

Gen. Ulysses Grant watches as the Army of the Potomac crosses the James River in Virginia in the spring of 1864. Grant, like Gens. Douglas MacArthur and George Washington, used principles of mobility, defensive maneuver, and deception in retreat to preserve combat power and regain the initiative. *Grant's Army Crossing the James River* by Benjamin West, 1897, halftone photomechanical print, 15 x 20 cm. (Image courtesy of the New York Public Library Digital Collections)

Rethinking Retreat

Retrograde Operations in the Indo-Pacific

Maj. Patrick Smith, U.S. Army

Hovering above the inky sheen of the surface, a grizzled figure paces on a sandy eminence beholding the scene below. Silhouetted against the shadowy pines, dark blue husks drift alongside the spans. Like infernal alligators, the iron-clad turrets abruptly spurt reddish-white smoke into the

darkness. The faint clatter of wagons ambling across rickety planks mingle with hushed voices, and the steady beat and jangle of boots and baggage lurch toward the far bank. Sporadic glints of metal in moonlight glimmer like scales of a long, black serpent slinking across the pontoon bridge. The

Army of the Potomac was in motion. Back on the hill, a red cigar ember glares above the winding serpent, revealing the visage of Ulysses Grant. The movement is no small miracle, and the result has yet to bear fruit. To the west, Grant discerns men of Maj. Gen. Gouverneur Warren's corps milling about their earthen defenses, shielding the army's aquatic passage. To the north, flickering enemy campfires stretch like stars for miles. All was still. They had taken the bait. He puffed another sigh of smokey relief.

The word “retreat” is anathema to American military thinking.¹ Joint Publication 3-0, *Operations*, uses a tactical euphemism for the word—“retrograde”—only once. Marine Corps Publication 1, *Warfighting*, doesn't use it all. The spirit of the offensive has defined American military doctrine since 1945. Rightfully so. Relentless maneuver would prevail against ponderous, continental adversaries.² However, a new paradigm awaits us in the Pacific. Fading advantages in firepower, distributed forces, and the growing operational reach of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) require an expansion of operational thought. The joint force must consider methods of retrograde to shape advantages in time, space, and force. Withdrawals, delays, and retirements of joint forces are not without historical precedent. Gens. Douglas MacArthur, George Washington, and Ulysses Grant used principles of mobility, defensive maneuver, and deception in retreat to preserve combat power and regain the initiative. We can look to their example as beacons to chart an informed operational approach in the Indo-Pacific.

Why Retrograde? Theater Considerations

U.S. force posture in the western Pacific is fraught with challenges. The first is the tyranny of distance. Small constellations of U.S. elements—ashore and afloat—encircle the looming mass of mainland China. Operating on tenuous exterior lines, they are vulnerable to defeat in detail by a prodigious array of standoff munitions or blockade. American forward elements operate within the weapons engagement zones for strategic deterrence, but their tactical value evaporates “once the region becomes contested.”³ As one Marine officer confesses, “There is no combined joint theater sustainment plan designed to sustain forces inside the weapons

engagement zone in a contested environment.” Forward elements are too fragile to mutually support one another and too distant for rapid replenishment from theater sustainment hubs.

Second are coalition considerations. Regional partners can quickly about-face on support to U.S. forces, making presence in some locales untenable. States that nominally support American forces are not assembled into a unitary defense architecture with Article 5 contingencies. In its annual index of military strength, the Heritage Foundation cautions that “the complicated nature of intra-Asian relations means that the U.S. cannot count on support” from its erstwhile Pacific partners.⁴ Recent polls even suggest that Association of Southeast Asian Nations states have grown more dynamic in a drift toward China.⁵ Lukewarm political support also undermines partner “friend-shoring,” whereby select nations ramp up surge capacity to offset the catch-up time for American industrial largesse.

This presents a third issue: industry and national will. At the nuts-and-bolts level, “factory to the front” pipelines have corroded with few well-oiled industry exceptions.⁶ But even the “Big Five” defense contractors are better calibrated to providing boutique platforms than provisioning national-level war.⁷ American patriotic fervor, too, has oxidized in recent years. The all-volunteer force remains the core of American might unless masses of eligible citizens are pressed into uniform.

There is simply no surge capacity for American forces on the fringes of the Pacific. Neither beans nor bullets nor replacements are primed for contingency. Nor will the PLA permit U.S. forces to methodically mass soldiers and materiel unmolested and seize the initiative through overwhelming offensive. Experts warn the PLA will conduct a rapid “surprise offensive” to prevent this eventuality.⁸ Given this

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“Rainbow” plans committed the United States to a “barrier” force posture in the event of war with Japan.⁹ Garrisons in the Philippines, Malaya, Borneo, and the eastern Pacific would hold until the Navy—having obliterated the Japanese fleet en route—arrived to reinforce the defenders. Pacific strongpoints, akin to contemporary “stand-in forces,” would then pivot to the offensive. These hopeful if not capricious war plans foundered in the face of rapid Japanese advances. Despite his aggressive instincts, MacArthur anticipated the rapid collapse of Allied bastions and prepared thorough defensive contingencies.¹⁰ He reasoned that a tenacious fighting retreat would trade space for time and prevent Allied resistance from buckling under Japanese pressure. A “sacrificial delaying action” was designed “to assuage honor, promote public morale, and inflict some damage.”¹¹

A jeep rolls off the ramp of a Coast Guard-manned landing craft onto a beach in the Philippines in 1945. Three weeks after the Luzon landings on Lingayen Gulf, American forces hit the beaches of Zambales with troops and equipment to seal off the vital Bataan Peninsula in the drive on Manila. Instead of stiff Japanese resistance, they were met by jubilant Filipinos. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard via the National Archives)

range of factors, American forces must be prepared to conduct retrograde operations to preserve its limited combat power. MacArthur’s stubborn defense of Bataan offers a salient case study that bears a striking resemblance to the contemporary operational environment.

