

Did TRADOC Outmanoeuvre the Manoeuvrists? A Comment

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In a series of articles and a book, Richard Lock-Pullan described the development of US Army doctrine in the post-Vietnam era. The first article, published in this journal in 2002, looks at what he believes is the marked impact of civilian reformers on the Army's AirLand Battle Doctrine.¹ Lock-Pullan's narrative may be summarised roughly as follows: the initial version of the US Army's doctrine for the post-Vietnam era was composed by the heads of the newly founded Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC): General William E. DePuy, TRADOC's commander, and Major General Donn A. Starry, Armor Center commandant. TRADOC was established by General Creighton Abrams, the Army's Chief of Staff, on July 1973, as a major step to rebuild the army after Vietnam. Abrams nominated two distinguished and trusted former subordinates to fill the two most important positions in the command. General DePuy served as an infantry field grade officer in Europe during 1944–45, and his last field command was the first Infantry Division in Vietnam in 1966–67. He served in various staff positions in the Pentagon.² Major General Starry was General Abrams' protégé. He commanded the Eleventh Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) in Vietnam from 1969 to 1970.

The DePuy–Starry Active Defense Doctrine, published in the 1976 Field Manual (FM 100–5), drew fire from circles within the army even before its publication. They claimed that, if implemented, the doctrine would not allow NATO troops to withstand a surprise Soviet attack. Likewise, the doctrine attracted criticism on the part of civilian pundits, later known as civilian military reformers, who saw it as another example of the hidebound thinking that had led them to call for sweeping military reforms. The civilian reformers' criticism claimed that while the army's 1976 tactical doctrine, based on what they called 'firepower and attrition', may have helped the United States to prevail in two world wars, it was not relevant in the context of land warfare in the post-Second World War era. Instead they pressed for what they called 'Maneuver Warfare Doctrine'.

1. Richard Lock-Pullan, 'Civilian Ideas and Military Innovation: Manoeuvre Warfare and Organisational Change in the US Army', *War & Society* 20: 1 (May 2002), 125–47, and idem, *US Intervention Policy and Army Innovation* (London/New York: Routledge, 2006), ch. 4.
2. DePuy's career is described fully in Romie L. Brownlee and William J. Mullen II, *Changing An Army: An Oral History of General William E. DePuy, USA retired* (Pennsylvania: United States Military History Institute, 1988). For a detailed description of Starry's career see: Donn A. Starry, 'Letter to Dr. Richard M. Swain, June 7, 1995', Starry papers, Historical Office, Headquarters, US Army TRADOC, Fort Monroe, VA [cited hereafter as 'Letter to Swain']. This letter was an earlier, longer, version of the final chapter, titled 'Reflections', in George F. Hofmann and Donn A. Starry (eds), *Camp Colt to Desert Storm: The history of U.S. Armored Forces* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999).

Lock-Pullan mapped out the development of this Maneuver Warfare, first put forth in 1976 by William S. Lind, who was at that time an aide of Senator Robert Taft, Jr, and later of Senator Gary Hart, and one of the founders of the Military Reform Movement. Maneuver Warfare, which Lind offered as a replacement for the establishment's Active Defense, was an amalgamation of ideas first articulated by J.F.C. Fuller and Basil H. Liddell Hart, and subsequently by retired fighter pilot Colonel John R. Boyd, father of the Boyd Cycle (or OODA Loop). Lind and Boyd were joined later by Edward N. Luttwak, a renowned expert in military strategy, who had stressed the need for an operational level (or theatre) doctrine to supplement the army's tactical doctrine.

It should be noted that the reformers did not limit themselves to analysing the ideas of past great captains and military pundits—they were also greatly influenced by the performance of the *Wehrmacht* in the Blitzkrieg of 1939–41, as well as the Israeli achievements in the wars of 1967 and 1973. The reformers backed their claims up by referring to a host of military leaders who emerged victorious after practicing manoeuvre warfare: McArthur, Patton, Lee, Jackson and Washington in the United States, von Manstein and Guderian in Germany, and the Israeli Ariel Sharon.

Lock-Pullan reminded readers that the views of the Military Reform Movement drew criticism from army officers as well as academic analysts. Ultimately, however, Lock-Pullan maintains that the 1982 edition of the Field Manual, widely referred to as the AirLand Battle Doctrine, reflected nearly all the basic ideas put forth by the civilian reformers.³ The preparation of the new edition was led by Starry, who succeeded DePuy and proved uniquely adept at generating consensus over the manual's contents. Starry succeeded in securing widespread support for the new doctrine, within both the military establishment and civilian circles.

In his conclusions, Lock-Pullan pointed out the similarity between the 1982 Field Manual and the ideas put forth by Lind, Luttwak, and other reformers. He concluded:

This article has highlighted the role of civilian critics in generating the manoeuvre ideas that the army under Starry adapted to meet its internal and external needs. The final outcome owed more to the civilians than the official accounts say and, in addition, highlighted how civilian ideas may be included in an Army's self-reform process.⁴

Lock-Pullan's narrative raises three problems: First, it did not describe the reformists' own views about their part in the creation of the 1982 Field Manual. Did they claim credit for Starry's innovative doctrine? Second, it did not explain the army's total denial that the civilian reformers had an impact on Starry and his team

3. A similar, if less detailed, account appears in a biography of Boyd, which presents only Boyd's ideas as the inspiration for Starry and TRADOC, making no mention of Lind: Grant H. Hammond, *The Mind of War: John Boyd and American Security* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 2001), 153–4.

