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# Halt Phase Plus Strategic Preclusion: Joint Solution for a Joint Problem

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"A particularly challenging requirement associated with fighting and winning major theater wars is being able to rapidly defeat initial enemy advances short of their objectives in two theaters in close succession, one followed almost immediately by another." -- 1998 National Military Strategy

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In the summer of 1996 General Ronald Fogleman, Chief of Staff of the US Air Force, became the first service chief to officially nonconcur with a combatant commander's major concept plan on the basis of the plan's fundamental strategy. The plan in question was a design by the Commander in Chief, Central Command, for the defense of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia against any future Iraqi attack. General Fogleman contended that the plan applied air power inappropriately, which would result in unacceptable casualties, loss of territory and resources, and excessive prolonging of the conflict.

These concerns stimulated development of the Air Force's "Halt Phase" concept. That concept contends that rapidly applied air power can serve as the key element to stop a large-scale armored invasion of a friendly nation before the enemy force can seize critical objectives. Although thwarting a conventional mechanized assault is not the most likely form of future warfare for the United States, such an attack poses one of the greatest threats to American overseas interests. This form of warfare is still the mode of choice for countries like North Korea, Iraq, Iran, and others, and will be for the foreseeable future. Air Force leaders argued that the inherent speed and range of air power, bolstered by advances in aircraft, weapons, and targeting technology, made the Halt Phase concept feasible. However, relying on such a philosophy for major regional conflicts would require a larger investment in future aerospace force structure. Thus, as quickly as "Halt Phase" became an Air Force battle cry in the services' struggle over a shrinking budget, it became anathema to the Army.

In actuality, however, the fundamental objectives of the Air Force's Halt Phase concept are similar to an evolving current Army doctrine known as "Strategic Preclusion," which contends:

Contingency response operations will require joint maneuver and interdiction forces capable of moving with such speed . . . and with such overmatching lethality that a potential enemy cannot "set" his forces and operate at an advantage against our power projection forces. The ultimate objective of these operations is *Strategic Preclusion*, where the adversary realizes he cannot achieve his objectives and ceases further escalation. These operations can resolve crises in their early stages, restore stability, and save lives and national treasure.[1]

Both concepts seek to respond rapidly to a developing major crisis with overwhelming force and quickly wrest the initiative from the adversary. If such actions alone failed to cause enemy capitulation, then efforts using multiple instruments of power would follow to achieve American objectives. Because the Air Force and Army remained committed to their designs, an acrimonious interservice dispute developed over how best to rapidly thwart an enemy attack on a friendly nation. Fundamental debates both within and between services have slowed progress on joint development of a workable rapid halt or strategic preclusion concept. In the final analysis, however, Halt Phase and Strategic Preclusion are *complementary* concepts that have much in common. Melding the two approaches into a single concept would not be difficult, and would offer the greatest prospect for a more efficient--and effective--American response to a conventional assault against a friendly nation.

Both the Halt Phase and Strategic Preclusion concepts offer great potential in conventional military conflicts, but the

services need to combine them into a *single* concept through close and continuous cooperation. The starting point should be a joint philosophy on *how* to implement the concept. A successful blending of ideas will occur only through input from the service chiefs and unified commanders with guidance from the Joint Staff and monitoring by the Office of the Secretary of Defense. United States Atlantic Command should conduct joint experimentation to validate concepts during the development process.

### Evolution of the Halt Phase Concept

The goal of rapidly regaining lost initiative and seeking quick defeat of an enemy in combat certainly is not new. What Halt Phase proposes are new operational concepts to achieve that objective. Beginning in 1996, and continuing through the Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) of 1997, the Air Force proposal led to revised programming and national strategy guidance in such documents as the Defense Planning Guidance, the National Security Strategy, the National Military Strategy, and the Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan. In early 1999 the Army, through its Training and Doctrine Command, began to unveil its development of the related Strategic Preclusion concept. The evolutionary process was not, however, without interservice debate.

Major General Charles Link, at that time the Air Force's Assistant to the Deputy Chief of Staff for Plans and Operations, led an effort to refine the Halt Phase concept. General Link's proposals developed into an overall philosophy of how America should plan and fight a major regional conflict (MRC). He believed that the United States was trapped in a Cold War paradigm emphasizing the armor and mechanized ground battle as the primary response to large-scale aggression. The land-based counteroffensive, he worried, had become an end in itself and the cornerstone of all MRC plans.