Historical Case Studies of Retrograde Operations

MacArthur’s stand (method, delay; principle, defensive maneuver). The Joint Board’s prewar

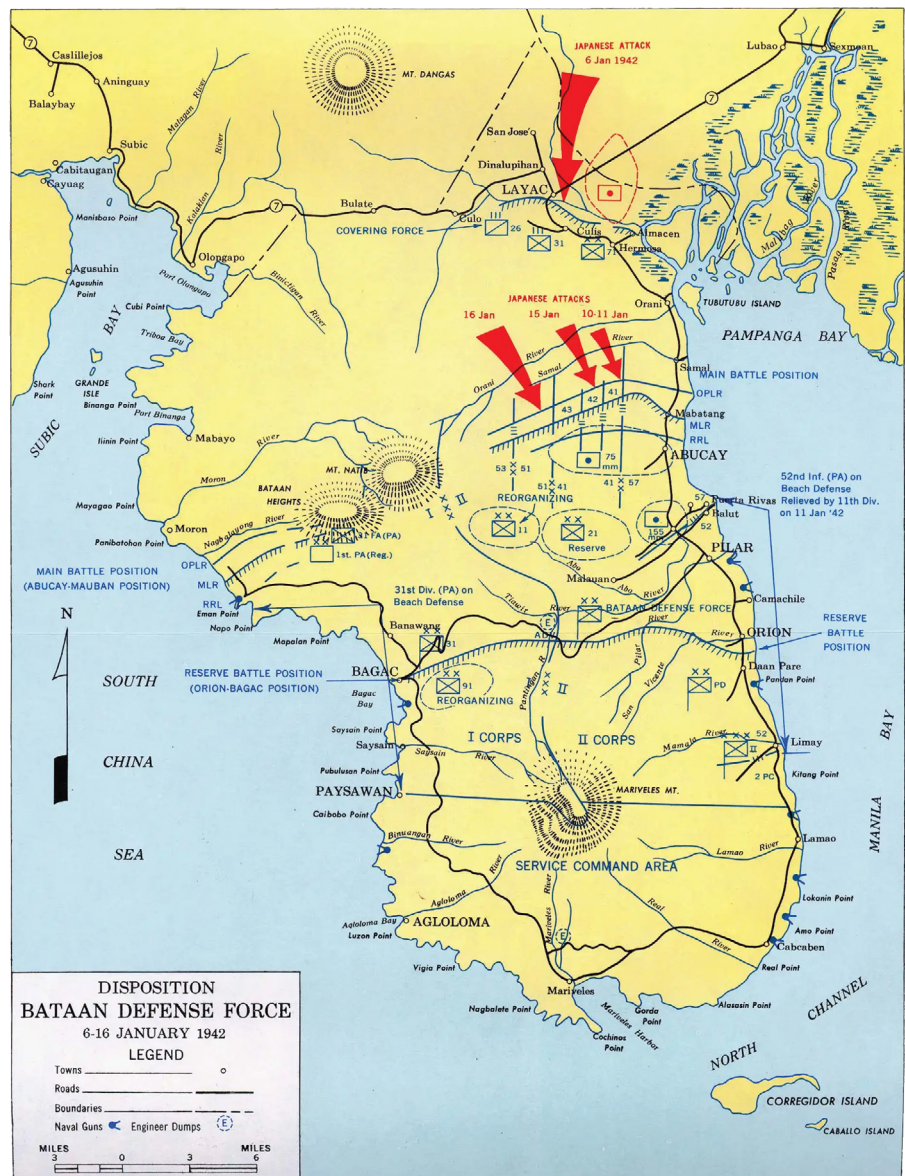
The utility of the Philippines was converted from an offensive launch point to a swirling vortex, pulling in Japanese combat power, and stalling subsequent drives into the eastern Pacific. As a barb in the strategic fuel line with Borneo, moreover, the defenders would slow Japanese logistics “to impotency.”¹² MacArthur termed his operational idea a “citadel type” delaying action involving three key elements.¹³ Confident in deliverance by sea, he first secured a measure of sea control in Manila Bay by emplacing “mines and coast defense guns supported by the torpedo boats” in the narrow channel.¹⁴ This would deny amphibious end runs on his eastern flank and secure an entry point for amphibious extraction.

Second was a layered defensive scheme. To offset the “widespread archipelago’s vulnerability,” MacArthur contracted battlefield geometry by massing his columns within the Bataan peninsula.¹⁵ This simplified logistics

and command and control and amplified the volume of fire to be inflicted upon the attackers. Successive fallback positions within Bataan's narrowing corridor acted as a tactical funnel upon which the defenders could confidently rally. It also served to offset gaps from the quick subtraction of casualties and steady the nerves of his embattled troops. Fighting positions exploited the advantages of the Filipino landscape. Theorist Milan Vego explains that delaying actions are "particularly effective" within "heights, trails, and gorges," enabling "in-depth interlocking defensive positions."¹⁶ Engagement areas were drawn behind booming rivers and across precipitous ridges, all within the dense jungle expanse. This reduced the scope of Japanese artillery, disrupted cohesion, and sapped the energy of the assailants before coming to grips with the defenders.

Third, MacArthur's layered defense was supported by prudent supply displacement. Recognizing the vulnerability to communications in retreat, bulk stocks were backhauled to a rear support area, protected behind the leeward Marivele ridges. As one of MacArthur's logistics officers recounted, "Ammunition had ... been stored in the peninsula, together with certain defense reserves including 300,000 gallons of gasoline, lubricating oil, and greases, and about 3,000 tons of canned meats and fish."¹⁷

As the defenders backpedaled, their supply lines contracted for faster responsiveness. This extended the army's logistical endurance, dragging the fifteen-mile retreat into a four-month slog. The delay had dramatic strategic effects. Tokyo's Pacific timetable halted in the ravines of MacArthur's Asiatic "Alamo." One staff



(Map from Office of the Chief Engineer, General Headquarters, Army Forces Pacific, *Engineers of the Southwest Pacific, 1941-1945: Engineers in Theater Operations. Reports of Operations (of the) United States Army Forces in the Far East, Southwest Pacific Area, Army Forces, Pacific*, vol. 1 [U.S. Government Printing Office, 1947])

