions (4,500–6,000 men) deployed in checkerboard formation destroyed it, the ancient world regarded

the Macedonian Phalanx as invincible. In a typical Phalanx nearly 10,000 heavily armed soldiers stood sixteen deep. Their tactic was simple and deadly: a perfectly aligned charge at a dead run against the enemy's weak point. But these tactics failed in action against the Roman Legions, which could maneuver more easily without fear of losing alignment and without the need for concern about gaps in the line—the gaps were built in!

For efficiency in attacking, subduing, occupying, administering, and pacifying hostile territory, the Roman Legion has seldom been equaled by another military organization. The same legions who routed the enemy in battle could handle disarmament control, police patrol, and general administrative supervision.<sup>1</sup> For almost 500 years, the arrival of the Roman Legion on foreign soil was synonymous with the presence of order, stability, and civilization. This is because however fierce the urge to dominate may have been, the Roman desire for an international system embodying Roman principles of justice and order was greater.

Like it or not, the logic of international relations that positioned Rome at the center of world affairs also compels the United States to remain engaged in the world at a time when America's economic dominance is substantially reduced from what it was just after World War II. There is no going back, in other words, to the assumption on which the traditional American nation-state was founded: that a small army, augmented by large numbers of reservists, is all that is needed to hold the enemy at bay while civilian economic facilities are converted to wartime production.<sup>2</sup> This was tried after World War II with tragic consequences for the U.S. Army and the American people in the Korean conflict.<sup>3</sup> At the same time, America cannot afford to enter the new millennium as a nostalgic posthegemon with expensive industrial age armed forces that simply do not fit the new strategic environment. In practical terms, this involves replacing old military structures and concepts—the contemporary equivalent of the Phalanx—with new structures: the modern American military equivalent of the Roman Legion.

For strategic planners, though, rethinking warfare is not easy. The end of the Cold War saw the beginning of the end of another, equally significant era in world history—that of industrial age warfare. That era opened in the 19th century with the first appearance of mass-produced modern artillery weapons and culminated with the American-led coalition's victory over Iraq in the Gulf War. Iraq's dramatic defeat suggested new ways in which the United States could attack an opponent technologically.<sup>4</sup> As a result, analysts in both the public and private sectors began applying the term "information age warfare" to a new, as yet undiscovered era of human conflict.<sup>5</sup>

Focusing primarily on the role of technology in military affairs entails great risk, however. The passion for new military technology and the desire for quantum leaps in capability that it can provide often lead policymakers to overlook the importance of the right organization for combat within a coherent doctrinal framework. The deterrent value of forward-stationed ground forces is overlooked. Moreover, the never-ending search for elusive silver bullet weaponry ignores the fact that once any military technology is known to exist and its characteristics are understood, it is possible to devise countermeasures that will reduce or completely negate its effectiveness.<sup>6</sup>

Recognizing that the evolution of the United States Army into a new form will depend on more than the incorporation of new technology, this book seeks answers to questions which confront the United States Army today: Is landpower essential to American strategic dominance? Can the Army's elected and appointed leaders shape warfighting organizations that are skilled enough, smart enough, and enduring enough to maneuver within a joint framework through the treacherous environment of contemporary and future conflict? How do political and military leaders ensure crisp execution of complex operations and winning performance in battle without restricting human potential and suffocating the American soldier's individual brains and initiative? Answers to these questions must be found before key choices are made by defense planners.