4. Lock-Pullan, 'Civilian Ideas and Military Innovations', 146.

of doctrine authors. Neither doctrine authors nor other military writers recognised or mentioned, at the time or in later writings, such an impact. How did the army succeed in 'suppressing' any mention of a significant impact in the hundreds of articles and books that dealt with the army's restructuring after Vietnam? Third, this narrative sounds too good to be true. It paints a picture of a perfect, enlightened world, in which the 'voices of reason' succeeded in awakening the 'forces of darkness' from their slumber, convincing the establishment to adopt the reformers' elegant ideas and allow them to be the arbiters of official doctrine. In the real world, outsiders find it very difficult to change operational ideas of high ranking and long-serving officers. This point was described in detail by Lieutenant Colonel A.J. Bacevich who had his feet planted firmly on both sides of the divide between theory and practice. In 1987 Bacevich was both a squadron commander in the Third ACR and a scholar with a doctorate in American History from Princeton. Later he would go on to lead the Eleventh ARC and write extensively on military affairs.

Bacevich argued that it is unlikely that professional military men, with extensive experience and war records, will accept ideas put forth by outside experts, be they civilian or military, with no battlefield experience.⁵ In this context it is useful to point out that in the 1970s the army was led by generals who had fought in Vietnam, Korea and the Second World War, whereas the reformers of the time had no land warfare or other military background. Of the leaders of the reform movement, only Steven Canby graduated from West Point. He was promoted to the rank of lieutenant colonel only as a reservist, having served for just six years. Some of the hardcore reformers were members of the so-called '[Jet] Fighter Mafia', which along with Boyd, a retired colonel and fighter pilot, included Pierre Sprey and Franklin Spinney, both civilian aviation experts. It is hard to imagine that civilian intellectuals, and a retired pilot, bright and well-spoken as they might be, would be able to persuade the army's establishment, ruled by decorated veterans, to change its thinking.

The aim of this comment is not to delve into the debate between civilian reformers and army planners, or determine, with hindsight, who was ultimately right. Rather, this article will focus on a specific goal—showing that the aforementioned narrative is not supported by contemporary and later sources, and suggesting pointers for formulating an alternative account. The present author contends that Starry's 1982 Field Manual presented an operational level doctrine that employed manoeuvre warfare and that the Military Reform Movement preached such a doctrine, but each side interpreted quite differently those two basic concepts. Both used the same terms but in practice there was a great disagreement about their content. Therefore, it is not surprising that Starry never mentioned that some of the credit for the 1982 Field Manual was due to the reformers, nor that they never claimed that they had been so deprived.

5. A.J. Bacevich, 'Prospects for Military Reform', *Parameters* 17 (Spring 1987): 31.

THE STARRY-WASS DE CZEGE NARRATIVE

The present section will try to describe the way that Starry and his team of doctrine writers characterised the factors which formed their ideas—the same ideas that led to the AirLand Battle Doctrine in the 1982 Field Manual. Needless to say, the Starry–Wass de Czege narrative is a natural starting point but should not be the sole support for the contentions of the present article. In the following sections more evidence will be offered, so that the case will not depend solely on the writings of the army's establishment.

Starry was the intellectual spearhead of five officers (Lieutenant General William R. Richardson, Lieutenant Colonels Huba Wass de Czege, L.D. Holder, Richmond B. Henriques in Fort Leavenworth and Brigadier General Donald R. Morelli in Washington) who oversaw the formulation of the new doctrine.⁶ There is no doubt as to Starry's pivotal role in the migration from the 1976 Field Manual to the 1982 edition. For this reason, the natural place from which to begin the search for the sources of his insights and ideas is his memoirs, articles and transcribed interviews. To date, the single most comprehensive source is his 1995 'letter' to Colonel Richard Swain, which runs to 36 single-spaced pages.⁷ In the letter Starry maps out the ideas about the operational (or theatre) level he had amassed during 25 years' experience as an officer, before accepting a post at Fort Knox as commander of the Armor Center in 1973.

The first idea concerns the role of nuclear warfare. While Starry believed nuclear weapons to be of great operational and tactical benefit, he realised that the chances were slim that political and high-level military leaders would allow commanders to make tactical nuclear weapons a part of their operational planning.⁸ Accordingly, he believed that, in the event of war in Europe, NATO would have to fight outnumbered using conventional means. Nevertheless, Starry felt that the West could prevail despite its numerical inferiority. He was encouraged by a survey of 1000 historical battles, compiled for the BDM Corporation in the late 1950s by Dr Robert Helmbold, who indicated that numerical inferiority did not necessarily entail defeat. Starry felt that if the outnumbered NATO were to seize the initiative, it could emerge victorious: 'All this became an intellectual underpinning of the AirLand Battle. We simply had to find a way to fight and win with conventional means, at theater level, below the threshold of the theater nuclear decision, therefore well below the threshold of a strategic level ICBM/ nuclear decision. And could we but define the secrets buried under the details of Helmbold's thousand battles, it just might be done!'⁹

The second idea concerned the substandard state of NATO's troops, the lack of strategic depth, and the German government's insistence on forward defence, deployed

6. This group comprised battle veterans with a very broad background in military history. See Huba Wass de Czege, 'Lessons from the Past: Making the Army's Doctrine "Right Enough" Today', *Land Power Essay* (Arlington, VA: AUSA's Institute of Land Warfare, September 2006), 4–12.

