



**STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT**

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**THE ARMY AFTER NEXT: ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH
STRATEGIC REALITY**

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**The Army After Next: On a Collision Course with
Strategic Reality**

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ABSTRACT

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The Army After Next (AAN), propelled by the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA), is on a collision course with the reality of the strategic context in which it must be born. Encouraged by an opportune "strategic pause" and the unprecedented technological opportunities afforded by the RMA, the Army's architects of the AAN have failed to fully grasp the true nature and importance of the forces of the strategic environment in which they are planning. These forces include the friction of an evolving, dynamic strategic setting, the role current U.S. national security strategy plays in shaping the strategic setting, the role of leadership, the implications of budget history, and the determinate nature of political and social issues. Failure to recognize and account for the reality of these forces will prevent realization of the AAN vision.

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**THE ARMY AFTER NEXT: ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH
STRATEGIC REALITY**

*They change their clime, not their frame of mind, who
rush across the sea. We strain at achieving nothing:
we seek happiness in boats and carriage rides. What
you seek is here, at Ulubrae, so long as peace of mind
does not desert you.*

— Horace, *Epistles*

In 1687, Sir Isaac Newton published the First Law of classical mechanics in his book, *Principia*, which simply stated that while in a vacuum, in the absence of an outside force, an object at rest tends to remain at rest and that an object in motion remains in a uniform, linear motion.¹ This law obviously applies to objects in the physical realm, but offers a useful analogy for identifying problems with the Army After Next (AAN). AAN is the most significant and far-reaching conceptual development in the history of the United States Army. In using this analogy in an analysis of AAN, the object (the idea or process) is moving in a line toward the future, propelled through space (a strategic pause) by a distinct force (the Revolution in Military Affairs). Given a perfect vacuum through which to move, the AAN should reach its targeted endpoint of a radically transformed force to meet the challenges of the early 21st century in 2025. However, the analogy reveals two problems for

the AAN. The first problem is that there is no vacuum. The strategic pause is not a reality. The second problem for the AAN is that there are significant outside forces set to act on it in a way that will either stop its motion or significantly alter its direction. Without consideration of these forces, AAN will miss its targeted endpoint. This paper examines the nature of the strategic environment and the leadership, budget, and political and social forces that are bearing down on the AAN and the problems they present for the AAN.

Three factors add urgency to this examination. First, there is significant risk to national security in getting it wrong. Our future force must be capable of ensuring our national security and protecting our national interests. Second, force development and modernization are expensive propositions. We cannot afford to build the wrong force. The federal budget will not support a second chance. Finally, we cannot afford wasted effort in terms of time and energy. Our modernization efforts must be both efficient and effective.

THE ARMY AFTER NEXT SUMMARY

The AAN project had its genesis in 1996, as Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), General Dennis J. Reimer, sought to focus Army leadership on preparing a vision of future requirements and

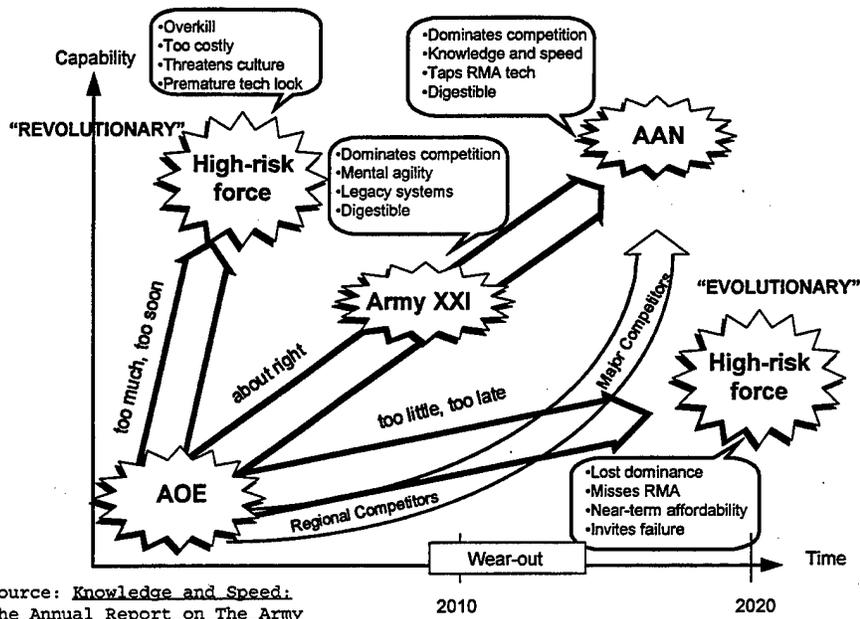
structure. The primary source of comprehensive information for the AAN project is the July 1997, annual report to General Reimer, titled *Knowledge and Speed: The Annual Report on the Army After Next Project to the Chief of Staff of the United States Army.*² This report serves as the basis of analysis for this paper. The report is an annual update to the CSA that summarizes the assumptions, research areas, conclusions, and recommendations of the AAN architects.