As Figure 1 depicts, in the postulated two MRC scenario the initial phases served to prepare the battlespace for a ground counteroffensive according to legacy (pre-Halt Phase) thinking. The problem with this response, according to General Link, was that it was slow and potentially quite costly in terms of lives and resources. Moreover, modern advances in military technology, organization, and doctrine, particularly within the Air Force, offered more palatable solutions.[2]

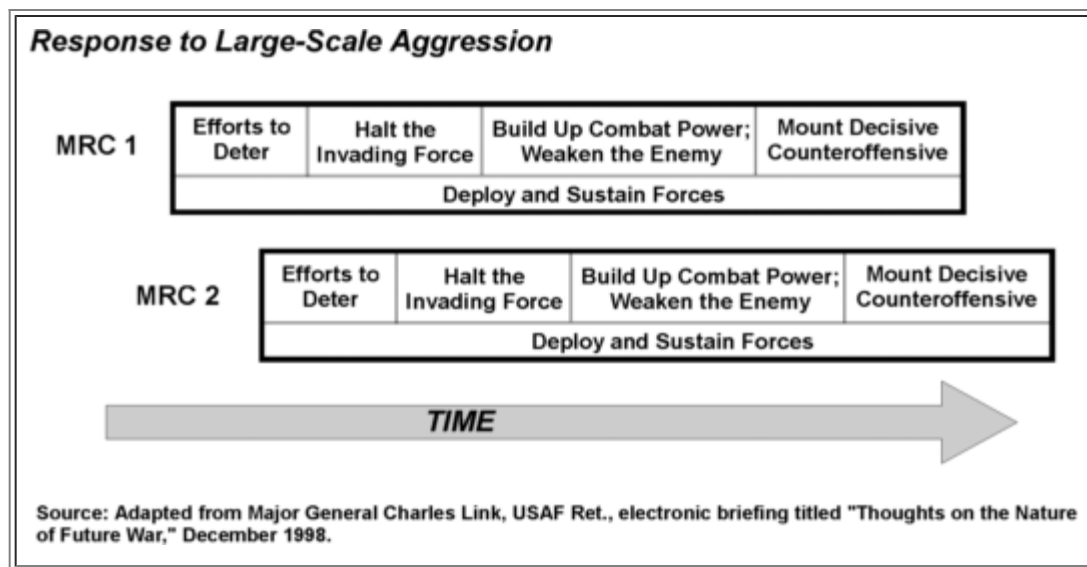
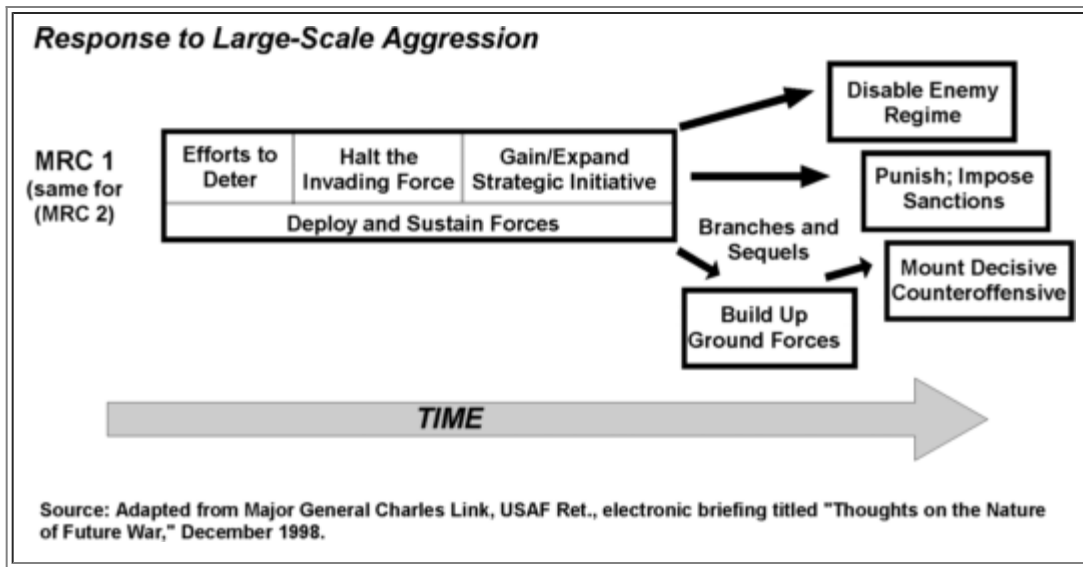


Figure 1. Legacy (pre-Halt Phase) Warfighting Construct.

General Link's underlying assumption was that the United States would engage in major theater conflict not as an aggressor or invader, but as a reaction to aggression against one of our friends or allies. This premise implied that American forces would cede the initiative at the outset of a conflict and respond initially in a reactive mode. Therefore, the United States must structure its forces to deter aggression, but when deterrence fails, prevent an aggressor from achieving his objectives and presenting the US with a fait accompli.[3]

Instead of focusing on the projected counteroffensive phase, General Link suggested focusing on making the Halt Phase more rapid and overwhelming: deliver a crushing blow early in the conflict to shock the enemy into physical and

psychological paralysis, stopping him short of his intended objectives. At best, the large and potentially costly ground counteroffensive might not be necessary. At worst, early success in the Halt Phase would buy time to employ other approaches, possibly nonmilitary, to achieving the ultimate political end state while still leaving the ground counteroffensive as an option, if needed.[4] Figure 2 summarizes General Link's vision of this approach.