7. See note 2.

8. 'Letter to Swain', 2–3.

9. *Ibid.*, 3–4.

on the inter-German border. All these factors, Starry felt, precluded the use of mobile (deep) defence as part of NATO's doctrine. He mentioned that DePuy was the first to realise that mobile defence, was not a viable option in the case of Europe. The third insight reflected the bitter experience of both the Korean and Vietnam Wars, from which Starry learned the importance of formulating an operational doctrine that is consistent with the strategic objectives at hand.

Starry's letter to Swain, along with numerous other documents, points to his early attention to both operational and tactical problems. It is quite clear that Starry was no stranger to the importance of the operational art, or the potential benefits of mobile defence. Still, he viewed the latter as a 'liturgy', whose realisation was precluded by diplomatic, geographic and budgetary constraints. John Mearsheimer shed light on this issue and pointed out that the reformers were proponents of mobile defence as NATO's operational doctrine, but for political reasons they did not state it explicitly. Like Starry, he thought that the adoption of mobile defence in Western Europe would lead to 'a formula for disaster'.¹⁰

Starry arrived at several further key tactical and operational insights in the wake of the Yom Kippur War. His many visits to the battlefields on the Golan Heights and conversations with Israeli Defence Force armour leaders provided him with a very tangible sense of the operational difficulty inherent in Europe's defence, and inspired the thinking that would ultimately become the AirLand Battle Doctrine.¹¹ Starry felt that the counterattack by Major General Moshe (Musa) Peled's Division on the Golan Heights was a prime illustration of Dr Helmbold's conclusion that, by seizing the initiative, the determined and well-trained and well-led few can defeat the many.¹² At the end of one of his many lucid descriptions of the Peled Division's counterattack, Starry provided some evidence of his misgivings vis-à-vis the civilian reformers: 'So the people who insist on talking about Maneuver Warfare simply don't understand that the problem is not necessarily to maneuver. That may be part of it, but the idea is to seize the initiative'.¹³

The apex of Starry's internalisation of the lessons learned from the Battle for the Golan Heights came in May 1977, during Starry's term as Commander of the V Corps in Germany. His tour of service there, which lasted from February 1976 through July 1977, reinforced Starry's understanding of the operational problem of Europe's defence. He conceded that from 1973 to 1976, TRADOC's leaders had focused most of their attention on rebuilding the army, which had been left in a shambles by the Vietnam War. Inspired by Army's Chief of Staff, General Creighton Abrams, TRADOC's first priority was to develop expeditiously the basic capabilities needed to protect Western Europe.

10. John J. Mearsheimer, 'Maneuver, Mobile Defense and the NATO Central Front', *International Security* 6: 3 (Winter 1981/2), 109–21.

11. 'Letter to Swain', 8.

12. *Ibid.*, 10–11.

13. Donn A. Starry, Oral History Interview by John L. Romjue, 19 March 1993, Starry papers, 34–5.

This meant a new tactical doctrine, more relevant education and training for officers and troops, and modern weaponry. After these starting objectives had been achieved and after Starry had become convinced that the army was capable of blocking the first echelon of a Soviet offensive, he began to seek solutions to the operational level problems at hand. Shortly after his visit to the Golan Heights in 1977, he began to formulate the ideas that would become ultimately the AirLand Battle Doctrine:

The invitation [by my close friend Musa Peled] led to my return to Israel in May 1977. There, from the Northern Command observation post in the hills above Kuneitra, and from battle positions of the 7th and 188th brigades, Musa Peled, Rafal Eitan and their comrades described the Golan Battle once again, almost minute by minute. They described again the layout of Syrian forces, echelon after echelon after echelon. Just like the Soviets said it should be done. Musa Peled traced for me the attack route of his division onto the flank of the Syrian Army. Listening, I tried to transpose what they were describing onto V Corps terrain east from the Vogelsburg to the Thuringerwald in East Germany. With German weather, German visibility, German foliage, German elevations superimposed.¹⁴

Starry came away from his visit to the Golan Heights with two more lessons. The first was the need for systems to enable commanders to see deep into enemy territory, the second was the need to restructure land and air forces so that they could strike at the Soviet second echelon before it reached the front line to reinforce the first echelon. In several interviews, Starry described the lasting impression his visit to the Golan Heights and conversations with his close friend, IDF Armor Corps Commander Musa Peled, had had on him. Two authors would describe the visit as a form of 'religious awakening'.¹⁵ In August 1977, shortly after returning from his trip to Israel, Starry instructed TRADOC planners to prepare a document integrating all the insights he had reached; this resulting in the Battlefield Development Plan, published in November 1978. The plan was the first step towards what was to become the AirLand Battle Doctrine.¹⁶

All this seems to show that at no time did Starry credit civilian reformers, even in the slightest, with having influenced the formulation of the AirLand Battle Doctrine. Rather, the AirLand Battle Doctrine seems to have combined insights amassed during

14. 'Letter to Swain', 17.

