

Full Spectrum Operations: Is This the Science of Victory?

**A Monograph
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AY 2011

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGEForm Approved
OMB No. 074-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)**2. REPORT DATE**

6 May 2011

3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED

SAMS Monograph, June 2010 - May 2011

4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE

Full Spectrum Operations: Is This the Science of Victory?

5. FUNDING NUMBERS**6. AUTHOR(S)**

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7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS)
250 Gibbon Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134**8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER****9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)**Command and General Staff College
731 McClellan Avenue
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-1350**10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER****11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES****12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT**

Approved for Public Release; Distribution Unlimited

12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE**13. ABSTRACT (Maximum 200 Words)**

The U. S. Army's current operating concept of Full Spectrum Operations is nothing more than a return to an earlier concept, Flexible Response. The Army adopted Flexible Response in the early 1960s to mitigate the threat posed by Soviet nuclear, conventional, and unconventional capabilities in Western Europe. The Army made a calculated decision to adopt that concept based upon its understanding of the nature of the threat posed to national strategic aims by the Soviet military in Western Europe, the likely geographic location conflict would occur. No such calculus exists today. Instead, the Army has adopted an operating concept in Full Spectrum Operations that is outdated and out of its original context. This is in error and poses a security risk to the United States.

This error exists partly because of the method through which the Army develops operating concepts. Today, the U. S. Army conducts capabilities-based operating concept development, instead of the threat-based method it used in the past. The Army justified this change in method in the belief that the fluid nature of the post-Cold War world would preclude traditional, threat-based assessments. Change would be a constant, and any operating concept would have to keep pace with change. However, as demonstrated in combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan, not even the capabilities-based concept of Full Spectrum Operations was up to the task. It failed to adapt quickly enough to mitigate threats in the security environment.

14. SUBJECT TERMS

Full Spectrum Operations, Operating Concept, Doctrine, FM 100-5, FM 3-0, Flexible Response

15. NUMBER OF PAGES

62

16. PRICE CODE**17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT**

UNCLASSIFIED

18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

UNCLASSIFIED

19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT

UNCLASSIFIED

20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT

UNCLASSIFIED

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

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Title of Monograph: Full Spectrum Operations: Is This the Science of Victory?

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Abstract

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The U. S. Army's current operating concept of Full Spectrum Operations is nothing more than a return to an earlier concept, Flexible Response. The Army adopted Flexible Response in the early 1960s to mitigate the threat posed by Soviet nuclear, conventional, and unconventional capabilities in Western Europe. The Army made a calculated decision to adopt that concept based upon its understanding of the nature of the threat posed to national strategic aims by the Soviet military in Western Europe, the likely geographic location conflict would occur. No such calculus exists today. Instead, the Army has adopted an operating concept in Full Spectrum Operations that is outdated and out of its original context. This is in error and poses a security risk to the United States.

This error exists partly because of the method through which the Army develops operating concepts. Today, the U. S. Army conducts capabilities-based operating concept development, instead of the threat-based method it used in the past. The Army justified this change in method in the belief that the fluid nature of the post-Cold War world would preclude traditional, threat-based assessments. Change would be a constant, and any operating concept would have to keep pace with change. However, as demonstrated in combat in both Iraq and Afghanistan, not even the capabilities-based concept of Full Spectrum Operations was up to the task. It failed to adapt quickly enough to mitigate threats in the security environment.

History provides more than one example of successful operating concept developed using threat assessment. In particular, the Soviet concept of deep operations is one example that successfully survived the rigor of combat. Contrasting this example to Army operating concepts over time example will highlight the Army's inability to adapt its operating concept to changing conditions in the security environment. Contrasting this example to the current operating concept of Full Spectrum Operations will reveal the current concept's failings and the inherent risk posed to U. S. strategic aims.

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Introduction

Operating concepts are “a way of doing business.”¹ They describe what the U. S. Army is and what it needs to be.² In addition, operating concepts form the core of doctrine.³ For the U. S. Army, operating concepts require additional articulation to be useful. In particular, an operating concept must describe the Army’s “way of doing business” as a method of risk mitigation. An operating concept mitigates the risk posed to national strategic aims by the capabilities and intentions of specific, real-world threats in the specific geography in which conflict likely will occur. In other words, an operating concept must describe a broad concept of operations “to be executed by Army forces on future battlefields.”⁴

There has been some debate within the Army, mostly since the 1980s, about what an operating concept is and what it does for the Army. L. D. Holder, one of the authors of the 1980s editions of *Field Manual (FM) 100-5* and a retired general officer, wrote an essay in 1985 that explained operational art. Operational art accounted for more than just sequencing battles and engagements. It “bridged the gap between strategic and political aims and actual military

¹ “A way of doing business” is the manner in which General Donn A. Starry, the Commanding General of the U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command between 1978 and 1982, defined the term operating -- or operational -- concept. See Donn A. Starry, “Commander’s Notes No. 3,” in John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine 1973-1982* (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1984), 87-91. See also, Milan Vego, “Operational Art and Doctrine,” in *Rethinking the Principles of War*, edited by Anthony D. Mc Ivor (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 175-176.

² Marin E. Dempsey, “Concepts Matter,” *Army* 60, no. 12 (December 2010): 39. General Dempsey is the current Commanding General of the U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command. He will become the next Army Chief of Staff in April 2011.

³ Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations*, Change 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2011) 3-1; Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1982), 2-1.

⁴ U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Regulation 11-15, Concept Based Requirements System* quoted in Ricky M. Rowlett, “The U. S. Army and Ground Combat Theory” (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1990), 6.

measures.”⁵ In addition, General Holder explained that the most important function of operational art was to help determine the method required to succeed in combat. This judgment was a matter of understanding the environment, the political situation, the strategic context, and the choice of achievable objectives.⁶

In a later article, David A. Fastabend, another retired general officer, augmented General Holder’s position but adjusted the terminology. Instead of operational art, General Fastabend used the term operating concept, as General Starry had earlier. General Fastabend argued that operating concepts shared common characteristics, including an idealization of war; a reflection of strategic context; a link among theory, strategic context, and doctrine; a clear choice of preferred technique; and a component of conflict with the competing operating concepts adopted by threats.⁷

For a time in the broader defense community, some argued that operating concepts existed within vision statements, like *Joint Vision 2010* and *Joint Vision 2020*. Vision statements were a corporate management technique promulgated through Total Quality Management to express an organization’s beliefs and intentions.⁸ Others in the defense community articulated a different set of operating concept characteristics. The Defense Adaptive Red Team, a Department of Defense contractor, argued that the ideal concept provided meaningful guidance in

⁵ L. D. Holder, “A New Day for Operational Art,” *Army* 35, no. 3 (March 1985): 24.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁷ David A. Fastabend, “That Elusive Operational Concept,” *Army* 51, no. 6 (June 2001): 40-41.

⁸ John T. Correll, “Visions,” *Air Force Magazine* 83, no. 9 (September 2000): 35. For the Joint vision statements, see Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2010* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996); and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Joint Vision 2020* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000).

clear, concise, precise, and actionable language, justified its own logic, was distinct from other concepts but still explicitly expressed its relationship to other concepts, and fostered debate.⁹

Other services use the term “operating concept” differently than the Army. For example, one history of U. S. Air Force doctrine argued that operating concepts exist within a continuum of ideas, concepts, and doctrine. In this continuum, there was no clear delineation of these categories. However, there was a progression from an individual idea into a collection of ideas. A collection of ideas would become a visionary concept. Finally, the organization would accept the visionary concept as doctrine.¹⁰

The most useful articulation of what an operating concept is came from a recent U. S. Army School of Advanced Military Studies monograph, written by Colonel John DeJarnette, a Fellow at the school and a reader of this monograph. Colonel DeJarnette argued that Cold War U. S. containment policy of the Soviet Union, as articulated in NSC-68, was an operating concept. Specifically, NSC-68 articulated the exact nature of the Soviet Union as a threat, the risk it posed to U. S. interests, and the required actions the U. S. must perform to mitigate this risk.¹¹ In other words, operating concepts develop from threat assessment and mitigate risk. Therefore, for the Army to develop an operating concept, it must perform what Carl von

⁹ John F. Schmitt, *Working Paper #02-4: A Practical Guide for Developing and Writing Military Concepts* (McLean, VA: Hicks and Associates, Inc., 2002), 19-21.

¹⁰ Robert Frank Futrell, *Ideas, Concepts, Doctrine: Basic Thinking in the United States Air Force 1907-1960* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, 1989), 8.

¹¹ John C. DeJarnette, “Toward a Nation-Building Operating Concept” (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2010), 4.

Clausewitz called the “first, supreme, and most far-reaching act of judgment,” to determine the nature of the war.¹² Then, it can develop an operating concept as a method of risk mitigation.

However, by the mid-1990s, the Army looked to replace the threat-based method of developing operating concepts with a method that focused on capabilities. Later, the Army integrated its capabilities-based concept development system into a larger system instituted by the Department of Defense in 2001. Both of these systems identify, assess, and document changes in Army and Defense doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities.¹³ A core function of capability development is the development of concepts that describe how forces will operate and the capabilities required to conduct a range of military operations against adversaries in the “expected Joint Operating Environment.”¹⁴

The Army first postulated in the early 1990s that the post-Cold War security environment precluded traditional, threat-based operating concept development.¹⁵ By the early 2000s, the Department of Defense adopted this viewpoint. Both the Army and the Department of Defense

¹² Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, Indexed Edition, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Peret (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 88.

¹³ U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Regulation 71-20, Concept Development, Experimentation, and Requirements Determination* (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2009), 1. The Department of Defense instituted its capabilities-based system with the 2001 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*. See Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 13-14. See also U. S. Joint Staff, *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction CJCSI 3170.01G, Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), A-1; U. S. Joint Staff, *Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction CJCSI 3010.02B, Joint Operations Concepts Development Process (JOPSC-DP)* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007), 1.

¹⁴ U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Regulation 71-20*, 9-10. The Department of Defense describes the threats in the current operating environment as a hybrid mixture of different capabilities. See U. S. Joint Forces Command, *The Joint Operating Environment, JOE 2010* (Suffolk, VA: U. S. Joint Forces Command, 2010), 60-68.

¹⁵ U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-5, Force XXI Operations: A Concept for the Evolution of Full-Dimensional Operations for the Strategic Army of the Early Twenty-First Century* (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1994), 1-3.

believed that threats would be emergent, not existing. Accordingly, both also believed that operating concept development based on a threat-based approach would not keep pace with advances in the security environment and in general would be too narrow in scope to be useful.¹⁶

The Army used this capabilities-based system to develop and improve its current operating concept of Full Spectrum Operations after the conclusion of the Cold War. Whether it called this concept Full-Dimensional Operations or Full Spectrum Operations, the Army designed this concept to be a new doctrinal response to the fluid security environment it believed was present in the post-Cold War world.¹⁷ However, despite its apparent novelty, Full Spectrum Operations were nothing new. Instead, this operating concept adopted an idea originally introduced during the height of the Cold War, Flexible Response. This similarity between current and past operating concepts calls into questions the validity of the capabilities-based method of operating concept development. The capabilities-based method is questionable because its product appears to be the reintroduction of an older operating concept taken out of the specific context in which the Army originally adopted it.

Flexible Response: Precursor of Full Spectrum Operations

Flexible Response appeared in the 1950s. It originally was to be an alternative method to implement President Dwight D. Eisenhower's national strategy by responding to the diverse

¹⁶ James R. Blaker, *Transforming Military Force: The Legacy of Arthur Cebrowski and Network Centric Warfare* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), 68-70, 147.

¹⁷ The Army introduced a precursor to the full-spectrum operating concept in 1993. The Army adopted the concept fully in 2001 and retained it in its subsequent revisions of its operational doctrine. See Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 1-4; Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001) 1-14 – 1-17; Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008) 3-1; U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, The United States Army Operating Concept: 2016-2028* (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2010), 26-27; Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Change 1* (2011), 3-1.

capabilities present in the Soviet military. At the time, the Soviet military possessed nuclear, conventional, and unconventional capabilities. The U. S. Army, in contrast, concentrated only on a nuclear battlefield environment, neglecting its conventional and unconventional capabilities. General Maxwell Taylor, the Army Chief of Staff between 1956 and 1959, recognized that the Soviet Union possessed more options in its approach to the Cold War. He also recognized that the United States could not afford two armies. It only could afford one that had to operate in both nuclear and non-nuclear environments.¹⁸ He developed Flexible Response specifically to create this diversity within the one force the U. S. Army could field.¹⁹

General Taylor's ideas took hold during the administration of President John F. Kennedy. President Kennedy began his administration extolling the virtue of paying any price and bearing any burden to preserve liberty.²⁰ Specifically, President Kennedy called for a reorganization of

¹⁸ Robert A. Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine, 1946-76*, Leavenworth Papers (1979; repr., Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Combat Studies Institute, 2001), 17.

¹⁹ Maxwell D. Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1959), 30-35. Taylor's conclusion was a departure from the Eisenhower Administration policy of massive nuclear retaliation as an operating concept. President Eisenhower used nuclear weapons instead of conventional forces to maintain a credible and cost-effective deterrent. General Taylor argued that credible deterrence came from conventional forces augmented with nuclear capability. He also believed that massive retaliation left the President with few military options, as seen in the U. S. response to French Indochina prior to 1956. See John Lewis Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment: A Critical Appraisal of Postwar American National Security Policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 149, 174; Richard Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation: From Vietnam to Iraq* (London: Routledge, 2006), 24; Stuart Kinross, *Clausewitz and America: Strategic Thought and Practice from Vietnam to Iraq* (London: Routledge, 2008), 44; Jeffrey Record, *Revising U. S. Military Strategy: Tailoring Means to Ends* (Washington, DC: Pergamon-Brassey's International Defense Publishers, 1984), 16; Kevin Patrick Sheehan, *Preparing for an Imaginary War? Examining Peacetime Functions and Changes of Army Doctrine* (Ann Arbor, MI: U. M. I., 1992), 94; Jane E. Stromseth, *The Origins of Flexible Response: NATO's Debate over Strategy in the 1960s* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1988), 12; Russell F. Weigley, *The American Way of War: A History of United States Military Strategy and Policy* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1973), 417-424.

