

# The Atrophy of Land Power: A Strategic Risk?

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## **Abstract**

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## **The Atrophy of Land Power: A Strategic Risk?**

You may fly over land forever; you may bomb it, atomize it, pulverize it and wipe it clean of life---but if you desire to defend it, protect it, and keep it for civilization; you must do this on the ground, the way the Roman legions did, by putting your young men into the mud. <sup>1</sup>

—T.R Fehrenbach

An era of shifting national security strategies and the ending of two wars has once again sparked debate among professionals and academics alike on the military drawdown, appropriate force structure, and strategies for the environment of tomorrow. Central in the debate is land power and its role in an unprecedented era of change and the National Security Strategy shift toward the pacific region. This monograph joins the land power debate from a different perspective. It does not advocate a proper force mix or capabilities needed to address the operational environment of tomorrow, but offers for consideration a disturbing byproduct of the last two decades of war. It questions our service's ability to fulfill land power's mandate to the joint force in conflicts beyond the stability spectrum. Specifically, it asserts that US land power's atrophy in Combined Arms Maneuver (CAM) over the last two decades of persistent limited war places us at strategic risk. At the low end, our atrophy at best restricts strategic options in the future; and toward the high end, it threatens our services ability to win an unforeseen high end conflict. Furthermore it asserts that we are at a tipping point, a point in which the institutional memory of how to conduct large scale maneuver warfare will have to be relearned versus retrained. The decisions we make now will determine how long it takes us to regain our higher end competencies and therefore the length of time we are at strategic risk. Moreover, this paper asserts that the current stability conflicts well over a decade long have produced a generation of professionals who have never conducted

combined arms maneuver beyond the platoon level. This fact highlights the Army's shortfall in its ability to fight and win a higher end conflict against a near peer threat. To compound the problem, the generation of professionals who remember how to conduct maneuver warfare in a near peer conflict are at the highest levels of the tactical Army and will soon transition to the operational army – impacting their ability to actively help retrain this generation. Additionally, but beyond the scope of this monograph, is an assertion that our atrophy probably extends beyond CAM and impacts larger land power functions of theater entry, which are relevant in today's discussion of Anti-Access Area Denial (A2AD) environments.

If we fail to harness the collective energy and expertise of our seniors before they depart our ranks, we risk prolonging the atrophy and likewise our long term strategic risk. We must act now to stop the decay. By acting now we can capitalize on those who remember, thereby regaining these capabilities more quickly. This will reduce the length of time we are at strategic risk and will posture the army for success in the future. Last and most importantly, by acting now we better provide our nation's leaders with a full complement of strategic options in an uncertain challenging future.

#### Depth of Land Powers Atrophy

It is commonly accepted among professionals and academics that over a decade of stability operations have come at the cost of higher end competencies, like the Israelis realized in 2006. But given our forces extraordinary level of combat experience, one could argue differently. Consider that today's generation of military professionals possesses well over a decade of near continuous conflict in two theaters of war. Our NCOs and officers have arguably logged more combat tours than any generation of our time. They have, through necessity, learned the art of flexibility and adaptation to a

volatile uncertain and complex environment fraught with ambiguity. Their small units have employed combined and joint effects to achieve a level of lethality not seen in decades. At the small unit level, our combined arms skill sets are arguably more lethal than they have ever been. One could assume that because our skills are so proficient at the building block level (platoons), we could reorient and quickly retrain our higher echelons to achieve a similar level of proficiency. If this assumption is true, there is no cause for alarm and the remainder of this paper serves no utility. However, I propose this assumption is false. The fact remains that regardless of our accomplishments in combat over the last decade, we have, out of necessity, become single event specialists. We are experts at wide area security (WAS) from platoon to corps; yet it is unlikely that we could close with and destroy a near peer threat in CAM above the company level. We simply have not done it. This and other associated problems equal a collective atrophy in land power's ability to achieve its mandate to the Joint Force: to fight and win in land combat. <sup>2</sup>

