

Some Doctrinal Questions for the United States Army

William S. Lind

In a US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Historical Monograph Series publication titled "From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine 1973-1982 (June 1984)," author John L. Romjue describes William S. Lind, then a legislative aide to Senator Gary Hart, as "an early dissenting voice" to the "active defense" doctrine in the July 1976 US Army Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Lind's article below was received by Military Review on 7 July 1976. In October 1976, Armed Forces Journal ran an article by a "John Patrick" titled "Banned At Fort Monroe, Or The Article The Army Doesn't Want You To Read" along with a non-attributed response by TRADOC. Patrick's article took TRADOC to task concerning alleged attempts to suppress Lind's article. The published TRADOC response notes that: "On 19 July, a member of the staff and faculty, USACGSC [US Army Command and General Staff College], discussed publication of Lind's article in Military Review with TRADOC Commander General William E. DePuy. General DePuy's guidance was that it would not serve any useful purpose to have the article published in the Military Review in advance of the FM's distribution to the field." Military Review records show that Lind was sent a check for \$50 in December 1976, a practice common at the time, and the article was printed in the March 1977 edition. General Donn A. Starry, generally considered the father of AirLand Battle doctrine, would not assume command of TRADOC until July 1977, and the new FM 100-5 espousing AirLand Battle would not be issued until August 1982. Although Lind's criticisms were largely discounted by Romjue in his monograph, most, if not all, were addressed and rectified by the revised FM 100-5 of 1982.

Author's Foreword

Following my briefing by General DePuy on February 11, 1976, I wrote "Some Doctrinal Questions for the United States Army" and sent it to TRADOC for response. I received no response from them, so I submitted the piece to the Marine Corps Gazette, which accepted it for publication.

Then, in the early summer of 1976, Military Review telephoned me and said that they would like to publish the article. I explained that it had already been accepted by the Gazette. They argued strongly that they should be allowed to publish it, as it was a critique of Army doctrine. After some discussion, I agreed to see if I could withdraw it from the Gazette, on the condition that Military Review would guarantee me that they would print it. They gave me that guarantee, and the editor of the Gazette graciously allowed me to withdraw the piece from his journal.

Shortly thereafter, I received from Military Review a check for the article, plus a letter stating that they now had the rights to it but that they would not publish it. I returned the check to them, with a letter stating that I would not sell them the rights.

In the fall of 1976, I wrote an article under a pseudonym for Armed Forces Journal with the title (if I remember it correctly) "Banned at Fort Monroe, Or The Article The Army Doesn't Want You To Read." In TRADOC's response they admitted to suppressing my critique of their new Field Manual. If I recall rightly, one of the reasons they gave was that it would cause "confusion" in the Army.

Eventually, toward the end of 1976, Military Review again approached me with a request to publish the article. This time, with their check they sent a letter promising that it would be published. I accepted their offer, and the piece appeared in the March 1977 issue.—
William S. Lind

THE US ARMY currently is engaged in revising many aspects of its doctrine. These revisions reflect major changes in perceptions both of the threat and of army capabilities. The revisions are important because doctrine itself is important.

On 1 July 1976, the Army issued a new version of Field Manual (FM) 100-5, Operations. Because "this manual sets forth the basic concepts of US Army doctrine," it deserves close attention.¹ Four aspects of the doctrine will be examined here:

- "Fight outnumbered and win."
- "Win the first battle."
- "Attrition or maneuver doctrine?"
- "Tactics."

FM 100-5 places great emphasis on the concept of "fight outnumbered and win." Is this a valid concept?

The concept of "fight outnumbered and win" is explained within the context of what is labeled the "new lethality." Drawing on examples and evidence from the 1973 Middle East War, the manual emphasizes the advantages which recent developments in battlefield technology supposedly have given to the defender. These include greater accuracy of new tank guns, equipping infantry with more accurate antitank weapons, the development of precision guided artillery projectiles, the use of precision guided munitions (PGMs) for aircraft in the close-support role and so forth.

Many of these systems have demonstrated their effectiveness on the proving ground, and some have shown their capability on the battlefield. In the October War, there were instances where forces using elements of this new technology conducted successful defenses.

But do these innovations really add up to the revolution that would be required to reverse the balance established in World War II and restore the defensive to supremacy? The connection between the "new lethality" and the superiority of the defense is assumed in FM 100-5 but never is explored systematically. If we do attempt to explore it, we find that perhaps it is not so obvious as the manual suggests.

