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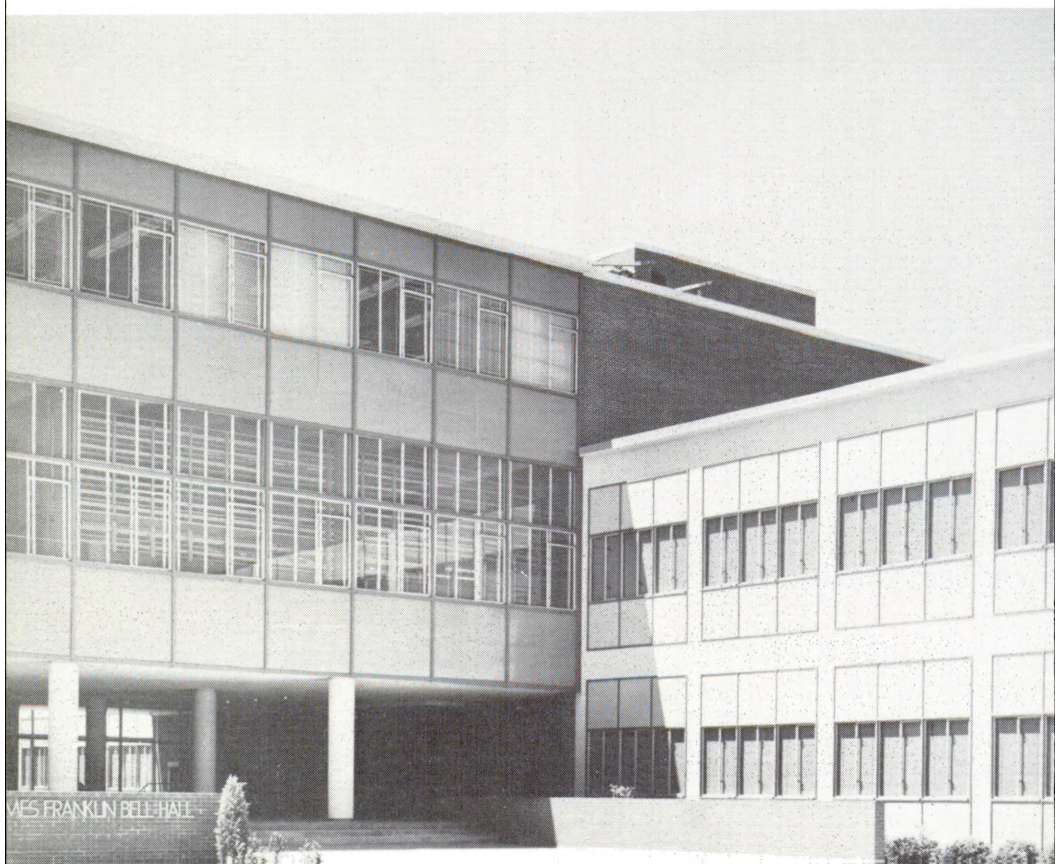
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FORTY-THREE YEARS OF MILITARY SERVICE

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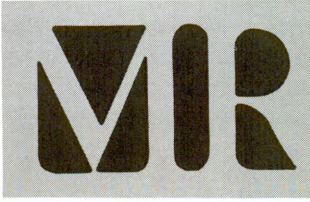
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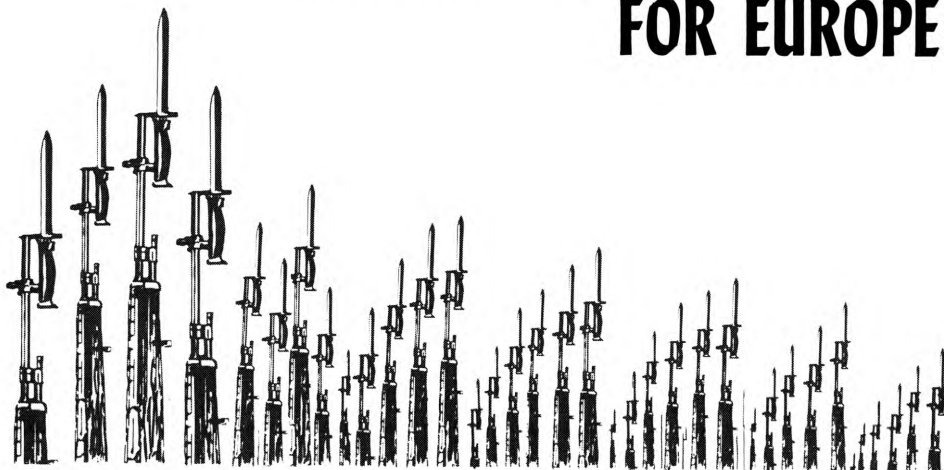
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A FORWARD-PAUSE DEFENSE FOR EUROPE



