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AD-A185 491

The Utility of the Operational Pause
in Sequencing Battles
to Achieve an Operational Advantage

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1 May 1987

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS			
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY			3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release: Distribution unlimited			
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE						
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION School of Advanced Military Studies, USACGSC		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable) ATZL-SWV	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION			
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-6900			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER			
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS			
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.	WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) The Utility of the Operational Pause in Sequencing Battles to Achieve an Operational Advantage (U)						
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) MAJ David M. Cowan, USA						
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Monograph		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 87/5/1	15. PAGE COUNT 38	
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION						
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) Operational level pauses, Culminating Points, Staff actions, AirLand Battle Tenets			
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP				
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) <p>That warfare is an uneven cycle of activity is undisputed. The most violent and active periods of war are inevitably followed by pauses in operations. Carl von Clausewitz recognized this phenomenon and devoted substantial comment in his famous treatise <u>On War</u> on the subject of "suspension of activity in war." Operational pauses are acknowledged in FM 100-5 as well in discussions on the culminating point of operations. Given that operational pauses are inherent in warfare, are they to be considered merely delays in accomplishing one's mission or are they of some utility in the practice of operational art? The purpose of this monograph is to determine how operational pauses may be used to one's advantage in campaign planning.</p> <p>A number of historical cases are examined to determine where, when, and why operational pauses have been executed in the past. Analysis of these cases indicate that the most apparent reasons for a pause are weather, shift in the main effort of operations, political constraints, and the combat power of a force reaching culmination. Further analysis reveals</p> <p style="text-align: right;">(cont on back)</p>						
20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL MAJ David M. Cowan			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (913) 684-2138	22c. OFFICE SYMBOL ATZL-SWV		

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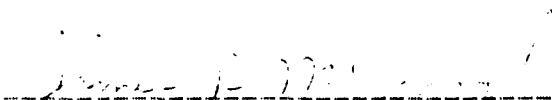
Key to controlling operations in a known relationship to the culminating point is the ability to recognize it as a culminating point. This idea is explored and doctrinal implications are then discussed in terms of the AirLand Battle tenets of initiative, agility, depth, and synchronization. The paper concludes with an assessment on the utility of operational pauses in campaign planning and comments on additional considerations.

School of Advanced Military Studies
Monograph Approval


Name of Student: David M. Cowan, Major, Armor

Title of Monograph: The Utility of the Operational Pause in Sequencing Battles to Achieve an Operational Advantage

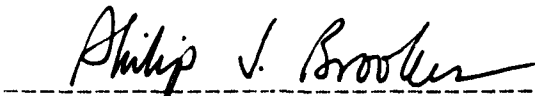
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(Philip J. Brookes, PhD) Director, Graduate Degree Programs

Accepted this 17th day of May 1987

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Distribution/Availability Codes	
Dist	Avail and/or Special
A-1	



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THE UTILITY OF THE OPERATIONAL PAUSE IN SEQUENCING BATTLES TO
ACHIEVE AN OPERATIONAL ADVANTAGE. MAJ David M. Cowan, USA,
38 pages.

ABSTRACT

That warfare is an uneven cycle of activity is undisputed. The most violent and active periods of war are inevitably followed by pauses in operations. Carl von Clausewitz recognized this phenomenon and devoted substantial comment in his famous treatise On War on the subject of "suspension of activity in war". Operational pauses are acknowledged in FM 100-5 as well in discussions on the culminating point of operations. Given that operational pauses are inherent in warfare, are they to be considered merely delays in accomplishing one's mission or are they of some utility in the practice of operational art? The purpose of this monograph is to determine how operational pauses may be used to one's advantage in campaign planning.

A number of historical cases are examined to determine where, when, and why operational pauses have been executed in the past. Analysis of these cases indicate that the most apparent reasons for a pause are weather, shift in the main effort of operations, political constraints, and the combat power of a force reaching culmination. Further analysis reveals that in all cases except that of a force reaching its culminating point the commander had little influence over where and when the pause was executed. It follows, therefore, that for an operational pause to be of any utility it must be planned and/or executed in a known relationship to the culminating point.

Key to controlling operations in a known relationship to the culminating point is the ability to recognize it as a culminating point. This idea is explored and doctrinal implications are then discussed in terms of the AirLand Battle tenets of initiative, agility, depth and synchronization. The paper concludes with an assessment on the utility of operational pauses in campaign planning and comments on additional considerations.

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INTRODUCTION

The phrase "hurry up and wait" is considered by many to be symbolic of life in the armed forces. Immortalized in numerous satirical representations of military service, the phrase typifies what many consider to be the essence of the military - hectic periods of intense preparation and conduct of operations separated by extended periods of anticipation and idleness. While this phenomenon is normally associated with individual and small unit experiences during peacetime, it is equally true for large units during wartime.