In the first place, the "new lethality" is merely one part of a much broader spectrum of battlefield technological development. Some elements of this new technology do favor the tactical defense—light infantry antitank weapons are an example. But other elements appear to favor the tactical offense in some situations. The ability to disrupt hostile radio communications effectively is an example of this. In a confrontation between a US-model and a Soviet-model force where:

- The US-model force relies heavily on radio communication to organize the defense in the right place at the right time.

- The Soviet-model force calls for attacking in radio silence.

- The Soviets are doing some interesting work in suppressing and disrupting hostile communications; this technological development would appear to favor a Soviet-model force in an offensive posture.

An example of a neutral technological development, one that would serve offense and defense equally, is air-launched PGMs.

Battlefield technological developments can achieve results only when and if they are deployed. Today, the Soviet Union is ahead of the United States in many respects in the deployment of new technology battlefield systems. The United States leads in air-launched PGMs, but the Soviet Union leads in electronic warfare and in ground-based anti-aircraft systems. A Soviet-model, not a US-model, force was the first to employ the new generation of infantry antitank weapons on a large scale. Even in relation to technologies which have existed for decades, the Soviets have deployed extensive systems where the United States has not; Soviet-model forces are much better equipped than US forces to defend against nuclear, biological and chemical attacks, and almost all Soviet ground forces are mechanized (motorized), yet 9 of the 19 active US divisions (Army and Marine Corps) remain foot infantry.

Moving to the consideration of operations, additional evidence casts doubt on the presumed relationship between new battlefield technology and a new importance for the defensive. An examination of the October War from the Egyptian side shows that two important elements of the new technology—light infantry antitank weapons and effective ground-based anti-aircraft systems, both tactical defenses—were used to make an offensive operation possible. The surface-to-air missile systems and the quad-23mm anti-aircraft gun were given an operational offensive capability by making them mobile; this, in turn, permitted the Egyptians to undertake an offense with adequate protection from the Israeli Air Force. In terms of light infantry antitank weapons, the Egyptians used these weapons (mainly the Sagger and the RPG7) offensively on the operational level by taking offensive action (crossing the canal) which they knew would cause the Israelis to react vigorously, then going to a tactical defense.

The Egyptian practice is pertinent because it provides a concrete example which contradicts a major assumption implicit in FM 100-5: that the new tactical defensive capability supposedly produced by new battlefield technology should result in a doctrine which generally emphasizes and favors defense. FM 100-5 itself makes no effort to distinguish what it sees as a new tactical advantage for the defense from

the possibility that this could enhance the operational offense. This is a sin of omission, not commission, but, coupled with the general implication in FM 100-5 that defensive operations are preferable, it leaves the reader questioning whether the Army understands the lesson taught some centuries ago by Belisarius: that the tactical defense can be combined advantageously with an operational-or strategic-offense.² Should the Soviets decide that the new technology, in fact, has increased greatly the capability of the tactical defense, we can count on them to explore ways of combining that tactical development with offensive operations—as their Egyptian clients did, successfully, in October 1973.

Thus, the FM 100-5 assumption that new technology has strengthened greatly the capability of the defense is incomplete.

There is yet another level on which we can question the concept of “fight outnumbered and win” as advanced by the US Army. The Army explains the origin of this principle as the “new lethality.” Is that really the origin? Or is the real origin in the need to maintain a “can-do” attitude within the Army, particularly in relation to Europe, even in the face of a high probability of defeat?

In most potential theaters, particularly Europe, the opponent has general qualitative equality, combining general numerical superiority with the initiative and with a doctrine which emphasizes concentration of forces. Thus, it is highly probable that we will fight outnumbered. The Army appears to argue that these realities offer no choice but a concept of “fight outnumbered and win.” There is, however, an alternative: a realization that doctrine cannot substitute fully for severe comparative materiel and force structure inadequacies and an admission that, at least in Europe, it is highly probable that we will lose.

Many objections would be raised instantly to an acknowledgment of such an alternative. But would not most of those objections boil down to one: the violation of the “can-do” principle?

From an Army institutional standpoint, many vital interests appear to be dependent on the “can-do” approach. Individual careers are not furthered by suggesting that the Army may not be able to do something. A rejection of “can-do” may be perceived as endangering Army force levels and funding—for example, if we cannot win a conventional/tactical-nuclear war in Europe, should not the defense resources allocated to that task be reassigned, perhaps to another service? Many civilian policymakers might be displeased by a statement that an assigned task is impossible. Foreign policy could be disrupted, and the Army could take the blame for the resultant unpleasantness.

In addition, “can-do” has a certain justification as a tool for keeping up morale. An army which believes it has no chance of success may not fight well even in those cases where it could succeed.

