PART II
Analyses

Chapter 3

Introduction and Background

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INTRODUCTION

In late 1984, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) adopted the Follow-On Forces Attack (FOFA) concept as one of a few critical warfighting tasks for its conventional forces. Although the concept had been under development for several years at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers, Europe (SHAPE), it was adopted in general terms only. This precipitated much activity on the part of the member nations, SHAPE, and the NATO international staff to define more clearly what FOFA is, how it is to be implemented, and what the individual nations are going to do to support its implementation.

As part of the U.S. effort, the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) was asked by the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, the House Committee on Armed Services, and the Senate Committee on Armed Services to conduct a study of options for implementing FOFA. In particular, OTA was asked to:

- discuss the military and deterrence rationale;
- survey the status of various applicable capabilities and programs, including those to develop advanced conventional munitions;
- review relevant Soviet doctrine and plans;
- review the attitudes of our NATO Allies;
- assess the strengths and weaknesses of various existing and proposed alternatives;
- assess the likelihood that various plausible combinations would meet U.S. and NATO goals; and
- discuss a range of policy options, their pros, cons, and timing of availability.

This report is the final product of that study. An earlier report—*Technologies for NATO Follow-on* Forces Attack Concept: *A Special Report of OTA's Assessment on Improving NATO Defense* Response–released in July 1986, accomplished the first two tasks listed above. This report covers the others. In the special report, OTA suggested to Congress that in considering how best to support the FOFA concept, systems ought to be considered not individually, but as complete packages to support clearly defined operational concepts; nonetheless, some systems will be "key systems"; all component systems will have to be procured in sufficient quantities; practice and training will be important; and some redundancy may be desirable. Readers wishing an elaboration on these points, or greater background on the FOFA concept and the technologies of interest, are referred to that special report.

After outlining the rest of the report, this chapter provides a brief review of the history of the FOFA concept, and of how FOFA fits into NATO's strategy. A fuller description is found in the special report.

Chapter 4 addresses the threat: Warsaw Pact forces, and what we know about that part of Soviet doctrine that is relevant to FOFA. All Warsaw Pact forces will follow Soviet doctrine. There has been some controversy in the West regarding Soviet doctrine and the appropriateness of FOFA as a response. This chapter reviews those areas of controversy.

Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the specific objectives for several different types of attacks on follow-on forces, and the operational concepts being considered for achieving those objectives. This sets the stage for the discussion of packages of systems to implement these concepts and the technical issues surrounding those systems, found later in the report.

Chapter 7 analyzes possible Soviet responses to FOFA, and chapter 8 reviews the attitudes of our Allies toward FOFA. FOFA was conceived by SHAPE as an Alliance-wide effort (although primarily concerning those nations

with forces in the Central Region); its value would be diminished if only the United States were to implement it, or if national responses were uncoordinated. NATO's current abilities to attack follow-on forces are reviewed in chapter 9.

The technological advances that are important for FOFA were described at some length in the special report. Although these are primarily mature technologies that could result in fielded systems over the next decade, major issues—technical and other—remain, particularly regarding Joint STARS, PLSS, remotely piloted vehicles, and advanced smart anti-armor weapons. These are the subject of chapters 10 and 11.

Chapter 12 analyzes how existing and new systems could be brought together into complete packages to implement the operational concepts discussed in chapter 6.

Chapter 13 reviews previous studies of implementing FOFA, summarizes their conclusions, and discusses major common threads.

BACKGROUND

History

In the late 1970s, both the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force began to study seriously the idea that much could be done to break up a Soviet-style offensive by attacking deep into enemy territory. Air bases and other major fixed facilities, major formations of ground forces, logistics, transportation nodes, and individual high-value targets like command posts and missile launchers were among the targets considered. To be sure, attacking into enemy territory was nothing novel for either service. The Air Force had always had interdiction of various forms as a major mission, and the Army had always relied on firepower delivered by these interdiction aircraft and by its own artillery to "soften up" the enemy forces prior to engaging them. And within NATO's integrated military command, into which elements of both services would be integrated in the event of war, nuclear planning had always considered such targets to be of prime importance.

At the same time, the Army-in part because of long-standing criticism that accused it of being too static and insufficiently mobile for modern warfare-was developing a new doctrine called "AirLand Battle. " AirLand Battle, officially published in 1982, called for a combination of deep fires to break up the enemy's offensive, and counterattacks to restore losses and seize the initiative. The Air Force declared its support for AirLand Battle, and in late 1982 the services signed the *Joint Operational Concept Joint Attack of the Second Echelon (J-SAK)* that laid out procedures for cooperation between Army and Air Force units in deep attack.

Also in 1982, the staff at SHAPE produced a study of attacking follow-on forces. This led to the NATO Defence Planning Committee (DPC) formally approving SACEUR's Long Term Planning Guideline for FOFA on November 9, 1984, making FOFA officially part of NATO strategy.