The first step in the process of finding answers to these questions, however, is that policymakers understand that future control of events on land in areas of pivotal strategic interest cannot be achieved without a substantial American army. In this connection, the most important factor in evaluating the importance of landpower to American strategic dominance is not being blinded by the immediate consequences—successful or not—of a single event.<sup>7</sup> The current period of adjustment in international politics will eventually end as new political authority structures fill the vacuum created by the end of the Cold War. To the extent that American policymakers contemplate the use of force to influence events in pivotal areas—Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, Southwest Asia, and Northeast Asia—landpower will be an essential feature of statecraft and deterrence. Today, historians remind Americans that the refusal of the United States and Great Britain to maintain armies capable of presenting real resistance to fascism on the Eurasian landmass was an important source of encouragement to the aggressors, who concluded that they could achieve their aims without American interference even though America possessed enormous sea- and airpower.<sup>8</sup>

What is needed today is a vision for the role the Army will play in national military strategy, and a description of how the Army will achieve that role. This description must encompass guidelines for the design and use of landpower within a joint military structure. The guidelines outlined in this work suggest an American military strategy based on action by Joint Task Forces (JTFs) either to preempt or to win conflict quickly. This concept for the use of Army Ground Forces links the Army's capability to dominate the strategic landscape to a military strategy focused on areas of the world where economic progress and political stability directly benefit American security.

Desert Storm demonstrated for the first time, really, that American land-based air and rapidly deployable Army heavy ground forces are global weapons like the legions of the ancient world.<sup>9</sup> The reorganization outlined in this work envisions an information age American Army rendered distinctly more mobile and effective by cooperation with American airpower and unchallenged American control of the sea.<sup>10</sup> Rather than relying on the cumbersome mobilization and massed firepower arrangements of the Cold War, this work suggests reorganizing the Army into mobile combat groups positioned on the frontiers of American security, ready to act quickly and decisively, primed to move with a minimum of preparation. Because the fighting power of an Army lies in its organization for combat, this means reorganizing American Ground Forces to "break the Phalanx."<sup>11</sup>

Because it is fashionable to speak of the decisive role technology plays in the "revolution in military affairs" (RMA), much less attention is paid in military circles to the complex set of relationships that actually link technology's military potential to strategy and organization for combat (doctrine) in the broader context of change. As a result, one finds little discussion of this topic in the Defense Department's Bottom-Up Review (BUR) or in the literature of the Army's *Force XXI* program.<sup>12</sup> To date, warfighting organizations for the Army of the future look much like the force structures in the past and present. For instance, the options under consideration for a new Army division range from retaining today's basic structure while inserting new technologies to the adoption of a flexible brigade-based division structure that can be tailored to specific missions.<sup>13</sup>

Yet, historical experience suggests that measures to incorporate potentially revolutionary technology in lethal or nonlethal forms will not make much difference if the warfighting organizations and the methods of application remain unchanged. Technology alone does not bring about a revolution in military affairs.<sup>14</sup> Increasingly lethal weapons lead to greater dispersion of combat forces and to increases in individual unit mobility. The

necessity for command, control, and sustainment of dispersed formations increases reliance on subordinate officers' and soldiers' judgment, intelligence, and character. Organizational change in directions that capitalize on these human qualities works to the benefit of armies with high quality manpower that encourage initiative and develop more flexible and adaptive fighting formations.<sup>15</sup> The combination of innovative technology and human ingenuity finds its way through obstacles and obsolescence.<sup>16</sup>

Even if reasonable and promising strategies for the near-term adaptation of existing warfighting structures achieve an incremental improvement in the Army's warfighting capabilities, today's military leaders will want to develop new warfighting formations that can effectively exploit both new technology and increased human potential. Whether there is a current revolution in military affairs is still being debated. What is certain, however, is that organizational change in armies can produce revolutionary change in warfare.<sup>17</sup>

In many ways, the observations about the Roman Legions with which this introduction began throw into sharp relief those key features which should characterize America's information age Army. Like Caesar's Legions, Joint Task Forces (JTFs) will need an Army component that is composed of highly mobile, self-contained, independent "all-arms" combat forces-in-being. These Army forces will have to be structured within an evolving joint military framework to exploit new technology and increased human potential for rapid and decisive action<sup>18</sup> and provide the foundation on land for coherent joint military operations in a new and uncertain strategic environment. When the national command authorities decide in the future to project a JTF capable of exerting direct and enduring influence over an opponent, the Army component must be organized within that JTF to provide the American people with an agile, responsive, and effective tool of statecraft.