In assessing land forces ability to do the prescribed against a near peer in an A2AD environment, consider the following: First, the nature of the current and past fight has been largely tactically oriented, stationary from forward operating bases and stability / COIN focused in WAS. In WAS, CAM is limited to combined arms actions, with maneuver rarely occurring above the platoon level, and with maneuver, command and control (C2) and sustainment over significant distances and time virtually non-existent. Our Company through Brigade competencies have focused on enabling squad and platoon fights. Our C2 systems and organizational energies have focused almost solely on the complex problem - the genesis of design doctrine. Second, ARFORGEN and the

era deployment versus core mission essential task lists (DMETLs and CMETLs) has produced a generation of professionals who knew the fight in front of them and executed extensive but deployment oriented training regiments that exceeded the training time available. Our training timelines over the last decade have not afforded commanders the ability to achieve proficiency in core competencies as a precursor to COIN training requirements. The impact has been an institutional knowledge loss in how to train, how to conduct CAM (and its associated supporting skills) against a near peer beyond the company level, and how to C2 and sustain a mobile force over extended distances for an extended period of time. Third, over the last 13 years our CTCs have focused and rightfully so on preparing units for the current fight and only until recently have begun to reinvest in more decisive action rotations. This addresses the immediate training shortfall, but do we even know how much subject matter expertise our institutions and trainers have lost over the last decade regarding our most difficult core competency? <sup>3</sup> Lastly, in response to insurgencies, our lessons, doctrines and education has tilted heavily toward the tactical level fight, helping us cope with the realities of the war in front of us. Do we even know our battalion and brigade proficiency levels in combined arms maneuver? If the answer is *not really* or *yes, but it is less than adequate*, then how much risk are we assuming by not being able to do it? Are we certain the future environment will not call for this kind of capability? Does the President of the United States have this capability if needed on short notice? Could the Army deliver? In a higher end hybrid or near peer conflict, we must not forget that closing with and destroying the enemy through CAM is a precursor to land power's exercising of control of land, resources and people.

We have been here before. As an Army we witnessed this same trend during the Vietnam era – the birth place of the Small wars journal and countless counter insurgency and guerilla warfare doctrines that unfortunately we had to relearn. Following Vietnam, we retooled our thinking and evolved a more operational level doctrines and training approaches designed to collapse the Soviet military system. This operational level doctrine, Air Land Battle, witnessed it's validation in the early 90s with Operation Desert Storm. In a sense, our doctrine has always followed a sine curve of coping mechanisms from small unit focus to major combat operations. As armies are expected to fight and win the current war, this trend is not surprising and frankly hard to avoid. The question we face today is, after more than a decade of stability operations, are we doctrinally, operationally and competency balanced? We are not. Our doctrine is tilted out of balance toward the irregular fight. Institutionally we are tactically focused- single event specialists, who have not engaged in, or dialogued about maneuver or operational art in over a decade. Collectively these problems add up to a lost generation of expertise in higher end conflict. We must do something about it now to ensure we can uphold the nations trust in us tomorrow. The Army's contribution to land power and the benefits land power has provided to the nation is immeasurable and steeped in history. The next section of this paper is intended to provide a mirror of reflection on land power as we try to negotiate the path into the future.

#### Land Power in Context- Purpose, History and the Debate

Establishing the linkage of military concepts from overarching to specific is contextually useful. First, the purpose of the Armed Forces is to fight and win the Nation's wars. <sup>4</sup> War conceptually is the extension of policy by other means – the means to physically force a change of wills.<sup>5</sup> To achieve this end, the Armed Forces fights as

part of a Joint Team across the range of military operations using the Joint operational concept of Unified Action.<sup>6</sup> Distilled into its simplest form, the Joint teams effectiveness is the synergistic effect of the services combination, the whole is stronger than the sum of its parts. Each service maintains capability and a responsibility to the joint team to achieve this synergy. In essence, they must all be experts and ultimately win in their domains. The later concept – Unified Action is simply the blending of this range of military expertise with other power to achieve unity of effort to win. Let's now discuss the services contribution to this joint team concept. The Navy's contribution to the joint force is Sea Power – to fight at and from sea and to influence events on Land.<sup>7</sup> The Air Force's contribution is the preponderance of Air Power, to fly, fight and win in the Air, Space and Cyber Domain.<sup>8</sup> The Army's contribution is land power, that which makes permanent the temporary effects of battle because it can be applied to man's domain in a sustained fashion until national objectives have been met.<sup>9</sup> Land power is defined as the ability by threat, force or occupation to gain, sustain and exploit control over land, resources and people.<sup>10</sup> In short, the Army provides the nation with land power to prevent, shape, but ultimately win in the land domain. The key concept in land power is control. Land power alone is unique in its ability to take and exercise it.<sup>11</sup> The concept of control is discussed later, but first I'll discuss the concept of winning in this domain.