Bataan Defense Force, 6-16 January 1942

officer insisted that the Battle of Bataan was one of the turning points of the war. Not only had it prevented Japan from adequately supplying Guadalcanal, but it also foiled an invasion of Australia.¹⁸

Unfortunately for the defenders, the vacancy of American mobility left them isolated on Bataan. MacArthur assumed that "some plan" could be "improvised to relieve or rescue the men stranded 7,000 miles across the Pacific."¹⁹ However, strategic planners failed to prioritize sealift as the American Filipino



Gen. George Washington directs the retreat from Brooklyn Heights to New York, 30 August 1776, following the Battle of Long Island. Steel engraving by James Charles Armytage after a painting by Michael Angelo Wageman, circa 1860. (Image courtesy of the National Archives)

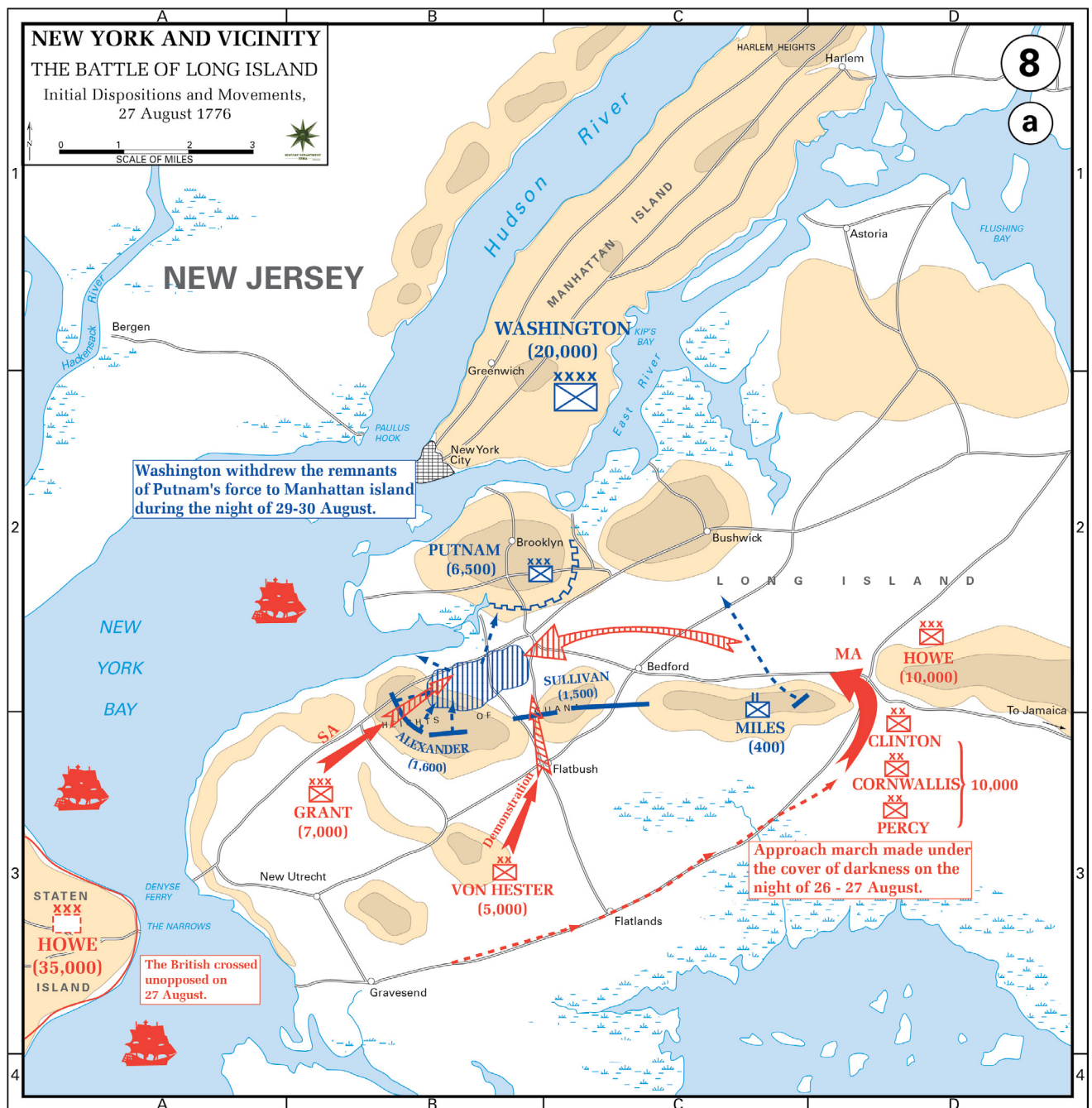
force grimly gave way. Inertia had seized American leadership in its response to a two-front war. Sealift was splintered between Alaska and Hawaii, husbanded in California, staged in Panama, or shifted toward the Atlantic. George Washington's continentals had nearly suffered a similar fate had it not been for timely mobility that saved America's first army.

Washington's [first] crossing (method, withdrawal; principle, mobility). In August 1776, the Continental Army found itself stretched across a cluster of islands in the lower Hudson Bay. Congress resolved to stall a *coup de main* of New York, and Washington dutifully took up the mantle of shielding the city wherever the blow would fall. While he preferred to wage a campaign along linear, European methods, he was receptive to the counsel of his subordinates who recognized the strategic imperative of preserving

the army, even if that meant ignoble retreat. The continentals could not contend with Britain's superiority on land and spatial dominance of the harbor's yawning rivers. "Whoever commands the Sea must command the Town," Maj. Gen. Charles Lee had cautioned.²⁰ It was wiser to expand the topography of operations into New Jersey. With the advantage of strategic depth, Washington could prolong the conflict and even the odds for his wily infantry as the British lengthened their communications into the interior.

After a brief but sharp action on Long Island, Washington witnessed the wreckage of his army bolt for the safety of his command post perched above the East River. He promptly abandoned the folly of another stand and, heeding the advice of his staff, commenced a withdrawal. Vego defines mobility as the "ability to shift forces and dispositions in response to changing conditions."²¹ As the British tightened the snare around the survivors hugging the western lip of Brooklyn, Washington directed the shift to save his scarecrow army from destruction.