15. One author described Starry's visit as an 'epiphany': James Kitfield, *Prodigal Soldier* (Washington/London: Brassey's, 1995), 151–5. Kitfield described Starry's visit in 1977, although the author ascribed it to Starry's first visit to Israel, in January 1974. Another author described the visit as an 'almost like a biblical revelation': Orr Kelly, *King of the Killing Zone: The Story of the M-1, America's Super Tank* (New York/London: W.W. Norton and Company, 1989), 216. For a more comprehensive description, see Saul Bronfeld, 'Fighting Outnumbered—The Impact of the Yom Kippur War on the U.S. Army', *Journal of Military History* 71: 2 (April 2007), 489–98.

16. For a description of the work of TRADOC's planners, after Starry's visit to the Golan, see John L. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle: The Development of Army Doctrine 1973–1982* (Historical Office, Headquarters, U.S. Army TRADOC, Fort Monroe, VA, June 1984), 24–7.

Starry's years in uniform, a very thorough background in military history, lessons learned from the Yom Kippur War, and war games that demonstrated the inadequacy of Active Defense. The many articles and speeches he penned during and after his tour of service at TRADOC, while beyond the scope of this paper, nonetheless lend credence to this particular reading.¹⁷

It might be asserted that Starry's statements did not reflect the full breadth and scope of the sources and influences which informed his desire to overhaul the 1976 Field Manual. For example, his statements made no mention the directive issued by General Edward C. Meyer, the newly designated Army Chief of Staff, regarding the changes which needed to be made to the Manual¹⁸. Likewise, Starry never mentioned the ideas conceived at the Army War College and the Army Command and General Staff College since the publication of the 1976 Field Manual (this will be discussed in the following section).¹⁹ Yet an insinuation that Starry made light of the civilian reformers is unsubstantiated; any such claim must be based on sound evidence, which Lock-Pullan's article fails to provide. Moreover, the derogatory references to the leaders of the military reform movement and their ideas found in Starry's writings cast heavy doubts on Lock-Pullan's assertion.²⁰ Furthermore, Starry stated emphatically that his ideas were diametrically opposed to those of the movement and that they missed a key principle:

So it [the battle] isn't just a matter of tactics, it isn't just a matter of maneuvering. A lot of people misunderstood that. A lot of books were written about Maneuver Warfare, the theory of Maneuver Warfare. This isn't what AirLand Battle is all about at all. AirLand Battle is about taking the initiative.²¹

And with regard to another question:

However, our critics who trumpet that we should steer away from a tripwire based strategy aren't all correct—we're going to have to kill a whole lot of them [Russians]—just to get their attention. And we should make no mistake about that! So to say it's all a war of maneuver and that maneuver will solve all, is to ignore the very real problems with space and depth, especially in Europe and with logistical support of highly mobile operations.²²

17. An another unpublished sources paints a similar picture: Donn A. Starry, 'Exit Interview by Dr. Malone', n.d., Starry papers.

18. E.C. Meyer, letter to General Donn A Starry, 13 June 1979, Starry papers, US Army Military History Institute, Carlisle Barracks, PA [cited hereafter as USAMHI].

19. See Richard M. Swain, "Filling the Void": The Operational Art and the U.S. Army', in B.J.C. McKercher and Michael A. Hennessy (eds), *The Operational Art: Developments in the Theories of War* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), 160.

20. See, for example, Donn A. Starry, letter to Colonel Corwin, 19 July 1976, and letter to Major General George S. Patton, 11 November 1976, Starry papers, USAMHI. See also 'Letter to Swain', 22–3 and 28.

21. Oral History Interview by Romjue, 31. See also 'Letter to Swain', 17.

22. Donn A. Starry, letter to General E.C. Meyer, 26 June 1979, Starry papers, USAMHI.

These comments indicate that Starry's understanding of manoeuvre and the operational level is quite different from those of the reformers. For them manoeuvre was the only way to fight outnumbered, but for Starry manoeuvre meant initiative that has to balance force movement with the appropriate use of fire power.

While Starry's doctrine was based on forward defence, striking Warsaw Pact's second echelon and deploying nuclear tactical weapons, the reformers' doctrine, which was formulated in rather general terms, called for a mobile defence, from deep in West German territory and disregarded the use of nuclear weapons. All this suggests that there is little reason to expect that Starry would be affected by civilian thinkers, since both schools disagree on basic issues.