**Figure 2. Halt Phase Warfighting Construct.**

It is important to appreciate what happens on the battlefield, and to the overall strategic situation, when friendly forces halt the enemy. From that point forward, the opponent can no longer continue the offensive and the initiative then passes to the defenders. A new set of options--branches and sequels--appears for the friendly side. Once friendly forces halt the aggressor, the United States and its partners may: (1) choose to impose additional economic and political sanctions on the offending country in hopes that this action may achieve the remaining objectives; (2) continue using air power to destroy critical military, economic, or national infrastructure to force enemy withdrawal from friendly territory captured during the initial invasion; or (3) exercise the option of initiating a ground counteroffensive. The later American forces begin halting an aggressor, the closer the enemy is to achieving his objectives and the greater the potential costs to prevent an enemy victory.[5] Propelled by General Link's theories, the Air Staff proposed that modern air power, when adequately resourced and properly employed, offered the key component of a joint and rapid Halt Phase.

### **The Halt Phase in National Strategy and Military Guidance**

An important test for the Halt Phase concept occurred during the QDR, the congressionally mandated review of the nation's security requirements. The QDR concluded that the Halt Phase was essential to future defense requirements, and in the May 1997 QDR final report, Secretary of Defense William Cohen listed three challenging requirements to fighting and winning major regional conflicts.

The first is being able to rapidly defeat initial enemy advances short of their objectives in two theaters in close succession, one followed almost immediately by another. Maintaining this capability is absolutely critical to the United States' ability to seize the initiative in both theaters and to minimize the amount of territory we and our allies must regain from the enemies. Failure to halt an enemy invasion rapidly can make the subsequent campaign to evict forces from captured territory much more difficult, lengthy, and costly. It could also weaken coalition support, undermine US credibility, and increase the risk of conflict elsewhere.[6]

As noted above, the halt concept progressed to other areas of DOD planning and programming. Multiple national documents including the National Security Strategy, the National Military Strategy, and the Defense Planning Guidance soon adopted the requirement to rapidly halt an invasion in two nearly simultaneous MRCs. While the Report of the National Defense Panel (December 1997) omitted mention of Halt Phase, the President's National Security Strategy stressed in both 1997 and 1998 the need for rapid success in the Halt Phase, in wording almost

identical to that of the QDR final report: "We must maintain the ability to rapidly defeat initial enemy advances short of enemy objectives in two theaters, in close succession. The United States must maintain this ability to ensure that we can seize the initiative, minimize territory lost before an invasion is halted, and ensure the integrity of our war fighting coalitions." [7] By stopping the enemy quickly, the United States and its allies could then take the initiative and be in a better position to dictate the tempo and direction of future actions without surrendering significant amounts of friendly territory. The National Security Strategy also noted that such a capability would deter potential aggressors who might take advantage of a situation where the United States was also heavily involved in an MRC or a smaller-scale contingency in another part of the world.

### **The US Army and Strategic Preclusion**

A key belief that the Air Force and Army hold in common is the need to achieve a *rapid* decision in battle. Both services understand that a prolonged conflict increases the risk of high casualties. The differences relate to the means each service would employ to achieve the commonly desired end.

The Army's draft planning document *Army Strategic Planning Guidance '99*, dated 5 February 1999, lays down the goal of "building a comprehensive strategic transformation plan" [8] to succeed on the battlefields of the future. Army leaders contend that the realities of the post-Cold War world require new and different military capabilities. Thus the Army's leadership, like that in the Air Force, recognizes the need to be fully ready "to rapidly project sufficient capabilities to minimize the risk associated with the early stages of a contingency operation." [9] *Strategic responsiveness*--rapidly projecting the right mix of forces wherever needed--is the objective of the Army's transformation plan. Responding with a combination of speed and overwhelming lethality will, in the Army's view, prevent an enemy from "setting" his forces. This is the basis for Strategic Preclusion as embedded in the future-oriented Army After Next (AAN) program. The AAN is an extensive effort that will develop new structures, organizations, and modes of operation for the Army of the new century. According to an Army briefing, "Emerging patterns of aggression both exhibited and articulated by probable adversaries necessitate that the nation . . . achieve a rapid and decisive contingency response to crises, terminating them in their early stages or placing an opponent at an early, continuing, and decisive disadvantage--strategically precluding escalation." [10]

If American forces can achieve Strategic Preclusion, the enemy will be unable to achieve his objectives, and the risk of escalation should be reduced or eliminated. If the adversary does not concede or retreat, American forces would then be in position to expel him from friendly territory, or take other action as directed by the National Command Authority. However, unlike traditional phased operations where a lengthy buildup of forces precedes the decisive counteroffensive, the initial halting or Strategic Preclusion actions assume greater importance.