On the grounds of logic, politics, and the absence of an impending war, many will dispute the notion that fielding a new, reorganized Army within a joint strategic framework is at least as important to the nation as welfare reform, deficit reduction, and health care. Many defense analysts are already suggesting that reducing the Army to eight or even six divisions would produce quick savings that could be plowed into the high technology areas of electronic warfare, aircraft, and missiles.<sup>19</sup> It is quite possible that the effects of budgetary pressures, service competition for limited resources, and private sector scientific-industrial interests could produce an American force structure without the mix of military means to influence events decisively on the Eurasian and African landmasses.<sup>20</sup> Devoid of a

strategically significant objective, an American military strategy based primarily on ships, planes, and precision-guided missiles potentially forfeits military flexibility and courts strategic irrelevance in the 21st century.<sup>21</sup>

Unfortunately, because this approach promises American influence abroad without U.S. forces on the ground it appeals to a rising tide of isolationist sentiment in America's domestic politics and reduces national defense to its raw economic rewards.<sup>22</sup> This helps explain why many elected leaders are ready to channel large portions of shrinking national resources into a few costly, specialized programs with uncertain prospects for success and why this emphasis creates a preference for both airpower and nonengaged sea-based forces over American landpower.<sup>23</sup> Computer-based simulated warfare rewards this focus by elevating old concepts of attrition warfare to new levels of sophistication because quantitative analysis cannot model the positional political and military advantages attained through ground force maneuver.<sup>24</sup>

The pattern is all too familiar. General Malin Craig, whom General George Marshall succeeded as Chief of Staff in 1939, warned in his final annual report that it might be too late to reorganize, retrain, and reequip the U.S. Army for war.

What transpires on prospective battlefields is influenced vitally years before in the councils of the staff and in the legislative halls of Congress. Time is the only thing that may be irrevocably lost, and it is the first thing lost sight of in the seductive false security of peaceful times. . . . The sums appropriated this year will not be fully transformed into military power for two years. Persons who state that they see no threat to the peace of the United States would hesitate to make that forecast through a two year period.<sup>25</sup>

A senior fellow at the Brookings Institution observed recently that this is a time in American history when the nation's leaders "ought to be thinking more about where we are going."<sup>26</sup> This is true, and it includes thinking about America's participation in future conflict. History tells us that while peaceful times should be cherished, peace is not a permanent condition in world affairs. But recent events suggest that the time and opportunity to prepare for future conflict may not last as long as many had hoped 5 years ago. Even small nations can no longer be prevented from building total war capacity—whether nuclear or conventional.<sup>27</sup> Thus, today's U.S. Army is in a race against time to be ready to fight jointly and win the next conflict wherever and whenever it occurs.

Reshaping the Army force structure to reconcile trends in the technology of warfare and the new strategic environment with the Army's immediate

need to preserve its readiness to fight and win today is easy in theory. In practice, reorganizing the Army for future missions in peace and war has never been easy and no new strategy will make it easier. But even if defense planners underestimate the scope of the necessary organizational changes or their short-term consequences, this will not in itself be sufficient grounds to reject organizational change unless the consequences of inaction are also taken into account.<sup>28</sup> If it can be demonstrated to the American people and to the Congress that the kind of deliberate and pragmatic reorganization outlined in this monograph will make better use of the resources the U.S. Army is given and result in landpower that is more potent and economically efficient, then America's Army will win its current race to be ready for the 21st century.

## NOTES

1. R. E. Dupuy and T. N. Dupuy, *The Encyclopedia of Military History from 3500 B.C. to the Present* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), 84. The two armies were roughly equal in strength; 26,000 men. In war, for each Roman Legion, there was one identically organized allied legion.

2. Peter F. Drucker, *Post-Capitalist Society* (New York: HarperCollins 1993), 138.

3. Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 392–93.

4. C. Kenneth Allard, "The Future of Command and Control: Toward a Paradigm of Information Warfare" in *Turning Point: The Gulf War and U.S. Military Strategy*, ed. L. Benjamin Ederington and Michael J. Mazarr (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1995), p. 162.