Harald B. Malmgren

NORTH Atlantic Treaty Organization defense strategists have for 15 years debated European defense strategy. Some argue that tactical nuclear weapons must be used automatically in the event of an attack to prevent any loss of territory. Others feel that a defense characterized by a "pause" is essential and that this can be achieved by making conventional forces much stronger.

It has been argued that if all NATO forces deployed in central Europe were fully combat ready and highly mobile, and there were some increase in the number of divisions, conventional defense of Europe would be pos-

sible. This posture requires additional divisions so as to maintain some defense in depth, but basically it involves a fluid defense which will allow trading space for time during which

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the forces for a counteroffensive can be organized.

However, many Europeans consider trading space for time inadmissible, because it would permit the overrunning of NATO territory and would probably convert most of West Germany into a battlefield. It requires increased conventional contributions by the NATO nations—a step that is unlikely to be taken.

Since such a force is also capable of large-scale offense, many argue that it would compel the Soviets to increase their combat forces deployed in East Europe with resultant adverse effects on the political situation in the bloc countries and on the stable military situation. A large-scale fluid defense capability would also tend to preclude thinning out of forces in central Europe in possible arms control negotiations, since it would take 25 to 30 divisions to provide defense in depth or coverage of the front under a fluid defense strategy.

The Static Defense

On the other hand, a deployment which places some of the total force in a static defense posture well forward, with a substantial portion in mobile reserve at the rear, is much more favorable in these respects. The static defense posture would have to include substantial digging in, barricades, fortifications, and alternative equipment. Thus, static defense may employ equipment and tactical concepts completely different from those of the mobile forces—for example, emphasizing antitank weapons as opposed to tanks for antitank warfare. If barricades raise enemy penetration requirements, they would be equivalent in that sense to the alternative of increasing the number of divisions.

Static defense does not depend so

much upon trading space for time. Rather, time is bought by forcing the enemy to give strategic warning in massing for penetration and by slowing the pace of his penetration. Static defense can reduce the number of divisions required to hold a position, and thus accords more closely to the realities of Europe's defense contributions. It is not as capable of offense as the fluid defense posture, but, consequently, it may tend to be less provocative. Thinning out of forces under arms control agreements would be more feasible behind a static defense posture.

If the other NATO nations do not increase their conventional contributions, or even further reduce their contributions, the development of complementary militia forces along Swiss lines for a static defense role may be an acceptable means to build a plausible defense posture.

With regard to the trade off between militia and regular forces, the fluid defense concept requires a very large, well-trained standing army, larger than that which presently exists; static defense does not impose such stringent requirements. The importance of continuous experience among men and units for effective mobile combat cannot be overemphasized; again, static defense is not so demanding. The functions of each man in a static defense posture are far more limited in number than when he is being used in mobile combat formation.

The Forward Pause

A static defense concept with alternative combinations of fixed forward forces and mobile reserve forces, standing forces and militia forces, and defensive equipment and positioning may consequently be described as

a strategy of "forward pause": forward defense, conventional, with a built-in pause.

Tactical nuclear weapons could be used to create gaps in a static defense formation, but this would place

tions will be far less vulnerable to "self-kill" by nuclear weapons employed in close proximity by the defenders. The enemy will, therefore, tend to remain a prime nuclear target for a substantial period of time so



Army News Features

The author says a static defense, emphasizing antitank weapons rather than tanks, would be less provocative

the onus of first use on the attacker. If the enemy does not use nuclear weapons at the outset of a military engagement, the static defense posture would compel him to mass his forces for penetration. Even during the course of penetration it will be necessary for the attacking force to remain compressed in order to maintain momentum through a static defense area and to deal with mobile reserve forces if the static area is broken through.