Naval theorist Geoffrey Till cites the high degree of difficulty in executing an amphibious withdrawal, one



The Battle of Long Island, 27 August 1776

that requires “specialist skills and training.”²² Among Washington’s motley ranks was a hard-bit regiment of Massachusetts fishermen. Commanded by Col. John Glover, “they were called infantry ... but they had the look of men of the sea. Their faces were grizzled from salt and their hands curled from oar and line.”²³ Washington authorized Glover “to impress every kind

of craft on either side of New York that had oars or sails, and to have them in the East River by dark.”²⁴ Regiments of seagoing men from “Salem, Lynn, and Danvers, sailors all” were corralled to conduct the first amphibious withdrawal in American history.²⁵

Within hours, the New Englanders stoically laded man, beast, and ordnance into craft of every



The Battle of Long Island, a National Guard Heritage Painting by artist Domenick D'Andrea, was created for the National Guard Bureau. The painting depicts the Delaware Regiment at the Battle of Long Island on 27 August 1776. (Painting courtesy of the U.S. National Guard Bureau)

The Battle of Long Island was the first major battle of the American Revolution to take place after the United States declared its independence on 4 July 1776. It was a victory for the British and the beginning of a successful British campaign that would initially give them control of the strategically important city of New York. Facing annihilation by a British army of approximately thirty-two thousand soldiers, Gen. George Washington's Continental Army conducted a tactical nighttime movement of his ten-thousand-man army along with their supplies on 29 August from defensive positions on Brooklyn Heights to defensive positions in Manhattan. This was accomplished without the loss of a single life. This retreat enabled the survival of the Continental Army, though it was later compelled to retreat still further from New Jersey into Pennsylvania during early stages of the conflict.

imaginable size. In complete darkness, the small fleet negotiated the choppy harbor currents, sequentially loading the panicky continental survivors. Lee had prescience about waterways and had the cunning to submerge chains of wooden obstacles across the mouth of the East River.²⁶ This contingency gave the continentals a degree of sea control for the riverine escape. As the sun dawned on 29 August, all nine thousand survivors of the Long Island fiasco were ferried to the relative safety of Manhattan. On the precipice of defeat, Washington's operational flexibility and deft employment of mobility preserved the fight for independence.

Not all retrograde operations are dynamic reversals in the face of enemy pressure. A retirement is "a form of retrograde operation in which one's force is not in contact with the enemy and moves away from the enemy by executing a tactical road march."²⁷ Ulysses Grant's movement to the James River offers a case study in which deception, mobility, and maneuver were orchestrated to reverse operational fortunes.

Grant's crossing of the James (method, retirement; principles—mobility, defensive maneuver,

deception). In the spring of 1864, Grant, elevated to general in chief of Union armies, pitched camp with the Army of the Potomac. In the pine thickets of central Virginia, he sought to reverse the methodical approach typified in the East with a series of vicious frontal assaults against its perennial antagonist, the Army of Northern Virginia. But Grant's Overland Campaign was as bloody and indecisive as his those of his predecessors. Each attempt to dislodge Robert E. Lee cumulatively whittled at the physical and moral strength of the army. Mired in the swampy lowlands of Cold Harbor, the army was outrunning its communications and vulnerable to counterattack. To resupply, reinforce, and reorient its lines of operation, Grant contemplated an extraordinary movement. He would retire from Cold Harbor, cross the James River, and redeploy at the mouth of the Appomattox.

To prevent Lee from striking the blue host as it transited the river mid-career, Grant orchestrated an elaborate ruse of forces across the map. Vego describes deception as "a series of measures and actions aimed at misleading the enemy," the best are "sound [and] elaborate."²⁸ Grant directed the Army



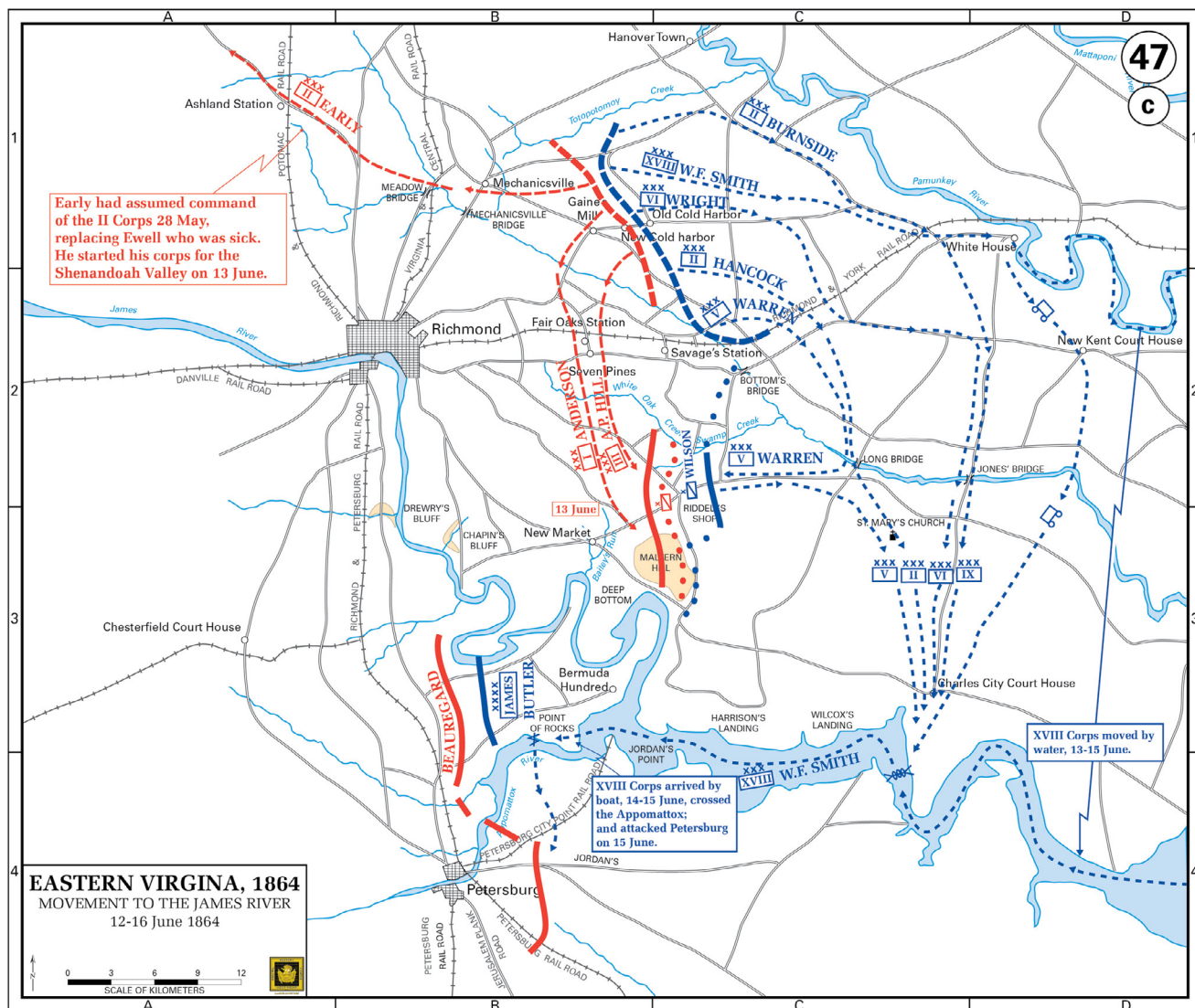
of the Shenandoah—140 miles distant—to threaten Lynchburg, Lee’s agricultural supply terminus. The Army of the James, intimating a lunge at the capital, demonstrated against Richmond, twenty-five miles to the south.²⁹ Mindful of his army’s logistical frailty, Lee snapped at the bait in Lynchburg and sent an entire division to its relief. The rest of the Confederates marked time in the Richmond defenses. The ruse had worked.