"Visualizing the future requires a process that anticipates the nature of warfare in the next century and the evolution of US national security requirements."³ This is the philosophical core of AAN, as stated in the introduction to the annual report. The report notes that the process of AAN is one that operates unconstrained ". . . by near-term budgetary and institutional influences."⁴ In addition to this unconstrained approach, the AAN process makes a significant number of key assumptions that determine its direction and focus. These assumptions appear throughout the report and are not consolidated in any comprehensive section. Readers of the report must be careful to note the assumptions as they proceed, in order to fully grasp the nature of the project's limitations. These assumptions are

central to the analysis of the project and are discussed in the body of this paper.

Fundamentally, the AAN process addresses four major areas: the geostrategic setting, the evolution of military art, human and organizational issues, and technology issues.⁵ The report's organization addresses each of these broad research areas in turn. They appear as major sections: "A Geostrategic View of 2025," "Military Art and Science in 2025," "Soldiers and Units in 2025," and "Technology: The Path to Knowledge and Speed." The AAN project is a systematic approach to developing the future Army force, the *potential force*, by looking 30 years into the future through a continuous, annual series of studies focused on the four broad research areas.

The report proposes that unconstrained, futuristic planning is the only way ". . . to break free of the action-reaction cycle of incremental change, which can only hold the future hostage to the past."⁶ AAN authors describe a revolutionary endstate of dramatically increased capability for the Army of 2025. The process of AAN, as depicted in Figure 1, seeks to achieve the AAN force by starting with the Army of Excellence (AOE) force, moving through the Army XXI force, and on to the AAN.⁷



Source: Knowledge and Speed: The Annual Report on The Army After Next Project to the Chief of Staff of the Army, July 1997

Figure 1

The AAN report characterizes the AAN process as a middle-ground approach to achieving increased capabilities over time. This is easily seen in Figure 1. It seeks to achieve a significantly increased capability and low risk through a revolutionary process that strikes through the mid-point of the Army XXI force. The AAN report states, "The challenge is to change the force without putting it at risk. The rate of change must accommodate both affordability and acceptability."⁸ In reality, AAN is an evolutionary process that uses unconstrained

planning to achieve what would be a revolutionary endstate only by today's standards. By 2025 standards, the endstate is clearly evolutionary. The process, as depicted in Figure 1, sets itself up for the Newton's First Law analogy.

THE FRICTION OF THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Is the AAN an object that will remain in a uniform linear motion? The first step in the analysis is to examine the force of the friction of the strategic environment - the space through which the AAN process must move. Friction results from an imperfect vacuum. In this case, the vacuum is nullified by two determinant factors. First, the changing nature of the international strategic environment creates friction for the AAN process that AAN authors have not adequately appreciated. Second, U.S. national security strategy, as currently evolving, places limits on the freedom of action of the Army in pursuing the AAN. Again, AAN authors have not sufficiently addressed these limits on the AAN process.

Numerous writers have referred to the current period of our strategic environment as a strategic pause. While the 1997 AAN report does not use that term, it does similarly characterize the period as one in which the US Army is ". . . in a position of unchallenged military superiority and with breathing space to

consider the next challenge."⁹ This is not an accurate portrayal of the nature of the current strategic environment. It implies, as stated in the AAN report, that Army strategic leaders have wide latitude in developing a force to meet the future security requirements. This simply is not the case.