Winning is the decisive factor in breaking the enemies will.<sup>12</sup> If the enemy's mind cannot be changed or he cannot be defeated from a distance, soldiers close with and destroy the enemy and his will to fight.<sup>13</sup> Decisive in achieving this objective is our ability to prevail in CAM, one of the indispensable contributions to the joint force.<sup>14</sup> CAM is the application of the elements of combat power to defeat enemy ground forces; to

seize, occupy and defend land areas; and to achieve physical, temporal and psychological advantages over the enemy.<sup>15</sup> If Army units cannot find, fix, close with and destroy armed opponents in any terrain, neither we nor the joint force will be decisive.<sup>16</sup> In short, winning our fights is a critical precursor to land power's central idea of control – we can't control it until we remove or destroy the enemy's ability to do the same, placing a premium on our ability to conduct combined arms maneuver.

As alluded to earlier, unlike Sea and Air Power, Land power is unique in its ability to deliver strategic effect through the taking and exercising of control.<sup>17</sup> In his article, "The Utility of Land power", Lukas Milevski framed it this way: "the aim of grand strategy is to control [sic] the pattern of power manipulation—of events around and during conflict—in time and space". And, that control is a trichotomous concept- one may deny control to others, one may take it for oneself, and one may subsequently exercise it. Denial of control to the enemy is implicit in acquisition and exercise of control, but the latter two are not necessary features of the former. One may deny control to another without being able to acquire and exercise it by oneself.<sup>18</sup> Milevski goes on to say that sea and air power are limited to the denial of control and land power alone is unique in the ability to take and exercise it. Milevski's discussion of control is centered on the concept of enemy power bases and the ability to remove, deny or destroy them of enemy ownership. Land power, because it alone has the capability to take and then to exercise control on the decisive geography of war, is the unique tool capable of and necessary for imposing one's will upon the enemy directly and actively. Short of nuclear war, only land power is capable of escalating a conflict to a level that may result in the destruction of entire great powers.<sup>19</sup> Navy Rear Admiral J.C. Wylie

described it this way in his reflection of the US Army Soldier “He [the soldier] needs the airman and the sailor for his own security in doing his own job.” Nevertheless, he is equally adamant “[t]he ultimate determinant in war is the man on the scene with the gun. This man is the final power in war. He is control. He determines who wins.”<sup>20</sup>

Clausewitz’s idea that “the policy with a positive aim calls for the act of destruction into being, [and] the policy of a negative aim waits for it” helps provide clarity to how these ideas connect. To achieve the positive aim, to gain or restore control requires offensive action. Offensive action is land powers currency in the achievement of the positive aim, and the tool in which land forces achieve it is through CAM, a core competency we lack at the upper tactical and operational level and one we must re-master in order to provide our civilian leaders the maximum number of options in the future. We have been here before both strategically and operationally, and history reminds us of when we enjoyed the advantage and when we did not.

### Strategic and Operational Historic Insights

The lessons of strategic flexibility and what competent land forces can provide are etched in our history. Consider the era immediately following World War II: the Eisenhower force structure reductions during the age of deterrence left the United States vulnerable and ill prepared to conventionally thwart an aggressive USSR who eventually dominated Eastern Europe, arguably the ideological engine that drove the limited wars of Vietnam and Korea and contributed to a cold war of power rebalancing that lasted for nearly half a century.

Toward the end of the cold war, the United States’ reversal of this trend, among other things essentially bankrupted the Soviet Union in its attempt to keep up with US military power. The Army of Excellence that emerged following the Vietnam era

arguably provided the United States with a strategic advantage that has lasted over a quarter of a century. It helped bring about the end of the cold war and provided strategic flexibility, responsiveness and land domination in South East Asia like no other force in history. Following the attacks of 9/11 it provided the same strategic capability as seen ten years earlier. US adversaries who watched Desert Storm learned one prevailing lesson from the US; don't allow US Land power's employment, it is unstoppable.<sup>21</sup> Without forgetting past lessons, a re-balancing of some of our competencies for tomorrow's more unpredictable, complex and dangerous environment will posture the US well for the next quarter century.<sup>22</sup> Operationally and tactically, our defeats in the Kasserine pass during World War II and 6 years later with TF Smith in the Korean conflict reminds us of the costs when land forces were ill prepared in their core competency.

The 38<sup>th</sup> Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA), GEN Gordon Sullivan, who, facing a similar time of defense cuts and an unknown future, summed it up this way, "I did not know what we would be asked to do, I only knew that we'd have to win."<sup>23</sup> We know environments change, and today's environment is no different, sparking once again a vigorous debate of land powers role. We must keep in mind that the threat we face tomorrow is as uncertain as it has always been and our ability to predict that threat is no better today than it was 60 years ago. What is not uncertain is the expectation of the Army when it happens – we will be expected to win.

