Projecting Strategic Land Combat Power

By GORDON R. SULLIVAN

Twenty-nine thousand tanks, thirty-nine thousand infantry fighting vehicles, over four thousand tactical aircraft, seven hundred bombers, six carriers and guided missile aviation cruisers, one hundred and five principal surface combatants, one hundred and twenty ballistic and attack submarines, and thirteen hundred naval aircraft.[1]

The relevance of those statistics—found in the last edition of *Soviet Military Power*—has altered dramatically. A wide variety of political, military, social, and economic events illustrates the changes in the global strategic situation over the last four years. The Army understands the scope and depth of these changes and their implications for the future of U.S. national security. It is taking advantage of, and responding to, international and domestic realities which condition the development and use of force. As an institution, the Army is innovating—in concert with the other services—to ensure that our Nation's enduring interests remain secure well into the 21st century.

U.S. Army photo by William U. Rosenmund

Members of the 2d Armored Division inside an infantry fighting vehicle.

A Changing World

Soviet military capabilities shaped the Army's perspective on joint warfare throughout the Cold War. From 1945 to 1990 we faced a numerically superior, disciplined, offensively oriented political and military adversary. The tremendous quantity of Soviet equipment, coupled with Moscow's drive to achieve technological parity with the West, threatened our interests around the globe, with the primary focus on Central Europe. Euphemistically characterized as a "target-rich environment," massed-armor warfare preoccupied American military thought and action for much of the last forty-five years—two generations of military leaders. Infantry, tank, and artillery units along with battalions, brigades, and divisions rightly had their minds and hands occupied with the job of defeating superior numbers of similar equipment arrayed in a dense combat area. With the notable exception of tactical air support, thoroughly integrated on the World War II pattern established by Pete Quesada and George Patton,[2] joint operations and considerations were, in the minds of many Army commanders, consigned to echelons above corps.

The demise of the Soviet Union has presented challenges that the Army is overcoming, and opportunities that it is seizing.

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International issues require a broader appreciation of the threat—from the unitary and relatively predictable adversary we knew in the Cold War, to the diverse, ambiguous, and dynamic threats that we confront today. Ethnic and religious conflict, weapons proliferation, thrusts for regional hegemony, irredentism, terrorism, and drug trafficking are the most prominent elements of this dangerous new world. To successfully meet the challenges which these trends indicate, we are retaining and developing capabilities to secure our national interests. We continue to base these capabilities on the sound foundation of the American people and leveraging U.S. technological advantages in training, developing, deploying, and employing the force.[3]

The Army also faces the challenges posed by a national agenda with a priority on domestic rebuilding of the physical and intellectual assets of the country. While the Army will shrink to its smallest end strength since just before World War II, and as the Nation devotes resources to other programs, the Army budget will approach that of the post-World War II service in percentage of gross domestic product. The challenge is to seize opportunities to apply our limited resources in a manner that best serves the country. In the past some observers may have portrayed a "circle the wagons" picture in which the Army attempts to preserve its capabilities at the expense of working with the other services. Today, the world situation and expectations of the American people will not tolerate such short-sightedness. The Army's view of service to the Nation is broad and embraces the concept of joint operations as a cardinal tenet of defending the United States now and in the 21st century. Our recent experience bears this out.

The Joint Experience

The last four years have taught us two things. First, joint operations work and they work more efficiently than single-service operations. There is unmatched power in the synergistic capabilities of joint operations. Second, future threats require that joint operations be the norm at every level of command. Relegating the expertise and ability to conduct joint operations to only "higher" levels is a recipe for missed opportunities, longer and more difficult operations, riskier outcomes, greater numbers of casualties, and increased expenditures of resources.

Joint capabilities provide decisive overmatch on every level of warfare from the strategic, where national objectives are determined, priorities assigned, and resources allocated, through the operational level, where campaigns are constructed to achieve national objectives, to the tactical, where engagements and battles cumulate in victory. The U.S. Army demonstrates an ability to dominate land combat. Working with the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps will ensure victory and success in any conflict environment.