One strategic analyst, Steven Metz, lays out a framework of five alternative strategic environments for the 21st Century and addresses the implications for the United States Army in each of the distinctly different scenarios.¹⁰ Each of his proposals is plausible and each would dictate varying requirements for military forces. Metz concludes that the future environment will likely be a blend of most, if not all, of the five.¹¹ Metz points out that one of the fundamental realities of the impending 21st century is the dominant impact of the accelerating pace of change in the international strategic environment.¹² His work and pre-Cold War experience suggest that the AAN authors' assumption of a "strategic pause" is flawed. The strategic environment is evolving daily and, while the U.S. may enjoy military superiority for the next twenty-five years, the analysis of Metz and others suggests the next challenges are already upon us in the form of dissolving states and asymmetrical warfare - reflected in new and unconventional missions.

As stated earlier, the AAN process relies on numerous assumptions appearing throughout the annual report. One of the fundamental assumptions is that National Security Strategy through 2025 will ". . . exhibit a fundamental continuity."¹³ The report also states, "The most difficult yet essential aspect of defining land-power capabilities 30 years in the future is forecasting the security requirements those capabilities must satisfy."¹⁴ Using three principal, vital national interests and several, important national interests as justification, the AAN process assumes that the United States will continue to employ its current national security strategy of engagement into the future of 2025 in order to ensure those interests.¹⁵ Unfortunately, continuity of interests does not necessitate continuity in strategy.

The assumption of a continuous national strategy is a false conclusion drawn from our recent historical experience. During the Cold War, our country operated under a strategy of containment. Apparently, the thirty-plus years of operating under this strategy have given AAN designers an expectation that a stated national security strategy is an enduring entity. There is no rational reason to believe this. As discussed earlier, there are many indications that the pace of change in the nature

of our strategic environment will rapidly accelerate, causing possible shifts in our national security strategy in order to guarantee our national interests in light of changing threats, opportunities, and factors.

It is important to note that the dynamic nature of the international strategic environment is, in large part, a product of the strategy that our nation pursues. As the dominant power in the world, the direction of U.S. national security strategy helps shape the international strategic environment. The current United States' national security strategy is one of "engagement and enlargement."¹⁶ In his 1997 report to the President and to Congress, Secretary of Defense William Cohen stated, "In order to shape the international security environment in ways that protect and advance US interests, the United States must remain engaged and exert leadership abroad."¹⁷ The strategic environment in which AAN planners operate is very much a product of the national security strategy. This shaping further adds to the friction that AAN planners must confront as military roles and priorities change.

The combination of the President's national security strategy and the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) formulated a national military strategy of shape, prepare, and respond.¹⁸

Each of these imperatives drives the shape of the Army. Current national security strategy requires the military to be prepared for a broad range of operations. The strategy results in a force that is stretched to its limits in attempting to meet the requirements of missions that span a continuum of operations from humanitarian assistance to regional contingencies to major theater wars. Our military forces and leaders are strategically engaged. The fact that the United States is not faced by a competitor of equal capability is not a sufficient reason to characterize the period as a pause. The force is decisively engaged as a direct result of our strategy. The Secretary of Defense captured this fact in his 1997 version of his annual report to the President and Congress, where he wrote, "Even as our security picture evolves, the world is undergoing unprecedented economic, political, and technological change — at a pace that is sometimes breathtaking."¹⁹ These words hardly conjure up a picture of a strategic pause.

The changing nature of the strategic environment, the uncertainty of the future national security strategy, and the total commitment of the Army in executing the strategy create friction that AAN architects cannot ignore. This friction contributes to the risk that General Reimer described in

discussing the Army of the future.

The QDR reveals a strategic window that gives us the opportunity to fundamentally reshape and prepare the Army for the 21st century. This opportunity is not without its risks. It will require the proper balance between the competing demands of maintaining the readiness required to shape and respond to the world today and prepare our forces to meet the needs of the future.²⁰

AAN planners must recognize that the AAN project moves through a less than perfect vacuum, posing a significant challenge to the AAN's geostrategic view of 2025. They must also deal with forces that have the potential to significantly impact on three other major areas of interest for the AAN project.