Grant called upon the Union Navy and the 50th New York Regiment—an expert team of Army teamsters and engineers—to unload horses, wagons, and bridging to expedite the deliverance of his mud-caked army. The bridge detail speedily laid eleven-foot planks across 101 pontoon boats. “To anchor the bridge in the swift current, three schooners” from the Navy “were positioned abreast above the bridge and three below the bridge.”³⁰ In seven hours, the teams completed the span. Meanwhile, a shrewd defensive scheme—both mobile and static—blunted any forays against the column. While one army corps screened the march, cavalry raids were launched north of Richmond to attract probing Confederate horsemen from discovering the retirement.³¹ Rear Adm. Robert

Soldiers and civilians construct a pontoon bridge across the James River, Virginia, in the spring of 1864. Gen. Ulysses Grant’s Army of the Potomac was able to cross unimpeded, preserving the force for subsequent operations. (Photo by James Gardner, courtesy of the Library of Congress)

P. Lee cooperated with the army to secure the crossing sites. Adding to the weight of his hulking monitors, the Navy “[sank] four schooners, moored with chains fore and aft in the main channel, and one in the narrower channel in the river, toward Richmond, to prevent hostile gunboats from attempting to steam downstream.”³²

Four infantry corps, forty-nine artillery batteries, and thousands of supply wagons lumbered to the far bank without incident. Interservice mobility, elaborate deception, and a prudent defensive scheme preserved the Army’s fragile morale, united it with adjacent forces, and restored lines of communication at City Point.³³ Grant’s reputation was synonymous with unbridled aggression, but his retirement from Cold Harbor revealed a flexible military mind, one that was willing to depart from an inclination to



(Map from U.S. Military Academy, Digital History Center Atlases)

Movement to the James River, 12-16 June 1864

attack. American leaders, too, must embrace ideas antithetical to current doctrine.

Principles of Retrograde in the Indo-Pacific

Open and imaginative means, particularly regarding deception, should inform our operational approach in the Indo-Pacific. Military history is rich with examples of deception. And yet its study hasn't percolated up to doctrinal practice. This is due in part to the prevalence of Carl von Clausewitz in military education who spurns "sham action[s]" because of "considerable expenditure of time and effort."³⁴ The

character of distributed maritime campaigns, however, differs from sharp, limited continental conflict. The inclusion of military deception in twenty-first-century operational art "is a natural evolution."³⁵

One U.S. Army Forces Command planner maintains that "opportunities also grow from achieving surprise, indecision, and stagnation in opponents."³⁶ Similar to Grant's illusory movements to confuse Lee, feints, demonstrations, and advances within and outside of theater may freeze enemy actions to create time and space for movement of friendly forces. Supporting movements can threaten energy sources, chokepoints, or lightly defended borders; or they can be farcical

through a variety of information platforms.³⁷ An elaborate deception only serves to confound rigid Chinese decision-making. Larry Wortzel discerns that the PLA “employs a strict, top-down structure that does not allow for flexible interpretation.”³⁸ If a regional command determines to strike a vulnerable American outpost, perceived threats from adjacent zones, commands, or distant theaters could throw a wrench into the inflexible cogs of PLA leadership, thereby “confusing, paralyzing, and disrupting [their] decisions and actions.”³⁹

Defensive operations, too, allow friendly forces to trade space for time, preserve combat power, and inflict costs upon the enemy. West Point Fellow Brandon Morgan highlights the need for inculcating defensive operations at the staff college level and engagement area development at the tactical. The hard-fought lessons of Bataan “using the surrounding terrain ... fighting positions, emplacing wire obstacles, felling trees into abatis ... against a determined” and numerous adversary needs to be institutionalized across tactical formations.⁴⁰ Consequently, fighting withdrawals and delays will be sharpened arrows in the quiver of operational leaders campaigning in the early stages of a Pacific fight.

In those precarious moments, the joint force should prudently select positions from which it can absorb repeated blows while degrading enemy means. Or else—like Washington’s halting dash across Long Island—it will be torn apart piecemeal as it tries to extricate itself from the jaws of an attack. So too, should the joint force preserve its limited magazine depth to prevail in a protracted conflict. Like MacArthur’s bulk supply movement, prepositioned stocks should be staged and secured in locations where they will be least vulnerable.