The Army seeks, through its transformation plan, to enhance the mental agility of its forces by harnessing emerging information-age technologies that will facilitate real-time integration of intelligence not only within the Army, but with the other services as well. In addition, the Army's transformation plan aims to improve its ability to *rapidly project forces with enhanced lethality*. [11] The goal is to combine information superiority, rapid power projection, and a robust sustainment capability with comprehensive force protection.

### **Blending the Concepts**

The Army and Air Force recognize that the traditional construct of waiting--perhaps for several months--for the buildup of sufficient joint forces for a counterattack is not the ideal approach to warfare. The risk of failure for the United States is simply too great if commanders must wait for the personnel and equipment to arrive according to the drawn-out timelines of existing phased war plans. The Army's goal of achieving Strategic Preclusion focuses on attacking early in a crisis to save lives and treasure. [12] Therefore, with general agreement on the fundamental approach to future conflicts, there is a genuine opportunity for the services to work together to devise the optimal mix of forces for the future MRC threat.

The Army's concept for rapid force projection calls for moving a brigade-sized force from the continental United States to theater within 96 hours of notification. [13] The Air Force's scarcity of strategic airlift could be partially offset by the Army's development of lighter, leaner systems and equipment. Indeed, the AAN program appears to be headed down a path filled with new ideas to achieve just such objectives. Recently retired Army Chief of Staff General Dennis Reimer

stated, "I don't think, necessarily, that in 2020 divisions will be the coin of the realm." [14] General Reimer added that combined-arms battalions are a likely structure for the Army of the future. This type of structure would also mesh better with Strategic Preclusion, since it would facilitate the movement of smaller-sized units.

All the services agree that early air superiority is a prerequisite for a successful Halt/Preclusion approach. The combination of ground forces and joint air power precision fire capability will help make a melded strategy work. Moreover, this combination will help provide force protection in theater. The United States cannot afford to place soldiers, sailors, airmen, or Marines within range of enemy missiles unless it can defeat the theater missile threat. The 1991 Iraqi Scud attack on US forces in Saudi Arabia drove that point home with lethal effect. All the services are working on approaches to provide a multilayered defense in depth. These efforts include the Army's ground-based Theater High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense program, the Navy's Aegis shipboard anti-missile system, and the Air Force's Airborne Laser.

## **Halt Phase Theory**

Lost in the evolution of the Halt Phase concept was the development of a *strategy* employing operational art that encompassed a rapid halt. While much discussion revolved around "What to do, and with what weapons," the unanswered question remained "How?" The Air Force's strategy think tank, its CHECKMATE Division, developed two strategic concepts for conflict in the Middle East and Korea that included an integral rapid halt element. In addition, the Air Force sponsored several Halt Phase studies by independent contractors. [15]

However, among the services, disputes over future programming issues during the QDR suppressed significant joint philosophizing over strategy development. But the *joint* strategy of implementing Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion within a larger campaign is exactly where DOD needs to focus its planning for major conflict today and in the future. The potential for a far more powerful and flexible operational concept exists if the services work together to refine it. The following premises provide a starting point for such a joint analysis. Collectively, these premises offer a foundation for joint planners to develop and shape a coherent concept that supports the goals of *both* services.

**Premise 1.** The Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion goal is to wrest the initiative from the adversary with such force that he is at best shocked into capitulation, or at worst paralyzed and unable to continue with his offensive.

In the most likely case, the United States would not apply the Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion preemptively, but would react to an attack that has already begun. Two responses must occur. The first is to absorb the initial blow and recover from the shock and damage. The second is to stop the adversary's offensive as quickly as possible, short of his critical objectives.

Thinking in terms of time and space, the enemy paralysis must occur at multiple levels of warfare nearly simultaneously. Tactical paralysis at key locations would provide certain immediate effects. Operational-level paralysis has a near-term effect, but it also provides lasting advantages by preventing the adversary from massing forces and conducting coherent theater-wide operations. Strategic-level paralysis pays dividends throughout the conflict. The art, of course, lies in how one plans to achieve such paralysis.

**Premise 2.** Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion is not an end in itself. It must be considered, tailored, and planned in relation to the other campaign phases and the desired political-military end state.

The "strategy" debate is more than just a minor semantic issue. Force structure planners as well as combat planners must realize that Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion is a subset of the larger theater war strategy. Moreover, Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion has no universal form. It must be tailored to a specific situation and environment, and shaped by the desired political goal. Above all else, the concept must be flexible.