LEADERSHIP IS THE KEY TO THE FUTURE

Of the three other forces addressed in this paper as impacting the AAN process, the issue of leadership is the most important. Leadership issues have the potential to derail the AAN process at the soldier and unit level - the heart of our Army. It is unthinkable to build a rifle without contemplating the man who will fire it. Yet, that is exactly what the AAN project has done. In the eighty-page document, a scant three pages cover the section "Soldiers and Units in 2025." LTG (Ret) Walter F. Ulmer, Jr., a former Division and Corps commander, now working in the field of organizational leadership, characterizes the documentation of leadership issues in AAN and RMA

publications as "relatively cavalier" ²¹ He specifically cites the deficiency in this area in the 1997 report as one in which leadership issues ". . . were unrefined, unexplained, and unexplored." ²² There are two significant leadership issues that will have a major impact on AAN. The first is the ability of current senior leadership to embrace the new dynamic environment and to engage in revolutionary thinking. The second major area is the leadership development for the future leaders of AAN. The AAN report does not adequately address either.

The most significant leadership factor in the AAN process is the ability of our current leadership to manage the change and guide the AAN to its target. There are several key aspects to managing this change from a leadership perspective. Because of the dynamic nature of war and planning for war, our strategic leaders must be flexible and creative in their approach to developing the national military strategy and the AAN to execute that strategy. Many senior leaders may lack the necessary flexibility or ability to break the mold of the past.

Author Shoon K. Murray brings to light in her book, *Anchors Against Change*, some key indicators that many of our current strategic leaders are captives of their Cold War perspectives. This insight is important in considering the ability of these

leaders to develop a force to meet distinctly different security requirements under a distinctly different strategy. She presents evidence that the attitudes of many of our strategic leaders did not change substantially with regard to how the United States should conduct foreign policy in the wake of the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism. Her study of data from a Leadership Opinion Project reveals that ". . . the respondents' most basic orientations towards international affairs, such as their attitudes about the use of military force, remained quite stable . . ." even in a dramatically changed security environment.²³ Her research is an important indicator of the potential inflexibility in the manner in which many of our strategic leaders address the future. Considering the distant look of the AAN project and the risks involved in designing the optimum force, this problem is significant. The nature of the AAN process demands revolutionary thinking from today's strategic leaders.

Other leadership risks emerge in ensuring that we design a leadership development program to meet the requirement of providing the future leaders of the AAN with the skills they will need. The requirement for an extensive leadership development and education system is highlighted in the AAN report. AAN

designers believe that the leaders of the AAN will require ". . . an exceptional degree of mental agility and psychological resilience" and that ". . . development of these qualities by 2025 will require nothing less than a cultural change within the Army" ²⁴ In this regard they are correct. Considering all the forces set to impact on the AAN as it moves toward its vision, the issue of leadership development is, perhaps, the most acute. It requires immediate attention in order to impact the generation of men and women who will be senior leaders and strategists during the period 2020-2030. Culture change within an institution like the United States Army does not happen overnight. This makes the process' failure to develop this issue particularly disappointing.

The first step in addressing the leadership development requirements of the AAN is to create a leadership climate in the Army of today that will support the culture change. General Ulmer cites a number of reasons to believe that the Army is experiencing significant problems in facing the future in the area of leadership. He offers a number of specific sources of evidence, most of which come from official Army surveys or studies, that point to problems with the leadership climate in

the Army.²⁵ This issue is closely related to the ability of senior leaders to accept and manage change.

Simultaneously with developing a climate that is conducive to significant cultural change, AAN designers must quickly develop a plan for leadership development and education. This is critical because the strategic leaders for the Army of 2025 are already entering service. AAN designers do not need to spend a great deal of time on identifying the requirements and traits of future leaders. These requirements have been developed by others such as Ulmer. But, General Ulmer's argument that what is needed now is a detailed plan on how to develop and sustain those traits in our future leaders has merit.²⁶ AAN architects must incorporate this plan into their process. Education will be one cornerstone of success.

In writing about the future military in the 21st century, retired General John Sheehan (USMC) cites education as one of three primary impediments to change that would hinder a vision for a future military such as AAN.²⁷ Fundamentally, education for the future necessitates an active campaign now to teach leaders "how to think," rather than "what to think" in the new strategic environment. As a result of its doctrinal focus, the U.S. Army has become increasingly prescriptive toward its

leaders, producing a "what to think" environment. Senior leaders are responsible for this dogmatic approach. They must change course to develop a plan that meets the requirements of AAN leadership in the strategic environment in which it will operate.