#### Insights from Recent Studies on Land Power

A significant factor to today's debate regarding the future of land forces organization is the future threat and the rise of non state actors on the international scene. It is widely believed that such combatants will be increasingly common

opponents for the US military.<sup>24</sup> This most likely future adversary is characterized as the hybrid threat.<sup>25</sup> The nature of this threat remains at the forefront of US defense strategy and defense planning. Advocates subscribing to the idea that future conflict will be dominated by a hybrid, asymmetrical threat like Hezbollah in 2006, advocate sweeping changes in the defense structure to posture the force to deal predominantly with irregular warfare being experienced in Iraq and Afghanistan today. Advocates differ on the particulars, but generally they would expand the Army and USMC and re-equip this larger ground force with lighter weapons and vehicles, restructuring it to de-emphasize traditional armor and artillery in favor of light infantry, civil affairs, military police, military advisors, special operations capabilities and reconfigure training, doctrine and service culture and recruitment and promotion systems to stress a low intensity irregular warfare skills rather than conventional warfare<sup>26</sup>

A second school of thought sees the picture much simpler, that non state actors will fight largely like what we have experienced in Iraq and Afghanistan. Advocates here see no major changes to structure or doctrines. In Biddle and Freidman's work on the 2006 Hezbollah / Israeli conflict, Biddle offers another thought provoking idea. He suggests that Hezbollah in 2006 demonstrated a concrete example of a non state actor whose military behavior and proficiency is far from classical guerilla models seen in today's wars. Instead they represent a proficiency well within the band that is characterized by many state actors.<sup>27</sup> In other words non state hybrid actors demonstrate operational concepts and high end capability traditionally associated with states.<sup>28</sup>

Although Biddle and Friedman's work does not presuppose policy concerning what the future force should look like, it does draw the conclusion that Hezbollah unambiguously demonstrates that even today's non-state actors are not limited to the irregular, guerilla model so often assumed in the future warfare debate.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, Biddle and Friedman suggest that similar Hezbollah like behavior has been observed in recent conflicts by other actors and the occurrence of the phenomenon is not likely to be the last. Lastly, and apart of his current work on land power, Biddle suggests that a force must first be able to deal with the high end problem in order to get to the lower end problem; suggesting that perhaps a middle ground, a medium force, may be more effective in dealing with the range of threats in the future.<sup>30</sup>

#### Debate and Evidence against Land Power

A nation's need of land power and competent land forces with lethal competencies is a sound enough idea, yet for generations mankind has debated its own nature and by analogy the nature of the international system. The nature of man, represented in the different views of liberalism and realism, has often been linked to the discussion of the nature of war and it's likelihood of occurrence. These ideas are not new and in fact predate World War I when we got it wrong the first time. However, this dialogue is natural and is a necessary component of our nation's defense adjustments throughout the cycle of peace and war. Today is no different. Today, like in 1913, some argue that the interconnectedness of nations in global trade is so interwoven and interdependent that the prospect of war is unfathomable. This may be true. It may also be true that globalization today has vastly changed the global landscape into a symbiotic inter-related conglomerate that will require, if not demand, peace. However, in acknowledging the economic nature of today and tomorrow, we must not be lulled into a

false sense of security that the fundamental nature of man has changed. Nor should we believe that the causes of war are any different today than they were in 2500 BC when Thucydides first wrote about them.<sup>31</sup>

However, the debate continues and one of the central issues surrounding it is the nation's re-balance toward the Pacific. Consider this quote from the President of the United States in November 2011:

For the United States, this [advance of security, prosperity and human dignity across the Asia Pacific] reflects a broader shift. After a decade in which we fought two wars that cost us dearly, in blood and treasure, the United States is turning our attention to the vast potential of the Asia Pacific region... Our new focus on this region reflects a fundamental truth -- the United States has been, and always will be, a Pacific nation. Asian immigrants helped build America, and millions of American families, including my own, cherish our ties to this region. From the bombing of Darwin to the liberation of Pacific islands, from the rice paddies of Southeast Asia to a cold Korean Peninsula, generations of Americans have served here, and died here -- so democracies could take root; so economic miracles could lift hundreds of millions to prosperity. Americans have bled with you for this progress, and we will not allow it -- we will never allow it to be reversed... As President, I have, therefore, made a deliberate and strategic decision -- as a Pacific nation, the United States will play a larger and long-term role in shaping this region and its future, by upholding core principles and in close partnership with our allies and friends.<sup>32</sup>