Ultimately, success in a maritime theater rests on mobile efficiency. Air Force Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost testified that American sealift must be prepared to negotiate contested environments and reestablish “access to our lines of communication.”⁴¹ Skills of this magnitude, though, have atrophied after decades steady-state operations. Glaring training shortfalls in crisis response, worsened by maintenance deficiencies, compromise U.S. capacity to conduct amphibious actions. The recent Gaza relief expedition is a case in point. Both Army and Navy elements lacked necessary training to secure beach zones, and vessels of both services struggled to establish the expeditionary architecture for the mission. The USNS *Bobo* suffered a fire in the engine

room transiting the Mediterranean and returned to Jacksonville.⁴² Meanwhile, Army vessel masters are “not taught maritime tactics,” nor do they have adequate force protection.⁴³ “These boats have next to no security,” an anonymous warrant officer confessed, adding, “If those boats don’t have multiple mechanical failures—I mean ‘dead in the water’ mechanical failures—I will be shocked.”⁴⁴

In the spirit of John Glover’s grizzled veterans and the 50th New York Engineer Regiment—forerunners of over-the-shore logistics—both services need to expand joint training beyond routine and permissive humanitarian aid. Sealift and accompanying naval forces should develop methods of securing maritime lodgments while achieving local sea control for extractions. Moreover, U.S. Transportation Command should look to expand common user sealift, analogous to Washington’s timely acquisition for “used vessels from the commercial market ... without restrictions” to augment maritime mobility.⁴⁵

Counterargument

Stay and Fight It Out.

— Gen. Henry Slocum⁴⁶

Some maintain that the joint force should never countenance backtracking in any corner of the Pacific. Gen. Charles Flynn invokes the Second World War to emphasize this point. The lesson from abandoning our Pacific strong points in 1941 was paid for in blood during subsequent campaigns. “We do not want to give up any decisive terrain,” he states, “because we will pay a heavy price to retake it.”⁴⁷ To Flynn, the initial cost of absorbing opening salvos and pivoting to the offensive offsets the higher price of fighting your way back in. After all, China’s operational design is intrinsically defensive. Its antiaccess/area denial arsenal is a static network “designed to defeat maritime and airpower,” Flynn claims, not one calibrated to “find, fix, and finish.”⁴⁸

A widely distributed joint force, meanwhile, serves to confound the PLA with a targeting dilemma if it decides to switch to the offensive. Flynn’s sentiments are reminiscent of retired Navy Capt. Wayne Hughes who advocates for “distributing force in an effort to make the enemy work so hard and take so long they cannot fire effectively first.”⁴⁹ Deception remains an afterthought, as U.S. forces only gain from making their

presence known. Flynn maintains that the kaleidoscope of joint platforms across the harbors and airfields closest to the mainland creates “joint interior lines” for maximum operational reach.⁵⁰ A key component of this aspect are “stand-in forces”: small ground elements occupying littoral fighting positions across the first and second island chains.

Marine Commandant Gen. David Berger echoes these views, adding that wide distribution enjoys the advantage of mass “without the vulnerabilities of concentration.”⁵¹ True to the maneuver school, Berger and Flynn view the mission of stand-in forces as singularly offensive. “As part of a joint campaign,” when and if attacked, these elements will “squeeze them back to the Chinese homeland.”⁵² Forward ground elements maintain their positions at all costs to “build an enduring advantage.”⁵³ Provisional to this design is the seizure and occupation of choke points and airfields that pave the way for theater naval and air forces to add their weight to the fight. Converging on the Western Pacific, American sealift is secured behind layers of ground, air, and naval forces drawing the mass of PLA fires. One can hardly argue with the results of this approach, especially when the outcome of simulated war games end in American victory. This is bolstered by recommendations from the U.S. House Select Committee on China to enhance “the United States’ ability to strike attacking Chinese forces” first.⁵⁴

Conclusion

Nevertheless, contemporary war games are limited in scope, fixated on a sharp, violent exchange with the objective of preventing a fait accompli of Taiwan. Congressional and think tank scenarios rarely consider a protracted struggle, and timelines are confined to the

limits of American magazine depth. Even in victory, however, the joint force will be divested of operational endurance and freedom of action.

It is estimated that the Air Force will consume “the entire stockpile” of its long-range ordnance in ten days.⁵⁵ In the absence of resupply, bombers will have to brave the gauntlet of mainland air defenses to engage targets. At sea, multiple war-game iterations predict the destruction of two aircraft carriers, with several strike groups “fleeing east at flank speed to avoid destruction,” an act not likely “to inspire much fighting spirit in the troops left behind.”⁵⁶ The fulcrum of Pacific strategy, moreover—stand-in forces—are destined to live “a short, unhappy life.”⁵⁷ Should the PLA shift to the offensive, they can overwhelm American ground elements with “swarm assault[s] consisting of a broad range of missiles and drones” or an amphibious assault.⁵⁸ Upon closer evaluation, some experts admit that the joint force “will need to be able to disperse and operate in a nimble and unpredictable manner to alternate locations.”⁵⁹

In view of these somber assessments, the United States needs to mitigate its offensive-minded vulnerabilities. Securing swift and responsive mobility must be integrated into operational ideas that provide an escape hatch for overmatched and isolated friendly forces. Deception operations will afford forward elements a measure of time and space to retire whereby they can resupply or reattack from advantage. Joint forces, meanwhile, should maintain the capacity to break contact with the enemy as competently as they are trained to attack it. Like MacArthur, Washington, and Grant, the joint force should temper an inclination for the offensive with concepts that complement warfighting potential and operational realities. ■

Notes

1. Timothy Heck and Walter Mills, “No Retreat! The Flaw in the US Military’s Preparation for Large-Scale Combat Operations,” Modern War Institute, 7 February 2023, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/no-retreat-the-flaw-in-the-us-militarys-preparation-for-large-scale-combat-operations/>.