Defensive forces in prepared posi-

that the opportunity to use tactical nuclear weapons in defense would not be entirely lost as a consequence of any pause.

In a tactical context, delay buys several things. Additional time enables intelligence to improve. The longer the pause, the greater are the chances of obtaining and confirming "correct" information and rejecting incorrect information. With additional time, better sources of intelligence can be employed, such as aerial photographic reconnaissance, which

is slower but more accurate than many other types of information acquisition. With additional time, in other words, there is a better chance of locating an enemy, defining his posture, identifying his likely pattern of attack, acquiring targets, and identifying them with greater precision.

Delaying or slowing up the attacker's penetration makes defensive tactics more effective. The enemy loses the advantages of mobility and momentum; targeting is much easier with a slowly moving enemy; counter-deployment by mobile reserve units at points of intended penetration is enhanced; attrition of attacking forces is likely to rise more rapidly than that of defending forces as the fighting is prolonged; and, in relation to tactical nuclear weapons, additional time enables defensive forces to maneuver in order to assume a tactical nuclear mode when necessary.

Tactical Nuclear Riposte

If the aggressive move appears to be an attempt at mass penetration rather than a limited (accidental or intentional) border incursion—a fact that can be established only over a period of time—then the defensive forces can redeploy for a possible tactical nuclear riposte. Slowing the speed of the enemy's attack is also important in terms of the safe and successful use of nuclear weapons. If the aggressor's rate of advance is so swift that the defender cannot acquire a target, and then fire and hit it at a range beyond the minimum safety distance, it will not be possible to strike at the enemy with tactical nuclear weapons.

In the strategic or politico-military context, time is critically valuable. Additional time produces better decisions and reduces the need for auto-

matic response and reliance on pre-planning or hasty judgments under fire. Additional time means time to negotiate, or at least to make threats and demonstrations of intent to move to a higher level of conflict. Additional time enables the adversaries to feel each other out and determine just how far the other is prepared to go and what the objectives are.

It has been argued that once overt conflict begins it must be assumed that the attacker has weighed all the risks and costs, otherwise the conflict would not have been initiated. But that need not be true. An attacker may have misjudged the defender's resolve or the defender's view of his vital interests in various parts of the globe. Once a limited conflict is underway, the probability of general war rises perceptibly, and the reactions of governments when confronting the imminent specter of general war are likely to be quite different than when general war appears remote or inconceivable.

Important Effects

As the conflict continues, longer run effects become more important—in particular, the ratio of friendly to enemy reserve and mobilizable forces which can be brought to bear, and the risks of escalation in prolonged stalemate. The length of delay a defender ought to be willing to buy is, therefore, limited by the constraints imposed by enemy reserves and the risk that stalemate will lead to escalation. Although a defense system should be constructed to achieve a "significant delay" or "significant pause," the duration of that pause will depend upon how long the defender estimates any limited central war can last in the modern era and what he will do with the time.

FORWARD-PAUSE DEFENSE

There are important reasons for a serious discussion of the forward-pause concept. There is, for instance, a very real question whether any defense other than a full forward defense along the border between East and West Germany will be acceptable to the West Germans in the long run.

