

*The Past as Future:
The US Army's Vision of Warfare in the 21st Century"*

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Today the US Army is engaged in the effort to learn the appropriate lessons from the wars it has been engaged in since the autumn of 2001 and to think through what type of force it needs to be, with what kinds of capabilities, in order to prepare for further future conflicts in the 21st Century. Estimating the character of future conflicts, and then preparing one's forces appropriately, is not an easy task. A critical line of argument today is that the vision of future warfare the Army developed in the decade plus following the end of the Cold War left it ill-prepared for the wars it found itself conducting in Afghanistan and Iraq. In an article published in 2007, US Army Lt. Col. Paul Yingling very pointedly, and very boldly for a serving officer, contended that, "throughout the 1990s our generals failed to envision the conditions of future combat and prepare their forces accordingly."¹ The US Army's operational experiences in the first decade of this century, particularly in the early years of the long conflict in Iraq, suggest that it marched eyes wide shut through the decade of the 1990s into the 21st Century.

¹ Lt. Col. Paul Yingling (U.S. Army), "A failure in generalship", *Armed Forces Journal*, May 2007, at: <http://armedforcesjournal.com/2007/05/2635198/>.

The Army through the 1990s and into the first decade of the 21st Century seemingly missed or ignored important emerging elements of modern warfare. Generally widely appreciated is that the US Army units, after the invasion of Iraq in the spring of 2003, were largely caught out by the rising insurgency and struggled to adapt to the requirement of conducting counterinsurgency operations from the late spring and summer of 2003 through to 2006.² Yet the Army was caught out not just by the emerging and growing insurgency and its lack of counterinsurgency doctrine and training. The US Army and Marine Corps forces that drove to Baghdad in the spring of 2003 with destructive effectiveness were also caught by surprise by the presence of irregular fighters and unconventional forms of warfare. Lt. Col. Bryan McCoy (U.S. Marine Corps), commander of the 3rd Brigade, 7th Marines, captured some of the unexpected aspects of the fighting during the initial march north to Baghdad when he complained:

The enemy has gone asymmetric on us. There's treachery. There are ambushes. It's not straight-up conventional fighting.³

Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace, the Commander of US Army, V Corps, was very candid when he noted on 27 March 2003, "The enemy we're fighting is a bit different than the one we war-gamed against, because of these paramilitary forces. We knew they were here, but we did not know how they would fight." Lt. Gen. Wallace further observed that the Iraqi Fedayeen attacked American units with "[t]echnical vehicles with .50-caliber weapons -- any kind of weapon -- leading the charge", and characterized this behaviour as "bizarre".⁴ US Army forces were able to overcome the challenge that was posed by the Iraqi irregular forces, but the non-traditional forms of

² See, for example, Thomas E. Ricks, *Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2006).

³ Quoted in Romesh Ratnesar, 'Sticking to His Guns', *Time*, 30 March 2003, at: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/printout/0,8816,438861,00.html> (accessed 2 April 2003 - not functional - so CNN.com, 31 March 2003 at: <http://www.cnn.com/2003/ALLPOLITICS/03/31/timep.guns.tm/> [accessed 1 July 2013]).

⁴ Lt. Gen. William S. Wallace, US Army quoted in Jim Dwyer, "A Gulf Commander Sees a Longer Road", *New York Times*, 27 March 2003, at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/28/international/worldspecial/28GENE.html?ex=1161489600&en=9f2bbaa7f5e186f4&ei=5070> (accessed 28/03/03).

warfare used did trouble them on a tactical level.⁵ The US-led coalition forces were perhaps fortunate that the Iraqis using irregular forms of warfare were not well trained, not very disciplined, not really prepared and not very well armed.⁶

Michael Howard in an important piece published almost 40 years ago observed that armies, and indeed all military services, find it difficult to get their vision of future warfare right in a time of peace.⁷ The US Army itself certainly perceived that it was at peace from the end of Cold War in 1991 to the beginning of the Iraq war in 2003. The US Army entered Iraq expecting the Iraqis to engage in the same force-on-force style of conventional combat that it intended to wage. To a substantial degree the Iraqis did, but there were sufficient numbers among the Iraqi opponents, both military and non-military, which did not to make the lack of recognition by the Army of the emergence of irregular forms of warfare fairly glaring. The Army for the most part did not expect the presence of irregular Iraqi forces using unconventional tactics in the initial phases of the conflict nor did it anticipate the manifestation of a major Iraqi insurgency once military victory had been attained.

There were any number of writings and analyses published in the 1990s that argued that warfare would likely become more irregular in character, both in terms of the combatants and forms of warfare utilized. The Army's sister service, the US Marine Corps (USMC), seemed to grasp better that warfare was evolving. From 1995-1999, the period when the Army's vision of future warfare coalesced in the Army After Next project,⁸ the USMC under the direction their Commandant, Gen. Charles C. Krulak, sought to come to grips with what they needed to do to be prepared for future warfare that Krulak described as being the "Step Child of Somalia and Chechnya". Stemming from these efforts were such concepts as the 'Three Block War' and the 'Strategic

⁵ See, for example, Col. Gregory Fontenot, US Army, Retired LTC E.J. Degen, US Army LTC David Tohn, US Army, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation IRAQI FREEDOM* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press 2004) esp. pp. 102, 135, 153.

⁶ In contrast, Hezbollah, which fields a well trained and well armed irregular force which employs unconventional modes of warfare, did seriously trouble Israeli armed forces in 2006. See, for example, Matt M. Matthews, *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War*, Long War Occasional Paper 26 (Fort Leavenworth, KS: U.S. Army Combined Arms Center Combat Studies Institute Press, nd).

⁷ Michael Howard, "Military Science in the Age of Peace," *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 119 (March 1974): pp. 3-9.

⁸ The Army After Next project and the vision of warfare that emerged from this are examined below.

Corporal', which would gain considerable international currency. Further, the USMC as part of this effort sought to develop tactics, techniques and procedures for fighting regular and irregular enemies in densely populated cities.⁹ This was in direct contrast to the Army's vision of future warfare which was, in effect, the 'Son of the Gulf War', enhanced by information technology. The critical question, then, is why was the Army seemingly unprepared for the emergence of irregular combatants, utilizing unconventional forms of warfare, on the battlefield in Iraq?

Military Organizational Culture

Military culture, or organizational culture, may influence the perceptions and behaviour of a military organization. Jeffrey Legro, for example, has argued that during World War II the different organizational cultures of the German and British militaries influenced their perceptions of the acceptability of submarine attacks against civilian ships, strategic bombing of civilian targets and chemical warfare, and how these perceptions in turn shaped national priorities for limiting the use of force during that 'total' war.¹⁰ Isabel V. Hull, in contrast, has argued that embedded assumptions and practices of the military culture of the German Imperial Army led it increasingly to seek the utter destruction of its enemies, including the annihilation of civilians, in the decades leading up to World War I.¹¹ Elizabeth Kier has demonstrated how military culture conditioned the French military's choice of a defensive doctrine in the interwar period that was inconsistent with the emerging technical and operational realities of the time, and which thus had disastrous consequences for France in the early years of World War II.¹² Kier further has contended that the gentleman-officer culture of the British regimental system in the 1930s resulted in resistance to the potential of massed

⁹ See Terry Terriff, "Of Romans and Dragons: Preparing the Marine Corps for Future Warfare", *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 28. no. 1 (April 2007): pp. 143-162.

¹⁰ Jeffrey W. Legro, *Cooperation Under Fire: Anglo-German Restraint During World War II* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 1995).

¹¹ Isabel V. Hull, *Absolute Destruction: Military Culture and the Practices of War in Imperial Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 2005).

¹² Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine Between the Wars* (Princeton: PUP 1997) esp. pp. 39-88: and Kier, "Culture and military doctrine: France between the wars", *International Security* 19/4 (Spring 1995) pp. 65-93.

armor,¹³ while Jennifer Mathers has examined how the military culture of the Russian military made it reluctant to undertake clearly needed reform in the post-Cold War era.¹⁴ Organizational culture thus can provide a compelling explanation for why specific military organizations may continue to pursue ways of warfare that are incompatible with emerging or prevailing strategic and operational realities, or why they resist change.

Organizational culture can be broadly defined as the assumptions, ideas and beliefs, expressed or reflected in organizational symbols, rituals, and practices, that give meaning to the activity of the organization. Cultural norms, those assumptions, ideas and beliefs which prescribe action for organizational actors, are often used to identify a cause of organizational action.¹⁵ Peter Katzenstein distinguishes between constitutive norms, that “express actor identities”, and regulatory norms, that “define standards of appropriate behaviour”.¹⁶ These norms together “establish expectations about who the actors will be in a particular environment and about how these particular actors will behave”.¹⁷ In essence, “culture influences action not by providing the ultimate values toward which action is orientated, but by shaping a repertoire or ‘tool kit’ of habits, skills and styles from which people construct ‘strategies of action’”.¹⁸ By providing identities and prescribing actions, norms shape the way actors define their interests and form preferences, as well as suggesting what they should do. Simply put, organizational culture, as norms, condition what is deemed acceptable.

Highly institutionalized cultural attributes are transmitted from one individual to another in an organization as being ‘this is how things are done’. Actors may adhere to ‘how things are done’ through two different logics. First, an actor will follow norms

¹³ Kier, *Imagining War*, pp. 89–139.

