Strategy Research Project

A FULL SPECTRUM CASE FOR THE HEAVY FORCE

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

A FULL SPECTRUM CASE FOR THE HEAVY FORCE

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The U.S. Army heavy conventional ground capability that crushed Iraqi forces in 1991 and 2003 no longer exists, and the assumption that the U.S. Army can dominate high intensity ground combat operations for the foreseeable future is questionable. The balance of U.S. Army combat brigades shifted significantly from favoring a heavy force to favoring a lighter force over the past decade. Further reduction of HBCTs based upon assumptions that there are no enemies willing to challenge alleged U.S. conventional warfare supremacy, or that if some arise, precision long range fires would neutralize them, is a mistake. Recent examples of hybrid warfare prove beyond any reasonable doubt the worth and utility of a robust, scalable heavy combined arms capability. With few leaders trained for combined arms maneuver over distance remaining in battalions and brigades, heavy brigade combat teams lack the expertise to dominate combined arms maneuver, and there may be too few of them to deter would be conventional adversaries. The Army could not rebuild a trained heavy conventional capability quickly enough to be relevant against a newly emerging threat once the current residual capability is gone. Protecting and recapitalizing the current heavy force structure is essential to full spectrum preparedness of the U.S. Army over the next decade.

A FULL SPECTRUM CASE FOR THE HEAVY FORCE

> [I]t is perhaps true that too often commentators declare transformational changes in the nature of war when in fact what is changing is the way it looks. Although war's characteristics may change, it is unclear why such transformation should affect its nature.
>
> —Colin M. Fleming[1]
> Chief Information Officer/G-6

The Risk

The U.S. Army has reduced its heavy force structure excessively over the past decade, allowing its once proven supremacy in combined arms maneuver across most of the world's terrain to erode to some sort of ill-defined but well advertised superiority in conventional military operations. Simple superiority is not good enough for the American people in the current information age, where political-military aims must be accomplished decisively and quickly, precision fires are a prerequisite, force protection is a necessity, and high casualties are unacceptable. The Army's role as part of the joint force is to wage and win land campaigns supported by the other services' enablers. Excessive redundancy in capability is not wise or acceptable in the upcoming era of fiscal austerity, and the Army should focus on core capabilities the other services cannot or will not provide our Nation. Combined arms maneuver by armored and mechanized units supported by organic fires and sustainment organizations is the one core military capability the other services cannot replicate or provide.

Protection retains its military and political importance not simply because it is now a standalone Army and Joint war fighting function.[2] Mechanized forces developed in response to the tactical stalemates and horrific casualties suffered by what would today be called Infantry Brigade Combat Teams during the wars at the end of the 19th

and beginning of the 20th century. World War I in particular was a catalyst for technical solutions to the protected mobility problem. Armies struggled to create organizations that were survivable in extremely lethal environments, which were initially defined by large volumes of artillery and small arms fire. The concept of tank versus tank armored warfare came later, but even then the point was to generate protected mobile firepower and create positional advantage via maneuver at the lowest possible cost in blood. Armies did not maintain armor and mechanized forces simply as a luxury or show of force. In the West it was a military and political imperative to minimize friendly casualties. Those imperatives have not changed significantly, and neither has the nature of war.

The primary purpose of the U.S. Army is to fight and win the nation's wars regardless of where they fall on the spectrum of military operations. Equipping, training, and maintaining a force that can fight and win anywhere, against any enemy, is our charter. As a hedge against risk, the force must be balanced. To paraphrase Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's much maligned quotation from 2004, the U.S. fights with the Army it has when the war happens. To paraphrase the British historian Michael Howard, it is most important not to guess completely wrong about the nature of that future war so as to have time to adapt before it is lost. It is thus an imperative that the force has the proper structure and training to mitigate risk of failure across the entire spectrum of conflict, while accepting little risk to those capabilities that guarantee vital national interests.