Accounts of armed conflict bear out this cyclic nature of warfare, though it is not always intuitively obvious. The focus of many historical writings is on the intensely violent aspect of combat, with relatively little elaboration on the periods of inactivity between engagements and battles.¹ Only as one delves deeper into the history of battles and campaigns does he develop an awareness of the relative frequency and duration of the peaks and valleys of military operations and the resultant active and idle periods of combat. Theoretical support of this roller coaster of activity in warfighting is provided by Carl von Clausewitz in his famous treatise On War. In Book 1, Chapter 1, he introduces war in the abstract by stating that war could consist of a single decisive act or a set of simultaneous decisions. This implies that because of the active and violent nature of war one might expect that once it is initiated it will proceed to its conclusion without pause.

He qualifies these comments by identifying a number of modifications in practice which tend to temper this observation and lead him to the conclusion that "...action in war is not continuous but spasmodic."²

War as a 'spasmodic' event rubs the grain of a military ethos which seemingly calls for rapid continuous action directed toward mission accomplishment. Why is it that activity in war is so often sporadic and delays the achievement of victory in the swift decisive fashion desired by military planners? Here again Clausewitz provides an explanation. In chapter 1, Book One, he states that one of the major reasons for delays in activity during war is "...a desire to wait for a better moment before acting."³ He elaborates further in chapter 6 of Book Three where he addresses the suspension of action in war. Here he establishes three 'determinants' which tend to restrain conflict from continuing without interruption: 1) the fear and indecision native to the human mind; 2) the imperfection of human perception and judgment, and; 3) the greater strength of the defensive.⁴ Of these 'determinants', the first two deal with the human aversion to danger and the often unclear picture of what the enemy's capabilities and intentions are, both of which tend to impose limits on how aggressively the conflict is pursued. The third factor recognizes the relative combat power of the antagonists and how a weakened or weaker force may terminate active offensive operations in order to capitalize on the advantages of a

defensive posture. All of these offer reasons why warfighting is less than the continuous chain of military operations one might initially suppose it to be.

Given that the nature of war tends to be an uneven cycle of events, how does current U.S. Army doctrine prepare the operational level planner to deal with these intermittent periods of activity and idleness? At first reading, one leaves FM 100-5 charged with the offensive spirit and convinced that success stems from relentless effort to turn the tables on the enemy. Practitioners in the conduct of operations "...must throw the enemy off balance with a powerful blow from an unexpected direction, follow up rapidly to prevent his recovery and continue operations aggressively to achieve the higher commander's goals."³ The subsequent in depth discussions on the four basic tenets of AirLand Battle give further emphasis to the continual, active nature of warfare, with little mention of what roles, if any, pauses in operations may play in achieving operational success. Some inference of a pause in operations is made in Appendix B of the manual where another Clausewitzian concept - the culminating point - is discussed. The culminating point is defined as that point where the strength of the attacker no longer significantly exceeds that of the defender. FM 100-5 points out that if an attacker cannot achieve his objectives without risk of exceeding his culminating point, "[he] must plan a pause to replenish his combat power."⁴ In general, however, operational pauses as a tool are given scant treat-

ment in the current edition of FM 100-5.

Pauses in operations are inherent in warfare. yet the question remains whether they are merely delays in accomplishing the mission or have some utility in the realm of operational planning. The purpose of this monograph is to examine the operational pause and determine if and how it may be used to one's advantage in campaign planning.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Within the strategic-operational-tactical structure of military operations, operational art is defined as "the employment of military forces to attain strategic goals through the design, organization, and execution of campaigns and major operations."⁷ Among the functions of operational art are the deployment of forces, their commitment to or withdrawal from battle, and the sequencing of successive battles and engagements to attain major objectives. Of these functions sequencing successive operations is paramount and perhaps the most difficult. The cyclic nature of warfare presents a demanding challenge to the campaign planner tasked with scheduling operations around often unavoidable pauses. By analyzing a number of historical examples some insight is provided on where, when and why operational pauses were taken, and from this some indication of their utility to the operational planner.

North Africa, 1941-42

After the resounding defeat of the Italians in Western Egypt and Libya in early '41, Hitler reluctantly dispatched a German contingent to North Africa in an effort to salvage his ally's situation. He hoped to "prevent a total Italian collapse anywhere, since to do so would expose the whole Axis southern flank to British seaborne attack."⁸ Chosen to direct the campaign in North Africa was Erwin Rommel, former commander of the 7th Panzer Division who had gained fame

against the French in the fall of the previous year.

Rommel was a converted infantry officer who had rapidly developed a talent and flare for mechanized warfare. In March of 1941, barely a month after his arrival in North Africa, he launched a heavy raid against the British at El Agheila. Discovering how weak the British were, he boldly pressed the advance and within six weeks had pushed them nearly 600 miles to the east and was knocking at Egypt's door. Rommel had commenced his drive essentially from his base of operations, but four months later he found himself at the end of his logistical tether and forced to halt offensive operations. He was unable to maintain the requisite combat power to sustain his offensive and achieve a decision. This was the first of several major operations which in the next year would see the initiative see-saw back and forth as the adversaries alternately extended then fell back on their supply lines.