²⁰ John F. Kennedy, "Inaugural Address," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States : John F. Kennedy*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), 1. Of note, General Taylor came out of retirement to serve as President Kennedy's Military Representative after completing a study into the failed Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba. President Kennedy later appointed General Taylor to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. See Maxwell D. Taylor, *Swords and Plowshares* (New York:

Army units and a reorientation to create more than a nuclear capability within the Army to implement General Taylor's Flexible Response.²¹ The Army responded to President Kennedy's call by adopting Flexible Response as its operating concept in 1962.

The Army codified its conception of Flexible Response in the 1962 version of *FM 100-5*, its capstone operations manual.²² The Army described that its forces must be able to operate under any of three conditions in a spectrum of war. These conditions included cold war tensions that could rise at any point to limited nuclear or conventional warfare. They included limited wars of any number of combinations of locales, magnitudes of violence, duration, and participants. Finally, these conditions included general nuclear warfare executed in response to a limited war or conducted outright.²³ The Army's doctrinal conception of Flexible Response corresponded well to the policy goals President Kennedy articulated. It also mitigated the threat posed by the Soviet military President Kennedy identified.

First, Flexible Response led to the restructuring of the Army outlined in President Kennedy's special message to the Congress in 1961. Second, the Army's adoption of Flexible Response continued an ongoing diversification of the force to include nuclear, conventional, and

W. W. Norton & Company, 1972), 195-197, 252; John M. Taylor, *An American Soldier: The Wars of General Maxwell Taylor* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, Inc., 2001), 235-236, 256.

²¹ John F. Kennedy, "Special Message to the Congress on Urgent National Needs, May 25, 1961," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), 401-402. President Kennedy adopted General Taylor's critique massive nuclear retaliation and the need for greater conventional capability prior to his election. See John F. Kennedy, "Conventional Forces in the Atomic Age," in *The Strategy of Peace*, edited by Allan Nevins (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), 183-186.

²² Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Field Service Regulations Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), 4-5, 8-9.

²³ *Ibid.*

unconventional capability.²⁴ The Army's implementation of Flexible Response also matched the primary threat President Kennedy identified in his various policy statements, the Soviet Union. General Taylor wrote about Soviet superiority in conventional arms and increasing capability in nuclear arms in 1959.²⁵ President Kennedy took Soviet Premier Khrushchev at his word when the Soviet leader stated in 1961 an intention to support wars of national liberation.²⁶ Flexible Response, as adopted by President Kennedy and expanded by President Lyndon Johnson, had some success mitigating the risk posed by the full capability of the Soviet threat in Western Europe. However, as the next section shows, it failed in other geographic areas.

Today's current operating concept of Full Spectrum Operations sounds remarkably like Flexible Response. The Army's current capstone operational manual, *FM 3-0*, states that Full Spectrum Operations are more than just combat operations against foreign militaries. They include interaction with local populations designed to shape and stabilize civil conditions, including interactions with the domestic population in the United States.²⁷ These concepts directly parallel the concepts presented in 1962. Full Spectrum Operations especially sounds like the concept of limited warfare using a combination of locales, magnitudes of violence, duration, and participants.

The problem with the parallel between these operating concepts is that the Army adopted Flexible Response during the Cold War to meet a Soviet threat in Western Europe that included nuclear, conventional, and unconventional capabilities. Full Spectrum Operations occur in a fundamentally different security environment. Today's threats include violent extremism and

²⁴ Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine*, 21-22.

²⁵ Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet*, 136-137.

²⁶ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 208.

²⁷ Department of the Army, *FM 3-0*, Change 1 (2011), 3-2.

terror networks, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, rogue or failing states, and global criminal networks.²⁸ In essence, today's security environment includes every type of actor and activity present in the Cold War except competition with a nuclear-armed peer nation with symmetric interests, like the Soviet Union.²⁹

The current capabilities-based method of operating concept development failed to account for this distinction between the current and past security environments. Instead, it created an operating concept that violates Clausewitz's first judgment by not determining the nature of war.³⁰ Full Spectrum Operations is an operating concept that describes the war the United States Army wants to fight, not the one it likely will encounter in reality.

Full Spectrum Operations: The Science of Victory?

This similarity in approach between Flexible Response and Full Spectrum Operations raises significant questions. Is the full-spectrum operating concept suited for today's security environment, or is it an inappropriate relic of the Cold War? If it is a relic, what are the national security aims and threats not addressed by Full Spectrum Operations? What residual risk do to the aims of national strategy do these voids in military means pose for the United States?

This monograph evaluates these questions with three criteria of U. S. strategic aims. The first criterion is the primary threat identified in national strategy that poses a risk to national strategic aims. Threats pose a risk to national strategic aims through a combination of intent and

²⁸ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 8-19, 47; Barrack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 8-9.

²⁹ Although China does possess nuclear weapons, it only possesses 240 nuclear weapons, as of 2010. Russia retains the Soviet nuclear arsenal that now contains over 12,000 nuclear weapons. See Federation of American Scientists, "Status of World Nuclear Forces," <http://www.fas.org/programs/ssp/nukes/nuclearweapons/nukestatus.html> (accessed February 8, 2011).

³⁰ von Clausewitz, *On War*, 88.

capability. There can be more than one primary threat, and current strategy documents reviewed here suggest this to be the case. The second criterion is geography. Threats exist in the real world. Even virtual threats have real components. Therefore, geography is an important consideration for operating concept development. The final criterion is doctrine. Specifically, it is the doctrine used to promulgate operating concepts to the Army as its “way of doing business.” The Army presents its current operating concept in its capstone operations manual, *FM 3-0*. The Army also presents experimental or emerging operating concepts in a series of U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command publications.

National strategic aims and defense initiatives provide the context for this evaluation. The aims of national security and initiatives of periodic defense reviews are the stated goals of national security. In the past, they originated in presidential statements to the Congress, public speeches, and memoranda produced by the National Security Council. Today, these statements originate in *National Security Strategies* and *Quadrennial Defense Review Reports*.³¹ Statements to the Congress, public speeches, and memoranda exist now to amplify these strategy documents.

This evaluation demonstrates that the evolution of the U. S. Army operating concept has not kept pace with the evolution of the security environment. Army operating concepts either have not nested within national aims or have not created doctrinal solutions that were adequate to mitigate the risk posed by identified threats. The current operating concept of Full Spectrum Operations is no different in this regard than its precursor, Flexible Response. Furthermore, the

³¹ By law, the *Quadrennial Defense Review* is a report that the Secretary of Defense provides to the Congress. This report includes a description of “the national defense strategy, force structure, force modernization plans, infrastructure, budget plan, and other elements of the defense program and policies of the United States with a view toward determining and expressing the defense strategy....” In practice, the Department of Defense has used this report to emphasize the national defense strategy component as a refinement to the *National Security Strategy* for execution by the department. See *National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2000*, Public Law 106-65, § 901(a)(1), *U. S. Statutes at Large* 113 (1999): 715, codified at *U. S. Code* 10 (2006), § 118.

current method of capability-based operating concept development does not adequately address the intentions and capabilities of specific threats in the security environment. Capability-based operating concept development also fails to account for the geography in which conflict would occur with identified threats. Instead, the Army should return to a method of operating concept development based on threat assessment.

Section II reviews these ideas. It starts with a review of the Soviet operating concept of deep operations for use in comparison. The deep operations concept was the Soviet operating concept for the latter half of World War II and throughout the Cold War that accounted for both perceived threat and geography in an assessment of risk to national strategic aims. It was a concept that succeeded in combat. Next, the review traces the evolution of U. S. Army operating concepts from 1962 until 2000.³² It compares and contrasts these operating concepts to the articulated national security aims and defense review initiatives. This review also compares and contrasts the operating concepts to the principal threats articulated in national strategy documents. In addition, this review compares and contrasts U. S. Army concepts to the Soviet concept of deep operations. Combined, these comparisons determine if the U. S. Army successfully nested its historic operating concepts within existing national security strategy and if it mitigated the risk posed by threats directly in its operation concepts.

Section III compares and contrasts the current operating concept to current national security aims and defense review initiatives. This determines if the U. S. Army nested its current operating concept within the national strategic approach. In addition, the third section compares and contrasts the current operating concept to the principal threats opposing the United States today, as outlined in the national strategy. This determines to what extent the U. S. Army

³² 2000 is the cut-off for historical review because it is the year in which the United States released its last *National Security Strategy* prior to the terror attacks of September 11, 2001.

mitigated these threats directly in the operating concept. Combat performance in Iraq and Afghanistan provide the evidence for this analysis.

Section IV concludes this monograph. It assesses Full Spectrum Operations as an operating concept in contrast to its predecessor, Flexible Response. It also contrasts Full Spectrum Operations to the Soviet deep operations concept. Finally, this section will provide recommendations to the U. S. Army for future operating concept development and for future research related to operating concept development.

Historical Operating Concepts

U. S. Army operating concepts historically had mixed results nesting within national strategies or mitigating the risk posed by specific threat capabilities and intentions. The period between 1962 and 2000 established a perpetual quest for a flexible application of military power toward limited national objectives. Most of the time, this quest resulted in a vast difference between the goals established in national strategy and the means applied to achieve them through the Army's operating concept. Rarely did these concepts nest and work cooperatively. When they did work cooperatively, there was limited applicability for the operational concept beyond the Soviet threat or outside the geographic confines of Western Europe. To begin, this section will introduce the Soviet operating concept of deep operations that will establish a standard for use in comparison with U. S. Army operating concepts. Then, this section will continue the review of Flexible Response began in the introduction.

The Science of Victory: Soviet Deep Operations

Capabilities-based operating concept development is not the only method of operating concept development. Other armies in the past used a developmental process that analyzed likely threats to established national strategic aims in specific geographic locations. This analysis produced a determination of risk to those strategic aims and to the military forces allocated to achieve them. This risk was measurable, a product of the likelihood of conflict with an

identified threat and the severity of that threat's capabilities in the terrain in which conflict most likely would occur. Those armies then developed doctrine to mitigate this risk by describing how military forces intended to operate in opposition to identified threats in the most likely terrain.³³ Although doctrine would not reduce the risk posed by the most dangerous threats completely, the residual risk could not produce a catastrophic result.

Arguably, the best historical example of an operating concept developed in this manner was deep operations, a concept developed in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s. It was a concept that ultimately succeeded in combat because it considered the nature of the threat, the geographical area of conflict, and the doctrine required to implement it. It is useful specifically because of the criteria it needed to achieve success.

Deep operations originated in the wake of two significant events that occurred after the Russian Revolution of 1917. The first event occurred in the 1920 Soviet-Polish war where the Poles destroyed a large Soviet army that exposed its flank.³⁴ The second event was a break in diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union in 1927 that the Soviets used as a rallying call against foreign aggression to continued communist rule.³⁵

These two threats challenged Soviet aims of economic development and the ability to respond to internal and external threats to communist rule.³⁶ The Soviet Union perceived the risk

³³ Current Army doctrine only states that doctrine is a "body of thought" that describes intended operations. There is no explicit mention of the capabilities or intentions of specific threats or the likely locations of future conflicts. See Department of the Army, *FM 3-0*, Change 1, D-1.

³⁴ Malcolm Mackintosh, *Juggernaut: A History of the Soviet Armed Forces* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 50.

³⁵ Sally W. Stoecker, *Forging Stalin's Army: Marshal Tukhachevsky and the Politics of Military Innovation* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 45-48. The Soviets referred to this event as the "war scare."

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 18.

in this situation to be high. First, the Soviet Union perceived that there was great potential for a repeated occurrence of foreign intervention in Soviet affairs, especially in the form of a coalition. Second, a coalition had the capability to end Soviet rule because its capabilities could overwhelm those of the Red Army. Accordingly, the Red Army developed a new doctrine to address this risk.

The Soviet's doctrinal answer was an operating concept known as deep operations. Several Soviet officers helped to develop this concept. One of the most influential was General V. K. Triandafillov, who wrote extensively on deep operations during his tenure as the Red Army Deputy Chief of Staff.³⁷ General Triandafillov conducted an extensive analysis of the most likely threats to the Soviet Union. He concluded that the greatest threat to Soviet aims was from a coalition of mechanized, mass-mobilization armies from France, Poland, Romania, Britain, and the Baltic states meeting a mobilizing Soviet force in a continuous front along the western Soviet border.³⁸ General Triandafillov assessed that contemporary Soviet forces were not adequate to penetrate a continuous front of such a scale. Accordingly, he developed an operating concept of deep operations to overcome this threat.

The deep operations concept called for the development of shock armies to penetrate enemy forces and to exploit those points of penetration throughout the depth of the enemy

³⁷ James J. Schneider, "Introduction," in V. K. Triandafillov, *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies*, edited by Jacob W. Kipp (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1994), xxix-xxxii. General Triandafillov expanded upon the ideas originally championed by Marshall Tukhachevsky, the Red Army Chief of Staff. See Stoecker, *Forging Stalin's Army*, 148-156. G. S. Isserson, another prominent officer in the Red Army, provided a later perspective on the Soviet deep operations concept. See G. S. Isserson, *The Evolution of Operational Art*, 2nd edition, translated by Bruce W. Menning (Moscow: The State Military Publishing House of the USSR's People's Defense Commissariat, 1937).