The U.S. Army demonstrated fearsome combined arms maneuver capability with its heavy brigades during the Iraq Wars in 1991 and 2003, using a relatively small

fraction of its combat power to defeat a conventionally organized and arrayed opponent in short order. It was also successful in the execution of stability and security operations in the Balkans in the 1990s. Since then, for good reason, the Army has adjusted its focus and resources to defeat two insurgencies at the lower end of the spectrum of conflict. These wide area security missions[3] took place throughout almost the entirety of the Army's Transformation process in the past ten years, significantly influencing that process over time. While it is necessary that the priority be winning the wars the Army is actually fighting, it does not follow that the wholesale restructuring of the force should be predicated upon assumptions that the current conflicts accurately reflect future threats to U.S. national interests. There is under-appreciated risk associated with reducing heavy brigade combat team (HBCT) force structure and the associated combined arms maneuver skills critical to success in major combat operations (MCO), organizations and skills that actually set the conditions for today's veteran and battle-hardened force.

Armor and mechanized ("heavy") units are not a luxury force intended only to combat like organizations, although that it certainly one of their key missions. They were developed as a reaction to and cure for the bloody infantry-artillery stalemates of the First World War. Without protected mobility, the cost in casualties to achieve tactical movement and operational penetrations on the modern battlefield was and remains prohibitive against almost every form of prepared defense. The synergy that develops amongst well-trained tank infantry teams supported by joint fires creates a full spectrum of dilemmas for an opponent. The decisive, even overwhelming tactical successes expected of the U.S. Army since 1991 are a direct consequence of the Army's heavy

conventional units' high proficiency in combined arms maneuver over distance and the ability to sustain such units logistically. Some may take the capabilities of the past for granted, particularly by those who have not served in such units since 2004 or those who are not familiar first hand with the difficulties of developing such proficiency. Such confidence, if it still exists, is profoundly misplaced.

The long-term focus on stability operations and counter-insurgency (COIN), coupled with transformation, have significantly degraded our ability to dominate conventional combined arms warfare. It is extremely risky to assume that the much advertised U.S. Army supremacy in combined arms maneuver is actually a fact, and even more risky to base force structure decisions upon such an assumption. Combined arms maneuver force structure, training focus, and practical experience has changed or disappeared to such an extent that Leader and Soldier skill sets critical to the Army's conduct of major combat operations have almost disappeared at the battalion and brigade levels. The resulting loss of proficiency threatens the U.S. Army's ability to conduct general war at the low casualty rates associated with Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom. There are no brigades prepared to wage high intensity war at the skill level of the forces that invaded Iraq eight years ago. It is not just that the focus is different; the U.S. Army is different. The modular force has been fighting in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF), and has never been tested in the crucible of large scale combined arms maneuver operations. A prudent, balanced, and historical view of requirements should thus inform future decisions about force structure and training priorities, and the end result should be a heavier overall force focused on training combined arms maneuver as its first priority.

A Much Lighter Force

Critics have long deprecated the pre-transformational and modular Limited Conversion Division XXI (LCD XXI) – Army of Excellence (AOE) U.S. Army as a clunky, inflexible organization looking for enemies to replace the Soviet Shock Armies of yore and seeking relevance during the informational Revolution in Military Affairs. The structure of the force in 2000 was actually fairly well balanced and suited to full spectrum of operations. In the Active Component (AC), 55% (18 of 33) brigades were 'heavy' organizations with direct support artillery and engineer battalions that provided critical capabilities for high intensity combat environments. 59% (61 of 104) of the Army's non-artillery combat arms battalions were armor or mechanized infantry units. Light infantry brigades and battalions made up 45% and 41% of the force respectively. All of the brigades, light or heavy, had three maneuver battalions and were 'bigger' in that respect than the current organizations, having nine maneuver companies instead of the current eight companies, not counting brigade reconnaissance elements.[4]

In 2011, heavy brigade combat teams only make up 38% (17 of 45) of the Army's active component brigades. The 'heavy' combined arms battalions and reconnaissance (RSTA) squadrons together make up 36% (51/143) of the Army's ground maneuver battalion total. These numbers represent more than a 20% reduction of the heavy force in a relatively short period of time. The eight new Stryker Brigades, with their 32 battalions, represent 18% and 22% of the ground maneuver force at brigade and battalion level, respectively.[5] The higher percentage of battalions compared to brigades as a fraction of the force is due to the Stryker Brigades having three ground maneuver battalions in addition to their RSTA squadron, which represents a significant

organizational advantage in the minds of most commanders. Designed as an interim organization to bridge capabilities between the current force and the future combat system (FCS), Stryker brigades have played an invaluable role during OIF and OEF because of their size, mobility, and digital capabilities.