**Premise 3.** The Air Force's Halt Phase concept is focused on conventional, mechanized warfare. However, this is not the only form of conflict the United States may face in the future.

The implication of this premise is that Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion should not monopolize programming and budgeting allocations. Without a single dominant threat such as the former Soviet Union, America's future of military

involvement becomes murky. The Cold War no longer overshadows once peripheral threats to US interests. The potential applications of US military force are becoming as diverse and complicated as the geopolitical environment itself.

No consensus exists over the character and conduct of future war. The development of one particular mode in the conduct and character of war does not imply that the others disappear. In the 1990s, while the most modern nations of the world advanced the state of industrial and information age warfare, ethnic African tribes slaughtered each other with machetes in a throwback to preindustrial, agrarian warfare.[16] Throughout the Cold War, while superpowers prepared for full-scale, unlimited, nation-state warfare, insurgent forces from Latin America to Southeast Asia conducted guerrilla warfare for revolutionary objectives. Different reasons for war, different modes of warfare, and different conflict environments can and do coexist. Some combinations may be more likely than others. Yet, the most likely scenarios may not be the most dangerous to US interests.

National security planning must prepare for the most dangerous scenarios as well as others that may be less threatening to American vital interests. The Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion concept correctly focuses on a particularly threatening form of major regional conflict. But that focus on MRCs does not relieve the United States from the obligation to prepare for other types of warfare.

**Premise 4.** Service arguments over which component is *the* decisive force are irrelevant and counterproductive.

The common debate played out in various forums over whether a particular military instrument is the decisive element in war simply generates interservice strife. The question for the strategist is not *which* component is the decisive force to execute the halt. The question should be: "Which *blend* of joint force tools and strategy most *decisively* achieves the desired objectives at the least cost?" In different situations and environments, different components may contribute more than others.

### **Application of a Halt/Preclusion Concept**

An "ends, ways, means" construct offers a useful way to dissect the elements of the Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion concept. The "ends" are the desired objectives or end states; the "ways" are the strategies to achieve the objectives; and the means are the tools that military and political leaders use to implement the strategy. The construct applies at many levels, from the National Command Authority using all instruments of power to achieve the country's overall political objectives, down to individual infantry platoons, fighter formations, or naval surface combatants using their respective weapon systems to achieve desired tactical outcomes in the battle area. The overall end state and political objectives must, at all times, shape the military objectives and strategy of the Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion.

The character and conduct of Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion will also be unique to the nature of the specific conflict, adversary, and environment. No universal MRC template exists that one can apply to all situations. This reality calls for flexibility; however, five principles should guide military campaign planners and those planning future service resources.

. *Conceptualize and Plan in Terms of Desired Effects Synchronized in Space and Time.* The strategist must first articulate the desired effects necessary to halt the aggression and achieve the campaign objectives before determining the appropriate joint tools necessary for the tasks. To approach the problem by first insisting on a ground or air power solution, and then applying those means to the objectives, will lead to a less than optimum plan. At the operational and tactical levels, the desired effects, not the identification of targets to attack, must guide planning. Planners should derive targets from the desired effects, not the other way around. In other words, like all military planning, this process is *not* first and foremost a targeting exercise.

"Effects-based" planning also helps prevent unnecessary effort. For example, destroying enemy forces for the sake of destruction makes no sense. If the desired effect is to prevent a distant motorized rifle division from exploiting the temporary success of frontline forces, then immobilizing it, delaying its movement, or diverting it to an undesirable location would be sufficient. Thus, the situation may dictate instead destroying a critical bridge span, or constructing an obstacle belt across a key avenue of approach followed later by attacks on threatening units.

Effects-based planning is more sophisticated and complicated than simply locating, identifying, and destroying armored vehicles. Halting aggression may contain elements of traditional interdiction missions to delay, disrupt, deny, or destroy. Accomplishing these tasks may involve a multitude of interrelated actions. Some actions may be direct attacks on the invading forces while others may be indirect attacks on the command and logistics support that permits the invasion to continue. And other actions, such as suppressing enemy air defenses or ballistic missiles, may facilitate the primary task of halting the enemy.

. *Speed and Timing of Response.* The ultimate goal of the military instrument, of course, is to achieve strategic objectives without resorting to full-scale combat. The speed of the halt force response and the composition of that force have a deterrent value that may preclude an enemy attack. In general, to provide effective deterrence in a rapidly developing crisis, (a) the forces must either be in place or arrive quickly, (b) the adversary must be aware of their presence, (c) the adversary must fear the employment of those forces, and (d) the adversary must believe the will exists to employ them. Deterrence, as always, depends on the adversary leadership's conclusion that the risks of the US response outweigh the benefits of aggression.