5. Henry Bartlett, G. Paul Holman, and Timothy Stone, "The Art of Strategy and Force Planning," *Naval War College Review*, Spring 1995: p. 121.

6. Hirsh Goodman and W. Seth Carus, *The Future Battlefield and the Arab–Israeli Conflict*, (London: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 167.

7. Joseph E. Goldberg, "Strategic Success" in *Essays on Strategy IV* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University, 1987), 7.

8. Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Education of a General* (New York: The Viking Press, 1963), 323.

9. William T. Pendley, "Mortgaging the Future to the Present in Defense Policy: A Commentary on the Bottom-Up Review," *Strategic Review* (Spring 1994): p. 39.

10. "The Navy–Marine Corps Battleground," *Navy Times*, 23 January 1995, p. 7.

11. James S. Corum, *The Roots of Blitzkrieg: Hans von Seeckt and German Military Reform* (Lawrence, Kans.: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 205.



12. Michael J. Mazarr, *The Revolution in Military Affairs: A Framework for Defense Planning*, (Carlisle, Penn.: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute Fifth Annual Conference on Strategy, April 1994), 3.

13. Amy McAuliffe, "Technology: Changing the Way the Army Does Business," *Military & Aerospace Electronics* (February 1996): p. 24.

14. Thomas L. Friedman, "The No-Dead War," *The New York Times*, 23 August 1995, p. 21.

15. William G. Stewart, "Interaction of Firepower, Mobility, and Dispersion," *Military Review* (March 1960): 25–33.

16. Jonathan Rauch, *Demosclerosis: The Silent Killer of American Government* (New York: Times Books-Random House, 1994), 229.

17. See Stephen Rosen's work, *Winning the Next War: Innovation and the Modern Military* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991).

18. Karl H. Lowe, "U.S. Armed Forces in the New Europe" in *European Security Policy After the Revolutions of 1989*, ed. Jeffrey Simon (Washington, D.C.: Defense University Press, 1991), 129.

19. David A. Fulghum, "Two-War Strategy May Be Abandoned," *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 29 January, 1996, p. 40.

20. Tim Weiner, "Smart Weapons Were Overrated, Study Concludes," *New York Times*, 9 July 1996, pp. A1, A14.

21. Frank E. Jordan, "Maritime–Continental Debate: A Strategic Approach," in *Essays on Strategy V* (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 1988), 210.

22. Sidney Blumenthal, "The Return of the Repressed: Anti-Internationalism and the American Right," *World Policy Journal* (Fall 1995): p. 7.

23. Secretary of Defense William Perry stated on 16 February 1995 that a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget by 2002 would result in a 20 to 30 percent reduction in defense spending.

24. Paul K. Davis and Donald Blumenthal, "The Base of Sand Problem: A White Paper on the State of Military Combat Modeling," *A RAND Note*, N-3148-OSD/DARPA (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND Corporation, 1991), 1–22.

25. M. S. Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations, United States Army in World War II* (Washington, D.C.: The War Department, Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1950), 35. Quoted by General Paul F. Gorman in "The Secret of Future Victories," *IDA Paper P-2653* (Alexandria, Va.: Institute for Defense Analysis, 1992), I–7.

26. Lawrence Korb, quoted by Bradley Graham in "Pentagon Faces Familiar Crunch on Procurement," *Washington Post*, 10 March 1996, p. 6.

27. Jeff Erlich and Theresa Hitchens, "Counterproliferation Efforts Await Requirement Review," *Defense News*, 6–12 November 1995, p. 6.

28. Ariel Levite, *Offense and Defense in Israeli Military Doctrine* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1990), 144–45.

