



# **AUSA BACKGROUND BRIEF**

## **AIRLAND BATTLE — FUTURE DOCTRINE FOR A STRATEGIC FORCE FOR THE 1990's AND BEYOND**



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The way the Army plans to fight, its doctrine, establishes a framework for its organization, equipment and training. Doctrine provides the basis for policy decisions regarding modernization, research and development, and commitment of budget resources.

The Army is currently in the process of a comprehensive review of its AirLand Battle doctrine that has guided its preparations for war throughout the 1980's. This review — called AirLand Battle - Future — is driven by two fundamental factors: drastically-changed world conditions and major developments in military weapons technology.

The Cold War as we have known it for the last 45 years is greatly attenuated; the "Iron Curtain" has collapsed. Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union are undergoing fundamental political change. The Warsaw Pact is no longer a reliable military alliance and, consequently, the threat of a rapid massive attack on NATO is very unlikely.

At the same time, the proliferation of advanced weapons throughout the world, and especially among developing countries, has greatly increased the potential threat to U.S. interests. As a consequence, the potential for military confrontation on a global basis spans the spectrum of conflict — from individual terrorists (Northern Ireland), insurgency (Philippines), limited conventional warfare (Chad-Libya), to full scale conventional war (Iran-Iraq). Also, major power military capabilities (both conventional and nuclear) remain.

The changing political climate, the perception of a diminished threat in Europe, and the prospect of significant arms reduction agreements translate into smaller forces and decreased defense budgets. This means the Army will have to modify its doctrine to accommodate a smaller force structure, as well as to cope with the changed threat environment.

### ARMY DOCTRINE

As a maneuver doctrine, the Army's current AirLand Battle seeks operational success through a disruption-destruction sequence in which larger enemy forces are first dislocated, disorganized and fragmented, and then defeated in detail. It relies on seizure of the tactical initiative and seeks through agile counter-maneuver to confront the enemy with a succession of unforeseen threats. It is directed toward wresting control from the attacker and ultimately collapsing his ability to fight.

### AIRLAND BATTLE - FUTURE

AirLand Battle - Future is designed to update Army warfighting concepts for the early twenty-first century. While the fundamentals of current doctrine will remain, greater emphasis will be placed on selected functions and changes in how the doctrine is executed. AirLand Battle - Future visualizes fighting a war in larger spaces, at a more rapid pace and with fewer troops armed with more sophisticated weapons. Smaller units — such as a combined arms brigade task force or smaller — must be prepared to fight a lighter and quicker opponent in developing countries as well as in Europe where Soviet forces can be expected to also become more modern, mobile and much more sophisticated.

The evolving concepts of AirLand Battle - Future visualize the use of technology (sensors) rather than forces to locate, track and acquire the enemy; attack of enemy formations by fire and rapidly-moving combined arms teams; "grabbing" the initiative and forcing the pace of events; and more definitive linkages between sensors and attack forces with rapid reconnaissance forces. The execution involves a sequence wherein dispersed forces mass rapidly; conduct the fight; and disperse to reconstitute forces. To carry this out will require rapid decisions emanating from a strong, real-time command system and reliable control and communications systems. This concept demands the successful development and integration of modern combat systems into the Army.

### FORCE IMPLICATIONS

Conditions dictate a smaller, leaner but more lethal force. It will continue to have a force mix of light, heavy and special operations units. Organizational considerations and changes to fit the new concepts include:

- The corps remains the centerpiece.
- Greater agility for the division echelon.
- Brigades to be combined arms forces.
- A simpler, service-oriented logistics system.

An aggressive research and development program to take full advantage of emerging technologies is essential to the implementation of the Army's revised doctrine.

### MODERNIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Modernization programs will focus on development and fielding of more mobile forces; simple, strong command, control and communications; accuracy of intelligence and target acquisition; reliable, accurate sensors; greater range, accuracy and lethality of precision munitions; and lethal maneuver systems.

The Army's current force modernization strategy encompasses several synchronized, functional modernization plans (i.e., heavy force, light force, special operation force, antiarmor, aviation, forward area air defense, close air support, tactical command and control, tactical wheeled vehicle, deep operations, short-range nuclear and chemical).

The technical revolution, driven to a large degree by micro electronics, the computer chip and new materials, will have a profound impact on weapon systems of the future. Effective exploitation and development will lead to a combat environment in which what can be seen or detected can be hit; and what can be hit can be killed.

The future AirLand Battle doctrine will take advantage of this advanced technology. Even in a tight budget environment, the U.S. Army plans to maintain a level of research and development funding which will permit the aggressive exploitation of those things that insure U.S. technological superiority on the battlefield.