Following the new National Security Strategy (NSS) that placed emphasis on the Asia Pacific, the espousal of Air Sea Battle has helped fuel the debate on the role of land power and land forces. Albeit an interesting contrast to the name of its cold war cousin, Air Land Battle, the concept is misunderstood as a threat to land power's role. In reality, the entire purpose of Air Sea battle is to counter an A2AD strategy for the sole purpose of projecting military power into the adversary's territory. In other words, the application of land power is not only half of the operational concept, it is the higher purpose of the concept. This is an extremely important point to consider as we adjust

policies in a fiscally constrained environment. We must be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water.

It may be true that programs and policies may align that effect budgets and capabilities, but it is not a foregone conclusion that land forces are at risk. As a service, we need to stop wringing our hands and roll up our sleeves with our Air Sea battle brothers and jointly finish the development of this operational concept. Clearly we would all do well to remember that if an air sea battle doctrine was actually ever prosecuted in some foreign land, the nation will ultimately depend on the Army's Land power and core competencies to achieve the positive aim. One of our most respected thinkers, BG (R) Was de Czega said it this way:

Success in changing an intolerable grand strategic status is a matter of shading the choices of a foe who has become intractable to diplomacy and political and economic pressure or inducements. Thus to pursue changes in a strongly defended status quo prudence will dictate a two armed approach – one that operates on the enemy decision makers frame of mind and reasoning, and another that steadily constrains and restricts the enemy's leaderships options. In other words, the purpose of the first arm is to convince enemy leaders to do willingly what is being dictated, the purpose of the second is to leave them with no other option.<sup>33</sup>

To close out the idea that the NSS somehow relegates land power's utility, one only needs to read it closer. Consider these points: First, it charges the Armed Forces to maintain an agile, flexible force, ready and capable for the full range of contingencies. This passage has vast implications. Second, operating in anti-access environments and prevailing in all domains is strategic guidance for all the nations' military powers, not just air and sea. Theater access and opening is an interdependent joint function, with land power playing a central role in not only achieving it, but exploiting it once it occurs. Lastly, our primary mission has not changed, to deter or defeat through the ability to impose unacceptable costs of an aggressor. Our service's role of imposing

unacceptable cost is the heart of this monograph and is a clear indication that land power and forces must remain capable of the full range of operations, providing our commander and chief maximum options toward changing an intolerable strategic condition. It is important to remember conflict's foundations, a contest of wills, each actor trying to dominate the other through violence.<sup>34</sup> Ultimately, it is the ability of land forces to close with and destroy the enemy that allows the Army to dominate.<sup>35</sup> Achieving the Clausewitzian ' positive aim will be significantly aided by the punishment strategies of air power, the strangulation and access strategies of sea power, but will ultimately be accomplished by the forcing and controlling strategies of land power.

### The Future Operational Environment

In his graduation speech to Kansas State University, former Secretary of Defense Robert Gates remarked that four times in the last century the United States has come to the end of a war, and concluded [a better peace would prevail, and] that the nature of man and the world had changed for the better, and turned inward, unilaterally disarming and dismantling institutions important to our national security – in the process, giving [it] a so-called “peace” dividend. Four times we chose to forget history.<sup>36</sup> Through the lens of the past we seek to understand the future. Over the next 20 years, the world we live in will radically change from the world we live in today.<sup>37</sup> By 2030, the western dominated, unipolar world of today will give rise to a world in which no country, whether China, US or other large country will be the hegemonic power. This dramatic change will for the first time in history likely see a new era of democratization on the international and domestic levels.<sup>38</sup> Fueled by multiple rising trends, these changes will increase the potential for conflict as much as they create opportunities for cooperation and peaceful competition.<sup>39</sup>

In our collective understanding of the future security environment, there are commonly accepted trends of change and enduring theories of war that we expect to remain. With the shifting tides in global power, increased effects of globalization, increasing populations and decreasing natural resources – we recognize that conflicts will remain a human endeavor. <sup>40</sup> Like 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, the next two decades ahead of us will likely produce conflicts of interest, incite fear, and violate honor of states.