The networked digitized nature of the Stryker brigades and battalions gives them greater capability than the Soviet motorized brigade and battalions which they resemble. The digital linkages that provide the capability and situational awareness are best used by keeping those battalions as part of their parent brigade, however. This is something of a constraint on their employment when compared to other types of battalions. Without their digital networking enablers Stryker organizations are simply 21st Century motorized infantry outfits vulnerable to direct fire weapons heavier than machine guns and rocket propelled grenades. They are historically untested in combined arms maneuver under live fire conditions outside of simulation. There should be some question as to their survivability under heavy artillery and direct fire conditions. Employing Strykers against a determined hybrid or conventional enemy could provide as many dilemmas for friendly commanders as enemy ones.[6]

Changes in the Army National Guard (ARNG) force structure have been even more pronounced. Heavy brigades make up 25% (7 of 28) of the reserve component ground maneuver force currently, down from 61% (25 of 41) ten years ago. Heavy battalions make up 25% (21/85) of the overall ground maneuver battalion total, down from 63% (81 of 129) ten years ago.[7] Given the peacetime responsibilities of the Army National Guard and the costs of maintaining heavy forces, plus the challenges of training proficiency at the crew and unit level, restructuring the ARNG is not in and of

itself a negative outcome. Under the total Army concept, though, our Cold War predecessors thought the active component (AC) plus the reserve component (RC) taken together represented a capability our nation needed to wage war and ensure national security at acceptable cost. From a total force perspective (AC+RC), the overall reduction of the heavy force in terms of brigades (19), battalions (70), and percentage of the force (29%) [8] represents a significant change in vision, focus, and capability with regard to waging military campaigns on the ground.

The current modular force structure is lighter, less protected, and less tactically mobile with organic assets than it was eleven years ago. It also contains some inherent flaws not obvious when simply counting numbers of battalions, flaws that potentially threaten the Army's long term ability to execute combined arms maneuver during major combat operations at the high end of the spectrum of war. While there are many points to argue with regard force structure, current threats, and what is affordable, there is a strong case to be made that further cuts to the heavy force structure are both unwarranted and ill-advised. The siren call of cost efficiencies normally heard during post conflict draw downs should be redirected to venues other than the most capable and versatile formations in Army inventory. The U.S. Army does not need additional light infantry formations that require significant augmentation to even wage wide area security missions in theaters like Iraq if the cost is a further reduction of the HBCT structure.

It is an unspoken truism that many leaders at various echelons in the Army consider heavy forces a necessary evil, at best. The term 'heavy' itself has negative connotations, particularly in the joint and strategic contexts of rapid deployability and

sustainment. There has always been tension in the infantry community with regard to whether ‘heavy’ (mechanized) infantrymen were really ‘true’ infantrymen. ‘Heavy’ was and remains a pejorative term outside mechanized units, and has negative connotations in the logistics community as well. The ‘best’ jobs were light, and the lighter and more deployable the better – Rangers, 82d Airborne Division, 101st Airborne Division, etc. The focus on counter-insurgency has intensified this view in parts of academia, as well as the Army. How units are classified has not helped, either. While the current naming convention for ground maneuver brigades was not conceived to any nefarious purpose, it reflects a glaring inconsistency of logic in how brigades are typed that affects both civilian and Army perception of heavy force structure.[9]

Formerly, brigades were labeled light infantry or heavy. Heavy brigades were infantry-heavy or armor-heavy. Brigade combat teams are now Heavy (HBCT), Stryker (SBCT), or Infantry (IBCT). One organization refers to weight, one to a transitory vehicle type, and one to an Army branch and occupational specialty. A more logically consistent and transparent naming convention that sacrifices no historical connotations would be to type brigades as heavy, medium, or light. Heavy, medium, and light brigades better describe strategic deployability, protection, mobility, and firepower capabilities, sustainment requirements, and operating cost. The names provide clarity of purpose and capability. The strengths and weaknesses of each BCT type become more obvious to the non-experts with influence in military affairs, like political leaders and think tank pundits. Simple, logical, and clear use of terms could set the stage for the overdue return to the use of other historically familiar terms for unit types, like artillery, signal, and intelligence.