¹⁴ Jennifer G. Mathers, “Reform and the Russian Military”, in Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff (eds.), *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner 2002), pp. 161–84.

¹⁵ Legro, *Cooperation under Fire*, p.19.

¹⁶ Peter J. Katzenstein, *Cultural Norms and National Security: Police and Military Power in Postwar Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP 1996), pp. 18–19.

¹⁷ Ronald Jepperson, Alexander Wendt and Peter J. Katzenstein, “Norms, identity and culture in national security”, in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.), *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia UP 1996), p. 54.

¹⁸ Ann Swidler, “Culture and social action”, in Philip Smith (ed.), *The New American Cultural Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 172.

due to a 'logic of consequentialism'. In this logic cultural norms are adhered to by actors as it benefits them to do so or as they are constrained to do so by sanctions.¹⁹ Second, an actor will adhere to cultural norms due to a 'logic of appropriateness'. In this logic an actor has been socialised into complying with certain values, routines and roles, and as these values are internalised, they are accepted uncritically and are instinctively acted out.²⁰ Lynne Zucker contends that, "the greater the degree of institutionalization, the greater the generational uniformity of cultural understanding, the greater the maintenance without direct social control, and the greater the resistance to change through personal influence".²¹ Her point is that strongly institutionalized cultural attributes will not only be resistant to change, but will, as suggested above, strongly shape identities and prescribe actions that are seen as acceptable and appropriate.

Military organizational culture comprises those identities, norms, and values, which encompass assumptions, ideas and beliefs, that have been internalised by a military organisation, and which frame the way the organisation perceives the world, and its role and functions within it.²² The culture of any military organization will certainly be complex, with a great variety of mutually reinforcing and contradictory aspects. This is no less true of the culture of the US Army than it is for any other military organization.²³ The aim here is not to elaborate fully the Army's culture, or personality, but rather to examine the Army's approach to war and warfare, or its 'way of war'. The term 'way of war' is often used and often not defined, but as used herein the concept of an 'Army way of war' "reflects the fundamental ideas and expectations" that the Army has had (or has) about war and warfare.²⁴ Antulio Echevarria has

¹⁹ Robert Axelrod, "An Evolutionary Approach to Norms," *American Political Science Review* 80/4 (1986): pp. 1095–1111; and Aaron Wildavsky, "Choosing Preferences by Constructing Institutions: A Cultural Theory of Preference Formation", *American Political Science Review* 81/1 (1987): pp. 3–21.

²⁰ James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, *Rediscovering Institutions* (New York: Free Press 1989).

²¹ Lynne G. Zucker, "The Role of Institutionalization in Cultural Persistence", in Walter W. Powell and Paul J. DiMaggio (eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Univ. of Chicago Press 1991), p.103.

²² Theo Farrell, *The Norms of War: Cultural Beliefs and Modern Conflict* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2005); Lynn Eden, *Whole World on Fire: Organizations, Knowledge, and Nuclear Weapons Devastation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004); and Hull, *Absolute Destruction*.

²³ See Brian McAllister Linn, *The Echo of Battle: The Army's Way of War* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2007).

²⁴ Antulio J. Echevarria II, *Toward an American Way of War* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, March 2004), p. 1.

cogently argued that the US military, including the US Army, however, does not really have a 'way of war', rather it has a 'way of battle', as American military thinking and practice tends, for the most part, to focus on the "winning of battles and campaigns".²⁵ Nonetheless, the term 'Army way of war' can be used to capture conceptually a set of ideas (or beliefs) and characteristics that describe a distinctive US Army approach to thinking about the character of war and the conduct of warfare.

Colin Gray has identified 12 characteristics of the US armed forces that he contends shape what he terms the 'American way of war'. These attributes are:

1. *Apolitical*: "The U.S. military has a long history of waging war for the goal of victory, paying scant regard to the consequences of the course of its operations for the character of the peace that will follow."
2. *Astrategic*: "Strategy is, or should be, the bridge that connects military power with policy. When Americans wage war as a largely autonomous activity, leaving worry about peace and its politics to some later day, the strategy bridge has broken down."
3. *Ahistorical*: "America is a future-oriented, still somewhat 'new' country, one that has a founding ideology of faith in, and hope for, and commitment to, human betterment. It is only to be expected, therefore, that Americans should be less than highly respectful of what they might otherwise allow history to teach them."
4. *Problem-Solving, Optimistic*: A "problem-solving faith, the penchant for the 'engineering fix,' has the inevitable consequence of leading U.S. policy, including its use of armed force, to attempt the impossible."
5. *Culturally Ignorant*: "[T]he American way of war has suffered from the self-inflicted damage caused by a failure to understand the enemy of the day."
6. *Technologically Dependent*: "[I]n practice the American way of war, past, present, and prospectively future, is quintessentially and uniquely technologically dependent."

²⁵ *Ibid.*.

7. *Firepower Focused*: "It has long been the American way in warfare to send metal in harm's way in place of vulnerable flesh."

8. *Large-Scale*: "Inevitably, the U.S. armed forces, once mobilized and equipped, have fought a rich person's [large scale] war."

9. *Profoundly Regular*: "[T]he U.S. armed forces have not been friendly either to irregular warfare or to those in its ranks who were would-be practitioners and advocates of what was regarded as the sideshow of insurgency. American soldiers . . . have always been prepared nearly exclusively for 'real war,' which is to say combat against a tolerably symmetrical, regular enemy."

10. *Impatient*: "Americans have approached warfare as a regrettable occasional evil that has to be concluded as decisively and rapidly as possible."

11. *Logistically Excellent*: "Americans at war have been exceptionally able logisticians."

12. *Sensitivity to Casualties*: The US generally fields "armies that are small, too small in the opinion of many, relative to their responsibilities. Moreover, well-trained professional soldiers, volunteers all, are expensive to raise, train, and retain, and are difficult to replace." In addition, the American public "has become so sensitive to casualties that the domestic context for U.S. military action is no longer tolerant of bloody adventures in muscular imperial governance."²⁶

The US Army shares in common these attributes, to a lesser or greater degree, with its sister services, the US Air Force, US Navy, and US Marine Corps. Yet each service has its own distinct, to use Carl Builder's term, 'personality',²⁷ and the US Army does have its own unique 'personality' or organizational culture. Of Gray's attributes, the ones of primary interest that relate directly to the US Army's 'way of war' are the concepts of 'profoundly regular', 'large scale' and 'firepower focused'.

²⁶ Colin S. Gray, "The American Way of War: Critique and Implications," in *Rethinking the Principles of War*, ed., Anthony D. McIvor (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005), pp. 27 - 33.

²⁷ Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

The US Army's conception of itself is that its purpose, as America's premier ground force, is to fight and win the nation's war, and this means that the Army's role is the conduct of large scale, force-on-force, high intensity mechanized combat operations against peer organizations. This Army conception of itself and of what it does has become deeply entrenched in its organizational culture. The US Army's roles for the first hundred and twenty some years of the Republic were largely concerned with consolidating the United States' dominion in North America and it had little fear of foreign invasion. Hence, through this period the US Army was normally small in size, with its role being primarily that of a frontier constabulary and internal/border police force.²⁸ The Spanish-American War, which started in 1898 and finished with the suppression of the insurgency in the Philippines in 1901, marked the emergence of the US as a rising power and international actor. The Spanish-American war was generally perceived as 'a splendid little war' won by the US, but it also exposed serious weaknesses in the US military, and in the US Army in particular. Elihu Root, the US Secretary of War from 1899–1904, believed that "the real object of having an army is provide for war",²⁹ and hence set about to professionalize the Army. Root reformed the organization of the Department of War, which was responsible for the maintenance and operation of the US Army, established the General Staff system, set up the US Army War College, and enlarged West Point, as well as instituting other changes. The general template used for the modernization of the Army was the German military system, the emulation of which had originally been promoted by Emory Upton.³⁰ The aim was to develop a modern army capable of fighting and winning America's wars.³¹

In the ensuing forty five years the US Army engaged in two major world wars in which it conducted conventional warfare against peer opponents. The Army's

²⁸ The first 125 years of the US Army are covered, along with the US Navy, in Allan R. Millet and Peter Maslowski, *For the Common Defense: A Military History of the United States of America* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1994), pp. 51-283. The main exceptions to the Army's largely a constabulary and policing role, mainly on the Frontier, through this period were the War of 1812 and the American Civil War (1861-1865).

²⁹ Quoted in Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, p. 327.

³⁰ On Upton's efforts to reform the US Army, see Stephen F. Ambrose, *Upton and the Army* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1964).