As the British withdrew to the east under Rommel's pressure, the advantage of shortened lines of communications (LOC) gradually passed to them. General Sir Archibald Wavell took advantage of this to strengthen his forces and by June had sufficient combat power to launch the British Western Desert Force in an attempt to eject Rommel from Egypt's doorstep. Wavell met with marginal success and in July was replaced by General Sir Claude Auchinleck. Auchinleck recognized that he did not have the requisite strength to overcome Rommel's force, and paused an additional four months

to rebuild British combat power.¹⁰ In November he was able to continue the offensive and by late December had pushed Rommel back to his original starting point west of El Agheila. It was the British now, however, who were at the end of extended LOCs and for the second time in a year a major offensive culminated without a decision.¹⁰

Rommel wasted little time in rebuilding his strength and seizing the initiative once again. On 5 January a sizable Axis convoy arrived at Rommel's base and on 21 January he attacked. Auchinleck's force was caught off balance by this action and forced to withdraw to the Gazala-Bir Hacheim Line. Enroute they abandoned large stocks of supplies which helped sustain Rommel's advance to Gazala.¹¹ For four months both sides attempted to build up adequate combat power to overcome the other on the Gazala-Bir Hacheim Line. By May Rommel felt that his opportunity was fleeting and continued his offensive. Within a month he had broken the line and captured the key garrison port of Tobruk. The immense stores captured at Tobruk and Rommel's sensing that his combat power exceeded the British regenerative capabilities persuaded him to continue his drive into Egypt.¹² In June Rommel paused near El Alamein to allow his Italian allies to catch up with his Deutches Afrika Korps' advance and secure the flanks of his extended lines. During this brief pause, however, the British were able to reorganize at a faster rate and quickly reinforced their lines to achieve combat power superiority.¹³ In August new leadership assumed control of

the British forces, and by November Rommel had seen the initiative at the operational level for the last time.

The root cause of all operational pauses in this theater was the inability of the attacker to maintain a relative combat power advantage over extended periods. Neither side could mount and sustain an offensive long enough to achieve a decisive victory; both were forced to halt operations. As operations in this theater were in competition for support with operations in other theaters, commanders found themselves regularly short of supplies and on successive occasions found that their attacks reached a point of culmination before a decision.

Eastern Front, 1942-43

An acknowledged master of the operational art, Field Marshal Erich von Manstein accomplished some of his greatest achievements on the eastern front during the winter and spring of '41-42. Author of the famed "Sichelschnitt Plan" which facilitated the Wehrmacht's rolling over France in the fall of 1940,¹⁴ Manstein was dispatched to the eastern front late in 1942 to stabilize a faltering southern flank.

Hitler's plan to conquer Russia with the "Blitzkrieg" was doomed from its early stages. Without a definite overall strategic concept and in disagreement with his generals about where the main effort should be, Hitler's vacillation over commitment of resources precluded achievement of a decisive result.¹⁵ Three months after the campaign was initiated an operational pause of sorts was forced by

torrential rains falling on the forces engaged in the battle for Moscow. Advances were slowed by a sea of mud and the Russians gained valuable time to strengthen their defenses. Two months later the vicious Russian winter set in and virtually all operations were brought to a halt. Hitler's preoccupation with the symbolic cities of Leningrad and Stalingrad further complicated matters when, in December of 1942, his Sixth Army was encircled at Stalingrad creating a precarious situation on his southern flank.¹⁶

In the extreme south Army Group A commanded by Field Marshal E. von Kleist was engaged with elements of the Soviet Transcaucasus Front. Further to the north portions of Manstein's Army Group Don were tied up with the Stalingrad Front while the Soviet Don Front attempted to reduce the Stalingrad pocket. Meanwhile the Southwestern Front (just north of the Don Front) had also engaged Manstein and was attacking southwest in an effort to take Rostov and cut off both Manstein's and Kleist's Army Groups.¹⁷

In a twist of what Clausewitz called the point of defensive culmination, Manstein had argued for a halt in defensive operations along the existing trace in order to withdraw to a shorter line in the west. This movement would allow Manstein to thicken his forces in the line plus free some other forces for reserve missions. Hitler's stubbornness about giving up any territory which his forces had acquired initially prevented this from happening.¹⁸ After the Sixth Army was lost at Stalingrad it became obvious that

the situation was rapidly becoming untenable. Hitler abolished Army Group B which had been working to Manstein's north, distributing its forces between Army Group Center and Manstein's Army Group Don which was now rechristened Army Group South. Meanwhile Hitler had authorized Kleist to pull his Army Group A out of the Caucasus Mountains and Manstein was to anchor the German southern flank on the Sea of Azov with his new command.¹⁹ Manstein's defensive pause had finally been executed and with the shorter lines he now could create a viable reserve.

The Russians failed to capitalize on this opportunity to cut off the German southern flank because they did not concentrate their forces.²⁰ Manstein utilized his Fourth Panzer Army in a masterpiece of mobile warfare to sequentially defeat each of the Soviet thrusts.²¹ In a race to beat a weather induced pause Manstein recaptured Kharkov and Belgorod, and by the end of March had restored the front to much the same trace as it had been in the summer of '42.²²

Weather emerges as the most obvious reason for operational pauses in this theater. First it was the cruel Russian winter, then the paralyzing mud created by rains and spring thaws that brought operations to a halt. A second factor influencing the timing and execution of pauses in this campaign is that of the higher commander's intent. One could argue that execution of the defensive pause desired by Manstein was temporarily precluded because of conflicting desires of the senior leadership within the Wehrmacht.