Starry did not engage the reformers directly; this task was carried out by Wass de Czege, leader of the triumvirate of lieutenant colonels who produced the 1982 Field Manual. In a lengthy treatise, written in the first half of 1982, Wass de Czege lambasted the hardcore reformers—Boyd, Lind, Canby and Luttwak. He referred to their Maneuver Warfare as 'vague prescriptions, imprecise language, differing perspectives and motives, unstated assumptions and misinformation'.²³ Moreover, he asserted that the central view of the Reform Movement as articulated by Boyd was 'one-dimensional' and rested on 'three questionable ideas', which he attacked in lucid detail. He concluded his criticism of Boyd by saying that there were 'quite a few instances where the outnumbered lost, where the creative and the innovative outsmarted themselves because the enemy wasn't smart enough to recognize their brilliance'.²⁴ Wass de Czege's elaborate critique of the reformers, especially of Boyd, are of some importance, since one of Boyd's biographers depicts Wass de Czege as a champion of Boyd's world view.²⁵ Wass de Czege was unable to find common ground with the reformers even on such matters as technology and weapons acquisition: 'The new doctrine [the 1982 Field Manual] has many implications for hardware which are not yet fully realized by our combat developers. However, the prescriptions of the "reform Caucus" in Congress remains an uncertain guide'.²⁶

It should be noted that Wass de Czege's treatise was a precursor to an article that would be published two years later in a compendium summarising a comprehensive seminar on military reforms at West Point.²⁷ A comparison of the two texts reveals that the older version has been 'sanitised'; although the more recent and more quoted article criticised the reformers and took them to task for their views, gone were the far-reaching pronouncements cited above which probably offered a more candid glimpse of the writer's true opinion of the reformer's ideas.

23. Huba Wass de Czege, 'Toward a New American Approach to Warfare', *The Art of War Quarterly* 2 (US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, September 1983), 34. A substantial part of the treatise is devoted to elaborating the above-mentioned critique of the reformers.

24. *Ibid.*, 60, note 4.

25. Robert Coram, *Boyd: The Fighter Pilot Who Changed the Art of War* (New York/Boston: Little Brown and Company, 2002), 370–1.

26. Wass de Czege, 'Toward a New American Approach to Warfare', 50.

27. Huba Wass de Czege, 'Army's Doctrinal Reform', in Asa A. Clark IV et al. (eds), *The Defense Reform Debate: Issues and Analysis* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

Wass de Czege's colleague, Holder, did not refer to the civilian reformers in the many papers that he wrote soon after publication of the 1982 Field Manual. Nevertheless, his review of Major Paul H. Herbert's seminal monograph on the birth of the 1976 Field Manual reveals a significant statement:

AirLand Battle doctrine presents a far broader view of war in its stress on historical experience, on worldwide contingencies and varying force mixes, on human strengths and weaknesses and on the dynamic effects of tempo, maneuver and action in depth. Those features and its attention to the operational level of war—entirely absent in the 1976 document—result in AirLand Battle doctrine's having more in common with pre-1976 versions of FM, 100-5 than with the Active Defense formulation'.²⁸

In other words, Holder's review stated that a lot of 'new' ideas incorporated in the 1982 Field Manual were already to be found in the pre-1976 field manuals. His statement points to another source that inspired the 1982 doctrine authors, which Starry did not mention, but it too is not a civilian source (see also the following section).

It may be of some interest to note that military technology is another field that may give the wrong impression that Starry and the reformers share the same ideas. It should be remembered that the civilian reformers chose technological issues as the starting point for their anti-establishment crusade.²⁹ Both Starry and the reformers rejected the view that 'technology is everything'; Starry also assailed what he termed 'techno-utopism'.³⁰ Starry was emphatic in stressing that technology was useless unless in the service of doctrine. He acknowledged that 'it is part of the American psyche to presume that technology is going to win everything',³¹ and he pointed to several technologies which proved useless. (One was that of high-bandwidth communications, which enabled commanders to receive far more data than they could process and use).

Starry's approach to technology only seems to be similar to that of Boyd's 'Fighter Mafia' and other reformers. Yet from a practical perspective, the gap between the two sides was substantial. Starry's AirLand Battle Doctrine was predicated on the notion of deep strikes on the second-echelon Soviet divisions, using emerging technologies—airborne radar, sensors, data links and smart munitions—which then needed to be developed and tailored for the new doctrine. In contrast, the reformers

28. L.D. Holder, 'A Dialogue on the Evolution of Doctrine: Review Essay', *Military Review* (November 1989), 75. A similar view was expressed by Colonel Franz, who stated that the 1936 Field Manual already dealt with the operational level: Wallace P. Franz, 'Maneuver: the Dynamic Element of Combat', *Military Review* (May 1983), 3-4.

29. There is an abundant literature describing the reformers' crusade against sophisticated and expensive weapons systems: The F-15 and F-16 jet fighters, the AIM-7 and AMRAAM air-to-air missiles, the M-1 main battle tank and many more. See Walter Kross, *Military Reform: The High-Tech Debate in Tactical Airforces* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 1985), and James Follows, *National Defense* (New York: Random House, 1981).

30. Starry, 'Reflections', in *Camp Colt to Desert Storm*, 560.

31. Oral History Interview by Romjue, 39-40.

saw Starry's operational-technological approach as untenable. Furthermore, the reformers insisted that historical experience cast some doubt over the effectiveness of deep strikes directed against the Soviet second echelon, logistics and command centres, irrespective of technology. Steven L. Canby was a vociferous proponent of this latter view, and published detailed studies to defend it.³²

It could be said that Starry was a farsighted optimist, who believed in technology as a means of force leveraging, providing that it was developed in accordance with a sound doctrine. He obviously did not share the reformers' objections to emerging, sophisticated and expensive weapons systems and believed that technology could be harnessed to implement his operational doctrine. The only subject on which reformers and Starry were in full agreement concerned the paramount importance of the human factor as a precondition for victory on the battlefield. This view became increasingly pronounced following TRADOC's establishment in 1973; its leaders placed particular emphasis on realistic training and relevant education for officers, NCOs and soldiers. Later, they focused on preparing officers for the operational level by way of an advanced course at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC), and founded the School of Advanced Military Studies.