The Current and Future Operational Environment

Most of the arguments used to justify positions regarding force structure and doctrine depend upon predictions about future enemies, changes to the nature of war, or technical trends that threaten the current force with obsolescence if it does not rapidly change course and adapt to the author's vision of the world decades from now. The U.S. Army should not ignore current trends or avoid change simply to protect current vested interests. Nor should it allow current vested interests to use futuristic or academic arguments to increase their own importance without looking at the validity and consequences of those arguments on the Army's ability to wage war across the full spectrum of operations. The absence of peer or 'near-peer' threats today is irrelevant, because the U.S. Army should not be seeking parity with any other army or enemy. It should be seeking absolute dominance; the risk of doing otherwise risks encouraging some nation or group to test the Army's capability.[10] There is little evidence to suggest that a lighter U.S. Army is preferable or necessary in the future, and significant evidence that the opposite may be true.

The U.S. Army experience in Iraq and Afghanistan has shown that protection during the conduct of wide area security operations is no less important than during combined arms maneuver. The expected gain in situational awareness due to new information technologies predicted ten years ago has not resulted in a lesser requirement for armor protection. If anything, the requirement for protected platforms increased to the point that traditionally unarmored wheeled logistics vehicles are now expected to have some minimal level of armor protection if they are used in a combat theater. All motorized transport provided to IBCT for tactical troop movements and

maneuver is now armored against small arms fire and most IED, although it remains woefully vulnerable to large caliber direct fire weapons. The imperative to protect troops from IED and direct fire attack now trumped the theoretical protection provided by digital connectivity and remote sensor collection, something often neglected in current discussions about future transformation requirements. Irregularly organized, resource poor enemies proved distressingly able to inflict casualties against U.S. forces; there should be no doubt that better resourced and organized enemies would be more lethal. An excessive preference for light organizations over heavy ones, coupled with a focus on wide area security over combined arms maneuver, is a major mistake.

Two significant and several smaller military events that occurred in the midst of Army Transformation should inform how the leadership considers force structure decisions, training priorities, and capabilities. Both the U.S. battle for Fallujah in 2004 and the Israeli Army's war against Hezbollah in 2006 provide examples of modern militaries using combined arms maneuver by mechanized units to combat so-called 'hybrid threats' in complex terrain. The U.S. experience was far more successful, mostly because it had leaders and soldiers trained to execute the tactical missions required of them in major combat operations. The U.S. had been conducting counter-insurgency and stability missions (wide are security) for less than two years, and thus had residual combined arms maneuver capability remaining in the force. The Israeli Army did not have the same capability remaining at the tactical level, despite having such a strong reputation in conventional mounted warfare. In both instances the capabilities of heavy forces were critically important.

The U.S. Army's support to the U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) in Fallujah in 2004 provides one such example. It has long been argued that heavy units are at a severe disadvantage when fighting in urban areas and severely restricted terrain. When properly employed as part of a combined arms team, there is much to be said in favor of heavy forces operating in urban areas. It was the protected tactical mobility and precision firepower utilized by the two task organized Army mechanized battalions and two USMC tank companies that prevented the battle from devolving into a bloody stalemate. The methodical use of combined arms firepower by Abrams tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles enabled organic Army and supported Marine infantry to defeat what we now call a hybrid threat relatively quickly and at low friendly human cost. Sound doctrine, good intelligence, and experienced leadership produced a synergy when combined with well protected heavy platforms as part of a combined arms team.[11] The enemy simply could not cope with the tactical dilemmas it faced. The modular HBCT, with its balanced organization of infantry and armored vehicles, is even more optimally organized for urban operations than the legacy units that supported the USMC in Fallujah.[12] This makes the HBCT even more relevant today.

A second, perhaps more compelling example justifying retention of significant well trained heavy force capability comes from the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) experience in the Lebanese campaign of 2006 and subsequent Gaza Strip campaign of 2009. The IDF that blundered its way to stalemate with Hezbollah in 2006 operated under the assumption that its reputation as an efficient and effective combined arms force earned in previous conflicts represented the reality of its capability in 2006. The IDF transformation process, focused on effects based operations and based upon an

assumption that there would be no need for combined arms maneuver above brigade level in the future, literally crippled the entire army when faced with a determined irregular enemy fighting to hold ground with conventional tactics.[13] The IDF had neglected its heavy force structure and conducted little collective training with what remained. The result was that it was incapable of decisively defeating a weak opponent in familiar terrain despite air and naval supremacy, precision stand-off weapons, and a powerful incentive to defend its own homeland from direct attack. What should be even more alarming is that IDF enjoyed at least two luxuries the U.S. Army almost never has, familiar ground and familiar enemies, and it still failed. The U.S. Army has a much broader and uncertain operational environment that encompasses the whole world.