³⁸ V. K. Triandafillov, *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies*, edited by Jacob W. Kipp (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1994), 65-69.

formation in a series of successive operations.³⁹ The deep operations concept was not a universal military solution, however. General Triandafillov designed the concept specifically for the threats the Soviet Union faced along its western frontier.⁴⁰ In addition, this concept exacerbated a cultural fear of envelopment within the Red Army of envelopment.⁴¹

There were residual risks in the deep operations concept. First, the concept was valid only within the geographic confines of Europe and against an enemy similar to the type fielded by the Soviet Union's most likely threats. Second, although the Soviet Army adopted the concept and promulgated it in its doctrine, the purges of the late 1930s and early 1940s restricted the concept's understanding and use in the field. Consequently, the Soviet Army did not employ deep operations in the first two years of combat operations against Germany in World War II.⁴² However, despite the purge, deep operations reemerged in late 1942 and early 1943, and the Soviet Army employed the concept successfully in combat against Germany.⁴³

Neither of these risks proved catastrophic to the deep operations concept, however. The Soviet Union eventually succeeded in World War II using that concept. It succeeded because the Soviet military designed deep operations specifically to mitigate the risk posed to Soviet strategic aims by its most likely threats. In contrast to this example, the U. S. Army's current operating

³⁹ Ibid., 90-91, 127-129. The Soviets Army later articulated the deep operations concept in the 1936 edition of its *Field Service Regulations*. See U. S. S. R. Commissariat for Defense, *Field Service Regulations, Soviet Army, 1936 (Tentative)*, translated by Charles Borman (1936; repr. Carlisle Barracks, PA: U. S. Army Military History Institute, 1937), 1-7.

⁴⁰ Triandafillov, *The Nature of the Operations of Modern Armies*, 69.

⁴¹ Mackintosh, *Juggernaut*, 50. Mackintosh called this fear the "Warsaw Complex." It stemmed from the Soviet army destroyed during the 1920 Soviet-Polish War, as discussed earlier.

⁴² David M. Glantz and Jonathan House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 10-13.

⁴³ Ibid., 154-156.

concept of Full Spectrum Operations contains considerable residual risk because it addresses neither the most likely threats in the security environment nor the specific geographic locations in which conflict with those threats likely will occur.

The Flexible Response, 1962-1973

The introduction described the adoption of Flexible Response as the Army's operating concept. As originally conceived by the Army, Flexible Response nested well within national strategy when confined to Western Europe. However, Flexible Response failed once President Kennedy adopted a more active foreign policy focused in the peripheral geographic areas of the Cold War.⁴⁴ The Army did not expand Flexible Response, as presented in the 1962 and 1968 editions of *FM 100-5*, in kind. Nor did the Army accept President Kennedy's desire to have a gradual approach to military operations in peripheral areas.⁴⁵ The Army, therefore, failed to adjust its operating concept to match the expanded geographic context and the gradual method of application in which it was to operate.

President Kennedy conceived his idea of Flexible Response "to deter all wars, general or limited, nuclear or conventional, large or small...."⁴⁶ He emphasized that this concept was to

⁴⁴ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 205; Ingo Trauschweizer, *The Cold War U. S. Army: Building Deterrence for Limited War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 180.

⁴⁵ Thomas Schelling used the phrase "graduated deterrence" to describe the logic behind the need for conventional military capability in the defense of Western Europe. Conventional capability gave this defense a passive deterrence that could become active in the event that deterrence failed and Warsaw Pact forces attacked. See Thomas C. Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1966), 78. See also Peter J. Schifferle, "The Ia Drang Campaign 1965: A Successful Operational Campaign or Mere Tactical Failure?" (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1994), 9; Peter W. Huggins, "Airpower and Gradual Escalation: Reconsidering the Conventional Wisdom" (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: U. S. Air Force Air University, 2000), 13-18.

⁴⁶ John F. Kennedy, "Special Message to the Congress on the Defense Budget, March 28, 1961," in *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: John F. Kennedy*, Vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1962), 228.

prevent the steady erosion of the Free World through limited war. President Kennedy believed the most likely threat posed by the Soviet Union was from conflicts that did not warrant the use of nuclear weapons.⁴⁷ The primary mission of military forces deployed overseas would be to combat this non-nuclear threat.⁴⁸

President Kennedy and his national security advisors considered the situation in Vietnam to be a test of Flexible Response. By his direction, the United States would intervene in the Republic of Vietnam to combat that nation's growing communist insurgency. It would deploy newly created Special Forces to combat communist guerillas. This, in turn, would buy time for the rest of the U. S. Government to intervene and bolster the capability of the South Vietnamese government to meet the needs of its people through "nation-building."⁴⁹

President Johnson continued these policies for Vietnam after President Kennedy's assassination. In addition, he expanded the role of regular U. S. Army forces in the conflict. He justified this expansion in the belief that he would be combating communism within the geographic confines of the United States if he did not stop their activities in South Vietnam.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ Ibid., 231; Kennedy, "Conventional Forces in the Atomic Age," 184. President Kennedy referred to these conflicts as "brush-fire" wars. He cited Korea, Indochina, Hungary, the Suez Crisis, Lebanon, Quemoy, Tibet, and Laos as examples of these erosive wars.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 231-232. This idea also appeared to be one of General Taylor's original concepts. General Taylor emphasized the multiple purposes of deployed forces, including deterrence and bolstering local willingness to resist Communist advances. See Taylor, *The Uncertain Trumpet*, 153-154.

⁴⁹ Michael Kort, *The Columbia Guide to the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 55-56; Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 237; Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation*, 29. General Taylor also believed Vietnam to be an experiment in the use of Flexible Response against a Soviet-sponsored insurgency. See H. R. McMaster, *Dereliction of Duty: Lyndon Johnson, Robert McNamara, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the Lies that Led to Vietnam* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1997), 230.

⁵⁰ Kort, *The Columbia Guide to the Cold War*, 56; Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 238.

Unfortunately, the Army did not approach the application of Flexible Response during the Vietnam War in the manner that both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson envisioned.

The U. S. Army acknowledged that military strategy should accomplish national strategic objectives, including limited objectives.⁵¹ However, it fought the Vietnam War as if it were a conventional fight against the North Vietnamese military, without the gradual application of military means either Presidents Kennedy or Johnson desired.⁵² In addition, it resisted President Kennedy's desire to transform the conventional Army into a force capable of counterinsurgency over a force capable of conventional combat.

Flexible Response required more than a change in the Army's organization of conventional units and the addition of unconventional units in the form of Special Forces. It also required military commanders in Vietnam to apply military means gradually, as Presidents Kennedy and Johnson desired. Instead, the Army implemented an organizational change to its conventional forces for use in Western Europe.⁵³ In addition, military commanders for much of the Vietnam conflict focused on conventional combat against the North Vietnamese Army and main force Viet Cong units. There was no flexibility in their application of Flexible Response.

Justification for the Army's resistance to President Kennedy's proposed restructuring varied. General George Decker, who was the Army Chief of Staff during the President's push to intervene in Vietnam, argued that the Army could afford to lose a fight against communists in Asia. Losing a fight against communists in Europe was strategically fatal. In addition, General Decker felt that any competent soldier could defeat a guerilla. Soldiers did not require special

⁵¹ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5* (1962), 4-8, 11-14; Department of the Army, *FM 100-5*, (1968), 1-2 – 1-3, 1-6 – 1-7.

⁵² Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 466-467; Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation*, 41-47; Schifferle, "The Ia Drang Campaign 1965," 10-11.

⁵³ Doughty, *The Evolution of US Army Tactical Doctrine*, 19-29.

training, equipment, or an organization tailored to counter a guerilla force. General Taylor supported General Decker's claim about regular soldier capability.⁵⁴

Ultimately, the United States failed to achieve its national goals in Vietnam. The differences among the geographic scope, the desired method to achieve strategic aims, and the Army's operating concept of Flexible Response contributed to this defeat. There was considerable debate over whom to blame for this failure. Colonel Harry Summers, a Vietnam veteran and professor at the U. S. Army War College, wrote one of the earliest analytical works on the Vietnam War. Colonel Summers proposed that the Army was to blame. The Army's doctrinal spectrum of war erased the distinction between war and peace. Doctrine also changed the meaning of limited warfare. Limited warfare no longer was for limited objectives. As discussed in the introduction, the Army described limited warfare in the 1962 edition of *FM 100-5* as the limited application of means, rather than a limitation on strategic aims.⁵⁵ Following the introduction of this doctrine, the Army conducted limited warfare to achieve any strategic aim using limited means.⁵⁶ A study with similar conclusions proposed the Army was to blame because it did not comply with the incremental approach desired by national political leaders. Instead, the Army sought a quick fix to Vietnam.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Andrew J. Birtle, *U. S. Army Counterinsurgency and Contingency Operations Doctrine, 1942-1976* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 2006), 226-227; Andrew F. Krepinevich, *The Army and Vietnam* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 37; George C. Herring, "The 1st Cavalry and the Ia Drang Valley, 18 October – 24 November 1965," in *America's First Battles 1776-1965*, edited by Charles E. Heller and William A. Stofft (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1984), 304.

⁵⁵ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5* (1962), 5.

⁵⁶ Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U. S. Army Strategic Studies Institute, 1982), 42.

⁵⁷ Kinross, *Clausewitz and America*, 73-74.

A different study, written by Andrew Krepinevich, who had taught national security strategy at the United States Military Academy, concluded that the Army failed to focus on separating Vietnamese insurgents from the general population. Instead, the Army focused on attrition warfare against the insurgent force.⁵⁸ Yet another study, written by Temple University professor Russell Weigley, blamed the Army's desire to find a solution to the problem of limited war it faced in Korea.⁵⁹

A more recent study, by Vietnam veteran and historian Lewis Sorley, argued that the United States actually won Vietnam by 1970. However, it squandered its victory by pulling its support of South Vietnam afterward. The final blow was the denial of U. S. support to South Vietnamese forces during the 1975 North Vietnamese invasion.⁶⁰ Others blamed Presidents Kennedy and Johnson either for incorrectly balancing ends and means or for asking too much of its military. The Army could not bear any price or pay any burden.⁶¹ The implication of this conclusion is that an operating concept must have defined bounds of applicability. It cannot be a one-size-fits-all application of military means toward strategic aims.

Whatever the explanation, Flexible Response failed as an operating concept in combat. In contrast to the Soviet example of deep operations, Flexible Response failed to account for the geographic scope of strategic aims. It also failed to remain within the context of those aims. Specifically, the Army failed to recognize that an operating concept conceived for application in Western Europe was not automatically suitable for application elsewhere, especially in the

⁵⁸ Krepinevich, *The Army in Vietnam*, 259.

⁵⁹ Weigley, *The American Way of War*, 458.

⁶⁰ Lewis Sorley, *A Better War: The Unexamined Victories and Final Tragedy of America's Last Years in Vietnam* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, Inc., 1999), 217-219, 376-379.

⁶¹ Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 273; Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation*, 45-46.

jungles and mountains of Vietnam. It also failed to adjust its operating concept to match the gradual method of application that U. S. political leadership desired. In other words, the Army fought the war in wanted to have in Vietnam, rather than the war it had in reality.

The one aspect that Flexible Response did address correctly was the mismatch between Soviet and U. S. capabilities in Western Europe. General Taylor's original assessment was correct. The United States could not rely on nuclear weapons alone to achieve its strategic aims and mitigate the risk posed by the Soviet Union. To accomplish this, the United States did require a conventional and unconventional capability to counter similar capabilities to those fielded by the Soviet Union. This need became the point of beginning for subsequent Cold War-era operating concepts.

Active Defense, 1973-1982

The Army's failure in Vietnam was at the forefront of its effort to redesign its operating concept in the 1970s. The Army focused its new operating concept on the defense of Western Europe against the Warsaw Pact. In so doing, it also nested its new concept within the strategy established by the Nixon Administration. However, by the end of the decade, the geographic scope of U. S. national strategy changed from one focused almost exclusively on Western Europe and the Soviet Union to one focused on both Western Europe and the Middle East. Consequently, the Army's operating concept again became outdated. More significantly, the Active Defense operating concept failed to account for the terrain of southern West Germany in its doctrine. It also failed to address the primary risk of conventional Soviet military capability, specifically the exploitation forces employed under the Soviet deep operations concept.

President Richard Nixon established his approach to containing the Soviet Union, known as the Nixon Doctrine, in 1970. The Nixon Doctrine stated three points. First, the United States would honor its treaty commitments. Second, the United States extended a nuclear shield over its allies and those states it deemed vital to its national interests. Third, the United States would

provide military and economic assistance to nations combating communist threats, provided those nations actively defended their own territory. In addition, President Nixon explicitly declared that the United States would not repeat its experience in Vietnam.⁶²

President Nixon's military strategy was to refocus on one-and-a-half wars. His administration assessed his predecessors' approach to containing the Soviet Union that included a two-and-a-half war approach was inappropriate for two reasons. First, President Nixon did not view the Communist Bloc to be a monolithic entity, as believed by previous administrations. He was aware of the strained relations between the Soviet Union and China. Accordingly, President Nixon felt that China no longer was a primary threat that warranted a wartime contingency.⁶³ Second, the Department of Defense concluded that it did not have the requisite force structure to fight two-and-a-half wars simultaneously. The transformation of the military to the All-Volunteer Force in 1973 exacerbated this problem.⁶⁴

President Nixon used his new strategic approach to focus the military what he perceived to be the primary threat, the Soviet Union itself. With the exception of the Korean Peninsula, the U. S. Army no longer would fight along the periphery to prevent communist expansion as it had under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson.⁶⁵ Instead, it would focus on Europe. This new approach corresponded well with the Army's development of a new operating concept, the Active Defense.