## *Landpower and Strategic Dominance*

---

- On the morning of 21 October 1805, the French and British fleets collided, just off the coast of Spain's Cape Trafalgar. When the day closed, eighteen French and Spanish ships had struck their colors. The most spectacular sea victory of the age had been won in 4 hours and the Royal Navy's greatest Admiral, Horatio Nelson, had achieved immortality. Six weeks later on 2 December 1805, the French Army met and defeated the combined armies of Austria and Russia near a small town named Austerlitz in Central Europe. It was a French strategic victory so complete and so overwhelming that French dominance of the European continent would not be successfully challenged again for 8 years. It would take 10 years and the combined efforts of several allied European armies to roll back French political dominance.
- In 1846, after difficult negotiations, Texas was formally annexed to the United States, despite Mexico's threat that this would mean war. Mexico, a second-rate military power without a navy, fought the United States for 2 years. Until a U.S. Army landed unopposed near Vera Cruz and fought its way into Mexico City, the Mexican government could not be induced to accept peace on American terms.<sup>1</sup>
- The Royal Navy subdued the German High Seas Fleet and dominated the world's oceans throughout World War I. But until America entered the war and American ground forces joined the British and French armies on the Western Front, the British and French faced an unbeatable enemy and the prospect of probable defeat.<sup>2</sup>

- Few challenges to Europe's stability have been as serious as the NATO governments' decision to deploy the American intermediate range nuclear force (INF) on German soil in the 1980s. Concerted efforts of the German antinuclear movement and the Soviet state nearly succeeded in disrupting the INF deployment and splitting the Atlantic alliance. Western observers wondered why NATO's leadership insisted on deploying the Pershing II missile in Central Germany when a comparable missile system could be launched from U.S. and British submarines in the North Sea. The former German Chancellor, Helmut Schmidt, reminded the German public that the deployment had to be visible to have the desired political impact.<sup>3</sup>
- Forty days of near-constant air and missile attack during January and February 1991 neither dislodged the Iraqi Army from Kuwait nor destroyed Iraq's nuclear facilities and mobile missile launchers.<sup>4</sup> It was the ground offensive that compelled the Iraqis to submit unconditionally to the American-led coalition forces.<sup>5</sup>

These accounts illustrate the centrality of landpower to the achievement of America's strategic objectives in war and peace. Why, then, given this record of experience, is there remarkably little appreciation in contemporary America for the strategic role of landpower? Part of the answer can be traced to America's reluctance to commit ground forces before conflict erupts to achieve important political objectives.

To understand the political forces that influence this thinking, it is essential to appreciate the beguiling notion that the United States is unsailable because it is protected by the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.<sup>6</sup> For about a century after 1815 American society enjoyed, and was conscious of enjoying, a remarkable freedom from external military threat.<sup>7</sup> One consequence of this experience is an isolationist impulse in American foreign policy which is founded on the idea of a fortress America rendered impregnable to attack. This impulse is further reinforced by the continuing absence of serious military threats on America's continental borders and the early American cultural disinclination to maintain standing armies.<sup>8</sup>

The concept is still seductive because it seems to promise less spending for defense and foreign aid. Although the United States acquired the geographic, demographic, industrial, and technological resources of a global power in the 20th century, the influence of America's early strategic immunity continues to be felt long after the technology of warfare eliminated it. To this must be added another observation: America has repeatedly fallen victim to the illusion of political influence without the commitment of American landpower.<sup>9</sup> The American willingness to apply the decisive

strategic influence of landpower in wartime is seldom matched by an understanding of landpower's strategic value in peacetime.

What the isolationist impulse obscures is the larger question of how best to maintain an international political and economic order that is consistent with the requirements of American national security. Had America's government sought an answer to this question instead of asserting international claims that could not be secured without landpower, America could have decisively influenced the circumstances which resulted in a series of 20th century conflicts.<sup>10</sup>

## PAST AS PROLOGUE

Woodrow Wilson (like Jefferson a century earlier) embraced grand objectives in the world but overlooked the need for an American Army to achieve them. Wilson perceived no connection between the prevention of aggression in Europe or Asia through the selective and skillful use of American landpower and the preservation of American security. The notion that threats to regional security could be closely linked to threats to global economic prosperity was understood by Wilson only insofar as these threats related to commerce. Since the world's oceans were the medium of transport for American commerce, this only justified the maintenance of American seapower.<sup>11</sup>