Both of the above examples point to a future whose nature essentially resembles the past. The enemy looks to exploit whatever advantages or opportunities he can create in each discrete situation. There would be far less discussion about 'hybrid' warfare if the IDF had decisively defeated Hezbollah. Tellingly, there are no recent examples of failure by U.S. forces against 'hybrid' threats. There are fewer advantages or opportunities to be gained by our enemies when fighting against a well trained, well protected, extremely mobile, and heavily armed opponent. If that opponent is an HBCT, then scaling down to irregular or guerrilla tactics is not necessarily going to result in any military advantage to the enemy over the long or short term. The HBCT can scale down its level of violence while maintaining all its other attributes in spades in most types of terrain. The U.S. Army proved this time and again in Iraq, using heavy forces to transition from wide area security to combined arms maneuver and back again in Sadr City and Baqubah in 2004 and Sadr City again in 2008.[14] The ability to wage combined

arms maneuver with heavily protected mechanized platforms created dilemmas for the enemy and denied him the sanctuary that motorized or dismounted opponents might have conceded. Surviving first contact is essential in terrain where the enemy has all the home ground advantages.[15]

Heavy Forces are Worth the Cost

The emphasis on wide-area security operations, as well as the belaboring of 'complexity' in both doctrine and contemporary military discourse, has contributed to a widely-held supposition that major combat operations in the form of combined arms maneuver, particularly at the tactical level, represent a simpler and easier mission set of Army units. Over time, that is an attitude with strategic consequences to the force and national security because it is inherently false. The overconfidence in a tactical capability not widely trained since 2004, coupled with the false assumption that little serious intellectual work or professional ability is required for combined arms maneuver is an extremely dangerous state of affairs for both the current and future force. What subtle nuances may be missing from high intensity conventional combat operations are more than made up for by the exacting tolerances of time and space required for execution of tasks under extremely inhospitable conditions. There is no time to develop organizational proficiencies or field better protected combat systems during the first days and weeks of major combat operations. It is also likely that the U.S. Army may not be controlling the initiative or the tempo of operations at the beginning of a new conflict, meaning that the component of time plays a completely different role than it does in wide area security missions.

The relationship between risk, time, and lethality needs to be incorporated into any assessment regarding force structure. Counter-insurgency, stability operations, or other wide area security missions on the 'lower' end of the spectrum of conflict seldom represent responses to threats against vital U.S. interests or national survival. Nor do they often require speedy execution or immediate deployment, particularly given the increased political distaste for nation building. There is an almost inverse relationship between time of preparation versus time of execution for wide area security missions and combined arms maneuver. To become extremely proficient at combined arms maneuver requires almost a generation of preparation, while the successful execution of such mission sets can happen over a mere matter of weeks. Proficiency for execution of security tasks such as COIN requires sound doctrine and a few months of preparation, but years to execute because of the uniqueness of each security environment.

Armored and mechanized ground heavy combat forces have the protected mobile firepower to create unavoidable dilemmas for conventional, hybrid, and irregular enemy forces at all levels of war. HBCTs have the most scalable combat power, representing the most versatility along the full spectrum of operations, of any of the BCT types. As shown in Iraq, HBCTs can fight as motorized units with very little cross training, and can fight dismounted as infantrymen in the execution of wide area security missions in a capable and effective manner. A combined arms battalion (CAB) from 1/1 ID recently deployed to Afghanistan to provide security for Special Forces troops at remote sites, at task for which a CAB was never designed. When deployed with both organic equipment and protected wheeled vehicles, HBCTs represent the ultimate tactical dilemma for irregular and hybrid opponents. The tracked vehicles sitting in a

forward operating base (FOB) motor pool act as a ‘fleet in being’ that makes enemy attempts to create no-go areas or concentrate combat power ultimately futile exercises. An IBCT does not have such scalability, and cannot ‘up gun’ into a heavy mechanized force for contingencies. The skill sets necessary to conduct and sustain mounted combat proficiency take years to develop, and the equipment is not sitting around like a car rental fleet on a lot.