⁶² Record, *Revising U. S. Military Strategy*, 29-30; Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 298.

⁶³ President Nixon's public message sought to delink the issue of communism from U. S. relations with China. It did not stress exploiting the gap in Soviet-Chinese relations. See Richard M. Nixon, "First Annual Report to the Congress on United States Foreign Policy for the 1970's, February 18, 1970," *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard M. Nixon*, Vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1971), 181-182.

⁶⁴ Record, *Revising U. S. Military Strategy*, 31-34; Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 285.

⁶⁵ Record, *Revising U. S. Military Strategy*, 32. Korea remained an explicit contingency because of a treaty obligation. Otherwise, the Nixon Administration would have dropped that contingency, too.

The Army adopted the Active Defense in its 1976 edition of *FM 100-5*.⁶⁶ The Active Defense declared that the Army's role was to win the land battle. It concluded that the outcome of land battle in the future would be determined during a highly lethal, short-duration period of combat. The Army needed to be prepared to win the first battle of the next war in order to guarantee success in that war. Further, the most demanding combat the Army would face would be an outnumbered defense of Central Europe against a Warsaw Pact offensive.⁶⁷ Therefore, the Army needed to be prepared to win the opening engagements of a mobile, defensive war in Central Europe against the Warsaw Pact. The flaw in this approach to doctrine was that it focused only on the first defensive engagements against the first echelon of a Soviet attack. It ignored subsequent echelons of Soviet forces employed to exploit success in initial engagements.

The Army argued in this manual for the superiority of the defense. It stated, "*the weapons of the attacker are not as effective as the weapons of the defender.*"⁶⁸ In addition, it declared that skilled commanders did not maneuver when they could destroy through the application of firepower. The defense envisioned in this manual was to be mobile, not static. Mechanization allowed defensive forces to reinforce positions under assault rapidly.

⁶⁶ The 1973 Yom Kippur War heavily influenced the Army's perception of the modern battlefield. The Army believed the combat seen in that war would be exactly like the combat it would see in Central Europe against the Warsaw Pact. See Paul H. Herbert, *Deciding What Has to be Done: General William DePuy and the 1976 Edition of FM 100-5, Operations, Leavenworth Paper 16* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Combat Studies Institute, 1988), 29-36; Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation*, 60-63; Sheehan, *Preparing for an Imaginary War*, 169-172.

⁶⁷ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Change 1* (1977), 1-1 – 1-2, 3-1. Chapter 2 of this manual described the Army's analysis of battlefield lethality in detail, with emphasis on the impact of tanks, anti-tank infantry weapons, air support, and tactical nuclear weapons.

⁶⁸ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Change 1* (1977), 3-4.

Concentration of units and fires at the right place and the right time was the key to defeat a numerically superior force.⁶⁹

The 1976 edition of *FM 100-5* fit well within the strategic context of the Nixon Doctrine in which the Army operated. Unfortunately, this doctrine proved difficult to apply successfully in the field. Several commanders who attempted to train in Active Defense found the synchronization required to conduct a defense based on mobility, versus a defense based on static defensive positions, impossible under simulated combat conditions in the compartmentalized terrain of southern West Germany. In addition, these commanders also concluded that the repositioning of units while in contact was not feasible. Further, Active Defense focused on the first battle against first echelon Soviet ground forces. It ignored the impact of subsequent battles and engagements in a defensive war that likely would be against subsequent echelons of Soviet exploitation forces.⁷⁰

Finally, there was a logical flaw in the concept within Active Defense. It acknowledged the role of offensive operations to “gain the initiative, carry the fight to the enemy, fight in his positions, and *seek decision on our terms*.”⁷¹ However, it emphasized the superiority of the defense over the offense for an Army that believed in decisions originated in offensive -- not defensive -- action. This final critique became the starting point for doctrinal reform in the late

⁶⁹ Ibid., 5-3.

⁷⁰ Sheehan, *Preparing for an Imaginary War*, 212-216; Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation*, 77-87; John J. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine 1973-1982* (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1984), 14-21; John J. Romjue, Susan Canedy, and Anne W. Chapman, *Prepare the Army for War: A Historical Overview of the Army Training and Doctrine Command 1973-1993* (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1993), 54.

⁷¹ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5*, Change 1 (1977), 4-1. See also Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle*, 13-14; Richard Hart Sinnreich, “Strategic Implications of Doctrinal Change: A Case Analysis,” in *Military Strategy in Transition: Defense and Deterrence in the 1980s*, ed. Keith A. Dunn and William O. Staudmenmaier (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 46.

1970s and early 1980s. It also highlighted the infeasibility of Active Defense as an operating concept in the field. Therefore, the Active Defense failed as an operating concept because it did not account for either the risk posed by the primary threat or the effect of terrain.

Beyond the doctrinal critique of Active Defense, historical developments changed the strategic context to make it obsolete as an operating concept. Presidents Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter continued to apply the Nixon Doctrine against the Soviet Union. This application included greater emphasis on European defense to the point where U. S. strategy effectively was a one-war approach, in the opinion of Jeffrey Record, a prominent commentator on national security affairs and professor at Georgetown University.⁷² However, Soviet support to the Third World during this entire period repudiated the Nixon Doctrine. Soviet support indicated that the Nixon Doctrine's approach failed to change Soviet behavior, as this doctrine had intended. Instead, the Soviets refused to accept détente as an end to Soviet and American competition.⁷³

In addition to Soviet actions elsewhere, the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 transformed President Carter's strategic approach. The new approach explicitly stated that the security of the Middle East was a strategic goal for the United States.⁷⁴ Active Defense, unfortunately, was an unsuitable operating concept for Carter's new approach. It also was not suitable for the approach adopted by President Carter's successor, President Ronald

⁷² Record, *Revising U. S. Military Strategy*, 32-33. By this point, the Department of Defense argued that it could not provide enough forces for more than a defense of Central Europe at one time.

⁷³ Ibid., 33-34; Gaddis, *Strategies of Containment*, 311-312. Gaddis outlined Soviet actions during this period. They included toleration for the Egyptian initiation of the Yom Kippur War, aid to communist guerillas during the Portuguese Revolution in 1974, allowing North Vietnam to conquer South Vietnam in 1975, employment of Cuban proxies in the Angolan civil war in 1975, support Marxist regimes in Somalia and Ethiopia, and the exploitation of Marxist coups in South Yemen and Afghanistan.

⁷⁴ Record, *Revising U. S. Military Strategy*, 37; Kort, *The Columbia Guide to the Cold War*, 76.

Reagan. Finally, the Army itself refused to accept an operating concept that surrendered initiative in combat to an adversary.

AirLand Battle, 1982-1993

President Reagan came to office in 1981 in the midst of this doctrinal revision within the Army. The central tenet of President Reagan's approach was to recognize the possibility of any conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States anywhere in the world spreading to become a global conflict. As a presidential candidate in 1976, President Reagan rejected détente as weakness in the face of the Soviet threat.⁷⁵ In addition, he rejected the notion that the Soviet Union and the United States would confine a potential conflict to Central Europe. In that regard, the Carter Doctrine was correct to identify the security of the Persian Gulf as a core U. S. interest. However, the Carter Doctrine ignored the threat of Soviet client states and other anti-American actors taking advantage of a Soviet-American conflict in a different geographic region.⁷⁶

President Reagan outlined eleven objectives in his strategic approach, in light of his estimate of the Soviet threat and of the global environment. Six of these addressed the Soviet Union directly. The remainder addressed increasing the prestige of the United States in both absolute terms and in relation to the Soviet Union.⁷⁷ President Reagan's global focus in this approach, however, reinforced the obsolete nature of the Active Defense as the Army's operating concept. The Army's replacement operating concept, AirLand Battle, better met the new

⁷⁵ Ronald Reagan, "To Restore America, March 31, 1976" transcript at <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/reference/3.31.76.html> (accessed January 15, 2011).

⁷⁶ Record, *Revising U. S. Military Strategy*, 39-43. President Reagan considered war with a Soviet client to be the most likely threat to the United States. See Ronald Reagan, *National Security Decision Directive 32*, <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsdd/nsdd-032.htm> (accessed December 5, 2010), 3.

⁷⁷ Reagan, *National Security Decision Directive 32*, 1-2.

strategic approach. AirLand Battle succeeded in supporting President Reagan's strategic aims because its focus on a mechanized Soviet military threat made the concept adaptable to other geographic areas where the Army might encounter mechanized forces organized for battle in a manner similar to the Soviet military.

The Army expanded AirLand Battle from a tactical technique to become its operating concept between 1976 and 1982. The Army first introduced AirLand Battle in one chapter of the 1976 edition of *FM 100-5*. In that edition, the Army described AirLand Battle as the close integration of air and land operations in every combat function.⁷⁸

The expanded AirLand Battle concept, introduced between 1981 and 1982, included a physical expansion of the battlefield to include deep and rear areas. The Army adopted this expansion specifically to address the Soviet deep operations concept, its associated force structure, and its echeloned approach to offensive operations in Central and Western Europe. AirLand Battle included the integration of all types of fires employed against enemy forces to reach into the depth of Soviet ground maneuver formations.⁷⁹ It also stressed the need for tactical flexibility, speed, subordinate initiative, and an offensive spirit to overcome Soviet tactics and tempo.⁸⁰ Moreover, AirLand Battle was to succeed against any type of modern mechanized threat in any geographic area, including those in Central Europe, the Middle East, and on the

⁷⁸ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5*, Change 1 (1977), 8-1. Chapter 8 described techniques for close integration of ground maneuver, close air support, suppression of enemy air defense, and airspace management.

⁷⁹ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5* (1982), 7-13 – 7-16; See also U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-5, U. S. Army Operational Concepts: The AirLand Battle and Corps 86* (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1981), 2. The physical expansion enlarged the battlefield to include the second and subsequent echelons the United States expected to encounter in a fight against the Warsaw Pact. Integrated fires included conventional, nuclear, chemical, and electronic means to engage an enemy throughout its depth. The Army developed both ideas in response to the failure of Active Defense to address the nature of the Soviet threat.

⁸⁰ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5* (1982), i.

Korean Peninsula.⁸¹ AirLand Battle also emphasized the primacy of the offense as the only decisive form of warfare.⁸²

AirLand Battle nested well with President Reagan's strategic approach toward the Soviet Union. It also matched in aggressive offensive spirit the offensive tone President Reagan employed in policy declarations and other rhetoric, specifically his declaration of the Soviet Union as an "evil empire."⁸³ Supporters of AirLand Battle highlighted this offensive nature. Samuel Huntington, the late distinguished professor of political science at Harvard University, believed this offensive spirit posed a credible threat to the Soviet Union. It opened the possibility of an American-led counteroffensive into Eastern Europe, where Soviet political support was weak. It also opened the possibility for American military action elsewhere.⁸⁴

One opponent of AirLand Battle argued that its aggressiveness endangered the North Atlantic alliance. Richard Sinnreich, a retired Army officer and frequent commentator, noted that the offensive nature of the AirLand Battle operating concept called into question the viability of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) defensive approach to the security of Central Europe. Strategically, NATO never sought to disintegrate the Soviet Empire by any means, including through a counteroffensive into Eastern Europe following a Soviet attack. Tactically,

⁸¹ Romjue, *From Active Defense to Airland Battle*, 45. This global focus was a distinct departure from the solitary focus on Central Europe in Active Defense.

⁸² Department of the Army, *FM 100-5* (1982), 8-1 – 8-5. Further, destroying the enemy's force through offensive fire and maneuver was the only sure path to victory. Essentially, an emphasis on fire and maneuver was the error in the Army's operating concept in Vietnam. However, this approach was appropriate in Western Europe because of its geography and the capabilities of the Soviet military threat.

⁸³ Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando, Florida, March 8, 1983," *The Public Papers of President Ronald W. Reagan*, <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1983/30883b.htm> (accessed January 15, 2011).

⁸⁴ Samuel P. Huntington, "Conventional Deterrence and Conventional Retaliation in Europe," in *Military Strategy in Transition: Defense and Deterrence in the 1980s*, edited by Keith A. Dunn and William O. Staudenmaier (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 26-28.

NATO likely did not have sufficient military power to conduct the counteroffensive outlined in AirLand Battle.⁸⁵

Both the supporting and opposing positions were valid characterizations of AirLand Battle. It did solve the tactical problems inherent to the Active Defense by mitigating the risk posed by the threat of Soviet deep operations in Western Europe. In fact, AirLand Battle was an accurate portrayal of the Army's capabilities against a modern, mechanized threat, as demonstrated during Operation Desert Storm.⁸⁶

However, the Army also attempted to apply AirLand Battle in low-intensity conflicts outside of Western Europe with mixed operational results, specifically in Panama and Somalia.⁸⁷ In addition, AirLand Battle did not de-escalate tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union during the closing years of the Cold War.⁸⁸ The end of the Cold War in 1989 spelled the

⁸⁵ Richard Hart Sinnreich, "Strategic Implications of Doctrinal Change: A Case Analysis," in *Military Strategy in Transition: Defense and Deterrence in the 1980s*, edited by Keith A. Dunn and William O. Staudemaier (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 52-57. Of note, President Reagan believed the NATO Alliance to be a central component to preserving peace between the United States and the Soviet Union. See Ronald Reagan, "Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, December 16, 1988," transcript at <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1988/121688b.htm> (accessed January 15, 2011).