³¹ On the reform the US Army from 1899 to 1917, see Millet and Maslowski, *For the Common Defense*, pp. 316-345.

experiences in World War I consolidated the perception, at least within that organization, that its primary purpose was to conduct force-on-force, high-intensity battles against other nations' armed forces.³² In the two decades following this war, however, the Army returned to fulfilling a largely constabulary and policing role in the service of the country. The Army's operational experiences in World War II served to reinforce strongly its experiences in the earlier war. Carl Builder has contended that "something happened to the Army in its passage through World War II that it liked; and it has not been able to free itself from the sweet memories of the Army that liberated France and swept victoriously into Germany."³³ His point is that the Army's self-identity and perception of its purpose became firmly grounded in a conception of itself as the triumphant ground force that fought its way against a professional peer opponent from the beaches of Normandy through northern Europe and into Germany. It was in this European campaign that the Army first refined and honed the combined arms techniques and tactics that were to become the mainstay of its approach to warfighting. As Builder observes, the Army's self-understanding of itself and of its purpose since that time has been based on an "image of the Army at its finest year, the last year of World War II."³⁴

That the Army's contribution to America's defence was to be able to conduct and win force-on-force conventional battles was further ingrained by its role in Europe during the Cold War era that followed the end of World War II. The primary mission of the US Army during the Cold War was to furnish a credible, forward deployed deterrent force in Europe, and, if that deterrent failed, to prevail over invading Warsaw Pact forces in major combat. Unsurprising, then, is that aim of the Army in the various efforts to transform itself through the era of the Cold War was to create a force best suited to conduct major high-intensity combat operations in Germany.³⁵ In essence, as

³² On the American Expeditionary Force's combat doctrine and methods in WWI, see Mark Ethan Grotelueschen, *The AEF Way of War: The American Army and Combat in World War I* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³³ Builder, *The Masks of War*, p. 38.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ See Ingo Trauschweizer, *The Cold War U.S. Army: Building Deterrence for Limited War* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008).

Builder suggests, the Army's priority was to be capable of fighting a European-style war.³⁶

The Army's strong preference for preparing for and conducting conventional warfare as it did during the end stages of World War II has proven to be remarkably tenacious. In the Cold War era the Army was engaged in two major conflicts outside of Europe on the periphery of the Soviet-US competition. The first of these was the Korean War, 1950 to 1953, which was dismissed in Army thought as a disagreeable aberration. The second was the war in Vietnam, which proved to be a deeply disturbing and, indeed, near disastrous experience for the Army. The US Army's performance in that war continues to be a point of contentious debate, but some analysts contend a central problem was that the Army command sought to fight a conventional style of warfare which was ill-suited given the character of the enemy, the way this enemy fought and the terrain on which the war was waged.³⁷ The Army was almost broken by America's strategic defeat, emerging from the Vietnam War beset by poor morale, ill-discipline and widespread substance abuse in the ranks.³⁸ The main focus of the Army in the 1970s and 1980s therefore was to restore and revitalize itself, and it pursued this goal through a renewed narrow focus on being prepared for and capable of conducting high-intensity, major combat in Europe against Warsaw Pact forces.

The Army's concerted effort to leave Vietnam firmly behind resulted in a further deepening of its distinct favouritism for major conventional combat. What the Army wanted to do was to put itself back on its "proper course".³⁹ The post-Vietnam reformation of the Army was designed to generate a peacetime force that was capable of fighting outnumbered and win the first major conventional battle of the next war. The Army promulgated a new capstone doctrine, FM 100 - 5, *Operations* in 1982 (known as AirLand Battle) that emphasized offensive, mechanized, high-intensity warfare,

³⁶ Builder, *The Masks of War*, pp. 186-87.

³⁷ On this point, see, for example, Lewis Sorley, *Westmoreland: The General Who Lost Vietnam* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2011); John A. Nagl, *Learning to Eat Soup with a Knife: Counterinsurgency Lessons from Malaya and Vietnam* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2005); and Andrew F. Krepinevich Jr., *The Army in Vietnam* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

³⁸ Linn, *Echo of Battle*, pp. 194 – 195.

³⁹ Linn, *Echo of Battle*, p. 201.

developed and procured a suite of new battlefield warfighting systems,⁴⁰ revamped its combat organizational structure and instituted training reforms.⁴¹ The Army's self-renovation focused on being able to fight and win "an intense armored battle, reminiscent of World War II, to be fought in the European theater."⁴² The Army after the debacle of Vietnam thus concentrated on what it preferred to do and what it believed it did best.

The Army's effort to heal itself from the trauma of Vietnam went further than just reasserting its ideal form of warfighting. It also sought to expunge the counterinsurgency experiences and the hard lessons it had learned about that form of warfare. Counterinsurgency files were purged from Army schools and, to the degree that there was national command authority interest in counterinsurgency, the emphasis was on Foreign Internal Defence support that necessitated only minimal direct US involvement, such as occurred in El Salvador in the 1980s.⁴³ More telling was the Army's interpretation of why the US lost in Vietnam. In 1982, Col. Harry G. Summers, Jr. published *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War*, in which he argued that the American failure in Vietnam was not due to the way the Army conducted the war, rather the fault lay with the US command authority which had emphasized nation building instead of focusing on defeating North Vietnam. His underlying argument was that the US military, and more specifically the US Army, had won the tactical battles of the war and could have won the strategic level of the war if it had been allowed to wage conventional warfare against the main enemy, North Vietnam.⁴⁴ Summer's argument was embraced by the Army, essentially becoming its official narrative of why that war had been lost, for it exculpated the Army of having mis-fought the war and restored the

⁴⁰ This suite of weapons systems, referred to as the Army's big five, were the M1 Abrams tank, M2 Bradley infantry fighting vehicle, AH-64A Apache attack helicopter, UH-60A Black Hawk utility helicopter, and Patriot air defense missile.

⁴¹ On the US Army's efforts to reform itself in the 1970s and 1980s, see Richard Lock-Pullan, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation: From Vietnam to Iraq* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

⁴² Frank N. Schubert and Theresa L. Kraus, General eds., *The Whirlwind War: The United States Army in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM* (Washington, DC: Center for Military History, United States Army, 1995), p. 34.

⁴³ Conrad C. Crane, *Avoiding Vietnam: The U.S. Army's Response to Defeat in Southeast Asia* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, September 2002), p. 12.

⁴⁴ Col. Harry G. Summers, Jr., *On Strategy: A Critical Analysis of the Vietnam War* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1982).

pre-eminent importance of conventional, force-on-force warfighting. The widespread acceptance of this story led to what some have termed the 'Never Again School'; that is, the US, and the US Army, should in future assiduously avoid becoming embroiled ever again in a major counterinsurgency campaign.⁴⁵ The Army's profound distaste for counterinsurgency, and indeed for contingency operations short of war, served to reinforce the idea that the organization's purpose was, and should only be, fighting traditional, high-intensity major combat.

The US Army since the beginning of the 20th Century has developed the self-conception that its purpose is to fight and win America's wars, and that in turns means that its priority purpose is to prepare for and, if need be, conduct major combat operations against a peer enemy. The main character of this self-conception is primarily based on the Army that had succeeded on the battlefields of northern Europe in the last year of the 'Good War'. The Army's experience in Vietnam, and its effort reform itself in the aftermath of that war, essentially hardwired this idea into the organization, to the point that any requirement for preparing for or engaging in operations against an irregular enemy that employed unconventional or asymmetrical approaches was essentially trivialized or even cast out. That the US Army should not be used for anything other than major combat was inherent in the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine, which established such stringent requirements for the employment of the US military so as to effectively preclude being utilized for anything short of high-intensity, conventional battle.⁴⁶ The Army's very successful ground operation (alongside USMC units) in the 1991 Gulf War powerfully validated this self-conception of the organization's purpose. Thus the Army in 1991 entered into a 12 year period of peace with this core idea -- that its purpose is to fight traditional, high-intensity major combat -- deeply sedimented into its organizational culture.

⁴⁵ Linn, *Echo of Battle*, pp. 194 – 195.

⁴⁶ On the constraining influence of the Weinberger/Powell Doctrine, see C.E. Dauber, "Implications Of the Weinberger Doctrine For American Military Intervention in a Post-Desert Storm Age", *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 22, no. 3 (December 2001) pp. 66-90.

The Army's Vision of Future Warfare in the Post Cold War Period

Through the 1990s, the Army, believing that it was in a strategic pause in which there was no apparent peer-competitor looming on the horizon, developed a vision of warfare in the 21st Century that it sought to prepare itself for. The Army faced two major challenges in the post war period. First, the dissolution of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 meant that the Army no longer faced a clearly identified peer enemy which it needed to be able to deter or defeat in an unmistakable regional theatre of central importance. As the US National Military Strategy of 1991 warned, “[i]n the emerging post-Cold War world, international relations promise to be more complicated, more volatile and less predictable.”⁴⁷ In this new strategic environment, the US Army, along with its sister services, was directed to be postured to be able to respond to two major regional contingencies.⁴⁸ The two major regional contingency strategy, which required the Army to be expeditionary, would remain the principal framework conditioning the US's defense posture and force sizing into the 21st Century. And second, as part of the US defence budget cuts after the end of the Cold War, the Army's annual budget decreased from \$93.6 billion in Fiscal Year (FY) 1989 to \$63 billion in FY 1995.⁴⁹ The Army's end strength decreased equally precipitously, with Active Army numbers falling from 770,000 in FY 1989 to just under 510,000 by the end of FY 1995, a reduction from 18 Active Divisions in 1990 to 10 Active Divisions in 1996.⁵⁰ In addition, the Army was faced with widespread base closures and realignments, and the relocation of a substantial number of force components from forward deployed areas, mainly from Europe,⁵¹ back to the continental US. Thus the two main challenges the Army faced was

⁴⁷ *National Security Strategy of the United States, August 1991*, at: www.fas.org/man/docs/918015-nss.htm.