Whatever the reasons it is clear that operational pauses (or lack thereof) were key ingredients of the campaign on the eastern front in '42-43.

France, 1944

Seven weeks after the landings at Normandy, the area occupied by the Allies on the northern coast of France encompassed what they had originally expected to have in the first week. Packed into the small beachhead was the equivalent of thirty-four divisions.²³ The build-up of supplies and troops had proceeded as planned, however, and in general the supply situation was satisfactory. In late July the Allies began their breakout of the beachhead with General Omar Bradley's First Army leading the way at St. Lo.

The first pause of operational significance occurred in mid-August. General George S. Patton's Third Army joined the First and the 12th Army Group was formed with General Bradley as commander. Bradley wasted no time swinging Patton through Brittany after their breakout to rout the scattered German resistance to the west. Turning east, Bradley's forces then began a drive toward the Seine in an effort to pin and destroy the German forces against the river. Hitler's reluctance to recognize the developing threat south of his Army Group B resulted in an encirclement of the bulk of these forces with only a small gap near the town of Falaise open for withdrawal. Recognizing the German predicament, General Bradley ordered elements of Patton's Third Army to swing north and close the "Falaise Gap". The friendly situation at

this time was unclear, however, and on the 14th of August Bradley made a decision to halt Patton's Army for fear of a "mix-up" of Allied forces. As a result of this directed pause the encirclement was not completed and a substantial portion of Hitler's Army Group B was able to escape and withdraw to the east.²⁴

By late August the Allied advance was on the west bank of the Seine. The initially favorable supply situation had now deteriorated as a result of the rapid advance and inability to activate ports closer to the advancing armies. Patton's 3rd Army, nonetheless, was pushing hard and led the pursuit of German forces across France.

The original plan after the breakout was to have both Bradley's 12th and Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery's 21st Army Groups advance on a broad front. This concept would avoid canalization of the Allies and minimize their vulnerability to counterattack.²⁵ Liddell Hart describes the situation that existed in the third week of August:

Eisenhower's 'broad front' plan of advance on the Rhine, designed before the invasion of Normandy, would have been a good way to strain and crack the resistance of a strong and still unbeaten enemy. But it was far less suited to the actual situation, where the enemy had already collapsed.....the issue depended on exploiting their collapse so deeply and rapidly that they would have no chance to rally. That called for a pursuit without pause.²⁶

Unfortunately the logistical situation would not permit a 'pursuit without pause' by both the 12th and 21st Army Groups. Confronted with a decision, Eisenhower elected to have Montgomery conduct the main effort in the northern

approaches, and consequently shifted the priority of support to the 21st Army Group.²⁷ The successes of Bradley's 12th Army Group advances now diminished as Patton's third Army, leading the drive, ran out of gas.

That Montgomery could have enjoyed success in his single concentrated thrust is a much debated issue. A number of factors enter into the discussion, most significant of which is a pause in operations initiated by Montgomery from 4 to 7 September after reaching Brussels and Antwerp. This delay precluded the capture of some vital bridges and allowed the Germans time to stiffen their defense.²⁸ The result was that the opportunity to exploit the enemy's disarray was missed.

The effects of Eisenhower's decision to shift the main effort to 21st Army Group are best summed up by Liddell Hart: "The best chance of a quick finish was probably lost when the 'gas' was turned off from Patton's tanks in the last week of August, when they were 100 miles nearer to the Rhine and its bridges, than the British."²⁹ The shift of the main effort was crucial in the campaign, and the resultant operational pause induced on the lead elements of Bradley's 12th Army Group had significant consequences.

Analysis

This brief capsulized summary of operations during World War II by no means portrays all of the pauses nor reasons for pauses in military operations. There are additional examples in that war and subsequent conflicts where induced pauses constrained military operations and taxed campaign planners'

skills. As the defeat of the Third Reich was nearing completion in 1945 American forces were halted and the main effort shifted away from Berlin. The reasons for this decision are contested, but the consensus is that political implications concerning the post-war settlements were a major factor.³⁰ General Douglas MacArthur also faced political constraints in Korea in 1950 as he was prohibited initially from sending U.S. Forces north of the 38th parallel.³¹ Similar restrictions faced commanders in Viet Nam during the 60's as they attempted to get at the North Vietnamese supply bases in Cambodia and Laos.³²

Having illustrated a number of operational pauses, it is appropriate here to review the reasons for the pauses and the degree of control which the various commanders exercised over when and where they occurred.

The momentum of the German's initial excursion into Russia was severely retarded by the heavy rains which fell on their forces in November of '41. The bitter winter that followed brought virtually all operations save some minor repositioning to a standstill. Manstein was also cognizant of the disrupting effects of weather as he struggled to complete his reforming of the defensive lines prior to the spring thaw in '43. Weather is always a major consideration in war planning or fighting, and it has often had decisive effects on the continuation of operations. Obviously there is little a commander can do to influence weather, although he can anticipate its effects and pace his operations accordingly.