The military commander must balance the mix of the deterrent forces between those that provide the optimum capability in the event of hostilities, and those that the enemy perceives to provide the greatest capability. Beyond the deterrent value, the speed and timing of the response play a significant role in the halt's success for both physical and psychological reasons. First, a rapid response lessens the time the defenders must engage the enemy. It thus reduces casualties and preserves forces for a counteroffensive. The earlier one stops an invasion, the less the destruction and damage that will be inflicted on the allied nation.

Second, a rapid response increases the vulnerability of the enemy's invading force. The adversary's movement of large mechanized forces exposes a tremendous logistical infrastructure that the halting force can attack throughout the depth of the enemy nation. The movement from garrisons to assembly areas, assembly areas to staging areas, and staging areas to the lines of departure places large numbers of vehicles on roads and rail lines.

Rapid response also provides a third critical advantage by keeping the enemy off balance and frustrating his strategy. Any mechanized force has a high level of vulnerability during the early phases of an advance as units attempt to assemble, coordinate, and synchronize their actions. The halt force can exploit the adversary's confusion and friction during his tactical deployment if it arrives early enough. Forces on the move are much more vulnerable than those in prepared defensive positions. The greater the delay in the arrival of the halt force, the greater is the likelihood that enemy forces will have reached their initial or follow-on objectives in friendly territory, prepared more formidable defenses, and decreased their vulnerability. An adversary may confine his attack to unconventional or standoff means such as special forces or long-range missiles (using conventional, biological, or chemical weapons), or he may attempt the conventional approach of quickly seizing critical ports and airfields. If the latter were the case, the rapid introduction of the halt force's lead elements would be necessary to secure those areas for the subsequent entry of follow-on units.

. *Parallel Effects in Depth to Maximize Physical and Psychological Shock and Paralysis.* The Halt Phase goals of quickly stopping the enemy short of his desired objective and then regaining the initiative do not imply attacks only on forces having an immediate role in the fight. In many situations opportunities for obtaining more rapid results with fewer casualties may be found by analyzing the complex interaction of enemy systems throughout the enemy's strategic depth. Such efforts may uncover effects throughout the strategic depth that when properly achieved create significant disruption and degradation of the enemy's military forces as a whole. The goal is to look for economies of force where a given level of effort has the largest, most disproportionate, effect. The likely MRC scenarios for the foreseeable future should provide such opportunities.

The maximum shock and paralysis of the enemy forces come from the nearly simultaneous attack on the critical elements of his military systems at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. When compressed in time, the attacks provide a far greater degree of psychological confusion and shock to complement the degradation of physical capability. This concept includes the direct attack on key units, and indirect attack on those systems that allow mechanized forces to function. It includes lethal attacks aimed at physical destruction as well as nonlethal information



and electronic warfare. It focuses on critical vulnerabilities or key elements that if successfully attacked will prevent the enemy from fighting in a coherent and coordinated manner. In one case the vulnerability may be a rail line essential to transport armored units. In another case it may be the bridging units that allow the invading force to cross large rivers. The precise critical nodes will vary but must always be the object of searching analytical inquiry.

. *Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion Problem for a Force Projection Military: Numerous Tasks but Limited Initial Resources.* The art of planning Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion stems from this mismatch. Even after the United States gains all the pre-conflict advantages it can through forward presence and stockpiling within budget and political constraints, Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion greatly stresses a force projection military. The implication of this is that commanders must make every weapon and asset count. For future force structure planning, two issues arise.

First, to minimize disadvantages, rapid force projection is essential. This involves not only maximizing the speed and volume of movement, but also minimizing the size of units and logistics support necessary for achieving the desired critical effects. Timelines for the arrival of initial and follow-on forces must be realistic lest excessive risk is incurred.

Second, timely and accurate intelligence is absolutely essential to success. Here again, effects-based thinking plays a valuable role. Analyzing the enemy as a complex system requiring numerous synchronized elements to conduct the offensive will yield critical nodes vital to his warfighting capability. Groups such as the Joint Warfare Analysis Center, Joint Command and Control Warfare Center, National Security Agency, Air Force Information Warfare Center, Defense Intelligence Agency, and the service intelligence units all contribute to sophisticated nodal analysis of an adversary's military and societal systems. Military planners must be aware of and use these organizations in peacetime to be prepared before a crisis occurs.

For example, a desired effect may be to deny coherent military operations for four days by disrupting communications between two enemy corps headquarters. The target set in the communications system may consist of 350 radio relays, fiber optic repeater sites, switching centers, command posts, microwave relay towers, and satellite ground stations. Physically destroying every target might require over 2,500 aircraft missions or missile attacks spread out over days due to weather or limited resources. However, sophisticated nodal analysis may reveal that all communications between the two corps are routed through two switching centers and three relay stations. The target set for the desired effect has now dropped from 350 targets to five. Given a fixed number of resources, nodal analysis and smart targeting allows a joint force to broaden the span of parallel attacks and accelerate the shock effect.