⁴⁸ On the 'Bottom Up Review', see Richard A. Lacquement, Jr., *Shaping American Military Capabilities After the Cold War* (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2003), pp. 79-97.

⁴⁹ Both figures in FY 1995 dollars. The decrease in the Army's annual budget from 1989 to 1995 had been preceded by a decline from a high of 100 billion FY 1995 dollars in 1985 (the height of the Reagan presidency military build-up) to the 93.6 billion FY 1995 dollar budget of 1989. See Gordon R. Sullivan and Michael V. Harper, *Hope is Not a Method: What Business Leaders Can Learn from America's Army* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997), pp. 250-51.

⁵⁰ Over the same period, Army Guard numbers fell from 457,000 to 387,000, Army Reserve from 319,000 to 242,000, and Army civilian workforce from 403,000 to 270,000. Sullivan and Harper, *Hope is Not a Method*, pp. 248-49.

⁵¹ The US Army was to cut its forces in Europe by over 50%, the equivalent of 1 Corps and 2 Divisions. See Gordon Sullivan, Speech, Eisenhower Luncheon of the Annual Meeting of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), Washington, DC, 15 October 1991, in *The Collected Works of the Thirty-second*

the need to develop a force projection capability at a time when it was retrenching from forward bases back to the continental US and needed to sustain or find new ways to ensure that it could overmatch peer or near-peer opponents even while it became a smaller force.

These two environmental challenges served to condition the US Army's view on how to adapt in the post Cold War period. These challenges also shaped, to a degree, the Army's emerging future vision of warfare. The two main sources for the Army's future vision of warfare, however, stemmed immediately from two key lessons the institution's leadership perceived as stemming from the 1991 Gulf War.

The first lesson was that, with the ending of the Cold War, the 1991 Gulf War was an early exemplar of the emerging reality that the Army in future would be largely based in the continental US instead of forward deployed and the main contingencies it would be tasked with would be comparable regional crises. A key lesson of the 1991 Gulf War for the Army was that its force units were either light enough to be transported strategic distances quickly but too light to fight against armoured conventional forces, or were too heavy to move rapidly over strategic distances.⁵² The central importance of this problem was underscored in *Certain Victory*, the US Army's official account of its operations in the Gulf; in the only sentence emphasized in bold in the study's conclusion, the point was made that "[m]aintaining an immediately deployable capability for decisive land combat to end a conventional conflict successfully is the single most enduring imperative of the Gulf War."⁵³ The Army's desire to develop a capacity to project its forces strategic distances rapidly to conduct

Chief of Staff US Army: Gordon R. Sullivan, General, US Army Chief of Staff June 1991- June 1995, Gordon R. Sullivan (Washington, DC: The Department of the Army, 1996), p. 18. (hereafter Sullivan, *Collected Works*).

⁵² Sullivan and Harper, *Hope is Not a Method*, pp. 6-7. Also see, Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, Speech, DESERT STORM Conference, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), Fort Monroe, VA, 2 March 1992, *Collected Works*, pp. 42-43.

⁵³ Robert H. Scales, Jr., *Certain Victory: The U.S. Army in the Gulf War* (Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2006), pp. 359-60. Bolding of the sentence removed by author. *Certain Victory*, the official history of the Army in the Gulf War, was first published by the Office of the Chief of Staff, United States Army, in 1993. Also see U.S. News, *Triumph Without Victory: The Unreported History of the Persian Gulf War* (New York and Toronto: Times Books, 1992), p. 101, and Lt. Gen. William G. Pagonis, (USA ret.), with Jeffrey L. Cruikshank, *Moving Mountains: Lessons in Leadership and Logistics from the Gulf War* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1992).

high-intensity major combat operation would prove to be an enduring challenge for the institution.

The second lesson stemmed from an early recognition that the increasing emergence of information technologies had implications for the future of warfare. The Army was able to utilize several new systems, such as the TROJAN satellite system, the Global Positioning System (GPS), Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) and the Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System, and deploy prototypes of improved communication systems. These new systems together allowed Army units to operate at greater distances at greater tempo, and facilitated the distribution of intelligence.⁵⁴ Gen. Gordon Sullivan, Army Chief of Staff, contended in October 1991 that the “[t]echnological advances — as evidenced in the deserts of the Gulf War ...shift us away from the attrition warfare of the past 100-plus years and usher in an era of warfare featuring greater speed and precision. Simply stated, we are at a watershed — we stand between the Cold War past and a new era.”⁵⁵ His view was that the new technologies of the post-Industrial Age would have three main impacts which would change the way the Army should fight. First, the improved precision of weapons and advancement in command, control, communications and intelligence systems meant that a smaller Army could be more effective on the conventional battlefield than an enemy. These technologies would permit the Army to see the battlefield better and strike whatever it saw, as well as to “respond to stimuli faster than [the enemy] can.” Second, the new technologies expanded the “dimensions of the battlefield”, allowing the Army to operate with “areas of greater width and depth while adding the dimension of altitude—to include the use of outer space.” And finally, the future battlefield would feature “increased speed and tempo”, with the Army capable of fighting “day and night in all weather.”⁵⁶ Together, he argued, “increased precision, dimensions, and speed make the battlefield of today fundamentally different” than in the past. Gen. Sullivan contended that the exploitation of these technologies and the mastering of the resultant changes on the battlefield would allow the organization to become a smaller yet more

⁵⁴ Scales, *Certain Victory*, pp. 164-74.

⁵⁵ Gordon Sullivan, Speech, Eisenhower Luncheon of the Annual Meeting of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), Washington, DC, 15 October 1991, *Collected Works*, p. 17.

⁵⁶ Gen. Gordon Sullivan, “The Army in the Post-Industrial World,” Speech to Land Warfare Forum, Arlington, VA. 9 January 1992, *Collected Works*, p. 25.

capable fighting force,⁵⁷ and would result in a future US Army that was not “simply be a smaller version of the Cold War army”.⁵⁸

The Army through much of the 1990s thus sought to explore the promise of new technologies, primarily information technologies, for warfighting and to revise its operational doctrine in order both to drive change and identify new ways of fighting its units. The Army’s examination of new technologies proceeded through the New Louisiana Manoeuvres process and the follow-on Division/Army XXI Advanced Warfighting Experiment process that culminated in 1998. The Army XXI force structure that emerged from this process encompassed some modifications to the structure of a division, but conceptually and organizationally the digitized Army XXI division would essentially be the standard division of the Cold War era with selected information technologies bolted onto traditional warfighting systems.⁵⁹ The new digitized division, in short, would only fight better the way the Army division had fought force-on-force battles against conventional enemy forces before, not fight differently.⁶⁰ The effort to revise the Army’s FM 100-5, *Operations* doctrine manual fared little better, for the attempt was hampered by fairly widespread internal organizational reticence to move too far from what had worked in the past and with what it was comfortable.⁶¹ Gen. Sullivan had been quite concerned at the beginning of his tenure that the Army, due to bureaucratic inertia and professional complacency resulting from its very real battlefield success in the 1991 Gulf War, would be resistant to the sort of changes he

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

⁵⁸ Gordon R. Sullivan, Speech, Eisenhower Luncheon of the Annual Meeting of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), Washington, DC, 15 October 1991, *Collected Works*, p. 18. Also see, for example, “The Chief on Army Readiness: “No More “Task Force Smiths’,” *Army*, January 1992, *Collected Works*, pp. 75-76.

⁵⁹ See Gen. William W. Hartzog and Lt. Col. James G. Diehl, “Building the 21st-Century Heavy Division,” *Military Review*, March-April 1998, at: www.fas.org/man/dod-101/army/unit/docs/hartzog.htm; and Jim Caldwell, “New design framework for Army XXI heavy division,” *TRADOC News Service*, June 9, 1998, at: www.fas.org/man/dod-101/army/unit/docs/a19980609newdiv.htm.

⁶⁰ See Major David M. King, *Force XXI and the American Way of War* (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: School of Advanced Military Studies, United States Army Command and General Staff College, 1995), esp. pp. 32-38.

⁶¹ See John L. Romjue, *American Army Doctrine for the Post-Cold War* (Ft. Munroe VA: TRADOC Historical Monograph Series, 1996). As Romjue put it, the new doctrine was to be “an evolutionary, not revolutionary approach,” p. 78.

envisioned.⁶² In 1994, in a letter to a fellow officer, he lamented that the Army had not been able to move forward to develop the capabilities he had articulated as being necessary for future battlefields.⁶³ The Army, in short, had proved largely unwilling, and perhaps unable, to adopt new technologies and develop corresponding new approaches for fighting major combat battles. The end product was a force structure that was essentially no different than it had been during the Cold War era. The crux of these early attempts to realize the Army's vision of warfare in the 21st Century was that the future battlefield on which it had to be prepared fight was one of force-on-force, high-intensity conventional warfare, which it was intended would be fought much the same way as the Army had fought in the 1991 Gulf War. It was the Army XXI, with a further update of FM 100-5 *Operations*, renamed FM 3-0 *Operations*, put out in 2001, that went to war in 2003.