If existing climatological data indicates a period when weather will have a significant impact on operations, the commander is obliged to plan for this. He may choose to prematurely pause to take advantage of favorable terrain, thus acquiring a positional advantage for future operations. Conversely, he may elect to surge in one sector or another to accrue similar advantages. As compared to other reasons for operational pauses, weather is unique in that it effects both sides in a conflict. A third consideration for planning around these weather induced pauses is to attempt to place your opponent in a situation where the weather will have a more adverse effect on him than on you.

A second factor which can invoke a pause in operations for some elements is a shift in the main effort. Patton's Third Army was brought to a halt at a crucial time in his drive toward the Rhine because of the Supreme Commander's desire to focus his efforts on another approach. On a larger scale it could be said that Hitler's decision to prioritize his strategic efforts in Russia precluded Rommel from receiving sufficient supplies to be operationally successful in North Africa. Here again an operational commander has little control over selection and support of a main effort in the theater. Given, however, some knowledge of the overall strategic intent and plan he can posture himself to avoid excessive loss of advantages during a pause in operations.

Key to the discussion here is whether the shift of the main effort was part of the plan or an unexpected occurrence.

When planned, the operational commander has much the same options as when weather invokes a pause in operations. When the shift and resultant pause come as a surprise, however, the commander must seek foremost not to cede the initiative to the enemy. This is discussed at length later in this paper. It suffices here to say that a commander may indeed retain the initiative even though he is a secondary effort by picking his sectors to attack or defend, thereby upsetting the enemy's balance.

A third reason for operational pauses arises from the political constraints often imposed on operational level commanders. There was a flavor of political considerations in Eisenhower's decision to prioritize Montgomery's 21st Army Group over Bradley's 12th.³³ Political implications again enter the equation on the call to shift American Forces away from Berlin toward the end of the war.³⁴ MacArthur was also constrained as political considerations restricted use of U.S. forces north of the 38th parallel. Arguably his forces would have been no less over-extended than they ultimately were had they proceeded without pause to the Yalu. However, there is some merit to arguments for alternative solutions to the restriction. Regardless, political constraints imposed on operational commanders are another factor which often force pauses in operations, and are another factor which the operational level commander can do little to influence.

Political constraints are normally established at the outset of a campaign and may be identified in terms of area,

time or forces available. If the constraint is on the area of operations, the commander must strive to be decisive in the prescribed area, or be so dominant in that area that the enemy cannot afford sustained operations. When time is the limiting factor the commander must be direct, going straight for the enemy's center of gravity rather than attacking in some indirect fashion. If forces available for the campaign are limited the object becomes that of achieving a decision before reaching the culminating point of combat power. Regardless of the reason, political constraints cannot be discounted as catalysts for operational pauses and operations must be planned accordingly.

The final and perhaps most obvious reason for operational pauses was illustrated in the North African campaigns of 1941-42. Although an inference has been made to a more basic reason for pauses in this theater, ultimately both sides failed to accomplish their desired ends because of diminishing combat power. This is perhaps the clearest example of forces coming up against what Clausewitz termed the 'culminating point of the attack'. While on the offensive both sides pushed their forces to the limit, until eventually they had barely enough combat power to take on a defensive posture. Depending on the advantage of shorter LOCs, one side could recoup faster and initiate an offensive. The degree of control which commander's exercised over these pauses was significant when compared to the other examples. In most cases they alone had the option of continuing or

halting operations. Though facing chronic logistical and personnel/equipment constraints, commanders normally had an accurate view of their relative combat power and gauged their operations accordingly. The difficult part was to pace the operations so that a decisive result could be achieved prior to their reaching their culminating point.

Another example of the culminating point influencing operations is seen by Manstein's experiences on the Eastern Front in 1942-43. Manstein recognized a form of the theoretical concept known as the point of defensive culmination when he argued for a cessation of defensive operations along the extended lines on the southern flank in favor of better positions along a shorter line to the west. Advantages in defending the existing trace were rapidly diminishing and a pause in active defense was needed to withdraw to create a more favorable situation. Though his suggestions met with considerable resistance they were ultimately accepted and this allowed the generation of sufficient combat power to stabilize the southern flank of the Eastern Front by the spring of 1943. It is clear from this example that a commander has some control over the defensive aspect of a culminating point as well.

Assessment

Operational pauses then are not merely delays in operations which preclude immediate accomplishment of the mission. They can be significant factors in determining success on the battlefield and are controllable in some

instances. Obviously pauses induced by weather or political reasons are outside the realm of the operational commander's control. Likewise, a shift in the main effort by a higher authority is also an occasion where the operational commander has little influence. Although pauses under these conditions are manageable, the commander has little say in when or where they occur and consequently they tend to hinder rather than help his plan.

Of the examples cited, commanders exercised full control only over the pauses brought about by culmination of combat power. They alone determined whether to halt operations short of, at, or beyond their point of culmination. It follows, therefore, that for operational pauses to become a usable tool in campaign planning/execution they must be conducted in a known and controlled relationship to one's culminating point. It is from this perspective that operational pauses can serve the campaign planner.