THE BUDGET AND ARMY AFTER NEXT

As noted earlier, the AAN process seeks to be unencumbered by near-term budgetary constraints. While unconstrained planning may ensure that AAN architects do not ignore any possibilities in future force design, it is unrealistic to fail to account for budgetary reality in designing the future force. This is a fatal flaw in the AAN process. Unconstrained planning ignores the political realities and imperatives of the budget process, both outside and within the Department of Defense. It assumes that the resultant AAN force can justify a budget to support it. This is not the case, again, as demonstrated in recent history.

Accompanying the many changes in force structure following the end of the Cold War was a drastically reduced defense budget. Much euphoria greeted an opportunity to provide a "peace dividend" to our nation. In the face of an opportunity to decrease the size of our military in the immediate wake of the breakup of the Soviet Union and the diminished threat to the United States' national security, defense requirements over the

past decade lacked credibility. Consequently, the defense budget steadily declined in the period 1989 - 1998, dropping from 6% of gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 3% of GDP and from 24% to 15% of outlays.²⁸ This decline corresponded directly to decreasing structure. Certainly, it found no basis in strategy requirements. Simultaneously, mission requirements increased, resulting in a common view of resourcing requirements as "doing more with less."

Increasingly, the budget process has become a system that has little flexibility. As a growing share of the budget is allocated to entitlements, the discretionary part of the budget, including defense spending, becomes significantly less flexible. The discretionary part of the FY 1998 budget comprises only 31.4% of total outlays.²⁹ A steadily declining defense budget reflects the competition for discretionary budget dollars in our national budget in the absence of a focused military threat to national security. What has transpired is a dwindling defense budget in the face of more pressing social issues that compete for the shrinking discretionary funds.

The vision of AAN depends on the ability to conduct an aggressive research, development, and acquisition program. The Department of Defense has fallen woefully behind the \$60 billion

level identified as the minimum level of sustainment for procurement by Secretary of Defense Cohen. Currently, the FY98 budget is \$17 billion below that mark.³⁰ According to the Association of the United States Army's 1998 budget analysis, "RDA is recognized as the most critical concern in the FY 1998 budget."³¹ This is the result of the serious decrease in RDA spending in real terms since 1985. All of this is occurring as the Army encounters other budget strains, including Army XXI modernization, increased operational tempo, and increased infrastructure repairs and upgrades. These are only three of the most acute requirements.

The ability to conduct focused research and development well in advance of the changing force requirements in order to ensure timely acquisition is absolutely essential to the success of AAN. The AAN report states, "As the pace of technological advance continues to accelerate, perspicacity in acquisition will become a strategic imperative for the Army."³² The report also notes that changes must begin to occur soon in order to meet the vision of AAN. It specifically highlights budget management as one of the key areas for the current CSA to address during his tenure.³³

The types of technological advances sought in the AAN, such as increased survivability, greater deployability, and rapid

maneuverability come with high price tags. Recent efforts to alleviate some of the costs such as more off-the-shelf procurement of civilian technology for solutions to military applications have critical pitfalls. There is no guarantee that civilian industry will be interested in all areas where AAN has requirements. Where they are interested, if the Army does not make some sort of investment in the development, there is no guarantee that the Army will get what it needs, either in performance or security of the technology. These are vital issues that act as forces on the AAN process. Once again, the fallacy of unconstrained planning is evident.

Some suggest that savings through streamlining many current processes will produce savings for channeling to RDA. The Army's current Army XXI initiative provides limited manpower and selected equipment reductions over Army of Excellence forces. The Department of Defense envisions additional savings through another round of base closures. Outsourcing functions is another hope for budget savings. The reality is that there is little likelihood that any of these efforts will produce savings of the magnitude required to develop and field AAN. As noted earlier, experience since the end of the Cold War indicates that DOD

savings are not reinvested in the defense budget, but in social imperatives.