WHO SHOULD GET THE CREDIT FOR INTRODUCING THE OPERATIONAL LEVEL TO THE 1982 FIELD MANUAL?

While the sources of inspiration of Starry and his team were wide and varied, the ideas of the civilian reformers were not among them. Moreover, their views were diametrically opposed on most issues. Lock-Pullan's argument is further weakened by a plethora of scathing critiques on the part of Starry and Wass de Czege.

The present author is of the opinion that Starry's explicit attention to the operational level cannot be interpreted as a sign that he was influenced by the reformers; there is enough evidence that he was fully aware of its importance even before Luttwak published his seminal articles in 1979–1980. One cannot accuse Starry of failing to recognise the importance of the operational level, because by 1977, the year in which he visited the Golan Heights and was subsequently nominated to serve as the Commander of TRADOC, Starry devoted much energy to the question of dealing with the Soviet second echelon and the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons. These are operational level issues *par excellence*, and the drive to address them came from Starry and the army, rather than the reformers.

Starry's relationship with the ideas of Luttwak and Lind may be seen in the context of his desire to foster a consensus *vis-à-vis* the AirLand Battle Doctrine—something DePuy had not considered in the Field Manual's 1976 edition. One important step in this direction was the nomination in 1979 of Morelli, Starry's Deputy Chief of Staff for Doctrine, as TRADOC's liaison to the defence community in Washington. It should be

32. Steven L. Canby, *New Conventional Forces Technology and the NATO-Warsaw Pact Balance: Part I* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Summer 1985), 12–20.

remembered that, by the end of the 1970s, civilian reformers had succeeded in touching off a media buzz in support of their ideas which facilitated the establishment of the Congressional Military Reform Caucus in 1981. Morelli held frequent meetings with both the Caucus members and the reformers themselves, so that it is not inconceivable that he adopted some of their terminology.³³ Yet it is no less inconceivable that Morelli and the authors of the new Field Manual adopted some of the terminology used by the reformers in an effort to secure the consensus they needed, as well as to ward off potential criticism of the new doctrine.

More specifically, AirLand Battle is essentially an operational level doctrine. That being the case, what could be more beneficial to its authors than adopting Luttwak's, persuasive language to explain the importance of the operational level? Starry knew that he would have a difficult task marketing the new doctrine to both the military establishment (the Army, Air Force, Department of Defense and NATO) and civilians (the press, Congress, academic pundits), and so Luttwak's persuasive language was the perfect tool. On this point it is instructive to quote Major Bolger, one of the reformers' harshest critics on this point: 'The maneuverists assumed that since they were consulted and some maneuver terminology made it into the doctrine they have won. None of the gleeful proponents considered the chance that their shrewd insights might amount to military common sense'.³⁴

In an earlier paper Bolger was explicit:

Has maneuver warfare become Army doctrine? It has not. Despite some verbiage similar to that used by the maneuver warfare advocates, the 1982 and the 1986 FM 100-5 clearly reflect evolutionary application of traditional American thinking about war.

Careful textual analysis marks the 1980s manuals as direct descendants of previous American doctrinal literature, at least as far back as World War II. Current Army doctrine represents a realistic mixture of maneuver, firepower, protection and especially leadership.

The 1980s *Operations* texts have much more in common with their 1976 predecessor (the bane of many maneuver warfare advocates) than with any of the interesting but vague proposals produced by the maneuver warfare community.³⁵

33. 'Letter to Swain', 22-3.

34. Daniel P. Bolger, 'Maneuver Warfare Reconsidered', in Richard D. Hooker, Jr (ed.), *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1993), 33.

35. Daniel P. Bolger, 'Maneuver Warfare: Flying High on Gossamer Wings', *Army* (September 1986), 26. Major General Bolger is presently the commander of the Army's Joint Readiness Training Center in Fort Folk. He served as military history professor at West Point and is a prolific writer on military subjects.

Richard Betts, another fierce critic of the reformers, expressed similar views: 'Skeptical observers, however, view the change [of the Army's doctrine] as largely cosmetic ("more or less multiplying the number of times the word 'maneuver' appears by two", as one suggested to me) half meant to coopt the critics'.³⁶ The arguments of Bolger and Betts are supported by John Romjue, TRADOC's resident historian. Romjue wrote in 1981:

Besides the wide staffing of FM 100-5 throughout the Army, prominent defense writers, including Edward N. Luttwak and Bill Lind were invited to review and discuss the drafts. TRADOC regarded as exaggerated the charges by some of the civilian critics that the 1976 FM 100-5 was pure attrition doctrine and found the critic's own maneuver views to be oversimplified in many cases, but their views on the new manual were taken into account.³⁷