. *Effect of Enemy Asymmetric Strategies.* One must keep in mind that adversaries are intelligent, thinking, learning entities. It is doubtful that lessons of the Persian Gulf War went unnoticed. Equally doubtful is the idea that a future adversary would be content to watch the US military build up large joint forces after the onset of a crisis. More likely, the opponent would rely on speed and shock to achieve objectives before the United States could respond, and would also try to prevent or disrupt the entry of US forces into theater.

Numerous methods of executing this asymmetric strategy could slow the deployment of the halting force at every step. A computer network attack against US Transportation Command deployment flow computers could prevent timely dissemination of orders to airlift and sealift units. Ports in the United States and the theater may come under persistent chemical or biological attack to prevent the loading or offloading of cargo. Halt/Preclusion's design and preparation must minimize these vulnerabilities. Force protection elements must be integrated into the rapid deployment plan. The protection must occur on US soil as well as in theater. The joint force should be tailored not just for speed of response and desired effects, but also for reducing the size and quantity of physically massed troops. Future force structure planning must emphasize operations from greater distances outside the range of significant threats but also develop active defenses against those long-range threats.

### **Limitations and the Joint Solution Requirement**

The limitations on land or air power operating in isolation create a strong argument for a joint approach to the Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion challenge. Each component brings a unique capability to the problem. In general, the air component arrives and can begin attacks much quicker than a significant ground force. Air power provides the ability

to quickly achieve desired effects through the full depth and breadth of the theater without first fighting through the leading edge of the invading force. Air and space forces offer the capability to sense and visualize a battlespace to greater depth, and with greater accuracy than ever before. And, in the right environments, air can bring rapid maneuver and tremendous firepower against an invading ground force while minimizing unintended damage.

While the air component carries out these missions, rapidly deployable ground forces create a persistent, around-the-clock defense of key terrain during the Halt/Preclusion phase. They defend against seizure of key cities or regain those that have been lost. They provide a defensive capability in mountainous or jungle terrain and during inhospitable weather that pose problems to air forces. They provide a physical bar to enemy forces that survive air attack and succeed in advancing upon the invaded ally's vital centers. They prevent the enemy from asserting control on the ground over the ally's populace.

Most important, when properly coordinated, parallel air attacks against critical nodes and enemy forces, plus a well-executed mobile defense by friendly ground forces, present a formidable multidimensional problem to the enemy. The enemy faces a much more difficult and complex problem than facing only one component in isolation. Ultimately, the exact situation determines the required participation level of all components--air, land, maritime, and special forces. A large, mechanized invasion across open, uninhabited desert may call for an air component main effort. A large-scale infantry assault into the towns and villages of a mountainous region begs for a heavier ground force contribution. Even in both extremes, however, all the components together provide a high degree of synergy.

## **Recommendations**

At the core of both the Halt Phase and Strategic Preclusion concepts lies a common goal and vision for modern American warfare--respond early, dominate the conflict, shock the enemy into paralysis, and do not allow him to use time or friendly casualties in his favor. The implementation of the halt concept should be tailored for specific situations, but it requires a true joint approach, capitalizing on the strengths of each component and mitigating the risks of relying on just a single tool. The solution requires service cooperation, inputs from the regional CINCs, and both a near-term and long-term plan. The following specific recommendations support this general prescription.

- . *Near-Term Improvement to Theater Operations Plans.* Existing CINC war plans can benefit by relying on recent advances in speed of maneuver, precision weapons, and intelligence-gathering capability. Stealth and standoff in joint weapon systems allow for much earlier parallel and simultaneous attacks of enemy military systems and infrastructure. They offer the opportunity to impart early shock on an adversary so as to more quickly regain the initiative in a major conflict. The starting point for the plans must be in articulating the strategy in terms of parallel attacks to achieve desired effects. For example, the plans must move away from the traditional tasking of air component commanders by mission categories--close air support, interdiction, strategic attack, offensive and defensive counterair. Instead, the plans should assign air commanders with specific missions. For example: "Delay 23d Armor Division north of the Blue River for four days," or "Deny primary communications from national headquarters to corps commanders."

The overworked phrase "synergistic effect" truly applies in the situation where air, land, and maritime forces work together, each making its own distinctive contribution to the overall objective of rapidly halting the enemy force. Theater CINCs and their staffs must carefully study the particular attributes of all US systems--land, sea, and air--and capitalize on them to put their forces in the best possible position to resist aggression early, thus providing a wide range of options for the political leadership to pursue. Service parochialism must not be allowed to block war plans that capitalize on all elements in America's military arsenal.