Two types of culminating points have been introduced thus far, and because of the importance of this concept in terms of the utility of operational pauses, some elaboration is required.

The point of defensive culmination as it is termed by Clausewitz refers to "that point when the defender must make up his mind and act.....when the advantages of waiting have been completely exhausted."³⁷ The importance of this point takes on added significance when one accepts the Clausewitzian precept that defense is the stronger form of

war because of proportionately fewer losses to the defender than the attacker in battle. The attacker normally initiates his operations with a clear combat power advantage. Given that the more favorable exchange ratio lies with the defender, the attacker's strength diminishes and eventually the advantage of relative combat power passes to the defender. With that advantage the defender now commands the action.

The culminating point of the attack, on the other hand, is defined as that point where "the remaining strength [of the attacker] is just enough to maintain a [credible] defense."³⁶ As the attacker's losses increase disproportionately in his advance, he approaches a point where his combat power is little more than that required to defend his gains. Theoretically if an attacker can identify his precise point of culmination and halts his offensive operations at that point, the defender is in somewhat of a dilemma as he will not yet have reached the point where 'the advantages of waiting have been exhausted.' A stalemate could conceivably ensue. If an attacker exceeds his point of culmination, however, the defender will eventually reach his culminating point as the relative combat power advantage shifts. The defender is then obliged to respond.

Field Manual 100-5 simplifies this concept somewhat by addressing culminating points from an offensive perspective only. Reference in the manual to a culminating point while on the defense is excluded. Here the culminating point is

identified as that point "where the strength of the attacker no longer significantly exceeds that of the defender."²⁷

Acknowledging only the offensive culminating point is not a doctrinal shortfall, however, as operations designed from this perspective necessarily affect defensive culmination as well. If the planner is armed with this definition of the offensive culminating point and strives to manage his own culmination while on the offense or hasten his opponents while he (the enemy) attacks, he has successfully employed the theoretical concept.

Admittedly this is a complex concept. It is here, however, that an operational commander can accrue his greatest advantages in the realm of operational pauses. With the above understanding of culminating points and the inference that the most logical utility of operational pauses is when they are executed in a known and controlled relationship to a culminating point, how then may one use pauses to his advantage in concert with AirLand Battle doctrine?

DOCTRINAL IMPLICATIONS

The effects of operational pauses induced by factors outside the control of operational commanders clearly cannot be ignored. In most cases the commander has some idea of what the overall intent is and must plan his operations to minimize the effects of pauses caused by weather, plan adjustments or political considerations. When pauses become necessary because of a force approaching its culminating point, however, the commander has control over what his concept and objectives will be in relationship to that point. He must either orchestrate his actions to accomplish his ends before reaching his culminating point, or schedule pauses to maintain a relationship to that point which leaves him with a relative strength advantage. The focus of this paper now turns to implications of sequencing operations in relationship to one's culminating point.

Before a planner can develop plans designed to maintain a favorable relationship to his culminating point he must be able to recognize a culminating point. It has been argued that determination of such a point is impossible.²⁰ Even Clausewitz acknowledged the difficulty of the matter when he stated "there is of course no infallible means of telling when that point has come."²¹ Nonetheless there has to be some means for projecting when and where culmination will occur.

It is combat power which culminates and the commander must be able to determine his combat power in relationship to

his opponent's for the concept of the culminating point to be of value to him. Clausewitz comments that it is often difficult to determine just which side has the upper hand. To aid in the process he identifies a number of components which determine a force's strength, and lists some factors which contribute to the erosion of that strength.⁴⁰ For the purposes of this monograph, however, a more appropriate vehicle for determination of combat power exists in the form of Colonel (COL) Huba Wass De Czege's 'Combat Power Model.' It is beyond the scope of this paper to go into an in depth discussion of COL Wass De Czege's thesis, although a few comments on his basic precepts provide some insight on the question at hand.

In COL Wass De Czege's "Understanding and Developing Combat Power" he identifies a number of methods which have been used in the past to measure combat power and the need for a new approach to this process. He feels that the complex environment of the next battlefield will require that U.S. Army officers understand more than a few simple decision rules. To aid in the decision making process he has developed a useful tool for determination of combat power. COL Wass De Czege defines combat power as "that property of combat action which influences the outcome of battle."⁴¹ He emphasizes that "combat power is always relative, never an absolute, and has meaning only as it compares to that of the enemy."⁴² He identifies combat power as a function of four basic ingredients: firepower effect, maneuver effect,

protection effect, and leadership effect. Key to his model is the term 'effect.' Firepower or leadership in and of themselves are of little consequence. It is their effects which contribute to combat power.

Wass De Czege goes on to state that each of the four ingredients of combat power are a function of a number of other components which exist within the basic ingredients. By placing a value on each of the many factors which make up the model a commander can make a reasonable assessment of the combat power at his disposal. When compared to a similar evaluation of his opponent's strength he can determine his relative combat power and have an idea of where his force lies in relationship to its culminating point. This information in turn can be used in sequencing operations to pause at the most opportune times. or, when on the defense. to design operations to hasten the opponent's culmination point.