The Army's vision of the future of warfare, and of the US Army of the 21st Century, was further refined in The Army After Next (AAN) project, which ran from late 1996 through to 1998. The objective of the AAN project was to seek to understand the future of warfare, and then make recommendations to the Army Chief of Staff on what the Army should do about it.⁶⁴ What emerged from this process was a vision of what Maj. Gen. Robert Scales (U.S Army, retired) later termed "fire-power intensive, limited wars" characterized by increased situational awareness, fast decision making cycles and rapid force movement which would create greater battle fluidity and an expanded, more lethal battlefield.⁶⁵ The warfighting systems and force units would be lighter and smaller than main battle tanks and current formations, sized to be rapidly transportable by strategic air lift to distant theatres and able to shift speedily within an operational theatre. Lethality would be increased through greater situational awareness and the capability to synchronize massed precision fires from joint air and ground

⁶² See James L. Yarrison, *The Modern Louisiana Maneuvers* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1999), pp. 8-9; and Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan and LtCol. Anthony M. Coroalles, "The Army in the Information Age," Strategic Studies Institute Paper, March 1995, p. 18.

⁶³ See Letter from Sullivan to Tilelli 28 August 1994, no subject; In LAM TF Files, Box 2, File 3-4c, quoted in Yarrison, *The Modern Louisiana Maneuvers*, pp. 68-69.

⁶⁴ Senior Officer Oral History Program, Col Robert Killebrew, USA, ret., [interviewed by Lt. Col. Greg Martin, US Army], Project 2000-2 (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army Military History Institute, 2000), p. 12..

⁶⁵ Robert H. Scales, Jr., *Yellow Smoke: The Future of Land Warfare for America's Military* (Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2003), pp. 17-41.

forces to destroy enemy units. Survivability would result from “a combination of speed, agility, active protection, signature management and control, comprehensive situational understanding, terrain masking, deception and indirect fires”, as well from engaging enemy forces at much greater distances.⁶⁶ The crux of this vision of future land warfare was that the Army could replace mass (or armour) with information superiority, or complete situational awareness, to fight major force-on-force, high-intensity conventional battles against a peer opponent.⁶⁷

The Army’s initial intention was to develop the Army After Next by 2025 through incremental changes. The Army’s experience in the 1999 Kosovo conflict, and in particular the deployment of Task Force Hawk, led to a radical change in this development timeline. Task Force Hawk involved the deployment to Albania of US Army UH-64 Apache attack helicopters and long range ATACMS missile batteries, along with support units. The TF Hawk deployment proved to be a public embarrassment for the Army, as it suggested that its forces were too heavy, too unwieldy, to get to the fight in a timely manner.⁶⁸ As Benjamin Lambeth observed, “[t]he Task Force Hawk experience underscored how little the US Army, by its own leadership’s candid admission, had done since Desert Storm to increase its capacity to get to an emergent theatre of operations rapidly and with sufficient forces to offer a credible combat presence.”⁶⁹ In the aftermath of the successful NATO operation, the US Air Force, jubilant about the success of its precision guidance and stealth aircraft in winning a war solely with air assets, was asserting the primacy of air power over the

⁶⁶ Major General Robert H. Scales, Jr. and John Parmentola, “The Army After Next: Intertwining Military Art, Science, and Technology out to the Year 2025,” *Army RD&A*, May-June, 1998,, “The Army After Next,” p. 5.

⁶⁷ For more on the Army After Next Process and its vision of future warfare, see Theo Farrell, Sten Rynning, and Terry Terriff, *Transforming Military Power since the Cold War: Britain, France and the United States, 1991-2012* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, Nov 2013), pp. 42-51. For the final official report on the AAN, see Major General Robert H. Scales, Jr., *Knowledge and Speed*, July 1997, p. 23, reprinted, without enclosures or appendices in Scales, *Future War: Anthology* (Carlisle, PA: U.S. Army War College, 1999), pp. 123-160.

⁶⁸ To move this force to Albania (except the 24 attack helicopters which self-deployed) required some 500 US Air Force C-17 transport sorties, and took, from initial movement orders to full operational capability, 44 days. Dennis Steele, “Remember Kosovo? The U.S. Army Effort That Began Our Involvement,” *Army*, Vol. 58, iss. 4 (April 2008) p. 28, 11 ff; and Bruce Nardulli, Walter Perry, Bruce Pirnie, John Gordon, and John McGinn, *Disjointed War: Military Operations in Kosovo, 1999* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2002), p. 81.

⁶⁹ Lambeth, “Task Force Hawk,” *Air Force Magazine*, February 2002, p. 82.

other services as it could deploy more quickly and win more rapidly than the ponderous US Army.⁷⁰ This enhanced efficacy of the US airpower raised real questions about the future roles and missions, and hence future budgets, of the Army.⁷¹ Heightening Army concerns about its future was that John Hamre, Deputy Secretary of Defense, warned in August 1999 that, "if the Army holds onto nostalgic versions of its grand past, it is going to atrophy and die...[The Army] cannot simply be what it was, and think that it is going to be relevant for this new, complex world that is emerging."⁷² Not to put too fine a point on it, the Army had made little progress in eight years in developing a more strategically responsive capability and was now confronted by serious questions about its relevancy.

Gen. Eric Shinseki, the recently appointed Army Chief of Staff, was very concerned about the questioning of his organization's continued relevance. To address this issue, he substantially changed the timeline of the development and procurement of the Army After Next, when he announced in October 1999 that the Army would develop the 'Objective Force' by 2012. The Objective Force was to be a radical force redesign based on the concepts of the AAN and the future vision of warfare it represented. In spite of some internal scepticism about the Objective Force, the Army moved forward quickly to develop the conceptual and procurement frameworks for achieving it in the new tightened timeline.⁷³ The critical feature the Army desired was for a force unit that was responsive, that is, rapidly deployable to anywhere in the world, using various modes of transportation, ready to fight on arrival.⁷⁴ The Objective

⁷⁰ See Bradley Graham, "Air vs. Ground: The Fight Is On," *Washington Post*, 22 June 1999, p. A1.

⁷¹ See, for example, Daniel Verton, "Army Battles Irrelevancy," *Federal Computer Week*, 15 November 1999; and John Barry and Evan Thomas, "Not Your Father's Army," *Newsweek*, 22 November 1999, pp. 49-52.

⁷² Quoted in Chris Hellman, "What Next for the 'Army After Next'?", *Weekly Defense Monitor*, Center for Defense Information, vol. 3, Issue 35 (September 9, 1999), accessible via www.cdi.org/weekly/ [Archives, 1999].

⁷³ On the misgivings internal to the Army see Farrell, Rynning and Terriff, *Transforming Military Power since the Cold War*, pp. 55-59.

⁷⁴ The stated aim was for the Army to be capable of deploying a combat capable brigade strategic distances in 96 hours, one division in 120 hours, and five divisions in 30 days. General Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff, Army, "Address to the Eisenhower Luncheon, 45th Annual Meeting of the Association of the United States Army (as prepared for presentation)", 12 October, 1999, p. 3: Eric K. Shinseki Collection, Box 85 Folder 13 Speeches – ACofS, Address to the Eisenhower Luncheon 45th Annual Meeting of the AUSA, 12 October 1999; Eric K. Shinseki Collection, Series III USAEUR Army Chief of Staff Oct 1998-13 Dec 1999 Box 85.

Force was made material in the Future Combat System (FCS), which was conceptualized as being a joint, networked system of systems, based on a suite of medium-weight vehicles, both manned and unmanned, linked through a tactical and operational internet. This lighter FCS unit still needed to be survivable, with survivability to be enhanced by a number of means, but primarily by replacing mass with the ability to see and strike accurately the enemy first, at longer distances, and further to be able to out-manoeuve and act faster than the enemy.⁷⁵ Thus the core idea underpinning the FCS was that superior mass could be replaced with superior information, and achieving such a force structure would result in a much more strategically agile force that would answer any questions about the organizations continued relevance.

The FCS moved into development in the spring of 2003.⁷⁶ The Army's efforts to develop the two main components of the FCS - the common main medium-weight combat vehicle and the information network - suffered from constant management troubles, severe cost escalations, and serious technology problems.⁷⁷ A critical issue that increasingly bedevilled the FCS, however, was the battlefield experiences of Army (and Marine Corps) units operating in Iraq. The Army's operational experience in Iraq seriously undercut the conceptual basis of the FCS of replacing mass with superior situational awareness. The counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq was a 'close fight', often in urban areas which reduced situational awareness in spite of improved combat information networks; moreover, military vehicles, including the Stryker light vehicle which was the precursor to the FCS main combat vehicle, proved to be very vulnerable due to a lack of sufficient armour to the rocket propelled grenades and improvised explosive devices that were widely employed by insurgent forces.⁷⁸ In spite of the

⁷⁵ Other means included advanced materials for armor, add-on appliqué armor, active countermeasure systems, and low observable signals. Francis, "The Army's Future Combat Systems' Features, Risks, and Alternatives," p. 7.

⁷⁶ Associated Press, "Army 'future combat system' secures OK from Pentagon," *Washington Times*, 20 May 2003; and Charles Aldinger, "Pentagon OKs 'Future Combat Systems' For Army," *Rense.com*, 22 May 2003, at: www.rense.com/general37/oks.htm.

⁷⁷ See Farrell, Rynning and Terriff, *Transforming Military Power since the Cold War*, pp. 85-99.

