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The U.S. Army in Transition II: Landpower in the Information Age

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Although *Reconstituting America's Defense* does have an introduction by Tritten summarizing the new strategy, most of this work contains completely new information.

Tom Grassey looks at the problems regarding intelligence requirements in the post–Cold War period, reminding us of the historic fallacy of relying on two-year warnings. Asian expert Ed Olsen looks at the new American strategy in the Pacific, while European and naval expert Jan Breemer provides a detailed chapter on "The Search for a Mission," about U.S. forces in Europe. Former START negotiator Bruce MacDonald writes on "Strategic Nuclear Policy in a Time of Change," noting every alteration that has taken place in that still vital area.

As a former Capitol Hill staffer, this reviewer enjoyed Paul Stockton's chapter on "The Congressional Response." In his discussion on "Pork and Policy," Stockton rightly states that "Policy considerations, and not pork alone, play a crucial role in shaping congressional actions," a point that is sometimes overlooked. Although the B-2 bomber was a "job bonanza" it simply did not fit into the new post–Cold War policy in most congressmen's minds.

These books are not without flaws, the major problem being that rapidly moving events have dated some of the facts, although the Clinton administration has made few strategy changes. In fact, Secretary of Defense Les Aspin's "Bottom Up Review" of defense, made public in the summer of 1993, has been described as something of which President Bush would have approved.

However, independent of Aspin's review, these books are important for three reasons: they represent the history and thoughts of those in charge of national security during the transition from the Cold War; they can serve as important benchmarks for judging any new policy; and finally, both books are well documented and have excellent bibliographies that should prove indispensable for scholars in the future. In short, if you are interested in national security, both works should definitely be on your bookshelf.

James L. George
author of
*The U.S. Navy in the 1990s:
Alternatives for Action*

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Brown, Frederic. *The U.S. Army in Transition II: Landpower in the Information Age.* McLean, Va.: Brassey's (US), 1993. 205pp. $24

This is a book about land power and the need for vision in changing times. As an integral and frequently decisive component of national military power, land

power in America has not generally commanded the same attention and level of intellectual discourse ‚as seapower and aerospace power. Now comes an incisive look at the state of land power in America and a serious attempt to frame the debate about where the Army should go and why.

Twenty years ago, General Frederic (Rick) Brown wrote an important book called *The U.S. Army in Transition* which assessed the state of the Army in the immediate aftermath of its most painful and debilitating conflict and offered fresh strategies for change, growth, and renewal. *The U.S. Army in Transition II* comes at a similar, critical nexus in our Army's history. Army leaders know well that they stand at a crossroads. In the face of unprecedented change and extreme pressure, their decisions, and those of congressional and executive branch defense elites, will determine what kind of army America will field into the next century. Defense decisionmakers would be well advised to think deeply about the assumptions and descriptions of policy, program, and the international security environment found in this book. General Brown writes in his preface that the reader will not find a detailed blueprint for organizational change; rather his intent is to "establish a broad framework for reviewing tough professional issues . . . [and] probe the design of a new Army from the foundation up."

Brown's central theme is that America and her army have seen the end of one military epoch (war in the Industrial Age) and the beginning of another (the Information Age). This "information" revolution, embodied in

applications of the microprocessor for targeting, intelligence collection, navigation, communications, and a host of other uses, will continue to alter profoundly virtually everything the Army does as it approaches the end of this century, and then the next. The author gently chastises the Army's leadership for failing to grasp the full potential of this revolution, calling for more innovative approaches to the use of high technology in training, administration, and integration of battlefield systems.

There is much here to ponder. Reconstitution, the role of the reserve components, the revolution in training, the development of leaders, new international security regimes, warfighting doctrine, and domestic uses for the military are all subjected to examination in light of a continuing generational and technological transformation. The author questions a number of articles of faith: Should Army families receive levels of community support not available to civilians? Should the Army conduct military training that can be contracted to civilians? Is unit personnel stability really essential in the information age? Should rank structures and promotion ladders be "flattened out"? How should we respond to the continuing social pressures to "occupationalize" the Army's professional ethos? What do we really need to do to "seize the future" for land power in the Information Age?

Some of the author's prescriptions will disturb today's military professional. Excessive enthusiasm for the application of "virtual-reality" computer-simulated training worries

many officers who fear it will displace hard training in the field, the only school short of combat where weather, fatigue, and systems failure—in short, the frictions of war—can be truly experienced. General Brown's assertion that noncommissioned officers are today capable, if necessary, of commanding combined-arms formations at the company level will not find general agreement among our officer corps. There is little discussion of the debilitating effects of massive, simultaneous, system-wide change that the Army must endure—is enduring—even if it undertakes no internally generated institutional changes at all.

Yet if there is anything that the Army (and all the services) needs now, it is vision and enthusiasm for rigorous self-examination. As the author himself suggests, the questions raised in *The U.S. Army in Transition II* are more important than the tentative answers provided. He has done a service in probing the status quo as only an experienced, senior insider can. He strikes the right note in urging the Army not to become complacent in the wake of the Gulf War but to build on the core values of the institution to shape a twenty-first-century Army that incorporates lasting strengths and exploits the opportunities that now present themselves.

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Leonhard, Robert R. *The Art of Maneuver: Maneuver-Warfare Theory*

and Air-Land Battle. Novato, Calif.: Presidio, 1991. 315pp. $24.95

Major Robert Leonhard, U.S. Army, has written a provocative book that will stir heated controversy within the ranks of the Army and also offer the Navy and Marine Corps a few points to ponder as those services embark upon their "maneuver from the sea" doctrinal approach. At the risk of oversimplification, Leonhard believes that the Army's adoption of maneuver warfare doctrine is less maneuver-oriented and more wedded to traditional firepower and attrition tactics than the Army is willing to admit. No doubt, the Army hierarchy will be displeased with this view.

In an effort to prove his thesis, the author presents a number of examples from his own experience along with historical evidence demonstrating pure maneuver theory at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels of war. One of the most interesting of these models is one the author calls the "Alcyoneus Principle"—after a Greek giant of mythology who was invulnerable on his home territory but whom Hercules defeated by lifting him off the ground and carrying him away from his homeland. Once displaced from his "center of gravity," Alcyoneus was helpless. Leonhard stresses that this concept of dislocating the enemy is a key point of maneuver warfare. Here lies the point of divergence with most conventional (and even most unconventional) military thought—which holds that an enemy's "center of gravity" is that place or thing that is the source of his strength, and that his "key vulnerability" is that weak point by which the "center of gravity" may most easily