2. Joint Publication 3-0, *Operations* (U.S. Government Publishing Office [GPO], 2022); U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) Publication 1, *Warfighting* (USMC, 1997); Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (U.S. GPO, 2022). FM 3-0 uses the term five times. Principles of the maneuver school are still integral to warfighting,

especially as it pertains to Russia. However, China has emerged as the new pacing threat.

3. John Sattely and Jesse Johnson, “Sustaining Distributed Forces in a Conflict with China,” War on the Rocks, 21 April 2023, <https://warontherocks.com/2023/04/sustaining-distributed-forces-in-a-conflict-with-china/>. Sattely is the commanding officer of Blount Island Command.

4. “Executive Summary of the 2024 Index of U.S. Military Strength,” Heritage Foundation, 24 January 2024, <https://www.heritage.org/military-strength/executive-summary>.

5. Seth Robson, "Army's Top Pacific Leader Counters ASEAN Poll Showing Popular Support for China," *Stars and Stripes*, 3 April 2024, <https://www.stripes.com/branches/army/2024-04-03/fly-nn-army-pacific-china-poll-13478240.html>.
6. Cynthia Cook, *Reviving the Arsenal of Democracy: Steps for Surging Defense Industrial Capacity* (Center for Strategic and International Studies [CSIS], 14 March 2023), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/reviving-arsenal-democracy-steps-surging-defense-industrial-capacity>.
7. The Big Five military contractors are Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Northrop Grumman, Boeing, and RTX.
8. Micah McCartney, "US Admiral Warns China Could Launch Surprise Attack From Military Drills," *Newsweek*, 26 February 2024, <https://www.newsweek.com/us-admiral-warns-china-could-launch-surprise-attack-military-drills-1873205>.
9. Edward S. Miller, *War Plan Orange: The U.S. Strategy to Defeat Japan, 1897–1945* (Naval Institute Press, 1991), 256. This defensive scheme envisioned the United States and associated powers. The revised plan, *Rainbow 5*, "accepted implicitly the loss of the Philippines, Wake, and Guam."
10. War Plan Orange, the most conservative war plan, was nonetheless the most operationally sound in December 1941.
11. Miller, *War Plan Orange*. MacArthur was committed to "keep the flag flying," as encouragement to Allied forces on their back heels. He would ultimately keep the flag flying from Australia, directed to abandon the Philippines from Washington, MacArthur and his small staff escaped the humiliation of surrender.
12. *Ibid.*, 58.
13. Louis Morton, *The Fall of the Philippines* (Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1953), 156.
14. Mark Skinner Watson, *Chief of Staff: Prewar Plans and Preparations* (Office of the Chief of Military History, U.S. Army, 1950), 431.
15. *Ibid.*, 413. MacArthur showed operational flexibility. Originally, he was prepared to meet Japanese assaults at the beachhead. As the likelihood of timely rescue diminished, his subordinates, particularly Maj. Gen. Jonathan M. Wainwright, convinced him of more prudent measures. MacArthur did this at considerable political risk when he abandoned Manila and declared it an open city. But the operational trade-off was promising. The flanks of the final defensive lines were anchored by the protected bay to the east and the South China Sea to the west.
16. Milan Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare: Theory and Practice*, 1st ed (Naval War College, 2009), IV-14. This also moderated risks to morale. Formidable fighting positions could offset the inclination to bolt in the face of Banzai charges.
17. Morton, *Fall of the Philippines*, 160. A logistics officer recalled that "it would be impossible to withdraw the ammunition in time to save it, and by God, he [MacArthur] would crucify anyone who lost so much as one round."
18. Gavin Long, *MacArthur as Military Commander* (Batsford, 1969), 81–84. Seventy-five thousand Japanese troops were committed to the fight, of which a third became casualties.
19. Morton, *Fall of the Philippines*, 154.
20. Charles Lee, "To George Washington from Major General Charles Lee, 19 February 1776," Founders Online, accessed 1 November 2024, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/03-03-02-0242>.
21. Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare*, GL-11.
22. Geoffrey Till, *Seapower: A Guide for the Twenty-First Century*, 4th ed. (Routledge, 2018), 255.
23. Thomas J. Cutler, "John Glover and George Washington's Amphibious Regiment," *Naval History* 38, no. 2 (April 2024), <https://www.usni.org/magazines/naval-history-magazine/2024/march/john-glover-and-george-washingtons-amphibious-regiment>. Glover used his stealth and seamanship to raid British shipping months before. Now his chief needed those qualities more than ever. Glover's "Marbleheads" deftly wrapped oars in cloth to muffle the smack and spatter of rows hitting the choppy surf. Aided by a providential fog that descended upon the combatants, it was as if a soundproof curtain shrouded the movement.
24. J. Jay Myers, "George Washington: Defeated at the Battle of Long Island," HistoryNet, 12 June 2006, <https://www.historynet.com/george-washington-defeated-at-the-battle-of-long-island/>; Cutler, "John Glover and George Washington's Amphibious Regiment." A British officer immediately recognized the effect of the withdrawal: "To my inexpressible astonishment & concern the Rebel army have all escaped across the River ... they will give us Trouble enough, and protract the War."
25. *Ibid.*
26. "Report on the Defense of New York, March, 1776," in [Charles Lee] *The Lee Papers*, 4 vols. (New York Historical Society, 1872–75, in *Collections of the New York Historical Society for the Year 1871*), 1:354–6; Jim Davis, "New York City During the First Year of the Revolution," Varsity Tutors, accessed 1 November 2024, <https://www.varsitytutors.com/earlyamerica/early-america-review/volume-7/new-york-city-during-the-revolution>. Gen. Nathaniel Greene's efforts to salvage the army's most precious supply—gunpowder—was equally important. Powder was redistributed from stores in Manhattan and along the route of march in arsenals across New Jersey.
27. Vego, *Joint Operational Warfare*, V-55.
28. Milan Vego, *Operational Warfare at Sea: Theory and Practice* (Routledge, 2017), 73.
29. Ulysses S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant* (1885; repr., Da Capo Press, 2001), 446–58. Weeks before, Grant crowed to President Abraham Lincoln that he would "fight it out on this line if takes all summer." The quote splashed across Northern papers, heartening home front support. Lincoln rode the wave of martial bravado into the Republican convention, where in Baltimore, he was nominated for a second term. Grant's campaign culminated at Cold Harbor, 140 miles to the south. Of the 110,000 who stepped off into the Wilderness, fifty-five thousand were casualties after forty days of fighting. Veteran units that held the line at Gettysburg and Antietam refused to attack after the 3 June assault.
30. Gustave J. Person, "Crossing the James River, June 1864 '... the real crisis of the war,'" *Army Engineer Professional Bulletin* 39 (September–December 2009): 63, <https://www.dvidshub.net/publication/issues/11704>. This was a joint exercise conducted by civilian teamsters, the Navy's North Atlantic Blockading Squadron, and the Army's 50th New York Engineer Regiment. The 50th New York Engineer Regiment were experts in pontoon bridging and conducted each of the Army of the Potomac's major (14) river crossings throughout the war.
31. Ulysses S. Grant's Report in United States War Department, "Cold Harbor, Va., June 3, 1864," *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, ser. 1, vol. 36, pt. 1 (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1891), 87, <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/>