At the strategic and operational levels, the U.S. Army’s theoretical and actual heavy conventional capabilities create significant dilemmas for enemies that field conventional forces. To hold terrain or deny access, would-be opponents require a like capability, which makes them vulnerable to joint fires when they mass to oppose U.S. combined arms maneuver. Opting to wage only irregular, asymmetric warfare becomes a poor option against a U.S. Army that has codified, combat proven irregular warfare doctrine, a full spectrum force structure, and the option of choosing the time and place of conflict initiation. It is no option if the enemy’s goal is regime survival or holding ground. The IDF proved in its Gaza Strip campaign of 2008 what the U.S. Army demonstrated in places like Fallujah, Sadr City, and Baghdad the previous five years. Organizational emphasis on the basics of combined arms maneuver conducted by a robust mix of heavy and light forces enables victory in complex terrain at low cost.[16] Discussions about hybrid enemies talk about Lebanon but do not mention the Gaza or Sadr City operations. Success quiets pundits.

The robust HBCT structure creates more symmetry issues for enemies than it does for friendly forces. The more difficulty the enemy has killing one’s soldiers and preventing their purpose, the more likely friendly forces are to prevail whether the

environment is combined arms maneuver or wide area security. The Army must avoid false economies in the search of efficiencies that mean nothing once forces are in contact. Joint delivered precision fires are powerful enablers, but are "blunt instruments compared to the precision firepower employed by ground commanders with situational awareness."[17] Heavy Brigade Combat Teams bring organic precision fires on protected platforms to every engagement. Enemies constrained to fighting asymmetric irregular warfare to achieve their ends can incur losses against well-led HBCTs, but at great cost to themselves and without creating large numbers of casualties to friendly forces.

Some senior leaders have begun to question the premises upon which current force structure was based. The assumption that an information revolution in military affairs would help achieve the holy grail of perfect situational awareness, precluding the 'legacy' need for heavy armor protection, proved to be more hope than science during the execution of wide area security missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. As GEN Chiarelli, the Army Vice Chief of Staff said, informational technologies have not removed the fog and friction of war, we face enemies capable of getting the "first shot[,] and that the movement to contact is not extinct."[18] U.S. forces require protected mobility that enables troops to survive initial contact, thus reducing tactical risk and providing commanders more tactical options. The combination of wishful thinking that technology could reduce the requirement for armor protection, the desire for rapid strategic deployability, and the troop intensive nature of wide area security missions during COIN, created an environment in which the Army has accepted significant risk to Soldier survivability. [19] Deactivating more HBCTs increases this risk while degrading capabilities for combined

arms maneuver even further. Unfortunately, there are signs that the Army may reduce the heavy force even more.

Recommendations

Future reductions in combat maneuver brigades, such as may be contemplated in the upcoming drawdown of Army end strength, should not come out of the HBCT force structure. Force structure decisions inherently have more long term consequences for heavy organizations because of how long it takes to build and equip them. Trying to build them from scratch in a time of need should not be an acceptable course of action. Maintaining too many of the organizations with the least utility along the full spectrum of conflict, like the IBCTs, is a false economy at best. The temptation to simply deactivate the two HBCTs in Europe as part of the re-stationing plan is immense but should be resisted by Army Leadership. One or both of them could replace the IBCT currently at Fort Knox, a post designed to support large numbers of mechanized vehicles and mounted gunnery. Draw down the most vulnerable and least versatile formations that are at the same time the ones easiest to reconstitute in the future or resource in the National Guard: the IBCTs. Adjust the MTOE of the IBCTs remaining outside airborne and air assault units by motorizing them with the fleet of armored wheeled vehicles that resulted from the Iraq and Afghanistan requirements. Divesting the force of expensively acquired capability like the MRAP fleet flies in the face of common sense, and would ignore the tactical mobility challenges that IBCT inherently have.