On the other hand, what risks are run by adopting a “can-do” position via a “fight outnumbered and win” doctrine if, in fact, it is unlikely that we can fight outnumbered and win? Few would argue that either the Army or the nation were well-served by the “can-do” attitude in Vietnam. A lesson of military history is that doctrines and promises are put to the test eventually. The results of failing the test are highly painful; arguably, they are more painful than the results of saying you cannot do something before the incapability is demonstrated.

Institutional courage would be required if the fundamental “can-do” attitude were to be reassessed, especially in relation to Europe. But which is genuine progress: adopting a concept of “fight outnumbered and win” where it appears unlikely that we can fight outnumbered successfully or acknowledging the actual situation and facing a possible redesign of our military force posture and possibly our diplomatic commitments?

Another concept expounded in FM 100-5 is “win the first battle.” This concept also is worthy of thorough examination. As a desire, it is axiomatic; few commanders will seek to lose any battle. However, if we penetrate behind the attractiveness of the slogan, does “win the first battle” stand up under examination as a valid concept?

The answer to that question is largely a product of the answer to two more specific questions:

- Can we assume that winning the first battle means that there will not be a second battle?
- If there is a second battle, will the concentration of our efforts on winning the first battle help us to win the second, or could it hinder us?

Working from the same basis as FM 100-5—a confrontation in Central Europe—we see that the opponent is organized in an echelon system. Soviet doctrine anticipates that the first echelon may be “defeated” in that it may suffer heavy attrition. But Soviet forces are prepared to absorb this attrition and still have adequate forces, with the commitment of the follow-on echelons, to compel a second and subsequent battles. It does not appear likely that winning the first battle means that subsequent battles can be avoided.

If there is a second battle, where does the concept “win the first battle” place us in regard to that battle? Simply posing the question creates some embarrassment in that it appears little attention has been devoted to this matter. When this question was posed by the

author during a US Army Training and Doctrine Command briefing, the response was, "It is something of a Chinese fire drill at that point."

We will examine some of the recommended tactics which relate to this problem. In general terms, however, concentration on winning the first battle would appear to impact negatively on preparing for subsequent battles. In some circumstances, the concentration of all efforts on winning the first battle will leave forces deployed in the wrong places for meeting a second thrust. This will depend on relative positioning, losses, timing and so forth. However, it appears impossible to determine conceptually when concentrating on winning the first battle will impact negatively and when it will not. If the concept cannot or does not take that into account, we must call the concept itself into question as a doctrinal point.

The problem of how emphasizing winning the first battle impacts on preparing for the next battle takes on the greatest significance if we again refer to Soviet doctrine. Soviet doctrine emphasizes the organization of the attacking force into several echelons. The Soviets recognize that the first echelon may be decimated—that is, that the first battle may be lost—but that subsequent echelons may succeed. In other words, Soviet doctrine emphasizes winning the *second* (or following) battle and provides for losing the first. How does this interface with the Army's proposed doctrine which emphasizes winning the first battle and appears to devote little attention to preparing for following battles?

Doctrine for mechanized and armored forces may be divided into two basic types which could be characterized as the attrition/firepower and the maneuver doctrines. The Germans developed the maneuver doctrine before and during World War II; the Soviets in many ways have adopted it. Which doctrine has the US Army adopted?

Both doctrines employ fire and maneuver. However, in the attrition/firepower doctrine, maneuver is primarily for the purpose of bringing firepower to bear on the opponent to cause attrition. The objective of military action is the physical reduction of the opposing force. In the maneuver doctrine, maneuver is the ultimate tactical, operational and strategic goal while firepower is used primarily to create opportunities for maneuver. The primary objective is to break the spirit and will of the opposing high command by creating unexpected and unfavorable operational or strategic situations, not to kill enemy troops or destroy enemy equipment.

American doctrine traditionally has been an attrition/firepower doctrine. If we examine the September 1968 version of FM 100-5, which was official US Army doctrine until 1 July 1976, we note, for example, in the

section, "Maneuver in the Offensive," "In offensive operations, attacking forces are maneuvered to gain an advantage over the enemy, to close with him, and to destroy him." The entire section where one would expect to find an emphasis on maneuver as a weapon in itself emphasizes the physical destruction of the opposing force. The purpose of maneuver is merely to determine when and from where firepower will be brought to bear to cause the attrition.