- . *CINC Requirements for Future Improvement.* As the regional CINCs and their staffs conceptualize and plan efficient but effective solutions to their unique challenges, they will discover limitations and shortfalls. By translating those limitations to future requirements, they stimulate the progress of Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion development. The service attempts so far to advance the Halt or Preclusion concepts started backwards. They have attempted to leap directly from theory to the budgeting process for future development. Missing in the process so far has been a concrete military strategy on which to base budget decisions. The articulation of such strategies and the associated current and future requirements to carry out the strategies must start with the warfighting CINCs.

. *Dedicated Joint Effort to Develop Near- and Long-Term Operational Concepts.* Starting from the common fundamental goal of Halt Phase and Strategic Preclusion, with inputs from the CINCs, the services must work together to build a joint operational concept from the bottom up. Such development will take a cooperative effort on par with the AirLand Battle doctrine development of the 1970s. Today, however, the services and DOD as a whole are better organized to allow such a program to flourish. The program should be a formal effort guided by the services' senior leadership along with the full participation of their respective doctrine centers and US Atlantic Command involvement.

. *Firm Leadership from Service Chiefs, Joint Staff, and Atlantic Command.* Firm leadership from the service chiefs would help prod cooperation between the service staffs in developing a joint Halt Phase/Strategic Preclusion concept. Atlantic Command and the Joint Staff can serve as honest brokers, discouraging the services from developing stovepipe solutions in isolation. Today, Atlantic Command has appropriately included Halt Phase and Strategic Preclusion concepts in its Joint Experimentation program. However, it is far less efficient to allow contradictory, service-specific concepts to mature before conducting joint experiments, than to insist on a concept developed jointly from the ground up. In the latter case, service cooperation already exists before the joint experiment begins, and the experimentation then serves to fine-tune the concepts.

The foregoing recommendations--collectively leading to a cooperative program for combining the Halt Phase and Strategic Preclusion concepts, will if implemented represent not only a victory for jointness, they will represent a victory for national defense itself. As Dwight Eisenhower declared over a half century ago, "War is waged in three elements but there is no separate land, air, or naval war. Unless all assets in all elements are efficiently combined and coordinated against a . . . common objective, their maximum potential power cannot be realized." [17] His words are even truer today.

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## NOTES

This is a condensed version of a longer paper titled, "Halting the Myths: Understanding and Applying a Joint 'Halt Phase' Concept." For a copy of the more detailed version, please contact the authors.

1. US Department of the Army, *Army Strategic Planning Guidance '99* (Draft) (Washington: Department of the Army, 5 February 1999), pp. 14-15. Italics in original. Hereinafter ASPG.

2. Major General Charles Link, USAF Ret., interview with authors, Arlington, Va., 11 January 1999. For a criticism of the Halt Phase concept, see Earl H. Tilford, Jr., *Halt Phase Strategy: New Wine in Old Skins . . . With PowerPoint* (Carlisle Barracks, Pa.: US Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 23 July 1998).

3. General Link interview.

4. Ibid.

5. Charles Link, "Thoughts on the Nature of Future War," briefing on compact disk, Washington: Air Force/XPXQ, July 1998.

6. William S. Cohen, *Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington: Office of the Secretary of Defense, May 1997), p. 13.

7. National Defense Panel, *Transforming Defense: National Security in the 21st Century*, Report of the National Defense Panel (Washington: December 1997); William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington: The White House, October 1998), p. 22.

8. ASPG, p. vii.

9. Ibid., p. iv.

10. *Army After Next: Strategic Preclusion Through Advanced Full Dimensional Operations*, Futures Directorate, Deputy Chief of Staff for Doctrine, US Army Training and Doctrine Command, 3 March 1999, slide 6.

11. ASPG, p. 20.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 15.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

14. John G. Roos, "Striking the Best Balance," *Armed Forces Journal International*, October 1998, p. 46.

15. For a detailed review of the results of one such study, see David A. Ochmanek et al., *To Find and Not to Yield: How Advances in Information and Firepower Can Transform Theater Warfare* (Santa Monica, Calif.: RAND, 1998).

16. In their book *War and Anti-War*, Alvin and Heidi Toffler describe three distinct transitions in the history of warfare derived from the forms of civilization. The earliest was First Wave warfare waged by preindustrial, agrarian-based societies. Second Wave warfare emerged from the industrial revolution and defined the two World Wars. Emerging now, with the 1991 Persian Gulf War providing a foreglimpse, is Third Wave or information-based warfare. Because "older forms of warfare do not entirely disappear when newer ones arise" (p. 83), one "predictable result of this will be the radical diversification of the kinds of wars we are likely to confront in the future" (p. 81). "In short," they argue, "at least a dozen different mixes and matches of war-forms are possible, each with endless possible variations. And this assumes contests in which there are only two adversaries or simple alliances" (p. 84). Alvin and Heidi Toffler, *War and Anti-War: Survival at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1993), pp. 33-85.

17. Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1948), p. 210.

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