⁸⁶ Robert H. Scales, *Certain Victory: The U. S. Army in the Gulf War*, (1993; repr., Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1994), 107; Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation*, 89; John S. Brown, "The Maturation of Operational Art: Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm," in *Historical Perspectives of the Operational Art*, edited by Michael D. Krause and R. Cody Phillips (Washington, DC: U. S. Army Center of Military History, 2005), 473-474.

⁸⁷ Lock-Pullan suggested that the Army's inclusion of low-intensity conflict in AirLand Battle, introduced in the 1986 edition of *FM 100-5*, led to poor execution in combat. The Army saw politics as a restriction upon warfare, rather than inherent to warfare. Therefore, it misunderstood types of conflict that depended upon more than military means for success. See Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation*, 104-106, 154-155.

⁸⁸ Keith A. Dunn and William O. Staudemaier, "A NATO Conventional Retaliatory Strategy: Its Strategic and Force Structure Implications," in *Military Strategy in Transition: Defense and Deterrence in the 1980s*, ed. by Keith A. Dunn and William O. Staudemaier (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), 196-201.

end of the need for U. S. Army operating concepts to address the threat of a powerful peer competitor. However, it took the Army four years to introduce a new operating concept for a world in which the United States was the only superpower.

Full-Dimensional Operations, 1993-2000

The Cold War provided a clear, primary threat, the Soviet Union. Yet, the U. S. Army had marginal results in the development of operating concepts that nested within the strategies they were to support, in spite of the clear threat posed by the Soviet military. The end of Cold War made nesting the Army's operating concept within national strategy more difficult. Partly, this was due to different and constantly shifting strategic aims and diminished resources allocated toward national defense. Partly, this was due to the lack of a clearly defined threat. Mostly, this was due to a reluctance to adjust from Cold War operating concepts.

Absent the threat of the Soviet Union, both Presidents George H. W. Bush and William Clinton placed U. S. security at the forefront of national strategy.⁸⁹ This was a clear break from Cold War-era strategic aims. In addition, both administrations explicitly stated their support for restrictions on military employment, as articulated first by President Reagan's Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinberger, and refined by General Colin Powell, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.⁹⁰ However, commonality ended on these points.

⁸⁹ George H. W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 3; William Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1994), 6-15.

⁹⁰ Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation*, 120-122, 136-138, 143-145, 147-149. The Weinberger Doctrine, first promulgated in 1984, had six points. First, the United States only would commit military forces to protect vital national interests. Second, military forces should be committed overwhelmingly, not piecemealed. Third, committed military forces should have clear political and military objectives to achieve. Fourth, the United States should reassess military commitments constantly and adjust them to match interests, ends, and means. Fifth, the United States should not commit military forces without the support of the Congress and the American people. Sixth, committing military

Presidents Bush and Clinton had different secondary strategic aims. These created substantive differences that influenced the development and implementation of the Army's emerging post-Cold War operating concept. President Bush advocated for increased emphasis on global and regional stability to protect American interests at home and abroad. He outlined several defense goals to support his approach, including defense and deterrence, forward presence, crisis response, and military force reconstitution.⁹¹ Substantively, military force reconstitution included the post-Cold War reduction in force President Bush implemented.⁹²

President Clinton's approach was much different. He specifically advocated promoting prosperity at home as a secondary strategic aim.⁹³ His initial Secretary of Defense, Les Aspin, outlined several supporting defense goals in the 1993 *Bottom-Up Review*. Foremost among these defense goals was an emphasis on cooperation and partnership.⁹⁴ In other words, President Clinton wanted to shift the physical and monetary burden for global stability off the United States, and he made this desire explicit in his policies. This put tremendous pressure on the Army to execute an operational approach that supported a seemingly expanded mission set, versus one

forces to combat should be a last resort. General Powell refined this doctrine, which later became the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, to emphasize the clear matching of military means to political objectives. See Colin L. Powell, "U. S. Forces: Challenges Ahead," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 5 (Winter 1992/93), http://www.cfr.org/publication/7508/us_forces.html (accessed January 16, 2011).

⁹¹ Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (1993), 3, 14-15. The defense goals matched the 1992 *National Military Strategy* exactly. See Department of Defense, *National Military Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 6-8.

⁹² Robert McCormick, *The Downsized Warrior: America's Army in Transition*, (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 29-39.

⁹³ Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 15-18.

⁹⁴ Department of Defense, *Report on the Bottom-Up Review*, by Les Aspin (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1993), 71-76.

focused on conventional defense of Western Europe, in an ambiguous security environment with diminished means.⁹⁵

The Army's response to the drastic change in the global security environment and in the strategic guidance it received was to implement an operating concept known as Full-Dimensional Operations. Full-Dimensional Operations employed "all the means available to accomplish any given mission decisively and at the least cost -- across the full range of possible operations in war and operations other than war."⁹⁶ This concept began as a review of AirLand Battle during the late 1980s. This study, known as AirLand Battle Future sought to update the AirLand Battle concept to focus on destroying enemy forces over retaining terrain. In addition, AirLand Battle Future emphasized the need for greater mobility and greater range of weapon systems and information sensors. Finally, this concept would expand the scope of Army force employment across the spectrum of war and peace.⁹⁷

The Army named its expanded scope of force employment the Range of Military Operations. This range portrayed the full-dimensional operating concept in the environmental

⁹⁵ The *Bottom-Up Review* proposed a reduction in Army force structure from eighteen Active Component divisions to ten. See *Ibid.*, 28. To understand the scope of this reduction in terms of budget allocation and personnel affected, see Robert McCormick, *The Downsized Warrior*, 26. The Army between 1990 and 1996 moved from a 30% allocation of the annual Department of Defense budget to a 23% share. In addition, it reduced in end strength from 770,000 to 475,000 personnel. These cuts were on top of seven consecutive years of real budgetary decline. See Carl E. Vuono, "National Strategy and the Army of the 1990s," *Parameters* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 4

⁹⁶ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5* (1993), 1-4.

⁹⁷ John L. Romjue, *American Army Doctrine for the Post-Cold War* (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 1997), 23-25. The ending of the Cold War increased the Army's emphasis on operations other than war. See also Vuono, "National Strategy and the Army of the 1990s," 11; James R. McDonough, "Building the New FM 100-5: Process and Product," *Military Review* 71, no. 10 (October 1991): 6-12; Gordon R. Sullivan, "Doctrine: A Guide to the Future," *Military Review* 72, no. 2 (February 1992): 8-9; Frederick M. Franks, Jr., "Full-Dimensional Operations: A Doctrine for an Era of Change," *Military Review* 73, no. 12 (December 1993): 7-10; James R. McDonough, "Versatility: The Fifth Tenet," *Military Review* 73, no. 12 (December 1993): 13; Thomas K. Adams, *The Army After Next: The First Postindustrial Army* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 27.

context of war, conflict, and peace. It specifically associated certain types of military operations within that context. Large-scale combat operations, attacks, and defenses occurred in war. Raids, peace enforcement, support to insurgencies, antiterrorism, peacekeeping, and noncombatant evacuation occurred in conflict. Counterdrug operations, disaster relief, civil support, peace building, and nation assistance occurred in peacetime.⁹⁸

Unfortunately, the Range of Military Operations increased the tension between restrictive strategic guidance in the form of the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine and an expanding Army operating concept. As alluded earlier, the Army's experience in Somalia revealed the lack of linkage between its operating concept and the political policies the United States asked it to help achieve. The March 1993 expansion of the United Nations mission from humanitarian assistance to peace enforcement exposed this gap by creating an ill-defined military objective of the restoration of law and order.⁹⁹ Somalia reinforced the Clinton Administration's belief in the usefulness of the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, if it chose to employ military means. Yet, the Clinton Administration employed the Army repeatedly in conflicts other than war with ill-defined strategic objectives.¹⁰⁰ This was an apparent contradiction in strategic approach, in that the

⁹⁸ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5* (1993), 2-0 – 2-1. Figure 2-1 portrayed the Range of Military Operations.

⁹⁹ UN Security Council, *Resolution 814 (1993) Adopted by the Security Council at its 3188th Meeting, on 26 March 1993*, S/RES/814 (1993), available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3b00f21143.html> (accessed February 19, 2011). See also U. S. Army Center of Military History, *United States Forces, Somalia After Action Report and Historical Overview: The United States Army in Somalia, 1992-1994* (Washington, DC: U. S. Army Center for Military History, 2003), 8.

¹⁰⁰ Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation*, 168-169. Lock-Pullan specifically mentions the phenomena of casualty aversion that arose following the October 3, 1993 raid in Mogadishu, Somalia. The Army received exceptional pressure to achieve national objectives quickly and without risk to the force. See also Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 327-330.

administration openly advocated use of military force only with clearly defined objectives but deployed military forces into conflicts without clearly defining how those conflicts would end.

The Army's retention of a conventional combat focus in the implementation of Full-Dimensional Operations no doubt added to the tension inherent in national policy and national strategy. The 1993 edition of *FM 100-5* expanded the Army's operating concept to include its interface with national strategy. However, the Army continued to organize, train, and equip its force to deploy forces abroad, fight a conventional foe, and win a decisive victory.¹⁰¹ The Army's approach adversely affected its ability to fulfill the vast range of activities it performed.

The effects of the Army's combat-centric approach toward operations and the political impetus for casualty aversion contributed to negative outcomes in operations other than war. For example, in Haiti the Army deployed over 20,000 personnel to restore President Jean Bertrand Aristide to power. However, the United States restricted the Army's ability to stabilize the country, interact with the local population, and help to maintain law and order. This corresponded to an increase in corruption and violence in the wake of the American withdrawal.¹⁰² In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Army suffered from rules of engagement so restrictive that leaders had to place protecting the force above mission accomplishment. In addition, the Army's combat focus and lack of interaction with the population reduced its effectiveness as a peace enforcement and peacekeeping force.¹⁰³ Finally, in Kosovo, the Army

¹⁰¹ Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation*, 163.

¹⁰² Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 324-325.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 325-326. See also Robert F. Baumann, George W. Gawrych, and Walter E. Kretchik, *Armed Peacekeepers in Bosnia* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Combat Studies Institute, 2004), 133-137, 144.

stood by as Albanian insurgents used Kosovo as a staging area for operations in neighboring Macedonia. It was too risky to reduce the Albanian threat to Balkan stability.¹⁰⁴

These failings in combat operations and operations other than war highlighted the failure of the full-dimensional operating concept. The Army believed that the end of the Cold War equated to an end of operating concept development based upon concrete, real-world threats like the defunct Soviet Union. Instead, the Army completely abandoned threat-based development and adopted an approach without specific threat or geographic focus. Therefore, the Army again failed to produce a sound operating concept, and it exacerbated its failure with its simultaneous theoretical work to develop a transformational force for the post-Cold War world, as seen in Force XXI, the Army After Next, and the Objective Force.

Experimental Concepts: Force XXI, the Army After Next, and the Objective Force

After the end of the Cold War, the Army developed two concepts simultaneously. The first was the operating concept of Full-Dimensional Operations, described before. Full-Dimensional Operations was to serve as a basis upon which the Army would develop future operating concepts.¹⁰⁵ Future concepts would leverage the rise of information technology and the perceived effects information technology would have on the future of warfare.¹⁰⁶ The Army called the first of these futuristic concepts Force XXI Operations. Force XXI Operations evolved during the 1990s into the Army After Next and the Objective Force. One common theme

¹⁰⁴ Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace*, 326-327.

¹⁰⁵ U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-5, Force XXI Operations*, 1-3.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-5, 2-2.

permeated all of these concepts. The Army believed the creative application of information technology would overcome any potential adversary in any terrain.¹⁰⁷ Accordingly, the Army developed these experimental operating concepts devoid of any specificity of threat or geography. This was in sharp contrast to the threat-based approach taken by the Soviet Union during the interwar period of the 1920s and 1930s.

The Army began these experimental concepts with Force XXI in the early 1990s under the direction of the Army Chief of Staff, General Gordon Sullivan. General Sullivan sought to create an operating concept that captured what he perceived to be a shift in warfare after the Cold War, a shift his predecessor had not addressed with AirLand Battle Future.¹⁰⁸ General Sullivan believed that the post-Cold War security environment was different. The United States, as the lone superpower, no longer had the luxury of contending with adversary nation-states. It had to be concerned with entire regions of the globe that might threaten its interests and destabilize the security environment, including the Balkans, the Middle East, and portions of Africa and Asia.¹⁰⁹

Threats in this new environment could be international or domestic. International threats included states, subsets of states, or coalitions of states with varying military capabilities, ranging from infantry-centric military forces to near-peer military forces capable of employment in either war or operations other than war. International threats also included non-state actors with access to conventional or weapon of mass destruction technology and natural or man-made disasters.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 1-5.

¹⁰⁸ Adams, *The Army After Next*, 27.

¹⁰⁹ U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-5, Force XXI Operations*. 2-1.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 2-3 – 2-5; Gordon R. Sullivan and James M. Dubik, “Land Warfare in the 21st Century,” in Gordon R. Sullivan and James M. Dubik, *Envisioning Future Warfare* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1995), 2-3.

In contrast, domestic threats included economic and social upheaval that would undermine the base of U. S. national security.¹¹¹

General Sullivan believed that the Army had a major role to play in the nation's defense against this diverse and geographically expansive range of threats. Unfortunately, in the U. S. economic situation of the early 1990s, the Army could not afford to make any radical structural changes to fit the conditions of the new security environment. It had to perform with the operating concept it had in place to assist with U. S. economic recovery. The Army also had to achieve decisive results in all of its assigned missions, even if those missions included an economic or social aspect beyond the scope of traditional military operations.¹¹² General Sullivan established Force XXI as an evolutionary expansion to the full-dimensional operating concept to achieve these results.