The new FM 100-5 indicates a continued adherence to the firepower/attrition doctrine. The second section, "Modern Weapons on the Modern Battlefield," indicates this clearly. The battlefield is presented as almost a mathematical diagram of overlapping ranges, rates of fire and kill probabilities. The first capability of the tank to be discussed is not its mobility but, rather, its firepower. Of the five pages devoted to tanks, three dwell on firepower; mobility shares the last page with protection and with a firepower-oriented recapitulation. At no time in this discussion of the "modern battlefield" is the use of maneuver as a weapon in itself even mentioned.

This chapter sets the tone for the rest of FM 100-5. If we turn to Chapter 3, we note under "Battlefield Dynamics" that the advantages assigned to the defender are all in terms of applying or avoiding firepower while the attacker is portrayed at a disadvantage because "the weapons of the attacker are not as effective as the weapons of the defender, and his forces are more vulnerable." The attacker's advantage of being able to use his mobility to by-pass the defender or to strike his flank or rear is not mentioned. When mobility finally is addressed, it is as a means for concentrating firepower. When the offense is discussed, the first purpose of the offense is given as "destroy enemy forces"; "destroy his [the enemy's] will to continue the battle" is tacked on the end of purpose number three, just slightly above deception and diversion as a main objective.

At times, FM 100-5 does approach discussing the use of mobility in terms of a maneuver doctrine. The section, "Offense: Shock Effect," notes the paralytic effect of attacks in depth. The sections, "Shock, Overwhelm and Destroy the Enemy" and "Attack the Enemy Rear," again approach an appreciation of maneuver doctrine although, as in "Offense: Shock Effect," the implication remains that the objective is the physical destruction of the enemy rather than breaking his mind and will. The same is true of the section, "Pursuit."

At best, a few sections approach an understanding of a maneuver, as opposed to an attrition/firepower doctrine. These sections appear to stand in isolation, their maneuver implications neither spelled out nor integrated with the overall doctrine. In general, the

doctrine expressed in FM 100-5 is as it was stated in the French doctrinal manuals of 1940, “of the two elements, fire and movement, fire is predominant.”³

If the Army is correct that the new technology for the battlefield has altered greatly the relationship between offense and defense in favor of the latter, then this renewed emphasis on a firepower/attrition doctrine may be justified. However, as already noted, that conclusion may be open to question. In light of the possibility that the battlefield situation has not altered significantly in favor of the defender, a review of the history and theory of the maneuver doctrine may be useful. The fact that the Soviet Union generally adheres to this doctrine is alone enough to cause us to wish to know what it is and potentially to evaluate it as an alternative.

J.F.C. Fuller was the first important advocate of the maneuver doctrine. He realized as early as World War I that the key to employing mechanized forces to best advantage was to emphasize the use of mobility:

*During [World War I] ... the tank had been used as a self-propelled armored gun ... had the war lasted another year, it would have become apparent that in themselves, tanks ... were not weapons, but instead vehicles ... their dominant characteristics were means of movement.*⁴

More specifically, Fuller:

*... saw the ultimate connection between will and action; that action without will lost coordination; that without a directing brain, an army is reduced to a mob. Then it became fully apparent to him [Fuller] that by means of the tank a new tactic could be evolved, which would enable a comparatively small tank army to fight battles like Issas and Arbela over again. What was their tactical secret? It was that while Alexander's Phalanx held the Persian battlebody in a clinch, he and his companion cavalry struck at the enemy's will, concentrated as it was in the person of Darius. Once this will was paralyzed, the body became inarticulate.*⁵

The Germans picked up this theory from Fuller via Guderian and embodied it in the panzer concept of warfare—the concept now the basis of Soviet Army doctrine. Even before Guderian, General Hans von Seeckt:

*... gave the Reichswehr a gospel of mobility ... in the exaltation of maneuver, the post-war [World War I] German manuals offered a striking contrast with those of the French Army.*⁶

General Heinz Guderian notes that:

*[The French] doctrine was the result of lessons that the French had learned from the First World War, their experience of positional warfare, of the high value they attached to firepower, and of their underestimation of movement. These French strategic and tactical principles ... [were] the exact contrary of my own theories....*⁷

The clash in 1940 between the German Army, with its maneuver doctrine, and the French Army, with a firepower doctrine, was resolved decisively in favor of the former.