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Operations Just Cause and Desert Shield/Desert Storm are clear examples of the benefits of joint operations. Just Cause illustrated the immense power generated by a simultaneous application of unique, complementary service capabilities. By land, sea, and air the Armed Forces assaulted and secured 27 objectives between midnight and sunrise on the first day. That complex, synchronized application of combat power, projected from the continental United States, its coastal waters, and within the region, eliminated resistance by the Panamanian Defense Force. We neutralized assets that could have been used to continue the struggle—communications, ready forces, logistics, and reserves. Precise power projection and joint principles applied in a compressed timeframe illustrate the need for rapid response forces trained in joint operations. Forces participating in Just Cause led the way in expanding the joint perspective on warfare. Seven months later, America received another decisive return on its investment in forces that can operate together in any environment and against any adversary while elevating warfare to a level unmatched in the world today. Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm required an imme-

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diate defense and a show of force which matured and evolved into a potent offensive capability. Throughout the fall and winter of 1990–91 the services conducted joint and combined training at all levels. The heavy force that defeated Iraq's Republican Guards was comprised of units that had stood watch in Central Europe for four decades, trained and ready to meet an armored thrust that never came. Within days of taking up positions in the desert these units were conducting joint and combined operations at battalion and brigade level. This cooperation, based on sound principles and doctrine, paid huge dividends and gave us a window into the future of warfare.

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For example, during one phase of the VII Corps operation, a SAM–2 site in the vicinity of Basra activated its radar and began to paint coalition aircraft. Since the only asset in striking distance due to the pace of operations was an artillery brigade operating with the 1st Armored Division, VII Corps relied on an Air Force EC–130H, Airborne Battle Command and Control Center, to relay the fire mission to the artillery unit and clear the airspace. Within three hours of the SAM–2 site activating its radar two Army tactical missiles fired from a multiple-launch rocket system were on the way to destroy the target.[4] Air Force operations continued without threat of SAM interruption, and VII Corps benefited from continued air strikes against Iraqi reserves and command and control targets.

Replicated across the battlefield, from varied service platforms operating on and above the desert floor and positions at sea, such actions decimated the Iraqi military, resolved the conflict on the ground in 100 hours, and kept our casualties to a minimum. Conduct of joint warfare at that level has become the unique province of the Armed Forces, and one that we are striving to maintain in order to overmatch any potential adversary.

The Future of Joint Operations

The strategic landscape that the Nation faces will require power projection forces that are tailorable, more versatile, and more precise than even those that we employed in Southwest Asia or Panama. The range of employment scenarios has burgeoned recently, and we can see evidence of this trend in joint operations in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Guantanamo, Southwest Asia, and domestically in disaster relief and the counternarcotics missions. Because such contingencies may not require application of force in the same magnitude or manner as Just Cause or Desert Storm, commanders of units of all types and sizes must work and succeed in the joint environment. The 212th Mobile Army Surgical Hospital in Zagreb and the 10th Mountain Division in Florida, and subsequently in Somalia, are prime examples.

Additionally, our recent domestic disaster relief and overseas humanitarian operations have reinforced the necessity to work with civilian agencies. Even before Operation Desert Storm was over, Army elements were coordinating reconstruction efforts with the host government and U.S. agencies in Kuwait. In Los Angeles, Florida, Louisiana, Hawaii, and Guam, Total Army units worked closely with private relief organizations and state and Federal agencies to restore order and assist civil authorities in restoring services to devastated neighborhoods.[5] That pattern of support to civil authority continued in Somalia.

In the future the Army's forward presence and crisis response capabilities will be needed and integrated into every phase of operations. The breadth and scope of single-service capabilities militate against making a solitary transition from forward presence, through crisis response, to conflict resolution. The capabilities of the Army to dominate maneuver, conduct precision strikes, sustain land combat power, and protect the force are essential and necessary for the prosecution of successful campaigns, but only a combination of multiservice capabilities will ensure success.

The Army recognizes this need for forces trained and ready to operate with other services and ad hoc coalitions, at all unit and command levels. We are on the right path, both conceptually and materially, to achieve our goals of integration, synergy, and overwhelming effectiveness.

The Army has revised its doctrine to reflect changing circumstances that surround

ground combat. Our doctrinal capstone, FM 100–5 (*Operations*), was published this spring. The concepts and tenets in this manual are the result of serious study of lessons learned and future possibilities, and the exchange of a range of ideas among military professionals, scholars, and policy analysts. It will guide our efforts to reshape the Army for the world in which we will be operating.[6]

U.S. Army photo

General Sullivan in Somalia.

We are working closely with the Navy and Air Force on implementing the recommendations of the Mobility Requirements Study.[7] The study requires the Army to be able to close a three division force (two heavy and one light) to a theater 7,500 miles away in 30 days, and to close a five division corps with its associated components and support within 75 days. This is true power projection, beginning on the first day of a crisis, and it is not possible to accomplish these objectives without close cooperation from the other services.

Of course, getting to a crisis theater is not enough. We must be prepared to fight from day one in conjunction with other services, and the Army is prepared to do that, through a rigorous training program that builds on our mature Combat Training Centers. Forced entry and contingency operations combining heavy deployments and airborne insertions are the norm. Operations combining heavy, light, Air Force, and Marine units take place at Fort Irwin in California.

The Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, has a long record of innovation when integrating the services. Navy SEALs routinely operate in local rivers. The threat can be varied and includes refugees and terrorists as well as a world-class opposing force. Recently, joint operations demonstrated the ability of the 24th Infantry Division's ready company team and the 82d Airborne Division to deploy rapidly and engage in combat operations within hours. This effort will continue when the Joint Readiness Training Center is moved to Fort Polk, Louisiana.

Recently, the Combat Maneuver Training Center at Hohenfels, Germany, trained a Royal Dutch Marine unit that was enroute to replace a sister battalion on U.N. peacekeeping duty in Cambodia. The scenario used real-time intelligence reports from satellite links with Cambodia to structure daily situational training exercises. The technological capabilities exist to link command posts with subordinates performing a wide range of simultaneous missions—search, combat, check point, surveillance, crowd control, etc.—through real-time intelligence files drawn from central and remote data banks. This ability to process and exploit information is the next step in producing a truly integrated battlefield.

The thrust of Army exploitation of the microchip is to improve battlefield awareness through horizontal integration and insertion of digital technology. We have begun to link individual weapons systems (both fielded and future platforms) through automated communications channels to provide instantaneous updates on operational and logistical status and enemy information. This will provide commanders and their teams with the precise knowledge needed to wage warfare at the decisive level on which America expects to fight. Map displays and operational graphics can be updated to give subordinate units complete knowledge of the enemy situation and the commander's intent, allowing units to take advantage of fleeting enemy weaknesses and to bring decisive combat power to bear. Other services are exploiting similar capabilities. The next logical step is to take the groundwork laid by such systems as J–STARS and work toward a truly integrated battlefield. The Army looks forward to exploiting this advantage with the Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force.

Additionally, within the context of joint operations, there is room for achieving economies of scale and consolidating functions. Some training and many logistics and support functions are already consolidated, and we are looking for ways to expand such programs. However, not all redundancy consists of unnecessary overlap. Centralization of some functions into single service capabilities can provide economies and efficiencies, but carried to an extreme can unravel proven jointness. America does not need a military establishment of eaches, wherein the services

become *customer-oriented* purveyors of narrow capabilities rather than combat-oriented organizations with a broad focus and an understanding of all the facets of war.

DOD photo

The U.S. Army has a proud record of working with the other services in joint operations. Indeed, almost every conflict in American military history is replete with examples of the services integrating their capabilities to defend our national interests. From the American Revolution, through Scott's march on Mexico City, the Vicksburg campaign of Grant and Porter, the Spanish-American War, World Wars I and II, and the long list of conflicts that punctuated the Cold War and its aftermath, the services have had much more in common than that which separates them. Americans should be confident that the Army will be a full partner in joint operations in the future.

The next chapter in our history will record an even greater degree of integration, as we respond to a new range of threats with tailored, multiservice force packages both oriented on and trained for crisis response and power projection, and as we employ the power that comes from simultaneous application of unique, complementary capabilities. We will seize those opportunities provided by technology and the support of the American people to protect the enduring, global security interests of the Nation. JFQ

NOTES

[1] U.S. Department of Defense, *Soviet Military Power*, 9th edition (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1990). Figures compiled from theater of military operations (TVD) and major subordinate command weapons systems totals.

[2] Martin Blumenson, *Breakout and Pursuit*, in *The United States Army in World War II* (Washington: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1961), pp. 208, 231–40, 333–34. Also, Headquarters, Department of the Army, FM 100–5, *Operations*, 1986, pp. 25, 47–53, 161–72.

[3] Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, *Confirmation Hearings*, Committee on Armed Services, United States Senate, Washington, January 7, 1993.

[4] U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, "Louisiana Maneuvers: First Board of Directors Meeting," October 27, 1992 ["Jayhawk Thunder" sequence], videotape presentation produced by the Training and Doctrine Command, Fort Monroe, Virginia, 1992.

[5] The Total Army response is described by the author in "Hurricane Andrew: An After-Action Report" which appeared in *Army Magazine*, vol. 43, no. 1 (January 1993).

[6] For a discussion of the Army's doctrinal base, and how doctrine serves as the foundation for innovation in personnel recruitment and retention, training, leadership development, organizational design, and modernization requirements, see Paul H. Herbert, "Deciding What Has to be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100–5, *Operations*," Combat Studies Institute, Leavenworth Papers no. 16 (Fort Leavenworth, Kans.: U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1988). The joint approach to warfare in Army doctrine flows directly from the Joint Staff doctrine found in Joint Pubs 1 and 3.0.

[7] Joint Chiefs of Staff, "Mobility Requirements Study," vol. 1, Joint Staff Publication (1992). This study was mandated by Congress to determine airlift and sealift assets necessary to support the national military strategy.