Few would debate that the system for developing the federal budget is a political process among competing national demands. Likewise, within the Defense Department, politics play a key role in developing a defense budget. The Army's share of the defense budget has traditionally remained constant, relative to the other services, regardless of the national military strategy. In the FY98 defense budget, the Army's share is 24%.³⁴ The radically changed post-Cold War security environment and its ensuing national military strategy did not result in major changes of the services' percentages of the defense budget. In light of all the services' modernization demands, the political context is the most obvious explanation for this constancy. Without compelling political support within DOD or Congress, it is unlikely that AAN can successfully compete for dwindling defense dollars on the basis of landpower requirements. This is another political reality.

This tremendous challenge to funding AAN demands a comprehensive Army budget strategy if AAN is to become a reality. In a Strategy Research Project at the U.S. Army War College, Alex McKindra makes a case for the necessity of building a budget.

strategy for AAN. In formulating his proposed strategy, McKindra asserts that a recognized threat has always driven Congressional increases in defense spending. He argues that there are six key threats around which the US Army could build an adequate case for a budget to support AAN.³⁵ McKindra's strategy for building an AAN budget uses the threats as a basis for deriving doctrine that, in turn, drives RDA of equipment and systems. Ultimately, this methodology provides a means of selling the AAN budget to Congress and the American people.³⁶ Unfortunately neither McKindra or the AAN architects attempt to identify the magnitude of a budget required to support AAN, both in the near and long-term. Without some understanding of the magnitude of the budget figures or a coherent internal strategy for gaining the necessary political support, there is every possibility that AAN will prove to be a budget buster or prove politically infeasible. Again, unconstrained planning produces a fatal pitfall.

THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FORCES

In addition to the politics of the budget process, there are other political and social factors that stand as potent forces certain to impact the AAN process. The first of these forces is a reaction to the essential nature of the AAN war fighting philosophy. The goal of AAN is to move toward an offensive

force. The 1997 report states, "The American method of war-making in the future must rely on the offensive if this nation intends to strike rapidly, decide quickly, and finish wars cleanly with minimal loss of life to all sides."³⁷ The offensive nature of the vision of AAN forces is clearly described in the AAN report as it discusses the desire to provide a force capable of achieving a *coup de main*.³⁸ The report also refers to this type of operational capability as ". . . an expansive take down operation" ³⁹ AAN designers clearly see this type of warfare as a transition to an offensive cycle of war. The AAN report describes the shift to an offensive-type force as ". . . the essence of the AAN Project."⁴⁰ This drive toward a change in the nature of warfare is based on the AAN architects' assumption that technology will be the determinant factor.⁴¹

The move toward a preemptive, offensive force, driven by technology, is another example of the failure of AAN planners to appreciate the realities of the strategic environment of the AAN force. Americans have never demonstrated a proclivity for war. The history of our nation has been to stir slowly in the face of aggression, resorting to the use of force as a last resort. For the first time our country would have a landpower force designed to be preemptive rather than reactive. Reliance on a strategy

employing preemptive force would portray our nation as an aggressor. The American experience in the cycles of war described in the AAN report has always been defensive. Basing our national military strategy on an offensive concept of warfare is in direct opposition to the traditional values of our nation.

There is a real danger in adopting an offensive form of warfare. At some point offensive warfare will, and should, open a political debate. Such a debate could still birth an AAN and provide a basis for supporting the traditional roles of the other services. Equally important, developing an offensive military machine could permit the military form of national power to subvert diplomatic, political, and economic forms of power in resolving crises. This is a dangerous scenario for any democracy, but most particularly the United States, the most powerful nation on the globe. Our political system is constructed in such a way as to deliberately mobilize for war. The Constitution contains a deliberate separation of power regarding the military. The issue of committing our nation to war was further developed in the War Powers Act, which Congress passed in order to curb the President's ability to commit forces to war. Without a debate on this issue, designing a force that relies on a offensive strategy of preemption runs the risk of

political disaster in the funding process and poses a threat to the fundamental political processes of our nation.

In addition to the response to an offensive strategy, other political responses to AAN concepts may divert the process from the vision. The concept of the Total Army has become an enduring one since its implementation in current form by General Creighton Abrams. Any attempt to significantly change this balanced force concept would quickly become a political issue. The Reserve Components of the Army have a powerful lobby in Congress. In an editorial in *Strategic Review*, Mackubin Owens writes about the increasing politics of the total force, citing ". . . the plan by four influential Senators to introduce legislation making the Director of the National Guard a four-star billet and installing him as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff."⁴²

Certainly the AAN force will involve significant changes in the current mix of active and reserve component force structure. While the AAN report indicates that the vision of AAN involves hybrid forces, it gives no indication of what the mix might be. The report does state, "A land power force optimized to capture the benefits of the information age would take on physical characteristics distinctly different from industrial age armies."⁴³ It further describes the force as having two primary

components: a sustaining component and a combat component.⁴⁴ It is unlikely, in view of the extensive readiness and strategic deployability requirements of the combat forces envisioned in AAN that much of those would involve reserve component forces.