Two points relating to the German adoption and employment of the maneuver doctrine are particularly relevant to any consideration of the US situation today. The first is that the German adoption of a maneuver doctrine was based on having quantitatively inferior forces. The Polish, French and British Armies combined were stronger numerically than the German Army. The Soviets plus the other allied forces were numerically superior in 1941. The Germans—or at least those Germans who understood and pressed for a maneuver doctrine, such as Guderian—realized that a maneuver doctrine applies a psychological multiplier to the forces employing it in that the spirit and will of the opposing high command may be broken by an unexpected action by a comparatively small force. Guderian's campaign in France was a brilliant example of this; his force, which completely shattered the plan and the nerve of the allied high command by the daring advance through the Ardennes to the channel, rested on only three divisions. The bulk of the decisive fighting in the French campaign was done by 10 panzer divisions. This success demonstrated that a maneuver doctrine, particularly when combined with its natural partner, an indirect approach, constitutes a form of jujitsu; balance can be substituted for brute force. As such, it is an interesting doctrine for a numerically inferior force. Some military authorities believe that Germany could have beaten the Soviet Union had the maneuver doctrine not been abandoned after 1941 on Hitler's orders in favor of a policy of holding ground.

The Germans also discovered as early as the Polish campaign that a maneuver doctrine reduces casualties. Because the object is not the physical destruction of the opponent's men and equipment but, rather, the destruction of his mental cohesion and will, a maneuver doctrine permits the offensive forces to avoid rather than seek tactical engagements. Not only were German casualties light in the Polish campaign, but, more indicatively, both German and allied casualties were rather small in the French campaign. Even in Russia, when the war was one of maneuver in 1941, German casualties were at an acceptable level. The comparatively large number of Russians lost as prisoners to the Germans in 1941 further attested to the ability of a maneuver doctrine to destroy an enemy's will rather than his bodies.

Again, it is possible that the current capability of the defender in terms of firepower is such that, if employed in sufficient mass and in such manner that

the maneuver-oriented force cannot by-pass the main strength of the defender, the firepower/attrition doctrine is valid. This author would wish only to suggest caution in making that assumption. As the Battle of Kursk demonstrated, World War II firepower also was sufficient to defeat an attacking armored force which chose to attack the defender head on. However, what happened at Kursk, and on the Eastern Front generally after 1941 on the German side, was not the defeat of the maneuver doctrine but, rather, its abandonment by those whom it had best served. On Hitler's orders, the desires of the general staff to continue a maneuver war, where holding of territory is not of prime importance, were overridden. Kursk is a classic example, not of the defeat of the maneuver doctrine, but of the price which can be paid for ignoring it.

Whereas Kursk demonstrated that World War II firepower could halt a head-on attack by an armored force, the Israeli counteroffensive across the Suez Canal in the October War may be seen as a successful modern application of the maneuver doctrine. Much stress has been placed on the supposed lessons of that war in terms of the increased firepower of the defender. However, it could be argued that another lesson of that conflict is the continued viability of the "blitzkrieg," *properly understood* as the use of mobility to create unexpected situations for the opponent. The Israeli thrust across the canal by armored and mechanized forces was the decisive military action in the Suez campaign. It was a classic example of the employment of a maneuver doctrine in that it completely surprised the Egyptians and upset their entire plan. It is reasonable to think that, had great-power intervention not occurred, it would have enabled the Israelis to achieve their war aim of restoring the Suez Canal as the cease-fire line.

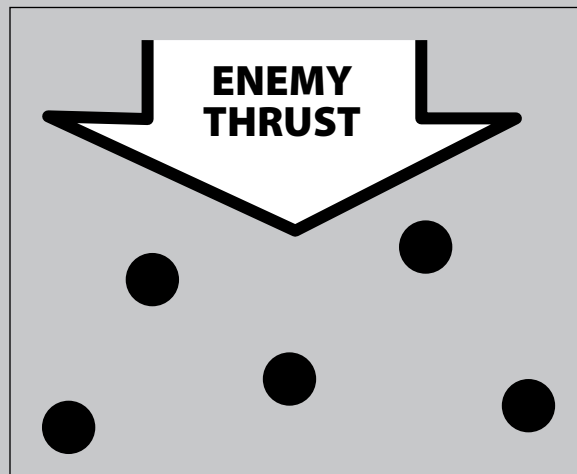
Thus, the question can at least be posed to the US Army of whether it is advisable to explore the potential of a maneuver doctrine and to justify explicitly the continued adherence to a firepower/attrition doctrine.

The Army has developed a tactical procedure for "winning the first battle"—that is, for meeting the initial enemy thrust. It is designed as a procedure for a successful defensive battle against a Soviet-model attack.

This procedure is not described fully in FM 100-5; however, individual sections in FM 100-5 hint at it. The section, "Defense: Main Battle Area," suggests that:

The defender must reinforce rapidly and continuously until he has concentrated an adequate defensive force.... armored and mechanized elements must be set in motion toward battle positions... . Army division

commanders must be prepared ... to concentrate up to 6 or 8 heavily supported maneuver battalions in such narrow sectors, accepting risks on the flanks.