General Sullivan stated that the Army could leverage information technology to achieve the results it needed from the Force XXI concept. The Army of Force XXI would share information on a scale not previously possible to detect enemy forces and to deliver precision munitions of increased lethality with great accuracy.¹¹³ In addition, the Army of Force XXI would develop other capabilities, including a flexible doctrine, strategic mobility, modularity and mission tailoring, interoperability with other U. S. forces and with U. S. partners, and a force structure with the versatility to accomplish assigned missions in either war or operations other

¹¹¹ Sullivan and Dubik, "Land Warfare in the 21st Century," 3-4.

¹¹² U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-5, Force XXI Operations*, 3-2; Sullivan and Dubik, "Land Warfare in the 21st Century," 5-7.

¹¹³ Gordon R. Sullivan and James M. Dubik, "War in the Information Age," in Gordon R. Sullivan and James M. Dubik, *Envisioning Future Warfare* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Command and General Staff College Press, 1995), 57-62; Gordon R. Sullivan, "Moving into the 21st Century: America's Army and Modernization," *Military Review* 73, no. 7 (July 1993): 7-11.

than war.¹¹⁴ These capabilities were to form the core of the Force XXI operating concept, the Army's first experiment with capabilities-based operating concept development.¹¹⁵

General Douglas Reimer, who replaced General Sullivan as Army Chief of Staff in 1995, continued to develop Force XXI. He expanded the planning horizon to predict the Army's operating concept for 2025. General Reimer focused so far into the future in an attempt to stop incremental experimentation with existing concepts and force structure and to achieve a conceptual "leap ahead."¹¹⁶ General Reimer called this new concept the Army After Next.¹¹⁷ Together, Force XXI and the Army After Next described how the Army would conduct combat operations on land throughout the duration of a crisis to support national aims and achieve full spectrum dominance.¹¹⁸

The Army After Next was a capabilities-based concept, like Force XXI. General Reimer initially described five capabilities of the force that would give it the ability to achieve full spectrum dominance. The first capability was dominant maneuver by mission-specific organizations both from bases of operations in the United States and inside a designated theater of operations. The second was precision engagement of enemy forces inside the theater of operations using lethal and non-lethal means. The third was full-dimensional protection of the fielded force to preserve its combat power. The fourth capability was a focused logistical

¹¹⁴ U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-5, Force XXI Operations*, 3-1 – 3-3.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3-17.

¹¹⁶ Adams, *The Army After Next*, 51.

¹¹⁷ Dennis J. Reimer, "The Army After Next: Knowledge, Speed and Power," *Military Review* 79, no. 2 (May-June 1999), 3; Adams, *The Army After Next*, 38-39.

¹¹⁸ Department of the Army, *Army Vision 2010* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996), 1; Adams, *The Army After Next*, 43.

structure that efficiently sustained the fielded force with the proper amount of resources. Finally, the last capability was information superiority that permitted the other capabilities to function.¹¹⁹

These five core capabilities served as the basis for the Army After Next concept. This basis in capabilities replaced the analysis of specific threats in the security environment and the likely geographic locations in which conflict with those threats would occur. Accordingly, fielding the concept was problematic. Two General Accounting Office reports highlighted the problems. The first report stated that the Army After Next likely would not maintain its projected fielding schedule because the information technology used to integrate these capabilities was untested.¹²⁰ The second report stated many of the problems plaguing the fielding of information technology for the Army After Next stemmed from the lack of a detailed implementation program.¹²¹ In essence, the Army failed to create a doctrine to support the Army After Next as an operating concept before it began to experiment with materiel solutions.

Simultaneous with the development of the Army After Next, General Reimer attempted to revise *FM 100-5*. This revision attempted to incorporate aspects of information warfare the Army had developed with the experimental concepts of Force XXI and the Army After Next. A key aspect of this revision was an expanded description of the Army's operating concept in the context of war and operations other than war. This description blended into one concept offensive and defensive operations in war and stability and support operations in operations other

¹¹⁹ Department of the Army, *Army Vision 2010*, 10-18.

¹²⁰ U. S. General Accounting Office, *Battlefield Automation: Performance Uncertainties Are Likely When Army Fields Its First Digitized Division* (Washington, DC: General Accounting Office, 1999), 2; Adams, *The Army After Next*, 51.

¹²¹ U. S. General Accounting Office, *Battlefield Automation: Opportunities to Improve the Army's Information Protection Effort* (Washington, DC: General Accounting Office, 1999), 10.

than war.¹²² It also mirrored a movement toward full-spectrum capability found in Department of Defense initiatives of the time.¹²³ Obviously, these attempted revisions to *FM 100-5* were a direct antecedent to the current full-spectrum operating concept. The Army did not adopt this version of *FM 100-5*, however, because it could not agree on this new doctrine.¹²⁴

The Army of late 1999 and 2000 was under considerable budgetary pressure. The pressure originated from the apparent success of Air Force operations during Operation Allied Force, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization offensive to curb Serbian ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.¹²⁵ Consequently, Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera and Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki proposed yet another experimental operating concept, the Objective Force.

The Objective Force incorporated aspects of the stalled full-spectrum operating concept, particularly the continued revision of the range of operations the Army would perform in war and in conditions other than war.¹²⁶ The Objective Force concept really was a description of three different types of forces the Army would field as it moved into the future. The Objective Force was to be the final result of technological transformation. The Legacy Force consisted of existing Army forces designed and fielded under the AirLand Battle operating concept. Force XXI was to

¹²² Michael McCormick, "The New FM 100-5: A Return to Operational Art" (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1997), 14-17; Michael McCormick, "The New FM 100-5: A Return to Operational Art," *Military Review* 78, no. 5 (September-October 1997): 3, 7-9. Figure 6 on page 13 illustrates the integration of war and operational other than war in the four operations categories. See also John M. Spitzer, "FM 100-5 and Information Age Warfare," *Military Review* 78, no. 5 (September-October 1997): 16-17 for another description of the integration of war and operations other than war.

¹²³ Department of Defense, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress*, by William S. Cohen (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1998), 7-8, 19-22.

¹²⁴ Adams, *The Army After Next*, 54.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹²⁶ Louis Caldera and Eric K. Shinseki, "Army Vision: Soldiers On Point for the Nation... Persuasive in Peace, Invincible in War," *Military Review* 80, no. 5 (September-October 2000): 3; Michael Mehaffey, "Vanguard of the Objective Force," *Military Review* 80, no. 5 (September-October 2000): 6.

create the process by which the Legacy Force integrated new technology developed for the Objective Force. Finally, the Interim Force would serve as an experimental test-bed with which the Army could experiment with technology and doctrinal concepts.¹²⁷ This was the operating concept under experimentation when the terror attacks of 9/11 occurred.

The problem with these three experimental operating concepts is that the Army's method of designing them was backwards. Instead of examining the security environment and conducting an assessment of risk based upon the capabilities and intentions of potential adversaries in the locations those potential conflicts might occur, the Army experimented in a vacuum.¹²⁸ Consequently, it developed capabilities for its force first, rather than construct a sound doctrinal concept that mitigated the risk posed by a real threat in real terrain. In addition, in the process of designing capabilities in a vacuum, the Army adopted a one-size-fits-all approach epitomized in the precursory version of Full Spectrum Operations it intended to publish in the defunct 1998 revision of *FM 100-5*. These problems continued to plague the Army as it transitioned from peacetime concept experimentation into wartime experimentation after 9/11.

Summary

This section revealed that the Army had a mixed record during and after the Cold War nesting its operating concept within strategic aims and mitigating the risk posed by the primary threats identified by national strategy in the likely geographic area of conflict. The operating concepts did not nest during this period because of differing conceptions of those concepts by

¹²⁷ Adams, *The Army After Next*, 68-70.

¹²⁸ See Jeffrey Record, *Ready for What and Modernized Against Whom? A Strategic Perspective on Readiness and Modernization* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U. S. Army Strategic Studies Institute, 1995), 4-6. Record offered an assessment of the nation-states and other potential actors he considered a threat in 1995 in response to the *Bottom-Up Review Report*. Record's analysis highlighted that it was possible to conduct threat-based operating concept development, even after the end of the Cold War.

political decision-makers and military executors. The operating concepts of this period also did not consider the nature of threat capabilities and intentions and the terrain in which the Army likely would encounter them. The AirLand Battle concept was the lone exception. However, AirLand Battle had limited applicability with threats other than those using a Soviet-style operating concept.

In the case of Vietnam, the operating concept failed because of a difference in the definition of Flexible Response. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson promulgated their conception of the Flexible Response in national policy leading to Vietnam. Military leaders put their different definition into execution. In the case of the Active Defense, this occurred because of a change in geographic scope and geography over time, especially in the Carter Administration. In the case of AirLand Battle, this occurred because the aggressiveness of offensive spirit infused into the doctrine threatened the alliance the Army devised it to support. Finally, in the case of Full-Dimensional Operations, this occurred because of a natural tension between the concept's expansive nature and the restrictions imposed by the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine.

Nesting was not the only problem plaguing the Army's operating concepts in this period. The operating concepts described here also had a troubled record mitigating the risk posed by primary threats to U. S. national security, as defined in national strategies. Mismatching led to the misapplication of military means under Flexible Response that were not suited for the particular nature of the threats and geography of Vietnam. It led to the design of an active defense that only addressed the Soviet Union's initial echelon of forces and ignored the second and third echelon exploitation forces that constituted the real threat to Western Europe. It led to another misapplication of military means, this time under AirLand Battle, not suited for the low-intensity threats and ambiguous strategic aims present in Somalia. Finally, it led to overly restrictive rules of engagement and force protection measures that threatened mission accomplishment during operations in Haiti, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo under Full-Dimensional Operations.

Therefore, from 1962 until 2000, the Army had a habitual, systemic problem nesting its operating concept within national strategic aims. It also had a habitual, systemic problem designing its operating concept to mitigate the risk of threats to U. S. interests identified in national strategy. Of the concepts adopted by the Army in this period, AirLand Battle best nested within national strategy and mitigated identified risk. However, it too had significant drawbacks. Finally, this period demonstrated the propensity of the Army to develop a one-size-fits-all operating concept to meet overzealous strategic guidance or match an ambiguous security environment. This was the case during the eras of the Flexible Response and of Full-Dimensional Operations. These problems were to serve as a prologue to the problematic nesting of Full Spectrum Operations in national strategy and of its ability to mitigate primary threats identified in the assessment of the security environment since 2000.

Analyzing Full Spectrum Operations

As stated before, full-spectrum capability emerged in the late 1990s as a Department of Defense initiative to create a set of joint doctrine with which to organize, train, and equip military forces across the services or the post-Cold War security environment.¹²⁹ The Army responded to this joint initiative by attempting to revise its capstone operations manual, but this attempt failed.¹³⁰ Instead, the Army retained the full-spectrum concept in the Objective Force experimental concept. Finally, just months before the 2001 terror attacks, it established Full Spectrum Operations as its operating concept in doctrine.¹³¹

¹²⁹ Department of Defense, *Annual Report to the President and the Congress* (1998), 7-8, 19-22.

¹³⁰ Adams, *The Army After Next*, 54.

¹³¹ Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 1-14 – 1-17.

The terror attacks of September 11, 2001 proved to be a watershed event. It fundamentally changed the strategic aims and of the Bush Administration from that of its predecessor. It also changed that administration's perceptions of the threats to U. S. national security. The Army, however, was slow to adjust its operating concept to match the new security environment. Slow adaptation to changed strategic conditions did not prevent the Army from achieving dramatic results early in the War on Terror. The Army quickly defeated opponents in Afghanistan and Iraq with decisive results: regime changes in both nations. Unfortunately, these decisive results hid the problems the Army encountered in their achievement, specifically the inability to adapt quickly to the capabilities and the intentions of threats to post-conflict stabilization encountered in both theaters, including insurgents, foreign fighters, former regime members, and other adversaries.

As a review of national strategies will show, slow adaptation was not entirely the Army's fault. Strategic aims shifted significantly between 2000 and today. So too did the assessments of the primary threats to U. S. national security, especially after the terror attacks of 9/11. The Army repeatedly found itself with an operating concept that was difficult to adapt as quickly as threats in the security environment adapted, just as it had throughout the period examined previously. To make matters worse, the Army retained the core ideas of Full Spectrum Operations without acknowledging the concept's Cold War heritage.

Strategic Aims since 2000

Strategic aims varied greatly between 2000 and today. Each of the three presidential administrations in this period had its own approach to secure U. S. interests in the security environment. In addition, the Department of Defense published three reports of the *Quadrennial Defense Review* that refined national strategy for execution by the department. The effect of these changes in strategic aims on the Army was to reinforce the Army's tendency to retain its one-size-fits-all operational concept.

President Clinton issued his last *National Security Strategy* in 2000. It outlined three strategic aims. The first aim was to enhance security at home and abroad.¹³² This aim included specific military activities to address the full spectrum of threats. First among these activities was to deter, and if necessary to fight and win against adversaries that threatened national interests. Other activities included overseas presence and peacetime military engagement to deter aggression, build coalitions, promote stability, and support indigenous counterdrug activities.¹³³ The secondary strategic aims were promoting prosperity and promoting human rights and democracy.¹³⁴ This strategy did not associate military activities with either of these secondary strategic aims.