Consider the Army's role in the Joint Force and have a dialogue with the Marine Corps regarding roles and missions. The United States' 'expeditionary force in readiness' identified by the Secretary of Defense is the Marine Corps.[20] Rapid

deployability may not be valid joint criteria around which to build significant U.S. Army active duty force structure outside of specialized units like the airborne and air assault brigades. The Vice Chief of Staff commissioned a study at the U.S. Military Academy that seriously questioned the logic of building a force designed around its ability to deploy rather than its survivability in sustained combat operations.[21] If more joint capability for strategic lift is not forthcoming, maybe a clarification of joint roles for expeditionary operations is in order. A strong U.S. Marine Corps is not a threat to the U.S. Army's war fighting responsibilities or capabilities. Deliberately maintaining force structure that is poorly survivable in contemporary or future combat environments is a threat to both. Ceding some mission overlap to the USMC allows the U.S. Army to worry less about rapid strategic deployability and more about survivability during campaigns that comprise both combined arms maneuver and wide area security.

The Army should aggressively pursue modernization of Abrams, Bradley, and Paladin platforms in the existing HBCTs. The Army is spending almost as much fielding new Stryker vehicles as it is recapitalizing and modernizing its heavy fleets. [22] Some modernization, particularly to automotive systems, would reduce future fuel and maintenance costs. Protection upgrades would ensure systems relevance across the spectrum of operations for years to come. Little procurement is necessary for refurbishing the Army's HBCTs. The same is not true when fielding new SBCTs. Responsible use of existing Army resources may not be an easier political sell than new procurement would be, but in an era of truly constrained budgets and tough choices it represents superior stewardship of both money and people.

The Army can address residual concerns about strategic mobility by ensuring that the majority of the pre-positioned equipment sets are composed of modernized HBCT sets. It makes little sense to design the majority of pre-positioned sets for IBCTs. It is unlikely that the U.S. would commit to another Asian wide area security mission in the foreseeable future. Regardless, there should be no reason to rush into such a mission along some arbitrary timeline, while racing into a combined arms maneuver fight with MRAP equipped IBCTs makes little tactical sense. There is no strategic justification for rushing to failure with equipment that protects poorly during high-end conventional operations.

U.S. Army experience in wide area security missions over the past ten years in Afghanistan and Iraq at great cost provides a huge body of knowledge from which to generate the best possible security doctrine and training techniques applicable to a full spectrum force. The Army should continue to refine such doctrine and continuously incorporate training of related tactics, techniques, and procedures into annual unit training schedules regardless of unit type. The vast majority of individual soldier and collective security tasks are the same in both combined arms maneuver and wide area security missions; those tasks are for the most part neither expensive nor resource intensive to train. The training priority for brigade combat teams, however, must remain combined arms maneuver and the sustainment inherent in enabling such operations. In the era of rapidly diminishing resources to come, such a priority requires significant support from civilian and military leadership.

Endnotes

[1] Colin M. Fleming, “New or Old Wars? Debating a Clausewitzian Future.” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, 32 (2009): 232.

[2] U.S. Army FM 3-37, *Protection*, (Washington, D.C.: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2009).

[3] ‘Wide Area Security’ and ‘Combined Arms Maneuver’ are defined by U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) in TRADOC Pam 525-3-1, *The United States Army Operating Concept 2016-2028*, 19 August 2010, 11. The terms were devised to provide clarity to the over-used concept of full spectrum operations. Army units perform one or both missions, sometimes simultaneously.

[4] Alan L. Farr, Chief, Force Developments, Concepts, Analysis, & Integration Branch, Soldier Requirement Division, Maneuver Center of Excellence Fort Benning, GA. *AOE Force XXI Pre Interim Force Structure Briefing 2004-5*.

[5] Alan L. Farr, Chief, Force Developments, Concepts, Analysis, & Integration Branch, Soldier Requirement Division, Maneuver Center of Excellence Fort Benning, GA. *Programs Branch Common Operating Picture 2010 Briefing* by LTC Schindler.

[6] The author observed Stryker Brigades during two Second Infantry Division Warfighter exercises conducted in the Korean theater of operations under simulated full spectrum operations. The casualty and vehicle loss rates were extremely high, particularly due to the inability to avoid close combat conditions in restricted terrain. Artillery fire made mounted maneuver necessary, while direct fire systems made survival of the mounted infantry problematic at best. 2ID used up the entire available national inventory of notional Stryker vehicles in each iteration of the exercises according to the theater sustainment brigade leadership.