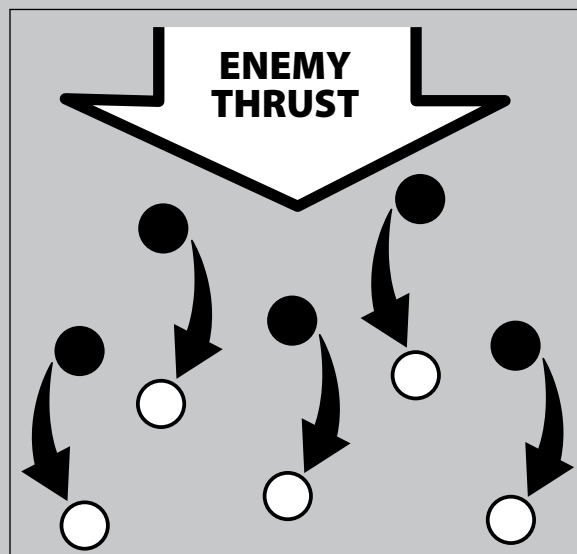


The full scope of the Army's defensive procedure was shown to the author in a briefing at the US Army Training and Doctrine Command by General William E. DePuy on 11 February 1976. The briefing was organized around three diagrams, each showing a different aspect of the overall procedure:

- The first diagram illustrated the basic defensive position.

The situation described a series of battle positions in mutual support, each having a range and direction of fire overlapping and supporting that of its neighbor.

- The second diagram illustrated what might best be described as a scheme of "bounding overwatch" withdrawals.



The concept illustrated a rolling defense designed to avoid the overrunning and destruction of the defenders through a series of well-timed withdrawals to prepared secondary defensive positions. The process is not intended to be single-step; the withdrawals are to be carried out as many times as necessary, preserving the defenders while inflicting sufficient attrition on the attackers to force the eventual cessation of the attack.

- The third diagram illustrated the maneuver of the division to form the above defensive system, once the main avenue of attack is identified.

The procedure described is that of reinforcing laterally with on-line battalions from the flanks as opposed to falling back on defense lines in the rear or placing primary reliance on reserves.

A comparison of the briefing material with FM 100-5 will show that it is consistent. The briefing developed and clarified the concepts in FM 100-5.

The material from FM 100-5 plus the briefing material illustrates a clear, coherent and consistent defensive doctrine. Does it constitute doctrinal progress?

On the most basic level (Diagram 1), it appears to progress. Current doctrine calls for an essentially linear defense which is unlikely to be effective against a mechanized attacking force. The proposed new approach of a defense in depth composed of interlocking strongpoints is the system developed by the Germans and used by both the Germans and the Soviets during World War II. When correctly organized and adequately manned, it proved an effective defense as such battles as Kursk demonstrated.

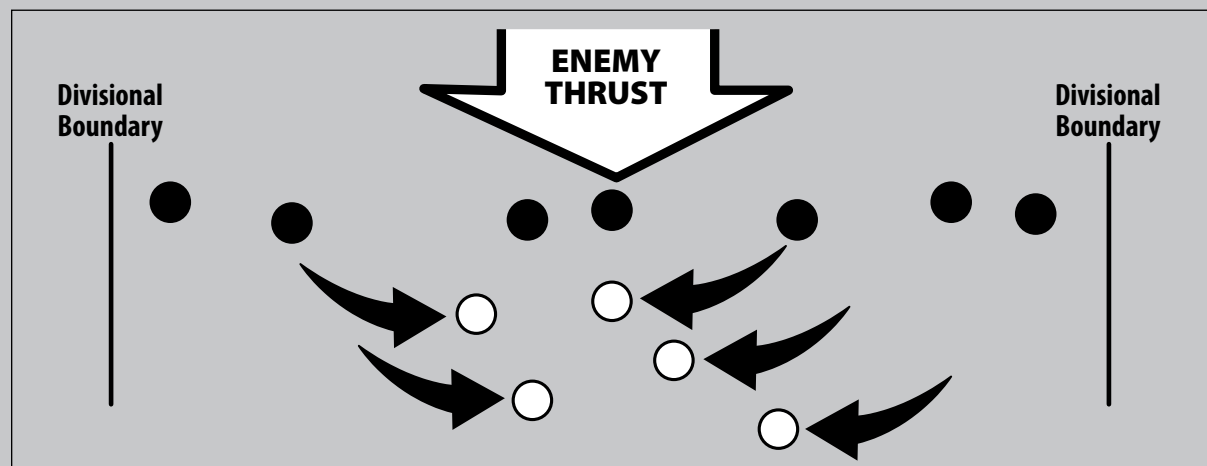
In German-Soviet usage, this defense was organized in depth, often in great depth. However, as Diagram 2 illustrates, that is not called for by US Army doctrine. Instead, the initial defensive position will be relatively shallow. Depth, according to the doctrine, will be obtained by a process of bounding Overwatch

withdrawals where those manning each defensive point withdraw, under the supporting fire of the other strongpoints, just before being overrun. Fall-back defensive points are to be prepared in advance.