The Joint Operating concepts of 2020 characterizes persistent trends in the security environment as : the proliferation of WMD, the rise of modern competitor states, violent extremist, regional instability, transnational criminal activity and competition for resources. <sup>41</sup> A broader look of larger overarching trends by the National Intelligence Councils November 2012 report - Alternative Worlds, provides four critical changes (called Megatrends) that will affect how the world will work. These trends provide useful context for understanding the security environment. Megatrend 1 predicts an acceleration in Individual empowerment. This trend will produce a huge growth in the global middle class. For the first time, a majority of the world's population will not be impoverished, and the middle classes will be the most important social and economic sector in the vast majority of countries around the world. This megatrend is the most important because it is both a cause and effect of most other trends. The report goes on to conclude that this can produce two effects, greater individual initiative as key to solving global challenges, and that individuals and small groups will have greater access to lethal and disruptive technologies (particularly precision-strike capabilities, cyber instruments, and bioterror weaponry). This will enable them to perpetrate large-scale violence—a capability formerly the monopoly of states. <sup>42</sup>

Megatrend 2 is the diffusion of power. The diffusion of power among countries will have a dramatic impact by 2030. Asia will have surpassed North America and Europe combined in terms of global power, based upon GDP, population size, military spending, and technological investment. China alone will probably have the largest economy, surpassing that of the United States a few years before 2030. In this shift, the health of the global economy increasingly will be linked to how well the developing world does more so than the traditional West. In addition to China, India, and Brazil, regional players such as Colombia, Indonesia, Nigeria, South Africa, and Turkey will become especially important to the global economy. Meanwhile, the economies of Europe, Japan, and Russia are likely to continue their slow relative declines. The report posits that the shift in national power may be overshadowed by an even more fundamental shift in the *nature* of power. Enabled by communications technologies, power will shift toward multifaceted and amorphous networks that will form to influence state and global actions.<sup>43</sup>

Megatrend 3 states that the world population will increase to 8.3 billion, up from 7.1 billion today. Four demographic trends will fundamentally shape, although not necessarily determine, most countries' economic and political conditions and relations among countries. These trends are: aging—a tectonic shift for both for the West and increasingly most developing countries; a still-significant but shrinking number of youthful societies and states; migration, which will increasingly be a cross-border issue; and growing urbanization. This shift will spur economic growth but could put new strains on food and water resources. Aging countries will face an uphill battle in maintaining

their living standards. Demand for both skilled and unskilled labor will spur global migration.<sup>44</sup>

Megatrend 4 centers on a growing food, water and energy nexus. Demand for food, water, and energy will grow by approximately 35, 40, and 50 percent respectively owing to an increase in the global population and the consumption patterns of an expanding middle class. Climate change will worsen the outlook for the availability of these critical resources. Climate change analysis suggests that the severity of existing weather patterns will intensify, with wet areas getting wetter and dry areas becoming more so. Much of the decline in precipitation will occur in the Middle East and northern Africa as well as western Central Asia, southern Europe, southern Africa, and the US Southwest. Although the report does not necessarily predict a world of scarcities, it concludes that policymakers and their private sector partners will need to be proactive to avoid such a future. Many countries probably won't have the wherewithal to avoid food and water shortages without massive help from outside.<sup>45</sup>

In summary, the rate of change in the next twenty years will be more dramatic than any other time in our history, likely fueling the potential for increased, not decreased conflict. Although we don't know exactly what threat we'll face, we do know that our capabilities and competencies to react must provide us strategic flexibility across the spectrum of conflict.

#### Risks Associated with Land Powers Atrophy in Combined Arms Maneuver

Air Sea battle and hybrid war theory address two parts of the same strategic problem. Air Sea battle addresses the outer half of the problem: how to gain access to the region, and once you get inside a region, how do you operate in the face of hybrid threats.<sup>46</sup> Beyond the scope of this paper, but closely related to my thesis, is my

assertion that more work needs to be done on land and sea power's capabilities to solve the access or outer half of the problem. Notwithstanding this monumental issue, the risks assumed by an inability to conduct decisively operational and tactical maneuver against a near peer once in his territory are obvious, an inability to achieve the positive aim. Just as we seek to avoid relearning the lessons of ill preparedness from the irregular fight in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), we too seek to avoid ill prepared maneuver lessons like the Kasserine pass and Korea's TF Smith. And although many believe the era of large scale maneuver conflicts is a thing of the past, this hypothesis has grave consequences if we get it wrong. If the hypothesis is correct, at least for the near term, and globalization and nuclear deterrence relegate conflict to conventional means, they will likely continue to be limited wars prosecuted by conventional means. Our lessons of limited wars span from Korea to present and are ingrained in our psyche. They are often ideological in nature, "limited" only in the eyes of the United States, but total in the eyes of our adversary.<sup>47</sup> If this hypothesis is true, future conflicts will inevitably call for the application of land forces ability to achieve through core competencies, the positive aim.