The Department of Defense published a *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* weeks after the 9/11 attacks. It had four aims that served as precursors to the 2002 *National Security Strategy*. These initiatives included assuring allies of America's purpose, dissuading adversaries, deterring aggression with forward deployed forces, and decisively defeating adversaries in the event deterrence failed.¹³⁵ Its approach included specific initiatives to defend the United States and protect its power, strengthen alliances and partnerships, maintain favorable regional balances, develop broad military capabilities, and transform the defense establishment.¹³⁶ Many of these aims and initiatives were present in the next national strategy.

¹³² William Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for a Global Age* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2000), 9.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 16-18, 19-28. Of note, this edition incorporated the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine as a rule-set of the use of military force. See pages 28-29.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 31-35, 36-38.

¹³⁵ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001), 2-3.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 13-16.

The 2002 *National Security Strategy* outlined eight strategic aims. Chief among those aims was championing aspirations for human dignity. This aim established liberty and justice as universal principles for all humanity, not just for the United States. It became the organizing aim of the remainder of the strategy and the chief method to combat the primary threats identified therein. The second aim was to strengthen alliances to defeat terrorism and prevent future attacks. Third was to work with other partners to defuse regional conflicts. Fourth was to prevent enemies from threatening the United States, its allies, and its friends with weapons of mass destruction. Fifth was to promote a new era of economic growth through free markets and trade. Sixth was to expand development by promoting democracy. Seventh was to develop agendas for cooperation with other global powers. The final aim was to transform U. S. security institutions to meet new challenges and opportunities.¹³⁷

President Bush retained most of the aims of his 2002 strategy in his subsequent national strategy in 2006. Significantly, he retained the chief aim to champion aspirations for human dignity. However, in the 2006 strategy, President Bush argued that promoting and extending freedom abroad was a key national interest.¹³⁸

The 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* nested within the 2002 and 2006 *National Security Strategies*, especially the strategic aim to transform U. S. security institutions. The 2006 report outlined five objectives for the Department of Defense to accomplish in support of the national strategy. These objectives were to defeat terror networks, to defend the homeland, to shape the choices of other nations, to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction,

¹³⁷ George W. Bush, *The National Security Strategy for the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 3-5.

¹³⁸ Bush, *National Security Strategy* (2006), 3.

and to refine the plans for future military force fielding.¹³⁹ This report described four initiatives for the Department of Defense to take in order to accomplish its objectives. They included the reorientation of capabilities and forces, reshaping the defense enterprise, developing a 21st century military force, and achieving unity of effort across the department.¹⁴⁰

The 2010 *National Security Strategy* was a significant departure from the two Bush Administration strategies. President Obama's strategic approach appeared to be a return to that of President Clinton a decade earlier. In particular, this strategy abandoned the active promotion of democracy as a central tenet. In its place, it described three strategic aims: building a solid economic foundation for U. S. security, comprehensive engagement with all parties in the security environment, and promoting a just and sustainable international order.¹⁴¹ Next, this strategy outlined four enduring U. S. interests: security, economic prosperity, democratic values, and international order.¹⁴²

The 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* did not depart from the preceding report, however. The 2010 report retained several of the objectives and initiatives from the 2006 report. These included prevailing in today's wars, preventing and deterring conflict, preventing and deterring adversaries, rebalancing the force, and reforming practices.¹⁴³ In addition, the 2010 review added two new initiatives. First, it added an initiative to address the tremendous personnel impact of a decade of constant war. Second, it added an initiative to strengthen defense

¹³⁹ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 19-40.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 41-92.

¹⁴¹ President, *National Security Strategy* (2010), 9-13.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 17-50.

¹⁴³ Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010), 11-48, 73-88.

partnerships as a method to apply military means toward the national strategic end of comprehensive engagement.¹⁴⁴

The differences between the 2006 and 2010 *National Security Strategies* and the similarities in the 2006 and 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review Reports* raise the possibility of a repeat of the problems seen with the clear articulation of strategic aims during the Clinton Administration. President Clinton's administration muddled strategic aims through conflicting guidance. As described in the previous section, the Clinton Administration subscribed to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine as a rule-set for the employment of military force, but it sought ways to employ military forces into conflicts without clearly defined objectives.

The current disparity between national strategies and defense reviews may be nothing more than a change in presidential administration and continuity within the Department of Defense. However, the example of the 1990s leaves open the possibility that the Obama Administration risks muddling its strategic aims through conflicting guidance. This would complicate the application of military means significantly and make any operating concept difficult to employ. Therefore, the disparity between current national strategy and defense review may reduce the effectiveness of any risk mitigation provided by the Army's full-spectrum operating concept.

Primary Threats since 2000

Each of the three presidential administrations since 2000 had a different assessment of the primary threats to the United States. Each of these assessments had similarities in that each identified a mixture of state and non-state threats in the security environment. However, there were distinct differences in threat identification and prioritization. As seen previously, changes in

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 49-72.

presidential threat assessment and prioritization affected the Army's operating concept and its implementation. This past decade was no different from the decades since 1960.

President Clinton identified a mixture of traditional state-based and irregular non-state threats in his final strategy. The most significant were regional aggressor states, specifically on the Korean Peninsula and in the Persian Gulf. Other threats included the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, ethno-religious conflict, terrorism, and illicit trafficking and crime.¹⁴⁵

In contrast to his predecessor, President George W. Bush identified a different set of threats in the wake of the terror attacks of 9/11. This new set of threats either had the ability to disrupt global stability or possessed technology capable of catastrophic effect, like nuclear weapons. His first strategy described both transnational terrorist networks and the "crossroads of radicalism and technology." It also identified a new balance of power unfavorable to the United States as a threat.¹⁴⁶ President Bush's second strategy revised the initial assessment to identify five threats: transnational terror networks, weapons of mass destruction, rogue states, failed states, and illicit crime.¹⁴⁷

President Barack Obama reprioritized and refined the Bush Administration's two threat assessments. The current strategy outlined four threats to the United States. Most significant was the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction in the hands of foreign extremists.¹⁴⁸ President Obama believed the threat posed by nuclear weapons was so great that he called for a worldwide

¹⁴⁵ Clinton, *National Security Strategy* (2000), 2-3, 6, 11-16, 22-23, 25-28.

¹⁴⁶ Bush, *National Security Strategy* (2002), preface. Especially notable in this strategy was the declaration that the United States would act preemptively against threats at the "crossroads."

¹⁴⁷ Bush, *National Security Strategy* (2006), 8-9, 12, 15-16, 18-19, 47.

¹⁴⁸ Obama, *National Security Strategy* (2010), 8-9, 17.

effort to eradicate them from national arsenals.¹⁴⁹ Other threats in the security environment included violent extremism, failing states, and global criminal networks.¹⁵⁰ President Obama assessed these threats differently than his predecessor, however.

Violent extremism, as described in the current *National Security Strategy*, was not the global terrorist network outlined by the Bush Administration. It was more than the embodiment of *Al Qaeda*. Violent extremism included a geographic “epicenter” in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It also included surrogate organizations that facilitated the terrorism performed by non-state actors like *Al Qaeda*. In addition, this strategy argued that *Al Qaeda* actively sought safe haven in nations other than Afghanistan and Pakistan.¹⁵¹

President Obama also assessed the threat from failing states and criminal networks differently. He did not expressly link failing states to the creation of terrorist safe havens, like his predecessor.¹⁵² Instead, they bred conflict and destabilized their regions and the global security environment.¹⁵³ President Obama also did not expressly link global criminal networks to the threat of weapons of mass destruction or to ineffective governance.¹⁵⁴ He simply stated that

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 19-21.

¹⁵² Bush, *National Security Strategy* (2006), 15. President Bush also linked humanitarian disasters and ungoverned areas to the creation of terrorist safe havens.

¹⁵³ Obama, *National Security Strategy* (2010), 8.

¹⁵⁴ Bush, *National Security Strategy* (2006), 47. President Bush linked the threat of illicit trade in drugs, people, and sex to a decrease in social order, increase in crime and corruption, decreased effectiveness of governance, illegal transfer of weapon of mass destruction and advanced conventional weapon technology, and decreased efficacy of traditional security and law enforcement techniques.

global criminal networks fostered instability and an illicit trade in people and goods that crossed into the United States.¹⁵⁵

These three distinct characterizations of the security environment essentially described three distinct security environments in which the Army had to respond with its operating concept. Prior to 9/11, the security environment consisted of traditional, state-based threats combined with threats from irregular, non-state actors. After 9/11, the Bush Administration described a security environment consisting of international actors with the capability to disrupt global stability and actors who possessed the technical means to create a catastrophic effect, like a nuclear weapon. President Obama retained his predecessor's description of the security environment. However, he focused on eliminating the spread of dangerous technology, including nuclear technology. At the same time, he focused the scope of extremist threats to encompass *Al Qaeda* and its actions in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

U. S. Army Analysis of the Security Environment, 2001-Present

Since 2001, the Army has not identified specific threats in specific geographic areas in the security environment. Instead, the Army only identified the types of threats it expected to encounter in the security environment. Moreover, the Army's interpretation failed to keep pace with the changes in threat assessment found in national strategy. This lack of detail in threat assessment and inability to keep pace with national strategy contributed to the Army's development of an operating concept as a one-size-fits-all doctrinal approach to mitigating risk to strategic aims. In combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, as this section will highlight later, this approach has been problematic.

¹⁵⁵ Obama, *National Security Strategy* (2010), 8.

The 2001 edition of *FM 3-0* began this imprecise description of the security environment. This description included conflicts among state, non-state, and transnational actors. Conflicts in this environment rarely had only two sides. More often, conflicts would involve state, non-state, and transnational actors using diplomatic, informational, military, and economic means to achieve their political aims.¹⁵⁶

The description of the security environment in the 2001 edition of *FM 3-0* assumed all actors were rational. They acted to secure their interests. States model would compete over wealth, technology, and information. Regional powers might threaten U. S. interests by attempting to dominate their less-powerful neighbors. The Army expected most states to improve their military capabilities through technological advancement.¹⁵⁷ Non-state actors and transnational were problematic because of the myriad of activities in which they were involved. Some of these activities threatened U. S. interests directly. Others threatened U. S. allies or regional stability.¹⁵⁸

The same doctrinal description of the security environment also assumed that all actors would attempt to mitigate the overwhelming military advantages in firepower and technology possessed by the United States. The Army expected potential adversaries to inflict as many casualties on U. S. personnel as possible, inside or outside the conflict zone. It expected threats to control the tempo of operations and attempt to deny the United States the ability to enter the geographic area in conflict. It expected threats to avoid direct confrontation with U. S. military

¹⁵⁶Department of the Army, *FM 3-0* (2001), 1-8 – 1-9.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 1-8.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid*. Transnational activities included “terrorism, illegal drug trading, illicit arms and strategic material trafficking, international organized crime, piracy, and deliberate environmental damage.” In addition, “extremism, ethnic disputes, religious rivalries, and human disasters” contributed to human migration. Migrations, in turn, exacerbated existing regional tensions and led to increased regional instability.

forces in order to avoid the overwhelming effects of U. S. weapon systems. It expected threats to combine the use of terrain and urban populations to concentrate their own capability while dissipating U. S. capability. Finally, the Army expected threats to form coalitions against the United States.¹⁵⁹

Both the 2008 and 2011 editions of *FM 3-0* made a radical change to the previous description of the security environment. Gone was the premise that there would be periods of war and peace. Instead, the Army emphasized the instability of the global security environment. This instability indicated that the United States was in a period of persistent conflict.¹⁶⁰ In addition, this edition classified threats in one of four categories: traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive.

The 2005 *National Defense Strategy* introduced the threat typology of traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive threats.¹⁶¹ Traditional threats included states employing military forces using conventional weapons or weapons of mass destruction. Irregular threats used unconventional or asymmetric methods to overcome U. S. technological strengths. These methods included the use of terrorism, insurgency, and guerrilla warfare to exhaust the United

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 1-9.

¹⁶⁰ Department of the Army, *FM 3-0* (2008), 1-1 – 1-3; Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations*, Change 1, 1-1 – 1-3.

¹⁶¹ Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005), 2-4. This document published a short analysis of some adversaries to classify them. It classified Iraq and Afghanistan as traditional and irregular threats. Terrorist organizations, like *Al Qaeda*, were irregular threats actively seeking catastrophic capability. North Korea was a traditional, irregular, and catastrophic threat, all at once. Finally, this document postulated that the most capable threat in the future would be one that combined capabilities in all four categories. See also Department of the Army, *FM 3-0* (2008), 1-4 – 1-5; Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations*, Change 1, 1-4 – 1-6. On page 1-6, the Change 1 edition of *FM 3-0* included a new section on hybrid threats. It defined them as “diverse and dynamic combinations of regular forces, irregular forces, criminal elements, or a combination of these forces and elements all unified to achieve mutually benefitting effects.”

States and erode its influence in a protracted conflict. However, irregular methods were not restricted to these three techniques. Collapse of a functioning state in a geographically significant area also was to be an irregular threat.¹⁶²

The *National Defense Strategy* continued its typology by describing catastrophic threats as those attempting to acquire, produce, and employ weapons of mass destruction to achieve sudden and dramatic effect. Disruptive threats used new technologies to negate or overcome existing U. S. technological advantage. Adversaries would combine these four capabilities in a novel approach or through rapid adaptation to place the United States and the Army in a position of disadvantage.¹⁶³

More significantly, both the 2008 and 2011 editions of *FM 3-0* resurrected the spectrum of conflict. The current restatement of the spectrum of conflict explicitly brought back ideas from the height of the Cold War into doctrine. There were minor differences between the 1962 and 1968 spectrum of war and the current spectrum of conflict. In the place of an escalating scale from cold war to limited war to general war was a slightly different scale.¹⁶⁴ The revised scale reflected the lack of discernable conditions of war and peace. Its graduation escalated from stable peace to unstable peace to insurgency to general war.¹⁶⁵ However, the concept was the same: a scalar representation of war's magnitude of violence in which to bound military operations.