Some serious questions can be raised regarding this proposal. In terms of the unit engaged, it calls for a precisely choreographed series of what is considered universally the most difficult tactical operation: the withdrawal. What is, in fact, the chance that the defenders of an individual strongpoint can schedule their withdrawal so as to avoid being overrun, yet not withdraw so early as to render their defensive action ineffective?

The complexity inherent in such a withdrawal doctrine would be enhanced on the European battlefield by enemy-induced problems. Command and control of such a process is difficult under the best of circumstances. In an environment where the enemy possesses superior electronic warfare capability, the probable disruption of friendly communications would appear to make command and control obstacles a telling objection to the entire scheme. As Field Marshal von Hindenburg remarked after inspecting the German heavy cavalry in the early 1930s, "In war, only that which is simple succeeds. What I see here is not simple."

We also must ask ourselves, what do we have if we succeed in implementing the Army's plan on this level? We appear to have something very close to the delaying defense doctrine espoused by the *Reichswehr* in the 1920s. The *Reichswehr* doctrine was a product of desperation; with 100,000 men, no tanks and no aircraft, the *Reichswehr* adopted a doctrine designed to show its good intentions as it was defeated. Is the Army proposal an equivalent? At least in terms of Europe, it may be argued that the situation is not unlike that faced by the *Reichswehr* in terms of



NATO's chances of success. But, even if that is the case, do we make progress by adopting a doctrine of endless withdrawal, a doctrine of face-saving defeat? This brings us back to the "can-do" issue discussed earlier. Would we not serve ourselves better by saying the impossible is impossible rather than adopting the *Reichswehr* approach? Or should we perhaps attempt what Guderian finally did in relation to the *Reichswehr's* defensive doctrine: acknowledge that preparing to lose a war honorably is a useless pastime, and explore fundamentally new approaches such as a maneuver doctrine? At the least, should we not avoid generalizing from what may be a hopeless situation in Europe, and saddling ourselves worldwide with a doctrine of retreat?

If we look at Diagram 3, illustrating the divisional defense, we see some of the same command and control problems which we discussed in relation to Diagram 2. The assumption behind the Army's approach is that modern battlefield mobility permits heavy reliance on reinforcing the main battle position with units drawn from the flanks. In terms of theoretical calculations of mobility rates, this may be true. But will it be true under actual battlefield conditions? It will require superior battlefield intelligence to know where and when to move. Given the opponent's emphasis on surprise and deception, and his capabilities of achieving both, what is the chance that we will have that intelligence, "having" meaning not just the collection of data bits but the entire intelligence process through the decision to act on the intelligence? How accurately can we discern an enemy commander's intentions? As the Czechoslovakian incident in 1968 and the 1973 October War indicate, the intelligence process defined this way is capable of error.

Heavy reliance on using flanking forces as reinforcements also assumes that, once the intelligence is gathered and acted upon correctly, the command and control system will permit calling the forces in from the flanks. Will the opponent permit this? Could he, with minimal forces in an economy-of-force role, put pressure or threat of pressure on outlying battalions sufficient to cause the division or brigade commander to delay movement past the critical point? After all, our own doctrine emphasizes the use of economy-of-force units such as armored cavalry to force the advancing enemy to deploy. Could not the Soviets use similar units to force our defending force to remain deployed? In the event it does not prove possible to call the forces in from the flank, and to do so in time to meet the opposing threat, the Army's approach produces a linear defense. Such a defense would have little or no chance of stopping an opposing thrust by mechanized forces.

What if the original intelligence estimates are incorrect or the opponent shifts his axis of advance and the defender concentrates, in line with Army doctrine, in the wrong place? FM 100-5 deals with this problem in one sentence:

If he [the division commander] makes a mistake and starts to concentrate at the wrong place, he can counter-march his mobile elements quickly and rectify the error.

