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Breaking the Phalanx

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142 Naval War College Review

slightly ill at ease. The impression, accurate or not, is that Gray did not read the originals and may be using the observations in ways that the writers or speakers did not intend.

There is much to consider in this book. Even if its culmination leaves one cold or angry, a dramatically different point of view can be a tonic, even to those who have already made up their minds.

DAVID SMITH
Commander, U.S. Navy

Macgregor, Douglas A. *Breaking the Phalanx*. Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1997. 283pp. \$24.95

With *Breaking the Phalanx*, Colonel Douglas Macgregor has accomplished what all military authors aspire to but few achieve. By calling for striking—some would say radical—change in how the United States Army structures and employs its combat forces, Macgregor has captured the attention of his service's leadership and inspired a genuine debate. The Army that emerges from this debate will likely incorporate some, though not all, of Macgregor's ideas. By fueling discussion and injecting fresh and provocative concepts and thinking, his contribution to the Army of the next century will be both lasting and significant.

An accomplished scholar and writer, as well as a distinguished combat soldier in his own right, Macgregor begins with a strong defense of the continuing relevance and utility of landpower. Refuting air advocates who claimed "decisive" roles for their service in the Gulf

war, he argues convincingly that "without landpower, airpower and seapower cannot be strategically decisive." Arguing that all conflicts are ultimately about control of populations and resources found on the land, Macgregor asserts that strategic landpower remains central to American preeminence in the next century. While service enthusiasts will no doubt continue to debate questions of service primacy, Macgregor is on firm ground in arguing that a strong, healthy capability on land, as well as at sea and in the air, is the essence of American military power—not a military establishment weighted toward any one.

Having made a plea for landpower's rightful place in our strategic calculus, Macgregor moves to his central theme: how to shape the Army for the next century. Here he boldly calls for the death of the division—heretofore the lowest all-arms formation capable of sustained combat—in favor of the "combat group," a combined arms formation of brigade size with organic maneuver, fire support, and logistics units. These groups would be organized and equipped by function and mission.

Thus "heavy" combat groups would conduct "decisive" maneuver operations. "Airborne/air assault" groups would conduct forced entry and economy-of-force operations. "Recon-strike" groups would conduct traditional cavalry missions to screen and secure the main force. Macgregor sees, in pushing the Army's organizational focus downward, major savings in end-strength by doing away with divisional staffs and headquarters troops.

How this force might fight a "future war" is described in a fictional scenario set in Southwest Asia. While incorporating next-generation technologies, the author points out the dangers of overreliance on "silver bullets": when the enemy manages to field passive systems able to detect stealth platforms, "dominant battlespace knowledge has turned out to be an illusion!" The message is clear. Precision guided systems and information warfare will matter greatly, but war will still be messy, plans will fail, and the clash of arms on the ground will remain at the heart of mankind's continuing fascination with war.

Many of Macgregor's proposals push the envelope hard. Still, upon reflection, much of his thesis intuitively compels. The arguments and counter-arguments to come (and there will be many) will be based as much on the response of threatened communities within the Army as on implications for warfighting.

To be sure, Macgregor is vulnerable to criticism on the merits. A career cavalry officer, his dismissal of light infantry reflects a measure of branch bias at odds with the realities of combat in close terrain. His superficial treatment of logistics and sustainment is a weakness that is sure to draw close scrutiny. Eliminating the division as an echelon of command, absent a hard and objective look at the downside (the obvious disadvantage being an inherent span of control problem, with numerous groups reporting to a single joint task force), will not attract much support from senior leaders who are well aware of the division's proven flexibility and staying power.

Yet *Breaking the Phalanx* is an important book that may well endure. Though most military professionals realize that the United States stands at the dawn of a new era in warfare, few step "out of the box" with Macgregor's force, clarity, and relish. Highly readable, always interesting, his thrusting logic grapples resolutely with the possibilities. Douglas Macgregor has put a mark on the wall and challenged the system to do better. His book deserves careful reflection by all professionals concerned with the common defense.

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Farer, Tom, ed. *Beyond Sovereignty: Collectively Defending Democracy in the Americas*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1996. 416pp. \$19.95

The United States is fortunate to be in a hemisphere relatively free of the recent troubling regional trends. One such trend is the deterioration of states, resulting in the unraveling of economies and the breakdown of civil society and its complementary form of democratic government. Perhaps, however, the withering away of the state is creating a positive effect in Latin America and the Caribbean. As *Beyond Sovereignty* reveals, state sovereignty is diminishing as a result of this hemisphere's growing dedication through "collective defense" to the full political institutionalization of democracy. *Beyond Sovereignty* explains this regional trend, which the United States must apprehend as one of the most positive