These arguments are supported by the writings of a prominent scholar, Colonel Richard Swain, who studied and appraised Luttwak's contribution to the inclusion of the operational level in the 1982 Field Manual. In his definitive article he devoted two full pages to Luttwak's part, and his verdict does not support Lock-Pullan's case. Swain cited the credit given by Morelli to the Army War College for developing the concept of the operational level of war.³⁸ Swain elaborated this by mentioning that the quest by many officers for explanations for what went wrong in Vietnam raised insights within the Army's War College about an intermediate level of war—between the tactical and the strategic (Colonels Harry Summers, Wallace P. Franz and Arthur Lykke were named). He concluded that Luttwak 'had hit upon an idea already percolating in the army. Many of the army were aware of the concept of the operational level'. He adds that 'it was clear ... that [in the spring of 1982] the Army's senior leadership had a pretty good idea of what they thought the operational level was, even if it could not yet define it with precision'.³⁹ Swain gave a similar evaluation of Lind's contributions. He saw Lind as someone 'who broke the dike inhibiting criticism of the new doctrine [1976 Field Manual] and opened thereby an important debate on the army's fundamental beliefs about battle'.⁴⁰

Lind's seminal 1977 paper is often cited, but it should be remembered that he was not the sole critic of the 1976 Field Manual.⁴¹ In 1976 General Alexander M. Haig, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, expressed serious doubts about the assumptions upon which Active Defense is based.⁴² His wording was most polite

36. Richard K. Betts, 'Conventional Strategy: New Critics Old Choices', *International Security* 7: 4 (Spring 1983), 156. Significantly, in the whole of ch. 4 which is devoted to the development of the AirLand Battle Doctrine, this is the only mention of the civilian reformers.

37. Romjue, *From Active Defense to AirLand Battle*, 58.

38. Swain, *Filling the Void*, 160. It is surprising that Lock-Pullan did not refer to Swain's article in his 'Civilian Ideas and Military Innovation'.

39. Swain, *Filling the Void*, 161-2.

40. *Ibid.*, 154.

41. William S. Lind, 'Some Doctrinal Questions for the United States Army', *Military Review* 57 (March 1977): 54-65.

42. Alexander M. Haig Jr, Letter to General William E. DePuy, 10 September 1976, CARL Archive, box 102A, folder CGSC82, DTAC-10, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

and diplomatic but the content is no less critical than Lind's abrasive paper. It did not take a four star general to realise the problems inherent in Active Defense. Even a CGSC student was able to detect them.⁴³

MORE DISSONANCE AND AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

One of the most popular manifestos of the Military Reform Movement was written by Senator Hart and his staffer Lind. In the first chapter of their book dealing with land warfare, the authors point out that many of the 1982 Field Manual's precepts express basic manoeuvre warfare concepts. Yet nowhere in the book did they claim credit for the new army doctrine and other desirable changes that were made. They admit that the change was being made 'largely because of efforts from inside the Army not in response to the civilian reforms'.⁴⁴

The matter becomes even more complicated since reformers, for their part, claimed that the 1982 Field Manual ran counter to the essence of Maneuver Warfare; 'simultaneity', abhorred by the reformers, was listed as one of the four central tenets on which the new doctrine was predicated.⁴⁵ Moreover, some of the reformers rejected the army's claim that the 1991 victory in the Gulf War was due to the application of manoeuvre warfare. The reformers argued that:

Judged by maneuver warfare criteria, Operation Desert Storm lacked the most important criterion—the kind of interplay between opposing forces that an alert opponent would have created. As a result, it only contained at best a single and rather simple maneuver. That maneuver was carried out by the main striking force (VII Corps) without any clear thought concerning the role that other forces could play in the scheme. Within VII Corps itself, a clear *schwerpunkt* was lacking. Apparently, there was more thought given to keeping one's own units abreast of each other than to rapid movement with the aim of penetrating deep into the Iraqi rear. True maneuver warfare would either have gone to Nasiriyah or sent a thrust to Baghdad, thus forcing the Republican Guard to come out and fight; neither of these took place.⁴⁶

43. Admittedly the student, Major Wesley K. Clark of the Class of 1975, was not a typical student. Still his essay refers to the need for manoeuvres in order to win battles: Major Wesley K. Clark, 'Winning the First Battle: Another Look at New Tactical Doctrine', unpublished essay by Staff College Class of 1975 first order of merit graduate, *ibid.* For more details about critics within the Army see Paul H. Herbert, *Deciding What Has to be Done: General William E. DePuy and the 1976 edition of FM 100-5, Operations* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, US Army CGSC, July 1988), ch. 5 and pp. 95–8.
44. Gary Hart with William S. Lind, *America Can Win* (Bethesda, MD: Adler and Adler, 1986), 36–7.
45. Robert Leonhard, *The Art of Maneuver: Maneuver-Warfare Theory and AirLand Battle* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1991), 173–178. For a more general description of the Army's deviation from Maneuver Warfare principles as preached by the reformers see: Robert R. Leonhard, 'Maneuver Warfare and the United States Army', in Hooker (ed.), *Maneuver Warfare: An Anthology*, 51–6.
46. Martin Van Creveld with Steven L. Canby and Kenneth S. Brower, *Air Power and Maneuver Warfare* (Maxwell Air Force Base, AL: Air University Press, July 1994), 219–20. Canby is one of the founders of the Reform Movement and Professor Van Creveld may be considered an honorary member since his trilogy supplied the historical foundations for a lot of the Movement's ideas. See his *Fighting Power: German and US Army Performance, 1919–1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), *Command In War* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 1985), and *Technology and War: From 2000 B.C. to The Present* (New York: The Free Press, 1989).