Although FOFA was a SHAPE development (known at various times as 'deep strike, ''strike deep, and the 'Rogers plan' '), its connection to the United States was inescapable, and amplified by General Rogers' also holding the job of Commander-in-Chief of U.S. forces in Europe. The AirLand Battle concept was unpopular among Europeans because of its emphasis on counterattack, and it soon became confused with FOFA in the debate that followed. In addition, many were (and some remain) skeptical of the value of attacking deep rather than waiting to engage the advancing enemy forces in the close battle.

After the November 1984 DPC meeting, the concept was turned over to the NATO international staff for coordination and refinement, and subsequently to the office of the Assistant Secretary General for Defence Support to pro-

vide a forum for the member nations to coordinate their armaments programs. The focus has now largely shifted from doctrine development to arms procurement, particularly arms trade and cooperation. However, the attitudes of the individual members regarding FOFA have not as yet completely jelled.

On a parallel track, SHAPE is still developing the concept. The original rather general approach, of delaying, disrupting, and destroying enemy forces from just beyond the range of direct fire weapons to as far in the enemy rear as NATO's forces can reach, is becoming a set of more specific goals phased to coincide with the introduction of new capabilities. Meanwhile, both the Army and the Air Force continue to refine their deep battle and interdiction concepts taking FOFA into account.

The Role of FOFA in NATO Strategy

Flexible Response is a strategy for deterring aggression, underwritten by a triad of conventional, theater nuclear, and strategic nuclear forces. NATO would respond to any attack at an appropriate level of violence, and reserves the right to escalate a conflict, including the first use of nuclear weapons. This strategy creates a risk to the Warsaw Pact that aggression can lead to nuclear warfare at a level such that the cost to them would far outweigh whatever they would hope to gain by attacking in the first place. NATO would resist a conventional offensive with conventional means, and would escalate to the use of nuclear weapons only if it proved necessary.

While there is agreement among the Allies on this principle, there is debate and disagreement over how much conventional defense capability NATO should have: too little would lead to being overrun before NATO could decide to escalate, while too much would risk a lengthy and destructive war on NATO territory and perhaps encourage a Pact attack in the belief that NATO would fight a conventional war which would carry little risk to the Pact, Either, it is argued, would decrease deterrence. Although no one wants a nuclear war, the nations that would be the most likely battlefield in a conventional war-such as Germany—have the greatest interest in sending the Soviets a clear message that aggression would lead quickly and directly to nuclear war.

Although NATO anticipates a conflict that would involve its Northern and Southern Regions in Europe (as well as the Atlantic), the focus is expected to be the Central Region. Warsaw Pact successes there would split the Alliance and make the defense of the rest of Europe all but untenable. Furthermore, Germany is the focus in the Central Region: its collapse would almost certainly produce defeat in the Central Region.

NATO strategy for a conventional defense in the Central Region is dictated by political and geographic considerations as well as by the threat facing it. Ground and air forces of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium are under the command of the Commander-in-Chief Central Region, who in turn reports to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR). SACEUR is responsible for the Northern, Central, and Southern Regions. France, although a member of the Alliance, is not part of this integrated military command. In the Central Region, the German border is divided into eight corps sectors, each defended by the ground forces of one nation. These are organized into two Army Groups, each supported by a multinational Allied Tactical Air Force. A relatively small force—much of which would come from the United States—would be held in reserve.

NATO is committed to a forward defense, both because there is little room to fall back, and because falling back would yield German territory which would weaken Germany and be politically unacceptable to the Germans. This is not to say that NATO will defend right at the border, but that it will take defensive positions as close as practical to the border and defend them with a *tactically mobile* defense.

It is, however, a *strategically static* defense having little ability to move forces north/south along the border to respond to the way the Soviets choose to attack. NATO is also gener-

ally constrained from counterattacking across the border, because it is a defensive alliance that wishes to avoid a provocative, offensive posture.

The Warsaw Pact not only enjoys significant numerical superiority over NATO in the Central Region, but it is organized according to Soviet doctrine for a *strategically mobile* offense. NATO believes Warsaw Pact ground forces would concentrate to smash through NATO's weaker corps sectors, allowing highly mobile divisions into NATO's rear. NATO can expect this attack on its rear to be aided by airplane, missile, airborne, and special forces attacks.

NATO is very constrained in its options for responding to this threat. It will not make major increases in its force structure. The corps that are attacked cannot fall back to reorganize their defenses, and the stronger corps that are not heavily attacked cannot counterattack deep into Warsaw Pact territory. By attacking the follow-on forces before they join the offensive, NATO hopes to reduce them to manageable proportions (i.e., reduce them through attrition) and meter their arrival at the close battle (delay them so they arrive in "drips and drabs" and not all at once). It also provides the opportunity to mass fire against concentrations of forces before they hit NATO's defensive line, thereby compensating at least in part for NATO's inability to shift its ground forces in response.