⁷⁸ See John Gordon IV and Bruce R. Pirnie, "'Everybody Wanted Tanks': Heavy Force in Operation *Iraqi Freedom*", *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Iss.39 (4th Quarter 2005) esp. pp. 89-90; Lisa Burgess, "Army Looks to Give Stryker A Facelift", *Military.com*, 22 December 2004, at:

difficulties in developing the FCS and the counter-indicating experience of the ground war in Iraq, the Army pressed on with the development of its future force with single-minded determination even as the organization was struggling to sustain and turn around the ground combat in Iraq. As US Secretary of Defense Robert Gates complained in May 2008, "I have noticed too much of a tendency towards what might be called Next-War-itis – the propensity of much of the defense establishment to be in favor of what might be needed in a future conflict."⁷⁹ Gates' statement in a sense underscores the Army's unwavering commitment to its preferred image of future warfare -- a vision that did not appear to conform to reality in light of the evidence provided by the on-going conflict in Iraq.

The Army's pursuit of the future force it wanted to have in order to fight successfully on what it envisioned was the future battlefield was ended when Secretary Gates effectively terminated the FCS program in May 2009. Gates argued that "there are significant unanswered questions concerning the FCS vehicle design strategy. I am also concerned that, despite some adjustments, the FCS vehicles – where lower weight, higher fuel efficiency, and greater informational awareness are expected to compensate for less armor – do not adequately reflect the lessons of counterinsurgency and close quarters combat in Iraq and Afghanistan."⁸⁰ Simply put, along with the management, cost and technology problems encountered in developing the FCS, there was a fundamental mismatch between the Army's concept of its future force that was designed to fight the Army's vision of future war and the form of warfare the Army was currently engaged in -- a form of warfare it could expect to wage again at some future point.

http://www.military.com/NewContent/0,13190,SS_122204_Stryker,00.html; and Associated Press, "Stryker Losses Raise Questions", *Military.com*, 13 May 2007, at:

<http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,135721,00.html?ESRC=dod-b.nl>.

⁷⁹ See in particular, Associated Press, "Military must focus on current wars, Gates says : Defense secretary rejects Pentagon's tendency toward 'Next-War-itis'", *MSBN*, 13 May 2008. at:

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/24600218/ns/us_news-military/t/military-must-focus-current-wars-gates-says/#.T_yobB0mVpg.

⁸⁰ Robert Gates, "Remarks to the Heritage Foundation (Colorado Springs, CO)," As Delivered by Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Tuesday, May 13, 2008 (Washington, DC: Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs, U.S. Department of Defense, 13 May 2008), at: www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1240.

The US Army in years following the end of the Cold War faced a new strategic environment that posed new challenges to which it had to respond. Facing a reduction of its overall force structure and retrenchment from forward positions, the organization needed to be able to furnish forces to meet the stipulation that US forces needed to be capable of managing two regional contingencies at the same time. The US Army's aim was to utilize emerging information technologies to improve its ability to deploy strategic distances quickly while enhancing its capability to conduct conventional, force-on-force, high intensity warfare. The Army's vision of future warfare was that mass (or armour) could be replaced by information superiority (or superior situational awareness) and it tenaciously pursued the development of a force structure suited for this conception of the future battlefield. Along with a variety of serious technical and other problems encountered during the development of such a force, the inherent problem was that, as Andrew Krepinevich contended in 2004, "[t]he path the Army has chosen is uncomfortably narrow, focusing on fielding what appear to be relatively homogenous new units that are oriented principally on only one aspect of the Service's future mission set: conventional warfare and the open battle."⁸¹ There are sound reasons why the US Army needs to be very competent on a conventional battlefield, but its organizational cultural preference for traditional combat shaped the Army's response to focus it very narrowly on this form of warfare. Indeed, that the Army's vision of its future force was, as Krepinevich suggests and battlefield experience demonstrated, one of a force fighting only in 'open battle', which is a conception of battle and the battlefield which is strongly resonant of the way of battle the organization employed in northern Europe in the last year of World War II.

Thinking About the Future of Warfare

The US Army moving into the post-Cold War period developed a fairly clear vision of the future of warfare, a vision that focused narrowly on conventional, force-on-force battles. The intensity of the Army's near mono focus on preparing for a future

⁸¹ Andrew F. Krepinevich, *Transforming The Legions: The Army and the Future of Land Warfare* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessment, 2004), pp.60-64, at: <http://www.cfr.org/defense-policy-and-budget/transforming-legions-army-future-land-warfare/p11788>, p. 108.

conventional war seemingly contributed directly to blinding it to other changes in warfare. As noted earlier, the US Marine Corps (USMC), under the leadership of General Charles C. Krulak from 1995 to 1999, envisioned future battlefields in which irregular warfare would be an important aspect, if not the main aspect. The Marine Corps based this future of warfare on a range of already present trends that could be fairly readily discerned by the mid-1990s. Among these was the materialization of irregular warfare, such as was seen in Somalia and Bosnia, among other places, and a recognition that the superlative conventional capability of the US military almost certainly meant that any future battlefield opponent would resort to irregular, asymmetrical forms of warfare rather than engage American forces in a style of warfare that opponent was sure to lose.⁸² The US Army certainly should have been aware of at least some of these trends and, moreover, would have been aware of the efforts of the USMC in this period. Indeed, between 1992 and 1998, the U.S. Army conducted 26 operations that were not conventional combat missions, whereas between 1960 and 1991 it had undertaken only 10 such non-combat operations.⁸³ Yet the Army persisted through the 1990s to adhere resolutely to its desired vision of future warfare, one which did not include irregular, asymmetrical warfare.

Military doctrine is intended to furnish the fundamental principles that guide the employment of forces. According to *Joint Pub 1: Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States* (1999), "Doctrine shapes the way the Armed Forces think about the use of the military instrument of national power."⁸⁴ Simply put, doctrine provides guidance for a shared understanding to plan for and operate in military operations, and it shapes the way a military organization thinks about and trains for war. The Army is decidedly a doctrine-based organization; it relies on its doctrine to inform all members of the organization of its purpose and of how to conduct and prepare for operations, as well as to serve as a guide to inform the organization's efforts to effect change.⁸⁵ Army

⁸² See Terriff, "Of Romans and Dragons".

⁸³ Jack Spencer, "The Facts About Military Readiness," The Heritage Foundation, *Backgrounder* #1394, 15 September 2000, at: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/MissileDefense/BG1394.cfm>.

⁸⁴ *Joint Pub 1: Joint Warfare of the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington: National Defense University Press, 14 November 1999), p. vi.

⁸⁵ On the relationship between doctrine and innovation in the US Army, see Michael Evans, "The Primacy of Doctrine: The United States Army and Military Innovation and Reform," Directorate of Army Research and Analysis, Army Occasional Paper No 1 - August 1996.

doctrine directly reflects how it understands it will fight and what forms of warfare it needs to be prepared to fight.

Gen. Sullivan in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War believed that the Army needed a new capstone doctrine to reflect the changes of the post-Cold War period and to furnish doctrinal direction for the changes he and his fellow officers sought to introduce in the 1990s.⁸⁶ The effort to update the Army's capstone doctrine, FM 100-5 *Operations*, was initiated in 1992 and a new version was issued in 1993. The rewrite of FM 100-5 *Operations* was intended to drive the Army forward to be prepared for conflict in the 21st Century, but even in terms of recasting the future conventional battlefield, it fell short due to considerable organizational resistance to change.⁸⁷ The new FM 100-5 identified that a goal of the Army was to be able to achieve 'full spectrum domination'⁸⁸, and included a chapter titled "Operations Other than War." This chapter started, however, with the statement that "[t]he Army's primary focus is to fight and win the nation's wars,"⁸⁹ and covered a fairly wide range of operations from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief through peacekeeping and peace enforcement to counter drug operations, all in only eight pages. The coverage of these and other operations was hence notably brief. With respect to addressing the prospects of the Army engaging in combat against irregular enemies, FM 100-5 1993 included two short paragraphs on combating terrorism and three short paragraphs under 'support for insurgencies and counterinsurgencies' in which the emphasis was on 'supporting' other nation militaries rather than on how to conduct operations against irregular opponents.⁹⁰ That the Army's nomenclature for this range of military operations, many of which it was increasingly being tasked to conduct, was 'operations other than war' (OOTW)⁹¹ is

⁸⁶ On Sullivan's view on the critical importance of doctrine, Gen Gordon R. Sullivan, "Doctrine: A Guide to the Future," *Military Review*, February 1992, pp. 2-9.

⁸⁷ The new doctrine in terms of conventional warfighting clearly had one foot firmly planted in the AirLand Battle doctrine and the Cold War Army of 1980s, extending and revising the 1987 doctrine without substantially changing how the Army would fight a force-on-force fight. See John L. Romjue, *American Army Doctrine for the Post-Cold War* (Ft. Munroe, VA: TRADOC Historical Monograph Series, 1996), esp. pp. 78, 93, 99 and 135.

⁸⁸ See Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 100-5, Operations*, June 1993, at: www.fs.fed.us/fire/doctrine/genesis_and_evolution/source_materials/FM-100-5_operations.pdf.

⁸⁹ *FM 100-5, Operations*, June 1993, p. 13.1.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 13.6 - 13.8.