### Conclusions

The debate on land power will likely continue through this generation and the next. As we work through the policy decisions that will shape the force over the next 20 years, we do so as a nation and Joint Force with eyes wide open to the enduring currency a land power provides the nation. As students of the future, we recognize the future security environment will call for agile, flexible forces, capable of prevailing in all domains in a complex, uncertain world. The preservation of peace in such a world is born not out of retrenchment, but instead out of involvement and responsibility for it. In

this world, our competencies must be balanced –equally able to stabilize an environment toward the political aim as we are ready to destroy obstacles and threats that impede it. Beyond the tactical fight, we remind ourselves of the larger role land forces play to the nation and to our sister services. Tomorrow’s world will be more complex and dangerous than today’s. The pace of operations and tempo, enabled by technology will force us to react faster than our adversaries if we are to prevail. This will require skilled land forces, proficient in their core competencies, rapidly deployable, truly expeditionary and with a level of readiness that transcends today’s attention on the subject. Soldiers and units alike must be prepared to answer the nation’s call. The conflicts of tomorrow will develop faster, increasingly calling for rapidly deployable and proficient forces capable of changing the status quo.

## Recommendations

### Doctrine

Doctrine is our coping mechanism for how we deal with our perceived reality of war. It is forged by theory and informed by history, experience and practice. Our CAM doctrine is 15 years old and has been informed through the lens of two tactically oriented / COIN centric wars and multiple internal changes. Re-examine our CAM and operational doctrines in light of the Joint operational environment (JOE) and our own internal changes ( ie C2, functional integration, reorganization, echelons above corps functions etc.) to determine what has changed in the nature of major combat operations. Relook -keystone CAM and supporting branches doctrinal manuals to ensure we have not, in a FOB centric era, lost key concepts of sustained maneuver, C2 and sustainment.

## Organization and Materiel

Although this paper offers no specific organizational changes, it does recommend that any changes adopted do not abandon the ability to win the higher end conflicts. In short, our ability to shape and deter is predicated on our ability to win, first and foremost. Beyond the scope of this paper, but strategically important is our ability to gain access in the A2AD environments. More study is needed in response to this question: Does the Army and Navy have the proper force structure and materiel to rapidly enter opposed immature theaters?

## Training

Decisive action rotations at the NTC are a good start to improving CAM skills beyond the company level. Without forgetting lessons of WAS, redouble training efforts on the battalion and brigade's ability to conduct sustained maneuver against a near peer. In a resource constrained environment, home stations should redouble crawl /walk strategies to regain CAM skills at company, battalion and BCT levels. Some examples include: tactical movement and terrain appreciation, mounted offensive building block exercises, defensive skill improvements ie (Engagement area development), supporting gunnery skill improvements, Fire control exercises and leveraging virtual and constructive platforms to build base knowledge prior to moving to live training venues.

## Leadership

Energize "the last generation of experts", our senior officer's emphasis on CAM skill regeneration. The pinnacle positions here are Division Commanders and Brigade commanders. "Re-inculcate" a new culture of service and lead the next generation of "no latest available date" (LAD) leaders. Create a new cultural mindset of readiness and preparedness similar to the emergency deployment readiness exercise (EDRE)

mentality of the early 90s. This new culture of readiness will help re-inculcate a generation of no LAD professionals. Most importantly, a new culture of readiness will, above all other competencies, serve our Army and our Nation's leaders well in the unpredictable world of tomorrow.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> T.R.Fehrenbach, *This Kind of War* (New York, New York, Bantam, 1991), 37.

<sup>2</sup> As defined by ADP-1, the army provides the nation the ability to prevent, shape but ultimately win in the land domain. Land operations seize the enemy's territory and resources, destroy his armed forces, and eliminate his means of controlling his population. Only land forces can exercise direct, continuing, discriminate, and comprehensive control over land, people, and resources.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ADP -1, page 3-4 states that nothing the army does is as challenging as Combined Arms Maneuver.

<sup>4</sup> Admiral M.G. Mullen, *Joint Publication 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*,(Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, May, 2007), 10.

<sup>5</sup> Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, translated and edited by Michael Howard and Peter Paret ( Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 87.

<sup>6</sup> Admiral M.G. Mullen, *Joint Publication 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*,(Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, May, 2007), preface.

<sup>7</sup> The United States Naval War College, *Joint Military Operations Reference Guide*, (United States Naval War College, July 2012), 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, 84.