It is not only the reformers who felt that the 1991 victory was not the product of Maneuver Warfare. Dr Paul Johnston cites Richard Hooker, Richard Swain and Roger Spiller as supporters of the claim that '[f]or the hundred hours of the ground campaign, the US Army more or less fought the way it always has, albeit at a faster pace'.⁴⁷

The acrimonious feelings of the army's establishment towards the civilian reformers' ideas were described above. Yet that is not whole picture, since some of the harshest adversaries of the Military Reform Movement had kind words for the reformers. Bolger, one of the fiercest critics of the reformers, blasted them from every conceivable direction, but still he gave them credit for enriching the debate over national defence policy:

There has definitely been some positive fallout from the reformers discussions of maneuver warfare. Certainly the emphasis on selfless fighters rather than selfish careerists, the importance of the operational level of warfare, the virtues of initiative, the value of flexible command methods and the benefits of historical study (for knowledge and insights rather than lessons) are useful results of the entire reform movement, although most of these thoughts have other proponents and other rationales for adoption.⁴⁸

Another fierce critic of the reformers, this time a USAF officer, devoted an entire book to refuting the reformers claims regarding airpower, but in the last chapter of his book, he asserts: 'Perhaps most important, the Reformers have been instrumental in sparking a campaign aimed at going back to basics: a reawakening of the warrior spirit in all US fighting men but particularly the officer corps'.⁴⁹ Moreover:

Reformers challenge Defense Planners with difficult choices, given the competition for limited resources. In this sense, the Reformers are the conscience for the military establishment, the in-house back-benchers, reminding all Defense Planners that certain relationships cannot be discounted.⁵⁰

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning one unpleasant facet of the controversy. It seems that the debates in the media and in Capitol Hill were 'so emotional and parochial on both sides that heat and acrimony have often appeared to be its predominant results ... the debate has expended much energy on false issues and obscured valid point on both sides'.⁵¹

While the focus so far has been on the various problems associated with Lock-Pullan's narrative, it is appropriate to indicate some pointers to an alternative narrative. The superficial similarity between the ideas advocated by the civilian reformers

47. See: Paul Johnston, 'Doctrine Is Not Enough: The Effect of Doctrine on the Behavior of Armies', *Parameters* 30: 3 (Autumn 2000), 30-9.

48. Bolger, 'Maneuver Warfare', 26.

49. Kross, *Military Reform*, 199.

50. *Ibid*, 189-90

51. See Benjamin S. Lambeth, 'Pitfalls in Force Planning: Structuring America's Tactical Air Arm', *International Security* 6: 3 (Fall 1975), 87.

and Starry's AirLand Battle Doctrine does not prove that the former influenced the latter. Rather, both schools of thought may have been born of four common basic presuppositions. First, both realised that the new strategic environment and numerical inferiority of American troops entailed a change from the ways in which the Second World War and the Korean and Vietnam Wars were fought; the old ways became irrelevant in the context of Western Europe's defence, and needed to be replaced. Second, both sides felt very strongly that American should never again humbled by a defeat, as in Vietnam. Third, the two schools did not disagree that to win the next wars commanders should be 'smart, quick and ready to take advantage of opportunities'.⁵² Last, members of both schools read the same history books and admired the German and Israeli ways of war, and the warrior cultures of the two armies. However, from these common grounds the two schools moved on parallel roads, if not in opposite directions and reached different conclusions:

The reformers called for manoeuvre based warfare, ignoring the need to translate their proposal into practical terms of force structure planning, weapons systems development, and field manuals. They did not take into account the political constraints which necessitated Forward Defense on the inter-German border on the one hand, and forced a defensive posture on the other hand. They also ignored the 'organisational friction' inherent in comprehensive reforms.

Starry and the army establishment understood the problematic implications of heavy reliance on fire power and attrition, yet unlike the reformers, they felt that it complemented Maneuver Warfare, rather than ruling it out. The operational level doctrine which took shape within the military establishment was forced to withstand various realities, such as the need to develop new technologies for deep strikes, as well as the need to receive the consent and cooperation of the US Tactical Air Force and of NATO's member states. Moreover, the establishment had to produce a doctrine that, on the one hand, obeyed Abram's directive to prepare the army rapidly for a war in Europe. On the other hand, the doctrine had to adapt to the serious problems created by the move to an All Volunteer Force and the poor readiness of army units. While both schools of thought recognised the importance of the operational level, it cannot be said that it was the reformers who introduced the military establishment to the concept.

One is tempted to conclude that the civil reformers used an indirect approach very skillfully. They mobilised Capitol Hill to their cause by using the media wisely and hoped to influence the military via Congress. Their involvement in the debate over national defence was substantial, especially given their meagre forces. However, when all is done and said, Starry and TRADOC outmanoeuvred the manoeuverers—they used the reformers' terminology while going their own way.

52. Betts, 'Conventional Strategy', 158.