The possibility that a defensible bridgehead would be required, a continental ally who could provide a base from which effective landpower could be exercised, does not seem to have occurred to Wilson or his predecessors.<sup>12</sup> Underlying this outlook was always the noble conviction that military force in international relations constituted a form of logic that was ultimately inimical to liberty.<sup>13</sup> Of course, this attitude did not prevent the U.S. Congress from appropriating significant sums of money for a large fleet of warships which Wilson used at Vera Cruz to support the prewar American Army's expeditionary force in Mexico. But it left America without the essential feature of national political influence in Europe—a capable, modern Army.

If unpreparedness for war is one pattern in 20th century American politics, another is the swift return to an isolationist military posture immediately after conflict.<sup>14</sup> This is based on the belief that military power has no relevance to the task of establishing new political institutions in the aftermath of war. After World War I, America's political leaders avoided the political and military commitments to achieve international stability along liberal capitalist lines—the conquest and occupation of strategic territory

to secure the peace. Sensing the incompleteness of the allied victory over Germany in 1918, General Pershing, President Wilson's Army Commander in Europe, advised a longer and more thorough occupation of Germany. In urging the President to occupy Germany with U.S. and Allied troops, General Pershing may have recalled any number of examples suggesting that occupation was necessary to secure the peace. America's war with Mexico provided one.<sup>15</sup>

Wilson rejected Pershing's recommendation. For domestic political reasons, Wilson could not ignore the public's demands for dismantling of the U.S. Army's Expeditionary Force once the Versailles Treaty was signed. Without a powerful American Army (which had been the real basis for America's negotiating strength during the conference) on the Continent responsive to the commands of the President, it is understandable that most of President Wilson's later proposals for collective security drew little more than curiosity from the British and the French. Unfortunately, while this truth escaped notice in Washington, it was not missed in Berlin, Rome, Moscow, and Tokyo.

President Wilson's Republican successors continued the same course and opted for a large U.S. Navy and a small, impotent American Army. They did not grasp the point that despite their impressive absolute and relative size, America's naval forces held a distinctly defensive posture<sup>16</sup> and could not deter aggression on land.<sup>17</sup> It was a peculiar marriage of Wilsonian idealism and Republican complacency that guided American policy in the thirties. Although the Republicans sincerely wanted to foster stability in postwar Europe, reassure the French, allay German grievances, and contain the spread of communism, they ignored the fact that successful strategy is a result of the organization and application of power.<sup>18</sup> Without a modern Army to apply power in Europe and Asia after 1920, no serious strategy could be devised to influence the events of the interwar years.

Curiously, America's elected leaders in the 1920s continued to express confidence in the survival of an international order that was quickly passing. Technological, economic, and political changes were steadily eliminating the circumstances of America's geographic isolation. Dramatic advances in aircraft, automotive, and communications technologies coincided with the onset of the depression and the rise of antidemocratic states in Germany, Russia, Italy, and Japan. Yet these developments did not yield an increase in funds for the modernization or enlargement of the U.S. Army. When Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur urged Congress to appropriate money in 1934 for the modernization and modest expansion of the U.S. Army to cope with the interwar revolution in military affairs, President

Roosevelt's Republican friend and confidante, Senator Gerald Nye called the Army Chief of Staff a "warmonger." Republicans in Congress were uninterested in the Army and rejected most of MacArthur's appeals to stockpile strategic materials as well as his plans for industrial mobilization—recommendations they would all remember five years later.<sup>19</sup>