⁹¹ The term 'military operations other than war', or MOOTW, is also sometimes used.

indicative of the general attitude of the organization toward these types of operations in comparison to the what the Army was convinced was its priority mission -- peer-versus-peer conventional warfighting.

The new FM 100-5 *Operations* doctrine, with its emphasis on traditional warfighting, furnished at best only partially useful guidance for Army operations in Somalia (1993), Haiti (1994) and Bosnia (1995).⁹² The Army, based on its experiences in Haiti and Bosnia, subsequently sought to redevelop its doctrine in a manner that merged conventional war and OOTW. The intent was to quell growing controversy within the Army over non-combat operations and a draft was produced by 1997 that aimed to do just that. This draft, however, was sidelined due a change in the commander overseeing the drafting process, with the new commander insisting on a draft that “created a discussion of the full range of violent and nonviolent operations that army forces might face in the future.”⁹³ A new draft was prepared and released for review in 1998, but considerable pushback from reviewers arguing that it was largely an intellectual exercise that did not have adequate tactical substance, and that the Army was unlikely to accept it, resulted in the draft eventually being shelved. Both the 1997 and 1998 drafts reportedly included more guidance for the conduct of contingency operations (or OOTWs) but both also continued to stress strongly that the Army’s mission is to fight and win America’s conventional wars.⁹⁴

In 2001 the Army finally promulgated a new FM 100-5 *Operations* manual, renumbered FM 3-0 *Operations*, to replace the 1993 version. This new capstone doctrine was intended to provide the Army with the necessary direction to begin the transition process from its heavy mechanized legacy force to its desired medium-weight future force (or Objective Force) that had been introduced by Gen. Shinseki in 1999.⁹⁵ This edition differed from its predecessor, and the two shelved drafts, in that it identified ‘full spectrum’ warfare as encompassing the full range of potential Army missions, from conventional warfighting through the various forms of OOTWs. The manual

⁹² See Walter E. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine: From the American Revolution to the War on Terror* (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2011). pp. 232-242.

⁹³ Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine*, p. 245.

⁹⁴ Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine*, pp. 245-246.

⁹⁵ The FM 3-0 2001 in particular was to furnish the direction for the Army to establish the ‘interim force’, with the expectation that another edition would be issued in 2007 to move the Army onto the Objective Force. Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine*, p. 248. The next rewrite was produced in 2008.

included a full chapter of 18 pages on stability operations, which encompassed sections on Foreign Internal Defense (FID) and support to a host nation waging a counterinsurgency as well as other types of noncombat contingencies, and a chapter 14 pages in length that focused on 'support operations' to either domestic or foreign civilian agencies.⁹⁶ The inclusion of these two chapters represented a significant enlargement of guidance for these types of operations, but in the manual there still existed a clear distinction between operations in war (or warfighting) and military operations other than war (OOTW). FM 3-0 2001 stressed that "[t]he doctrine holds warfighting as the Army's primary focus and recognizes that the ability of Army forces to dominate land warfare also provides the ability to dominate any situation in military operations other than war."⁹⁷ The view the new capstone doctrine presented was that the Army's main concern must be on being able to dominate in conventional warfighting operations and that this would allow it to succeed in the lesser OOTW contingencies as well.

The inclusion of a more in-depth examination of OOTWs in this edition, however, did not necessarily signify that the Army had embraced these lesser-included contingencies. Many in the Army were unhappy with this aspect of the new manual. As one chronicler of the evolution of Army doctrine put it, one senior Army officer who was unhappy with the inclusion of OOTW contingencies "understood that the Army must perform every task assigned by civil authority, [but] he did not want to read about it in the service's keystone doctrine."⁹⁸ The senior officer's preference for conventional warfighting and distaste for OOTWs was fairly widely shared amongst the officer corps of the service. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. John Shalikashvili, expressed his concern about operations other than war in 1994, saying "[m]y fear is we're becoming mesmerized by operations other than war and we'll take our mind off what we're all about, to fight and win our nation's wars."⁹⁹ Indeed, the Chairman's dismissive attitude toward non-combat operations is evident in his expressed view that

⁹⁶ Headquarters, Department of the Army, *FM 3-0, Operations, June 2001*, p. 9-1 to 9-18 and 10-1 to 10-14. At: <http://www.bits.de/NRANEU/others/amd-us-archive/fm3-0%2801%29.pdf>.

⁹⁷ *FM 3-0, Operations, June 2001*, p. vii.

⁹⁸ Kretchik, *U.S. Army Doctrine*, p. 249.

⁹⁹ General John Shalikashvili, "Shalikashvili: Focus Remains on Warfighting, Not Peacekeeping," *Defense Daily*, 2 September 1994.

“real men don’t do MOOTW.”¹⁰⁰ In November 1999, ACS Gen. Eric Shinseki attributed the 10th Mountain and 1st Infantry divisions’ low readiness ratings with respect to potential conventional warfighting missions to “their commitments to ongoing peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo.”¹⁰¹ In short, through the 1990s and into the first few years of the 21st Century, the Army appeared to trivialize operations other than war, and perceived such non-combat operations as a distraction from their preferred form of warfare, one that could undermine the service’s capability to conduct its conventional warfighting functions and would consume resources needed to develop its envisioned future force.

Army doctrine can be seen as reflecting the organization’s official thinking about what it does and what it needs to do to be prepared to fulfil its tasks most effectively. Thus, the effective absence of any guidance for addressing the conduct of operations against irregular, asymmetrical opponents and the slighting of operations other than conventional warfighting in the Army’s capstone doctrine is telling. Not to put too fine point on it, the Army officially was not thinking about these types of operations in any thorough way, and very particularly appeared not to think that it would be faced with fighting irregular combatants employing unconventional forms of warfare. There was some open unofficial debate and discussion, however, apparent within the Army about these issues. A survey of the articles published in the *Military Review*, a key outlet for writings on Army issues, from July 1991 through to December 2001 indicates that there was a reasonable amount of articles published on ‘operations other than war’.¹⁰² Over the period surveyed, *Military Review* published 848 articles (including short Insights and Almanac pieces) of which 118 addressed some form of contingency operation that broadly fell within the Army’s definition of OOTW. The substantial majority of these

¹⁰⁰ Fred Kaplan, *The Insurgents: David Petraeus and the Plot to Change the American Way of War* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2013), pp. 45.

¹⁰¹ Eric Shinseki, “Shinseki: Division Readiness Problems Due to Deployments,” *Defense Daily*, 12 November 1999, p. 1.

¹⁰² The time frame was chosen to reflect the completion of the Army’s role in the 1991 Gulf Conflict and the one issue that that was published after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks. It must be noted that *Military Review* up to 1994 published 12 issues per year, but in 1995 started publishing only 6 issues annually; further, the Jan-Feb 1998 issue was not available. Issues of *Military Review* were accessed electronically via the Combined Arms Research Library Digital Library, United States Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, at: <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p124201coll1>.

118 articles addressed such topics as peace operations, humanitarian responses and disaster relief, counterdrug operations, war criminals, foreign internal defence, and civil-military/media relations. This set of articles largely described operations conducted by the US military, or explained operations by other organizations such as the UN, that had occurred in the recent past, and were reflective of the types of operations the Army was being tasked with by the US command authorities. Twelve articles focused primarily on insurgencies, asymmetrical warfare or terrorism,¹⁰³ of which several contended that the Army needed to take seriously that it might engage in asymmetric warfare against irregular opponents in the future and prepare accordingly.¹⁰⁴ Such a survey of one professional journal cannot be considered definitive.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, it does suggest that, even unofficially, consideration and discussion about the Army needing to be capable of conducting operations against irregular, non-state entities which employed unconventional, asymmetrical forms of warfare was on the very margins of Army concerns about the future character of warfare for which it needed to be prepared.

The seemingly widespread view within the Army that it needed to focus on preparing to fight conventional force-on-force, high-intensity combat against some peer opponent and that preparing for other forms of warfare or operations was of marginal utility arguably was shared by its sister services.¹⁰⁶ In the summer of 2002, the US

¹⁰³ If articles that simply describe aspects of the operations in Somalia are included, this number increases to 18 articles. None of these other six articles examined the character of irregular warfare.

¹⁰⁴ See in particular, Col. John M. House, US Army, "The Enemy After Next", *Military Review*, LXXVII, No. 2 (March - April 1998): pp. 22 - 27; and Lieutenant Colonel Lester W. Grau, US Army, ret., and Jacob W. Kipp, "Urban Combat: Confronting the Specter", *Military Review* LXXXIX, No. 3 (July-August 1999): pp. 9-17. House concluded his article stating that "[US] Military forces must be prepared to defeat a variety of threats, because America's military advantages will force opponents to seek unexpected and unconventional avenues for attack." House, "The Enemy After Next", p. 27.

¹⁰⁵ The two 'official' journals published by the Association of the United States Army, *Army* and *Armour*, and the journal *Parameters*, were not surveyed. Although a complete survey of the articles published in *Parameters* was not undertaken, over the period of 1990 to 2003 this journal did publish a number of articles that addressed issues such irregular warfare.

