

POSITION PAPER

Subj: THE VALIDITY OF JOINT FORCIBLE ENTRY OPERATIONS IN AN EVER INCREASING ANTI-ACCESS / AREA DENIAL ENVIRONMENT?

Ref: (a) JP 3-18, Joint Forcible Entry Operations

1. Problem. Is Joint Forcible Entry Operations a valid option for military commanders in an ever increasing Anti-Access / Area Denial environment?
2. Recommended Position. Joint Forcible Entry Operations remain a valid option for military commanders however, the methods must continuously be updated and adapted to account for an ever increasing Anti-Access / Area Denial environment.
3. Opposing Viewpoints. Due to the ever increasing and advanced Anti-Access / Area Denial environment, Joint Forcible Entry Operations are no longer a valid option because of the unacceptable risk to force and risk to mission that will accompany them. This viewpoint argues that Anti-Access / Area Denial technology has gotten so advanced that military commanders will be unable to adequately penetrate the enemy's defenses enough to gain a sufficient lodgment. While temporary success might be achieved, it will come at too high a cost in terms of losses to personnel and materiel and thus it will be deemed an unacceptable course of action.
4. Rationale. JP 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations* defines forcible entry operations as: "Seizing and holding of a military lodgment in the face of armed opposition or forcing access into a denied area to allow movement and maneuver to accomplish the mission." Unlike linear tactics that were made an operational anachronism by the advent of the machine gun, forcible entry operations are not made irrelevant just because the enemy has a more advanced defense. Forcible entry operations isn't tied to one particular tactic, technique, or procedure but rather is an amorphous concept that can be molded to fit any given situation. Just because the situation is more complex doesn't make the concept irrelevant, it simply necessitates an approach that accounts for the increased complexity. The ultimate goal remains, "access to a denied area" which is and will remain the crux of any tactical offensive operation.

The question at hand should not be whether forcible entry operations are a valid option, but rather, what changes can be made to the U.S.'s approach to forcible entry operations given a specific enemy situation. There are no one size fits all solutions to any battlefield situation because they are all unique. The increasing complexity of enemy Anti-Access / Area Denial systems simply adds another layer to the problem set which planners must then account for. To adopt the notion that forcible entry operations are no longer an option is to concede the battle before it ever happens.

5. Recommendation. In order to account for the increased complexity of enemy Anti-Access / Area Denial systems, the United States Military must continue to exercise its maneuver warfare doctrine. Deconstructing the most advanced enemy systems will identify a multitude of surfaces

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and gaps. The key to success is to avoid the surfaces and exploit the gaps through technology, maneuver, or other means. To do this, the U.S. must continue to invest in technological innovation to give the military an operational advantage while also leveraging the other instruments of national power to create and exploit non-military solutions. Additionally, the U.S. military should continue to experiment with new force employment methods and tactics that result in lower signatures and are thus more difficult to target. Finally, a frank discussion needs to be had at all levels about the cost in lives and resources that will incur in a peer/near-peer fight. Forcible entry operations against an advanced Anti-Access / Area Denial system will result in high losses no matter what tactic is employed, so leaders need to be ready for that calculus.

Prepared by: Major Andrew D. Wright, CG-14

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