[pt?id=coo.31924097311744&seq=3](#). Maj. Gen. Gouverneur K. Warren was tasked with leading the defensive scheme. This was a shrewd choice by Grant. Warren, known as “the hero of Little Round Top,” was formerly chief engineer of the army, an expert in defensive warfare.

32. Person, “Crossing,” 63.

33. John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant, Volume 11: June 1–August 15, 1864* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1984), 19. From City Point, the Army of the Potomac received forty-eight thousand reinforcements. City Point also accommodated provisioning and movement for the Army of the James and the Army’s XVIII Corps. It became the largest active port in the world for the duration of the Petersburg campaign.

34. Michael G. Anderson, “The Case for Deception in Operational Success,” *Military Strategy Magazine* 8, no. 2 (Fall 2022): 38–42, <https://www.militarystrategymagazine.com/article/the-case-for-deception-in-operational-success/>. The limited wars that colored Carl von Clausewitz’s vision did not account for the swift destruction of large-scale conflict in the Indo-Pacific.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid.

37. The entire gamut of information from social media platforms to deceptive signal communications.

38. Larry M. Wortzel, “The PLA and Mission Command: Is the Party Control System Too Rigid for Its Adaptation by China?,” *Land Warfare Paper* 159 (Association of the U.S. Army, March 2024), <https://www.ausa.org/publications/pla-and-mission-command-party-control-system-too-rigid-its-adaptation-china>.

39. Anderson, “The Case for Deception.”

40. Brandon Morgan, “Make Defensive Operations Great Again,” *Modern War Institute*, 10 July 2018, <https://mwi.westpoint.edu/make-defensive-operations-great/>.

41. Jim Garamone, “TRANSCOM Commander Testifies on Top Readiness Concerns,” *Department of Defense News*, 12 April 2024, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Stories/Article/Article/3740525/transcom-commander-testifies-on-top-readiness-concerns/>.

42. Konstantin Toropin, “Navy Ship Slated to Help Build Gaza Aid Pier Forced to Return to Port as Experts Warn of Other Delays,” *Military.com*, 17 April 2024, <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2024/04/17/navy-ship-slated-help-build-gaza-aid-pier-forced-return-port-experts-warn-of-other-delays.html>.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Garamone, “TRANSCOM Commander Testifies on Top Readiness Concerns.”

46. Stephen W. Sears, *Gettysburg* (Houghton Mifflin, 2003), 242. A celebrated quote from the 2 July council of war at Gettysburg. Only one of the voting corps commanders advocated an offensive—Gen. Henry Slocum—who tried to push Meade into launching an attack. It was a foolhardy idea given the shattered condition of the army and the natural advantages of maintaining a defensive attitude. He was overridden by his peers.

47. “Strategic Landpower Dialogue: A Conversation with General Charles Flynn,” CSIS, 12 October 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/strategic-landpower-dialogue-conversation-general-charles-flynn>.

48. Todd South, “Top Army General in the Pacific Warns of China’s Military Threat,” *Military Times*, 13 September 2023, <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-army/2023/09/13/top-army-general-in-the-pacific-warns-of-chinas-military-threat/>. Antiaccess/area denial (A2/AD) is an array of long-range land, air, and sea-based network of fires to prevent enemy intrusion into a given zone.

49. Wayne P. Hughes and Robert P. Girrier, *Fleet Tactics and Naval Operations*, 3rd ed. (Naval Institute Press, 2018), 296.

50. CSIS, “Strategic Landpower Dialogue.”

51. Mark F. Cancian, “The Marine Corps’ Radical Shift Toward China,” CSIS, 25 March 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/marine-corps-radical-shift-toward-china>.

52. Ibid.

53. CSIS, “Strategic Landpower Dialogue.”

54. Mark Montgomery and Bradley Bowman, “Five Urgent Steps to Prevent American Defeat in the Pacific,” *Defense News*, 12 June 2023, <https://www.defensenews.com/opinion/commentary/2023/06/12/five-urgent-steps-to-prevent-american-military-defeat-in-the-pacific/>.

55. Robert Haddick, “Defeat China’s Navy, Defeat China’s War Plan,” *War on the Rocks*, 21 September 2022, <https://warontherocks.com/2022/09/defeat-chinas-navy-defeat-chinas-war-plan/>.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Montgomery and Bowman, “Five Urgent Steps.”

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Army Military Intelligence Is Getting It Right: Continuous Transformation and the Army Intelligence Data Platform (No. 25-791, March 2025)

Col. Christina A. Bembenek, U.S. Army; Chief Warrant Officer 3 Andrew M. Seamon, U.S. Army; Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jacob D. Holmes, U.S. Army; Paul G. Meinke; and Samuel D. Flaming

This paper details how Army military intelligence is transforming in contact through the use of the Army Intelligence Data Platform (AIDP), which is comprised of an innovative software package and cloud-based architecture. AIDP has greatly improved analysts’ ability to ingest, analyze, and display intelligence data in order to create a common intelligence picture. Intelligence units in Europe and across the globe have utilized the platform in support of conflict with highly favorable results.

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