Armed with this process for determining combat power and an understanding of how it fits into the equation for determination of culminating points, some comments are now offered on the utility of operational pauses in the framework of the basic tenets of AirLand Battle.

Initiative

As defined in FM 100-5 initiative means setting or changing the terms of battle by action. To many this means that one possesses the initiative only when he is on the offense. If that is so how does one avoid ceding the

initiative to the enemy when he is obliged to halt offensive operations for an operational pause? Two options exist to preclude this. The first is to have the skill (or luck) to precisely determine when and where the culminating point will occur. If the pause is properly executed in relationship to this point the enemy will not yet have the relative strength to threaten the defense, and (giving him credit for some prudence in his decisions) will be unable to initiate any offensive actions. A second option is to maintain a tempo and ambiguity while attacking that keeps the enemy constantly off balance. This action allows a staggering of effort which provides opportunities for some elements to pause for strength accumulation to be prepared for the decisive blow. As the initial Allied ground component commander during the Normandy campaign, General Sir Bernard Montgomery argued that his attacks in the area of Caen were designed according to just such a rationale. Although the issue is somewhat contested, in his post-war memoirs Montgomery contends that the operations were designed to tie down German reserves and confuse their leaders as to the location of the actual breakout.¹³

Such a response assumes that one must be in an active offensive posture to possess initiative. Could not the action referred to in the definition of initiative also imply defensive action? It can when one views initiative in the broader sense.

A somewhat more palatable description of initiative is

provided in the FM 100-5 discussion of initiative as it applies to the force as a whole. Here it is stated that initiative requires a constant effort to force the enemy to conform to our operational purpose and tempo while retaining our own freedom of action.¹² Occupation of a defensive posture for purposes of refitting in anticipation of a major effort next week is clearly forcing the enemy to conform to your tempo. Within the framework of this definition it is conceivable that an operational pause for the entire force could be executed without ceding initiative to the enemy provided that your regenerative process is at least equal to or faster than the enemy's. Nonetheless, by executing a pause you are serving your operational purpose and have not sacrificed your freedom of action.

Agility

Agility is the ability of friendly forces to act faster than the enemy. At first glance there seems to be an inconsistency when discussing operational pauses in terms of agility. It would appear that if a commander was adequately agile there would be no reason to pause. This inconsistency diminishes, however, if one views operational pauses in terms of only a portion of the force with the remainder continuing activities and reaping the benefits of resources unused by the pausing force. Key to successful execution of such agility is the ability to 'read the battlefield.' If a commander has a clear picture of the action he knows which forces are gainfully employed and which are not. A decisive

commander willing to take risks may direct an operational pause in one sector to shift his main effort to another where the enemy is weaker. This induced operational pause will free resources to support his new main effort. Eisenhower's call to focus the Allied efforts on Montgomery's drive to the Rhein while holding part of Bradley's force (wrong as it may have been) illustrates the use of operational pauses to enhance agility.

Likewise a decisive commander in a defensive posture with a clear picture of the situation may also utilize an operational pause to increase his agility. The commander may direct a pause in active conduct of the defense along existing lines in order to take advantage of more favorable terrain elsewhere, thereby shortening the width of his sector. This action would no doubt free some forces for other missions which could not help but increase his potential for agility. The utility of an operational pause for this reason has been shown in the discussion of Manstein on the eastern front, 1943 (pg9).

Depth

All too often the term depth is thought of only in terms of space. Field Manual 100-5 is careful to point out that depth is the extension of operations not only in space, but in time and resources as well. An operational pause executed to refit in anticipation of future events has utility in extending operations in terms of depth in time. Properly planned such a pause insures adequate forces are available

for future operations. Similarly, pauses in operations can facilitate operations in terms of depth in space by allowing regeneration of combat power to preclude arrival at one's culminating point prior to achieving his objective. An example of this would be a pause conducted prior to executing a river crossing. Even if adequate forces are currently available to maintain the advance to the river, it would be far better to execute a pause now and insure that the point of culmination was reached after the river crossing rather than at the river.

Synchronization

The arrangement of battlefield activities in time, space and purpose to produce maximum relative combat power at the decisive point defines synchronization. It is here that the simplest and perhaps clearest example of the utility of operational pauses can be illustrated. If a commander wishes to reap all the benefits of combined arms warfare he may find occasion to direct a pause in operations of ground forces while waiting for priority of the air effort to be given to his force. Once air assets are provided to his force he can then synchronize their combined effects to produce decisive results. An example of operational pauses to facilitate synchronization is provided in the planning stages of Operation COBRA. In July of 1944 as the Allies planned to breakout of the Normandy beachhead, the execution date for the operation was set first for the 21st of July, then the 24th, and ultimately the 25th. These changes were necessary

because the ground offensive was to be built upon its aerial support, and that support would not be available until the 25th of July.*" Synchronization on a smaller scale may also be facilitated by a pause in operations to allow a marshalling of resources such as artillery or ammunition to insure maximum combat power is available at the decisive point.