Currently, the reserve component of our Total Army constitutes well over half of the Total Army strength. There is a significant investment in the National Guard in combat units. By definition, any revolutionary changes in the way we organize, equip, train, and fight will have crucial impacts on this component of the force. Rationally, politics will play a dominant role in how these changes occur. AAN architects can ill afford to hide this reality under the cloak of unconstrained planning.

THE WAY AHEAD

The reality of this situation is important to the Army's senior leaders and others who work at the strategic level. Senior leaders of the Army and the AAN designers must recognize the nature of the environment through which they are moving and its ensuing friction. They must also account for significant outside forces to avoid derailing the process. In either case, architects of AAN must recognize and directly confront these

realities. Ultimately, this is an issue with immense implications for national security.

The AAN project plays a crucial role in determining the future of land power in the United States' defense strategy by providing a process of vision. A useful vision must be achievable. By ignoring the realities of the present and near-term in developing an unconstrained view of the future, there is little, real hope of achieving the vision of the AAN. The report states that the project seeks "a set of plausible futures that avoids errors inherent in predicting a precise future or in inadvertently ignoring an important possibility."⁴⁵ Some of the key assumptions of the process have insured the invisibility of important probabilities.

The primary assumption that limits the value of the process is the assumption that national security strategy will remain continuous. The constantly changing nature and complexity of the international security environment creates demands that will undoubtedly necessitate changes in our national response. This assumption also ignores the role that U.S. strategy plays on creating specific conditions in the strategic environment, increasing the friction. Failure to account for friction in the environment results in creating a force that does not meet

national security requirements. As AAN proceeds, AAN architects must accept and account for the reality of the friction of the strategic environment.

In addition to the friction created by the nature of the strategic environment, the process faces influence by several, significant other forces. Leadership issues stand as the most important of these forces. These issues involve the ability of current senior leaders to embrace and manage change and the requirement to develop the future AAN leaders. The second set of forces involve budgetary realities that require the development of accurate projected costs for the AAN, a strategy to manage the many internal competing demands for the Army's funds, and a comprehensive strategy to deal with the political realities of the federal and DOD budget processes. Finally, political and social considerations involving the acceptability of a preemptive, offensive landpower force and the political reality of the difficulty in changing the Total Army force structure loom as forces that will have significant impact on the AAN process in the strategic environment. These are areas that receive only cursory discussion, if any, in the 1997 report. Each of these forces, as discussed in this paper, directly affects the success of the AAN process in achieving its vision.

Like Newton's object moving through a vacuum, AAN's planners have viewed the AAN, propelled by the technological advances of the RMA, as moving through a vacuum without other forces at work. What they have failed to consider is that the strategic environment creates friction and that forces other than the RMA have tremendous potential for impact on the process.

(Word count: 5,613)

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Encyclopedia Britanica, 1996 ed., s.v. "Isaac Newton."
- ² U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, Knowledge and Speed: The Annual Report on The Army After Next Project to the Chief of Staff of the Army (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Army, July 1997). Hereafter cited as AAN Report.
- ³ Ibid., 1.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Ibid., 5. This figure is based on a figure appearing on page 5 of the report. The words, "revolutionary" and "evolutionary" have been added to show how resultant forces could be viewed in terms of their formulative process.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid., 26.
- ¹⁰ Steven Metz, "Which Army After Next? The Strategic Implications of Alternative Futures," Parameters 27, no. 3 (Autumn 1997), 15-26.
- ¹¹ Ibid., 26.
- ¹² Ibid., 15.
- ¹³ AAN Report, 10.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., 8.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 9.
- ¹⁶ William S. Cohen, Annual Report to the President and the Congress (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Defense, April 1997), 2.
- ¹⁷ Ibid., 1.
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