However, some of MacArthur's warnings were heeded. MacArthur's insistence, in his final report as Chief of Staff, that a future war would be one of movement and maneuver in which "command of the air over attacking ground forces would confer a decisive advantage on the side that achieved it" was taken seriously.<sup>20</sup> In 1936, five years before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the President asked Congress to fund an increase in the number of aircraft in the Army's inventory. The number of aircraft purchased rose each year, with the result that 4,429 aircraft were purchased in FY1941, which ended in June 1941.<sup>21</sup> Funding for the ground forces, however, continued to fall, with the result that the U.S. Army in the 1930s was largely moribund.<sup>22</sup>

Instead of supporting measures for the modernization and expansion of the U.S. Army to deter Japanese and German aggression, until 1940 President Roosevelt limited his requests for military expenditures to a program for American naval construction to compete with Japan's increased production of warships. Like his predecessors in both parties, President Roosevelt privately hoped that the United States' participation in any future war with Germany or Japan could be restricted to the use of American naval power and airpower. Until the fall of France, Roosevelt continued to express the view that 10,000 American aircraft and an armada of battleships would suffice to aid America's allies in their fight on the Eurasian landmass.<sup>23</sup> For Roosevelt the prospect of building an American Army that would fight beyond America's borders raised the spectre of casualties on the scale of World War I. If America could exploit the armies of allied states for landpower while American military technology dominated the air and sea, Roosevelt thought, American casualties could be kept to a minimum.<sup>24</sup>

President Roosevelt's strategy to exert political influence through exclusive reliance on seapower and, later, airpower, did nothing to dissuade Germany, Japan, Italy, and Soviet Russia from aggressive action between 1938 and 1942.<sup>25</sup> In part, this view was due to a growing faith in both sea-based and land-based aviation as a new silver bullet in military affairs. In the interwar period, the public fascination with airpower in Britain and America prompted officials in both countries to urge reliance on airpower at the expense of modernized ground forces.<sup>26</sup> The British Air Ministry went so far as to state that defensive measures to defeat strategic bombers were

futile. "To defend against aircraft with ground-based anti-aircraft weapons was useless; fighter planes were no match for the bomber."<sup>27</sup> The effect of such predictions, however, did not improve Britain's defense posture. The unintended consequence of Britain's overreliance on airpower and reluctance to construct and maintain a modern army in peacetime was a weak and inadequately prepared British Army that no amount of British airpower could rescue from defeat in May 1940.<sup>28</sup>

After the fall of France and the subsequent Battle of Britain in 1940, the substance of the debate inside the Roosevelt administration about what forces the United States would need to confront Germany and Japan began to change. While Britain's defeat of Germany's air offensive temporarily removed the threat of invasion, it also demonstrated the impotence of a security policy based primarily on airpower. President Roosevelt realized that American involvement in another world war would require the use of American ground forces. When the President turned to General Marshall for strategic advice, Marshall provided him with a memorandum, "Program for Victory," which had been prepared by recently promoted Lt. Col. Albert C. Wedemeyer in the Department of the Army's War Plans Division. Wedemeyer's memorandum, dated 21 September 1941, determined more than how and where the United States Army would fight World War II. Its conception and delivery were among the decisive acts of the war.<sup>29</sup>

Wedemeyer reasoned that the technology of the 20th century—railways, automotive and aviation technology—placed insular America at a disadvantage unless she could seize a foothold on the "world island" and one as close as possible to the heartland—European Russia. He persuaded Roosevelt that while air and sea forces would make vital contributions, effective and adequate ground forces would be needed "to close with and destroy the enemy inside his citadel." In order to take the strategic offensive, the United States would require an army capable of defeating the Germans. Though a citizen of the richest nation on earth, Wedemeyer was sensitive to the need for economy. He pointed out that a large-scale invasion of Europe with the use of allied bases and staging areas would be less expensive than building of amphibious forces for operations along the periphery of the world island. Eventually, his argument in favor of economy persuaded the President. The result was a plan to field a ground force consisting of eighty-nine Army divisions and six Marine divisions.<sup>30</sup>

The military posture of America's Army after World War II bore a striking resemblance to its posture after World War I. In 1945, Congress could not be convinced of the need to preserve the striking power of the Army while no imminent danger could be found to justify it. This is not evidence for