Summary

Far from being a phenomenon requiring special doctrinal considerations, the operational pause can neatly complement the thrust of AirLand Battle doctrine. Such pauses not only have the potential to facilitate the basic tenets of AirLand Battle, they are crucial in sequencing successive battles and engagements to attain major objectives. With a solid grasp of the theoretical concept of the culminating point, the operational pause is a valuable tool in the practice of operational art.

CONCLUSION

It is clear at this point that operational pauses are much more than impediments to mission accomplishment. They have been and will continue to be significant factors in determining success on the battlefield. Their utility, however, is limited to execution in a known and controlled relationship to one's culminating point. Given this observation, a number of salient points emerge.

Maintaining a favorable relationship to one's culminating point is one of the most difficult challenges of a commander. As Clausewitz said, "this is why the great majority of generals will prefer to stop well short of their objective rather than risk approaching it too closely, and why those with high courage and an enterprising spirit will often overshoot it and so fail to attain their purpose."⁴⁹

To avoid overshooting or pulling up excessively short of one's culminating point, the commander must have an appreciation for combat power and a reporting network to provide the requisite data accurately to assess combat power. Recall that both friendly and enemy situations are required for such assessments as combat power is always relative, never an absolute. All too often one or the other of the reporting systems is broken. Only when the entire picture is clear can operations be planned to maintain a favorable relationship to one's culminating point, and only then can the operational pause be utilized in an advantageous fashion.

The Achilles heel of the utility of operational pauses

in any situation is the sustainment of operations. Recognizing a culminating point is one thing, providing adequate supplies to maintain a favorable relationship to that point is another. Without the ability to refit or regenerate faster than the enemy, there will be more negative than positive effects of any attempted operational pause. Logistical support is perhaps the key function of planners at the operational level, and logistics more than any other factor will dictate the utility of pauses as an operational tool. The logistician must be intimately involved in the planning process as he will most likely determine when and where operational pauses can (must) occur. Only through extensive coordination and linkage with the operational plan will significant benefits of operational pauses be realized.

An additional point affecting the utility of operational pauses lies in the area of future planning. An undisputed principle of the operational art is that planning far in the future is a key requirement, and although this is true in all aspects of the art it is especially so in terms of operational pauses. The terms 'planning windows' or 'planning horizons' enjoy popularity in higher headquarters today, and not without justification. Field Marshal Erich von Manstein who was a master at future planning believed fervently that "the greater the sphere of one's command, the further ahead he must look."² He was known to look weeks - not days - into the future.

The current planning horizon for a corps level

headquarters is 72 hours.⁴⁰ In other words the plans they are working on are not due for implementation for another three days. Admittedly a corps is at the lower end of the operational level of warfighting. However, it is these headquarters which will more than likely be called upon to execute operational pauses. A contributing factor to the difficulties of future planning at these headquarters appears (in some cases) to be the absence of key players in plans cells. Traditionally the 'first team' works in the operations cells 'where the action is' while the plans cells are usually inadequately and poorly staffed. As an aid in overcoming future planning difficulties, emphasis at echelons above divisions should be on staffing the planning cells with the bulk of the talent available in the headquarters. Perhaps then the extended planning horizons can be met.

If the operational pause serves no other purpose than to prevent a commander from exceeding the culminating point it is a worthwhile endeavor. However, there are many more benefits and utilities for operational pauses. The essence of AirLand Battle is successive and continuous blows to keep the enemy off balance, and appropriately planned and executed operational pauses facilitate this type action. They may be used to maintain the initiative or, at the very least, insure that the initiative is attainable at the crucial point. Similarly, operational pauses facilitate operations in depth by conserving resources for employment at a future time. An operational pause of some sort is virtually always required

to achieve the full effects of synchronization.

To master the operational art the campaign planner must control every aspect of the battlefield to include the often inactive periods of warfighting. Understanding the operational pause is a first step in this process and their versatile utility should be regarded as a valuable tool in campaign planning.

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ENDNOTES

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15. Esposito, West Point Atlas of American Wars, map 25.
16. Hart, The History of the Second World War, pg 258.
17. Ibid, pp 261-264.
18. Manstein, Field Marshal Evich von, Lost Victories, (Novato, CA, Presidio Press: 1985) pg 372. See also pages 278-280.

19. Ibid, pg 394.
20. Ibid, pg 440.
21. A detailed description of the maneuvers is found in Manstein's Lost Victories, chap 13. An excellent capsulized version is provided in LTC Lawrence Izzo's MMAS thesis, "An Analysis of Manstein's Winter Campaign on the Russian Front, 1942-43", (Fort Leavenworth KS, School of Advanced Military Studies, USACGSC: 1986) chap 6.
22. Esposito, West Point Atlas of American Wars, map 36.
23. Ibid, map 52.
24. There are a number of arguments advanced for this decision in Kent Greenfield's Command Decisions (Washington, DC, Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, USGPO: 1971) pg 411. Russell Weigley offers his assessment in Eisenhower's Lieutenants, (Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press: 1981) pg 208.
25. Esposito, West Point Atlas of American Wars, map 56.
26. Hart, History of the Second World War, pg 566.
27. Ibid, pg 562. See also Command Decisions, pg 425.
28. Ibid, pp 566-567.
29. Ibid, pg 567.
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