<sup>9</sup> General Raymond T. Odierno, *ADP 1, The Army*,(Washington, DC, Headquarters, Department of the Army, September 2012), 1-4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>11</sup> Lucas Milevski, "Fortissimus Inter Pares: The Utility of Land power in Grand Strategy" *Parameters*, Vol XLII, No. 2 (Summer 2012): 6

<sup>12</sup> General Raymond T. Odierno, *ADP 1, The Army*,(Washington, DC, Headquarters, Department of the Army, September 2012), 1-6.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>14</sup> General Raymond T. Odierno, *ADP 1, The Army*,(Washington, DC, Headquarters, Department of the Army, September 2012), 1-7.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Lucas Milevski, "Fortissimus Inter Pares: The Utility of Land power in Grand Strategy" Parameters, Vol XLII, No. 2 (Summer 2012): 6

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, 10.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Mr. Bob Coon of US Army War College, interview by author, Carlisle, PA, Nov 05, 2012

<sup>22</sup> General Martin E. Dempsey, Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020, (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, September, 2012), 3 paraphrase.

<sup>23</sup> GEN (R) Gordon Sullivan, "Land Power" lecture, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA Nov 12, 2012, cited without permission of GEN (R) Sullivan.

<sup>24</sup> Stephen Biddle and Jeffery A. Friedman, The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy (Carlisle, pa., Strategic Studies Institute, September 2008), xi.

<sup>25</sup> General Raymond T. Odierno, ADP 3-0, Unified Land Operations, (Washington, DC, Headquarters, Department of the Army, October 2011), 4.

<sup>26</sup> Stephen Biddle and Jeffery A. Friedman, The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy (Carlisle, pa., Strategic Studies Institute, September 2008), xv.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> General Raymond T. Odierno, ADP 3-0, Unified Land Operations, (Washington, DC, Headquarters, Department of the Army, October 2011), 4.

<sup>29</sup> Stephen Biddle and Jeffery A. Friedman, The 2006 Lebanon Campaign and the Future of Warfare: Implications for Army and Defense Policy (Carlisle, pa., Strategic Studies Institute, September 2008), xviii.

<sup>30</sup> Dr. Stephen Biddle, "Land Power" lecture, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA Nov 12, 2012, cited without permission of Dr Biddle.

<sup>31</sup> Thucydides is attributed for identifying the three major causes of war between countries: fear, honor and interests. Robert B. Stassler, ed., The Landmark Thucydides: A comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War (New York: The Free Press, 1996) 46.

<sup>32</sup> President Obama, "Remarks by President Obama to the Australian Parliament", White House Press Secretary, November 2011, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/11/17/remarks-president-obama-australian-parliament>

<sup>33</sup> BG(Retired) Huba Wass de Czega, "The Logic of Campaigns of Offensive Air-Sea-Land Maneuver" Army, July 2011, 46.

<sup>34</sup> General Martin E. Dempsey, Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020, (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, September, 2012), 7.

<sup>35</sup> Military Operations and Land Power, linked from *The Global Security Home Page* at <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/land.htm> (accessed November 12, 2012).

<sup>36</sup> Defense Secretary Robert Gates, "Landon Lecture Remarks as delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates" U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), November 2007, <http://www.defense.gov/Speeches/Speech.aspx?SpeechID=1199>

<sup>37</sup> National Intelligence Council, Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds. (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, <http://www.dni.gov/nic/globaltrends>), iii

<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 1

<sup>39</sup> General Martin E. Dempsey, Capstone Concept for Joint Operations: Joint Force 2020, (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, September, 2012), 2.

<sup>40</sup> United States Joint Forces Command, The Joint Operating Environment 2010, (Norfolk, Virginia, United States Joint Forces Command, February 2010), 4.

<sup>41</sup> United States Joint Forces Command, The Joint Operating Environment 2010, (Norfolk, Virginia, United States Joint Forces Command, February 2010), 2.

<sup>42</sup> National Intelligence Council, Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds. (Washington, DC: Office of the Director of National Intelligence, <http://www.dni.gov/nic/globaltrends>), iii

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, 31.

<sup>46</sup> Sydney J. Freedberg Jr, "The Network: Where Hybrid War Meets AirSea Battle" May 31, 2012, <http://defense.aol.com/2012/05/31/the-network-where-hybrid-war-meets-airsea-battle/> (accessed October 23, 2012).

<sup>47</sup> Bernard Brodie, War & Politics (New York, New York, : Macmillan Publishing, 1973), 106.