¹⁶² For the background to the development of these four types and expanded definitions, see Nathan Freier, *Strategic Competition and Resistance in the 21st Century: Irregular, Catastrophic, Traditional and Hybrid Challenges in Context* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: U. S. Army Strategic Studies Institute, 2007), 20-63.

¹⁶³ Department of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, 2-4.

¹⁶⁴ Department of the Army, *FM 100-5* (1962), 4-8, 11-14; Department of the Army, *FM 100-5* (1968), 1-2 – 1-3, 1-6 – 1-7.

¹⁶⁵ Department of the Army, *FM 3-0* (2008), 2-1 – 2-3; Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations*, Change 1, 2-1 – 2-3.

During part of the Cold War, this spectrum bound Flexible Response. Today, this spectrum bounds Full Spectrum Operations. It also reinforces that concept's one-size-fits all approach by not delimiting the portion of the spectrum in which the Army did not intend to operate

In 2009, the Army's Training and Doctrine Command released *The Army Capstone Concept*. This document represented a preview of Army thinking to appear in future operational doctrine. In it, the Army retained its description of the security environment from the 2008 edition of *FM 3-0*. In addition, the Army also predicted that future conflicts and threats would look very similar to the threats seen since 9/11. Specifically, the Army highlighted Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Second Lebanon War, and Operation Enduring Freedom as "harbingers of future conflict." These three conflicts demonstrated threat adaptability, the non-linear nature of war with multiple actors, shifting threat goals, weak states, and evolving forms of violence.¹⁶⁶ However, this document described the Army's military problem in the contemporary security environment without reference to any possible state-based threats.¹⁶⁷ It also did not mention by name the specific threats the U. S. Army expected to engage in the period described.

Applying Full Spectrum Operations in Combat: Iraq and Afghanistan

As eluded, the U. S. Army encountered significant problems applying its full-spectrum operating concept to the reality of combat operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan. The Army encountered these problems because its operating concept never accounted for specific threats in

¹⁶⁶ U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Pam 525-3-0, The Army Capstone Concept: Operational Adaptability: Operating Under Conditions of Uncertainty and Complexity in an Era of Persistent Conflict 2016-2028* (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2009), 10-13.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

specific terrain. This failing became manifest in problems during the execution of major combat operations and of stability operations in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

In Iraq, the Army encountered significant problems in its approach march to Baghdad in late March and early April 2003. These problems stemmed from an improper analysis of Iraqi capability and intention within the terrain of southern Iraq and a belief that existing doctrine was not suited for warfare in the 21st century.¹⁶⁸ The result of this poor analysis was successful Iraqi tactical surprise during U. S. offensive operations. Repeatedly, U. S. Army units encountered enemy forces that appeared to be irregular. These irregular forces were not uniformed Iraqi Army units. They wore civilian clothes, mixed into civilian populations, used population centers for concealment, and used civilian vehicles to maneuver on the battlefield.¹⁶⁹ In fact, these irregular forces were a mixture of the Iraqi Army's own unconventional units and foreign volunteers.¹⁷⁰

In addition to having inadequate knowledge of Iraqi capabilities, U. S. Army units entered Iraq with restrictive rules of engagement based on a false assumption of Iraqi intentions. The U. S. believed that it had to show extraordinary restraint in the application of its combat power during the approach to Baghdad. Accordingly, units entered Iraq with rules of engagement that stressed the importance of not shooting unless Iraqi forces engaged first.¹⁷¹ This was an example of a gamble over a "single, improbable event," according to the 2001 edition of *FM 3-0*.

¹⁶⁸ Michael E. Gordon and Bernard E. Trainor, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 93, 311. General Tommy Franks, the U. S. Army general in command of U. S. Central Command stated his belief that existing doctrine was inadequate in late 2002, prior to the invasion. In addition, General William Wallace, a U. S. Army corps commander during the invasion, stated that the enemy the Iraqis fielded was not the enemy his units had anticipated during pre-invasion planning and rehearsal.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2006), 118; Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 207-208, 218, 263, 408-409, 418.

¹⁷⁰ Gordon and Trainor, *Cobra II*, 498-499.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 200, 215-218

It was not a product of calculated risk management designed to take advantage of opportunity.¹⁷² The approach march succeeded, however, because the U. S. Army units in general trained better prior to the invasion and had better access to supporting fires than their Iraqi foes.¹⁷³ It did not succeed because its operating concept was suited to either the threat or the terrain.

Stability operations in Iraq also were problematic. Occasionally, Army units had to conduct the mixture of offensive, defensive, and stability operations contained within the full-spectrum operating concept in the same terrain, at the same time, in the presence of the same enemy. One of the best examples of this circumstance was the April 2004 uprising in the Shia slum of Sadr City, Baghdad. The fight for Sadr City pitted the followers of Muqtada al-Sadr, a popular Shia cleric, against occupying U. S. Army units and their Iraqi allies in the newly established Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police. The U. S. Army units expressed surprise at the tenacity of their foes.¹⁷⁴ They also indicated surprise at the linkage of increased stability to decreased enemy activity.¹⁷⁵ This indicated that threat assessment remained an issue in Full Spectrum Operations. It also indicated that the doctrinal linkage of offensive, defensive, stability, and support operations was a sound concept if applied against a specific threat in a specific terrain.

In Afghanistan, the Army attempted to execute stability operations at times without regard to the threat or the terrain. A poignant example of this occurred in Nuristan Province during 2008. The U. S. Army unit responsible for stabilizing Nuristan attempted to apply

¹⁷² Department of the Army, *FM 3-0* (2001), 6-10.

¹⁷³ Adams, *The Army After Next*, 178.

¹⁷⁴ Ricks, *Fiasco*, 337-338.

¹⁷⁵ Peter W. Chiarelli and Patrick R. Michaelis, "Winning the Peace: The Requirement for Full-Spectrum Operations," *Military Review* 85, no. 4 (July-August 2005): 9-11; Donald P. Wright and Timothy R. Rease, *On Point II: Transition to the New Campaign: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom May 2003 – January 2005* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 392.

counterinsurgency tactics throughout its area of operations. In some local areas, this approach worked. In others, it failed. The Waygal Valley, the site of the infamous Wanat engagement, was one place where this approach failed. A U. S. Army after-action report cited several reasons for this failure. Prominent among these conclusions was a misunderstanding of the capabilities and intentions of the enemy particular to the Waygal Valley.¹⁷⁶ Although a local snapshot of operations in Afghanistan, the Wanat example highlights the same problems with the full-spectrum operating concept encountered in Iraq. The concept simply does not account in any specificity the capabilities or intentions of any real-world threat in the terrain in which conflict likely will occur with that threat.

Full Spectrum Operations: A Concept in a Vacuum

As stated before, Full Spectrum Operations returned the Army to its 1960s-era operating concept of Flexible Response, absent the context of the Cold War. Both the 1962 and 1968 editions of *FM 100-5* articulated how Army operations would mitigate the risk posed by Soviet conventional and unconventional capability in Western Europe. It also accounted for the Soviet intention to further its strategic aims outside the European theater. The problem with Flexible Response during Vietnam was that some Army leaders did not follow the doctrine, and the Army as a whole failed to adapt the doctrine to the particular circumstances of threat capability, threat intent, and geography of Southeast Asia. The Army failed in its most basic judgment of warfare in Vietnam because it fought the war it wanted to have, not the one it had in reality.¹⁷⁷ Full Spectrum Operations also fails in this judgment, but to a different degree.

¹⁷⁶ U. S. Army Combat Studies Institute, *Wanat: Combat Action in Afghanistan, 2008* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U. S. Army Combat Studies Institute Press, 2010), 223-224.

¹⁷⁷ von Clausewitz, *On War*, 88.

Contrasting Full Spectrum Operations to the example of Soviet deep operations highlights the degree of failure inherent in the current Army operating concept. Soviet deep operations evaluated the security environment of the 1920s and 1930s to determine the threats that had the greatest capability and intention to counter Soviet aims. It also determined the effects geography would have on the employment military capability by both the threats and by its own forces. Full Spectrum Operations accounts for neither of these assessments. It takes a one-size-fits-all approach to mitigating the risk posed by general categories of threats present in the security environment, without regard to any real-world factor. It is a true concept in a vacuum. This approach itself creates risk to national strategic aims.

The inherent risk in the full-spectrum operating concept stemmed, in part, from the spectrum of conflict. The full-spectrum concept approached peace and war as a continuum where only the magnitude of violence changed the state of the environment, just as earlier doctrine had during the Cold War. Miscalculating where a threat lay upon that spectrum would risk mission accomplishment and the forces involved while a reassessment would determine the exact nature of the enemy. To be useful, the spectrum of conflict must account for threat intentions in addition to threat capability, in the form of the magnitude of violence. Only a combination of severity and likelihood would facilitate risk management in any method of operating concept development.

Another source of risk is the process the Army and the Department of Defense use to develop operating concepts. As described earlier, some historical operating concepts used a threat-based method to develop successful wartime operating concepts. Instead, the Army today uses a capabilities-based method to develop its operating concept. This method does account for

terrain in the real world. However, it does not account for a real, identified military threat to U. S. strategic aims.¹⁷⁸ This is problematic.

A potential adversary likely will construct its force based on its analysis of primary threats, friendly and enemy national aims and will, and the terrain in which it likely will fight. As seen with the Soviet example of deep operations, this analysis led to a doctrine from which the Soviet Army developed organizations, training, and materiel. In other words, adversaries use threat-based methods to develop operating concepts based on real threats in real terrain. The Army's abandonment of threat-based methods now precludes the science of operating concept development. There is no science because there is no reflection of real military threats with which to compare to existing Army capabilities.

Recommendations

There are several corrective actions to address aspects of the problems inherent with Full Spectrum Operations as an operating concept. First, both the Army and the Department of Defense should take a more realistic view of the security environment and abandon the virtual world in which they develop operating concepts. The *Joint Operating Environment* may be useful for experimentation to foresee new threats, but it is not an adequate method to support concept development. The tried-and-true method is threat-based, the same method the Soviet Union used in the 1920s and the 1930s. That concept was tried-and-true because the Soviet Union properly performed the primary judgment Carl von Clausewitz called for in *On War*: to determine the nature of the war.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, *TRADOC Regulation 71-4, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command Standard Scenarios for Capability Developments* (Fort Monroe, VA: U. S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, 2008), 10-12.

¹⁷⁹ von Clausewitz, *On War*, 88.

Fortunately, both the Department of Defense and the U. S. Army have an adequate model with which to evaluate the global security environment. The typology of traditional, irregular, catastrophic, and disruptive threats introduced in the 2005 *National Defense Strategy* and included in the 2008 and 2011 editions of *FM 3-0* would be a useful tool. However, this typology is helpful only if used to evaluate the real-world capabilities of actors in the security environment and to assess the severity and likelihood of risk they pose to U. S. strategic aims. This evaluation will reveal what actors pose the most likely and most dangerous threats to U. S. national security with which to focus the development of an operating concept. It also will reveal the likely geographic areas in which the U. S. may employ its military forces. Then, and only then, will an operating concept mitigate the risk posed by threats operating in the real world. This would permit the U. S. Army to judge the nature of today's security environment.

The second corrective action would revise the pantheon of U. S. Army doctrine that exists today to support the mutual understanding the operating concept throughout the Army. This would require the Army to publish a capstone operations manual that describes its operating concept in detail. This manual also would describe the employment of that concept against the most likely and most dangerous threat identified in the security environment. The 1986 edition of *FM 100-5* was an example of this type of capstone document. This is not to say that the Army should return to AirLand Battle. It is to say that the Army best articulated its operating concept in doctrine when its operating concept was AirLand Battle.

In addition to a capstone operations manual, the Army should develop a series of how-to-fight manuals as supplements. These manuals would describe the application of the operating concept against threats and in terrain other than the most likely and most dangerous. Most important in these manuals would be an assessment of operational risk that identified the shortcomings inherent to the operating concept in those unique conditions. Specifically, this assessment would include the effects of the conditions upon organization, training, materiel,

leadership and education, and personnel. It also would include recommended tactics, techniques, and procedures to mitigate those risks.

Finally, this discussion of operating concepts requires a warning regarding means and ends. In the 1980s and 1990s, the Army subscribed to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine, as discussed above. Secretary of Defense Weinberger and General Powell developed that doctrine specifically to prevent the use of military force to achieve ill-defined strategic aims. The danger in that doctrine is that the Department of Defense could chose the exact conditions in which it wanted to employ military forces, rather than selflessly support national strategy. That would be counter to accepted U. S. Army service culture.¹⁸⁰ It also violates the primary judgment of determining the nature of war, as described by Carl von Clausewitz in *On War*.¹⁸¹ This precludes simply adopting another operating concept from the Army's past simply because that concept describes the type of war the Army would prefer to fight.

These few recommendations would return some measure of prudence to the Army's operating concept. They would help to overcome the inadequacies of today's concept by accounting for the specific nature of the security environment and the threats within it that pose a risk to national strategic aims. Simply returning to the past is not enough. The Army tied past concepts specifically to the threats it designed them to mitigate. Adopting any past concept wholesale, therefore, is as artificial a method of concept development as the Army's current method. Consequently, a new operating concept is in order, one that accounts for this nature and explicitly describes these threats. Only then will the Army have an operating concept adequate to mitigate the risk posed by the challenges it will face in the years to come.

¹⁸⁰ Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 33-34.

¹⁸¹ von Clausewitz, *On War*, 88.

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