¹⁰⁶ To a degree, this holds for the USMC as well. The effort to prepare the USMC for an irregular future undertaken by Gen. Krulak were largely allowed to lapse under Gen. James Jones, who succeeded Gen. Krulak as Commandant in July 1999. See Terriff, "Of Romans and Dragons", and Terry Terriff, "Warriors and Innovators: Military Change and Organizational Culture in the US Marine Corps", *Defence Studies*, Vol. 6, no. 2 (June 2006): esp. pp. 227-239.

military conducted Millennium Challenge 02, one of the largest and most expensive US joint force exercises and experiments ever undertaken, that was designed to test the concepts and theories that emerged from the US military transformation. This exercise roughly modelled an American "Blue Force" invasion of a fictitious state located in the Persian Gulf. The first day of the exercise proved disastrous for the invading US force. The Red Force, or enemy, commander utilized militia fighters to engage the Blue Force with a range of unconventional and irregular tactics and operations. The result was that a significant number of the invasion fleet ships were sunk by suicide-bombers in speed boats and small aircraft, communication interception was evaded through the use of coded cries from minarets and motorcycle messengers to transmit orders, and the Red Force's main conventional military units were hard to locate never mind destroy as they were constantly manoeuvring. The Blue Force compelled the refloating of the sunk ships and resurrection of the 'killed' soldiers and sailors in order to continue the exercise. The Red Force commander's subsequent continued use of unconventional approaches and tactics were eventually restricted to ensure that the exercise continued. The exercise proved to be very controversial for a number of important reasons, but a significant point was the US military commanders of the Blue Force appeared unwilling, and perhaps unable, to accept that an opponent would fight using militias as well as state military forces and would employ unconventional tactics and approaches. As former US ambassador Robert Oakley, who played the leader of the opponent state, pointed out, the Millennium Challenge 02 exercise showed "that a relatively primitive or unsophisticated enemy can find ways to surprise you".¹⁰⁷ Yet as Lt. Gen. Paul van Riper (USMC, ret), who was the Red Force military commander, observed, "A phrase I heard over and over was: 'That would never have happened,' And I said: nobody would have thought that anyone would fly an airliner into the World Trade Centre... but nobody seemed interested."¹⁰⁸

The US Army in the period from the end of the 1991 Gulf War through to the Iraq War that started in 2003 held a vision of future war that reflected its preference for preparing for and fighting a conventional, force-on-force war against a peer enemy.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted in Nicholas D. Kristof, "How We Won the War", *New York Times*, 6 September 2002, at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/09/06/opinion/how-we-won-the-war.html>.

¹⁰⁸ Quoted in Julian Borger, "Wake-up call", *Guardian*, 6 September 2002, at: <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/sep/06/usa.iraq>.

This intent focus on being able to fight high intensity conventional battles against a peer opponent resulted in alternative future forms of warfare which could emerge seemingly being evident only on the margins of Army thinking. Doctrine is central to explaining what types of operations the Army will engage in, how it intends to conduct combat operations and what it thinks the organization needs to do to prepare for future conflicts and combat. The two main capstone doctrines promulgated after the 1991 Gulf War and before the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 strongly emphasized traditional conventional combat, slighted what the Army labelled, in an almost derisory fashion, 'operations other than war', and essentially ignored preparing to conduct operations against irregular, unconventional opponents. There was some wider discussion of the need to prepare to fight against irregular enemies that resorted to unconventional, asymmetric approaches to offset the Army's clear military superiority in conventional warfare, but such arguments were largely on the fringe of the main debates and did not gain any traction in the service's deliberations on the future character of warfare. The content of each of the doctrine manuals promulgated was a compromise, and what was included or excluded depended in part on what senior leaders wanted or preferred and in part on what the wider Army would be comfortable with. The very clear emphasis in these two capstone doctrines on major combat reflected the Army's self-understanding that its prime purpose was to prepare for and, if need be, to be capable of successfully waging, high-intensity, force-on-force warfare against a peer professional opponent. Hence, considering or preparing for any other types of operations or conducting other forms of warfare was both unwelcome and bothersome, and the Army generally harboured an indifferent attitude towards preparing for or conducting any operations other than major combat. The US Army thus entered into Iraq largely unprepared for the prospect that Iraqi military forces and militias might very well resort to unconventional tactics and approaches in tandem with conventional warfighting approaches, and that Iraqis might very well resort to guerrilla warfare rather than accept defeat.

Conclusion

The US Army entered Iraq displaying no evident appreciation that it was embarking in a war in which there was a real prospect it would face irregular (and regular) Iraqi forces employing unconventional means or the real possibility that many Iraqis would resort to insurgency to resist the American occupation of their country. Through the twelve years from the ending of the Cold War to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Army was distinctly focused on being able to fight and win a conventional, high-intensity, mechanized war. The Army's intent focus on its future vision of warfare, and on developing and fielding the future force it was convinced it needed to be able to fight successfully on what it conceived as the future battlefields, resulted in all other considerations and possibilities essentially being ignored or marginalized. This narrow focus on conventional warfare is an artefact of the US Army's military culture. Over the past 100 years the Army has essentially internalized the idea that its purpose is to fight and win America's war, and that this means that its function is to conduct conventional, high-intensity, mechanized warfare against a professional peer (or near peer) opponent. The service's unhappy experiences in conducting military operations other than major combat missions, such as Korea and Vietnam, only served to strengthen this view of the Army's purpose. This self-conception that it does, and should, fight traditional forms of wars using traditional modes of warfare has come to define the identity of the Army and what it means to be a soldier. The centrality and power of this characteristic of the organization's self-identity shaped the Army's consideration of the future of warfare, and its conception of its future force structure. The result was that in the 1990s the Army seemingly was marching toward the future while looking through a conceptual telescope that was focused relentlessly on its preferred way of war.

The US Army's uncompromising emphasis on major force-on-force warfare meant the organization paid insufficient attention to ongoing changes in variegated battlefields around the globe. Indeed, the Army faced irregular warfare in Somalia, and irregular fighters featured in such theatres as Bosnia and Kosovo, among other regional wars, yet there seemed to be no organizational contemplation that the service would face such irregular fighters and unconventional modes of warfare on future battlefields. This lack of foresight meant that the Army was not prepared for irregular warfare intermixed with force-on-force battles, and it was not prepared to conduct

counterinsurgency operations. The Army's focus on preparing on traditional conventional warfare, however, does not mean it got matters entirely wrong. The US Army and USMC's mechanized manoeuvre from the Kuwait border to Baghdad was mostly a traditional force-on-force fight and Army units involved demonstrated the organization's exceptional competence in this form of warfare. More problematic was the Army's vision of future warfare as represented by the Army After Next project and the Future Combat System. A core concept of the FCS was that Army units could replace mass, including armour, with superior situational awareness and stand-off massed firepower, but the vulnerability of medium-weight vehicles during the Iraqi insurgency makes this idea very problematic. One can only wonder how well a medium-weight force, even with superior situational awareness, such as represented by the FCS, would have fared in the 'Thunder Run' the Army's 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, conducted through the thoroughfares of Baghdad.¹⁰⁹ Gen. Robert W. Cone, the current commander of Army Training and Doctrine Command, has observed that, "[o]ftentimes in recent years we have been mesmerized by technology."¹¹⁰ Arguably, the Army was equally mesmerized by a vision of 'open battle', much as it had fought in the final year in World War II in Northern Europe and in the 1991 Gulf War, at the expense of having a force capable of 'close battle' in which armour, or mass, still remains rather important.

The US today, in the wake of the war in Iraq and with the war in Afghanistan winding inexorably toward some form of denouement, is once again looking to the future. As a service, it is again facing questions about its relevance, as the US is war weary and will prefer to avoid any large commitments of ground troops to a sustained overseas campaign. There have been attempts to argue that the Army did not get it wrong in Iraq, rather the whole campaign was a misbegotten misadventure borne of strategic miscalculations and strategic mistakes, and that the organization needs to focus on preparing for and conducting the traditional mode of warfare it wants to fight.

¹⁰⁹ On the Brigade's armoured punch into Baghdad and the form of combat involved, see David Zucchini, *Thunder Run: Three Days in the Battle for Baghdad* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004).

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Dan Parsons, "Technology Alone Cannot Win Future Wars, Senior Military Leaders Say", *National Defense Magazine*, 24 October 2013, at:

<http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?List=7c996cd7-cbb4-4018-baf8-8825eada7aa2&ID=1314&RootFolder=%2Fblog%2FLists%2FPosts>.

In a sense such a point of view is reminiscent of Col. Summers' arguments about the Army in Vietnam. The Army currently contends, however, that it will retain its hard won counterinsurgency expertise even as it sets about re-instilling the competence and skills it needs to conduct mechanized, combined arms, force-on-force warfare which have atrophied over the past decade.¹¹¹ The culture of an organization can exert a powerful influence on its behaviour, and the Army's self-identity as a conventional warfighting force is deeply institutionalized in its culture. As Iraq and Afghanistan recede increasingly into the past, the Army needs to be vigilant that the allure of its identification as being a force that fights conventional, high-intensity warfare against a peer opponent does not lead it again to a blinkered vision of the future of warfare which is focused primarily on its desired way of war.

¹¹¹ See, for example, Sandra I. Erwin, "Army Ponders Its Post-War Identity", *National Defense Magazine*, 1 December 2013, at: <http://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/blog/Lists/Posts/Post.aspx?List=7c996cd7-cbb4-4018-baf8-8825eada7aa2&ID=1350&RootFolder=%2Fblog%2FLists%2FPosts>.