[7] Alan L. Farr, *AOE Force XXI Pre Interim Force Structure Briefing 2004-5*.

[8] Ibid.; also. *Programs Branch Common Operating Picture 2010 Briefing*.

[9] Colonel (R) John Bonin, Ph. D., in an email to the author on 21 DEC 10. Dr. Bonin, who played and plays a significant role in Army Force Structure design, confirmed that the terms “Light” and “Armor” to describe brigade combat team types were specifically rejected by Army Leadership.

[10] Major Aaron Lilley, “Dismantling the Armor Force?” *Armor* (November-December 2009): 15. MAJ Lilley makes a strong case about the reduction of heavy forces based upon the number of battalions and companies in current heavy brigades, as well as the minimal combined arms maneuver capability of the armored reconnaissance squadrons. This paper treats the reconnaissance battalions in IBCT, SBCT, and HBCT like the other two maneuver battalions in their respective organizations to simplify comparisons. Adding a true third maneuver battalion to the IBCT and HBCT would greatly enhance their flexibility and endurance during sustained operations.

[11] Kendall D. Gott, *Breaking the Mold, Tanks in the Cities* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2006), 98-106. There are five historical case studies in this CSI

pamphlet that argue against generalizations with regard to the effectiveness of heavy forces in urban terrain. The bottom line is that heavy forces have extremely useful capabilities in cities when used as part of a well trained combined arms team.

[12] Brigadier General (R) Huba Wass de Czege, *The US Army's New Coin of the Realm: Modular Brigade Combat Teams and Their Evolution*, Unpublished paper written for the U.S. Army in 2004-2005 justifying the rationale for the modular brigade types and their capabilities, 29-32.

[13] Matt M. Matthews, *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israel War* (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2008), 23-28, 39.

[14] First Cavalry Division and First Infantry Division heavy brigades, respectively, in 2004, and 1-68 AR CAB in 2008. These events were well known at the time but perhaps less well known now. LTC (R) Dave Siegel and COL Mike Pappal, both of whom had firsthand experience in the Sadr city battles, shared their views with the author on various occasions. COL Pappal provided his observations in an email dated 4 February 2011.

[15] The author, as an operations officer in a 'legacy' armor battalion, observed that other units in the area of operations had 'no-go' areas for friendly forces. The combined arms battalions and our tank battalion had no such self-imposed restrictions and hence no (known) enemy sanctuary areas. The difference in the units was the availability of Abrams tanks and Bradleys for routine combat patrols in hostile areas. Wheeled vehicles lacked the protection and firepower to deal with the unknown at acceptable risk, so commanders avoided the areas. Maintaining a visible heavy quick reaction force while randomly using tanks and Bradleys for patrols made it dangerous for the enemy to mass forces against friendly forces in the Baqubah area throughout 2005.

[16] David E. Johnson, *Military Capabilities for Hybrid War, Insights from the Israel Defense Forces in Lebanon and Gaza* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation Arroyo Center, 2010), 4, 7-8

[17] Brigadier General (R) Huba Wass de Czege and LTC Antulio J. Echevarria II, "Precision Decisions: To Build a Balanced Force, the QDR Might Consider These Four Propositions," *Armed Forces Journal International* (October 2000): 55.

[18] General Peter W. Chiarelli, Introduction to "Revisiting Priorities for the Army's Future Force," *Military Review* (September-October 2009): 40-41.

[19] Colonel Jeffrey D. Petersen, Lieutenant Colonel Robert Kewley, Lieutenant Colonel James Merlo, et.al., "Revisiting Priorities for the Army's Future Force," *Military Review* (September-October 2009): 41-42.

[20] Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said in a 11 August 2010 speech that the role of the Marine Corps is to be America's expeditionary force in readiness. The Gates speech, part of the George P. Shultz Lecture Series, took place at the Marines' Memorial Club and Hotel in San Francisco, CA.

[21] Colonel Jeffrey D. Petersen, et.al., 42-46.

[22] Association of the United States Army, *The Army Budget, An Analysis, Fiscal Year 2011* (Arlington, VA: Instituted of Land Warfare, 2010), 76. The Army is spending $299.5 million for an additional 83 Stryker vehicles against $183 million to upgrade 21 tanks and $230.9 million for tank modifications.