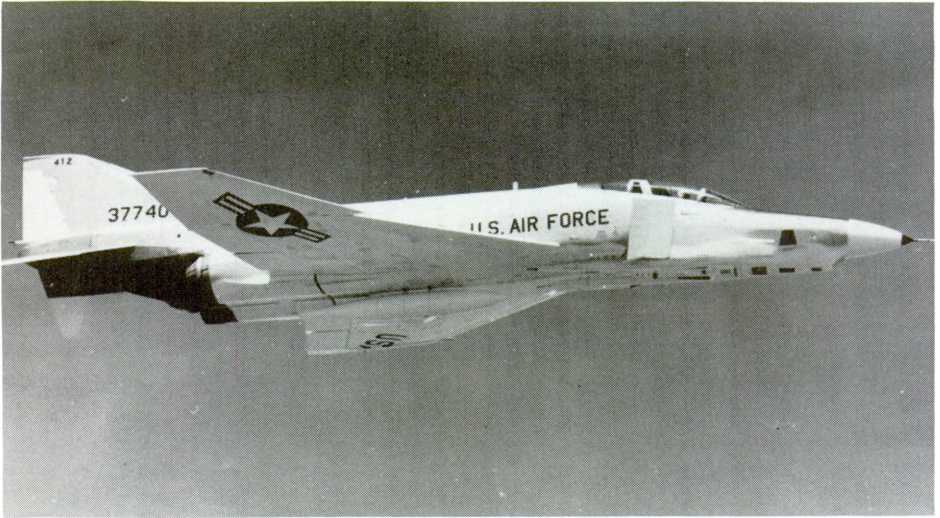
The European configuration of forces is also likely to change substantially in the next few years. The French are not only reducing the size of their army by one-third; they are also shifting to a territorial deployment concept for a substantial portion of their ground forces (the so-called Operational Defense of the Territory (*DOT*) forces).

The British may well find the world-

forces, and this may well be the pattern of further development beyond the present 12 standing divisions. A concept of defense which fits in with this coming configuration of forces may be better than one which ignores it.

With regard to questions of arms control and military stability in central Europe, the forward-pause concept may turn out to have certain advantages over other possible defense configurations. A defense concept which increases defensive capability without increasing the dangers of escalation would make thinning out safer for the defender.

If the defense concept provides strategic warning and substantially



US Air Force

Delay gives intelligence agencies more time to acquire information. Aircraft such as the *F-4C* can conduct a detailed photoreconnaissance.

wide demands on their fighting forces so burdensome as to compel them to reduce further, or at best not to fulfill the target strength of, the British Army of the Rhine. The Germans are now beginning to develop a Territorial Army in addition to the standing

raises the enemy requirements for penetration, so that the ratio of offense to defense needed for an attack would virtually preclude attack, then stability would have increased measurably. Thus, a shift to a forward-pause defense strategy for the forces

remaining in central Europe may permit a reopening of the question of disengagement and supply new impetus to a consideration of other forms of European arms control.

Moreover, if domestic pressures for some reduction in US forces based in Europe grow, the administration might find it possible to argue that there are some realistic defense concepts which do not require such extensive US commitments in Germany.

Finally, if there is any way in which a forward defense capability can be achieved without reliance on the automatic use of tactical nuclear defense in a provocative mobile defense-offense mode, then substantial progress toward avoiding escalation will have been achieved.

It should be remembered, however, that simple calculations of offense-to-defense ratio for achieving various levels of defense effectiveness can be misleading. Requirements for penetration vary greatly with terrain, weather, morale, strategy of attack, pace of attack, and their relation to the various elements which make up the defense system.

Measures of combat effectiveness or combat firepower of attacking and defending units can only be crude estimates for average conditions. Other considerations may be of equal importance, such as an increase in the enemy's uncertainty of the possibili-

ties for successful attack. In the modern context, where the risk of escalation is so great, any increase in the aggressor's uncertainty about his ability to penetrate is a gain to be sought in itself.

No defense system can be considered adequate if there is no offensive capability whatsoever. If an enemy does penetrate and consolidate his position, the defender must have the means to take the offensive and regain the lost territory, or to seize enemy territory and bargain for the lost territory. A defense posture must not encourage the enemy to make a concerted push to achieve a *fait accompli*.

If the enemy should break through the static defense system, the defending forces must have a rapid counter-attack capability to prevent consolidation of the enemy position. There is no getting around the need for fluid tactics involving space-time trades once a large-scale penetration is achieved. This capability must exist so as not to tempt the enemy to concert all his energies for one large-scale penetration, after which he might be free to disperse and harass the static defense as well as increase the momentum and area covered in his attack. There is, in other words, a limit to the degree to which static defense forces may replace mobile reserve forces capable of taking the offensive.