Does this not assume greatly superior mobility on the part of the defender? Given the rate of advance called for in Soviet doctrine, what is the chance the defender will have time to carry out this maneuver? The same section in FM 100-5 notes that this maneuver is absolutely dependent on "continuous, reliable, secure communications."⁸ What is the chance US forces will have dependable communications facing a Soviet opponent?

Finally, FM 100-5 appears to advocate a linear defense in the main battle area. The 15 December 1975 draft stated, "The deeper the area, the easier the defense." In the final (1 July 1976) version, that sentence is deleted. Instead, it states:

... the farther forward the battle can be fought, the better... . If the active defense can maintain coherence along the line of the FEBA [forward edge of the battle area] or in the tactical zone just behind it ... the more successful the total defense will be.

This would appear to indicate a change of thinking by the Army, a change toward what might be seen as a Maginot mentality. Is the Army abandoning a linear defense on the small unit level only to adhere to it all the more strongly on a higher tactical level? As Guderian, among others with experience, warned, a forward, linear defense is the least advantageous posture when facing a Soviet-style attack. If this apparent advocacy of a linear defense does signal a change of thinking by the Army, as the contrast with the 15 December draft indicates, it should be explained and justified. The US Army consulted with the Bundeswehr in the interval between the draft and the final edition, which suggests that the change may be due to German demands for emphasis on forward defense. Does the change possibly constitute the sacrifice of a militarily correct principle, that depth is desirable in the defense, to a political requirement?

FM 100-5 also fails to clarify what is "active" in a forward defense along the FEBA. The subsequent paragraph states, "Nonetheless, the defense must be elastic-not brittle." But it fails to explain what should be elastic and simply moves on, within the same paragraph, to discuss the need to destroy enemy armor. Is heavy reliance on antitank systems supposed to constitute elasticity and an "active" defense? If so, how; and, if not, what is the active element in this defense? Unfortunately, a linear defense cannot be

made an active defense by incorporating the adjective “active” into the field manual.

Thus, if we examine the Army’s tactics for the defense—and FM 100-5 speaks mostly of the defense—we see a number of problems relating to specific points. What of the overall approach? In general terms, we appear to see a structured defense suggestive, in both strengths and weaknesses, of the bowmen of Agincourt. As the French knights discovered, the frontal defensive capability of the English bowmen was prodigious; the attrition of the attacking armor was so severe as to be decisive.

The critical deficiency of the English bowmen was that, while they were eminently capable of winning the first battle, they could not move. The same appears true of the overall Army defense:

[The captain] must see to it that each weapon is sited to ... minimize its vulnerability to counterfire or suppressive fire. His fighting vehicles must be covered and concealed, or at least be hull down... . The terrain must be exploited and reinforced when necessary [or desirable] with mines and obstacles... .

The defense is to be forward and along the line of the FEBA. How does this doctrine interface with the Soviet doctrine of emphasizing alternate axes of advance, of by-passing strongpoints, of encirclement and pocketing? Apparently, just as the English bowmen interfaced with the French once the French learned to by-pass the bowmen; and the French eventually won that war.

In summary, it appears that there are serious questions which can be raised about the new doctrine. Some of these questions suggest that no examination of the possibility of reform is being undertaken in key areas such as the “can-do” mentality and the adherence to an attrition/firepower rather than a maneuver doctrine. Other questions can be raised as to whether new assumptions, such as that the new battlefield technology works solely to the advantage of the defender, are fully justified. Still others suggest that the genuine change in some areas may be in the wrong direction; the proposed doctrine of “win the first battle” is a case in point. These questions must raise a serious doubt as to whether FM 100-5 and the basic doctrinal outlook FM 100-5 represents constitute doctrinal progress. **MR**

NOTES

1. Field Manual 100-5, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office [GPO], July 1976), i. FM 100-5 was prepared by the US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).
2. *Ibid.* See for example, p 4-2, and the section on “Counterattack in the Defense,” 5-14.
3. B.H. Liddell Hart, *The German Generals Talk*, William Morrow & Co., Inc., NY, 1948, 14.
4. J.F.C. Fuller, *Armament and History*, Charles Scribner’s Sons, NY, 1945, 143.

5. J.F.C. Fuller, *The Conduct of War, 1789 to 1961*, Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, Eng., 1961, 242-43.
6. Liddell Hart, *op.cit.*, 14.
7. Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader*, Ballantine Books, Inc., NY, 1967, 73.
8. Field Manual 100-5, *op.cit.*, compare 3-5: “To concentrate in time also requires continuous, instant communications.” Despite this acknowledgment of the criticality of such communication, operational intelligence gets only third out of four priorities on the communications network, according to FM 100-5, 3-16.

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