

the French and a handful of other countries into the exercise, but their participation will be more political than military.

Britain, on the other hand, will be appalled at what is happening. Even though there will be a giant game of global power politics going on, the British will still be deeply concerned with the local balance of power. They will once again be facing the possibility of a German-dominated continent, however awkwardly achieved by Germany and however dependent on Turkish underpinnings. The British will recognize that if this happens, any neglect toward Europe on the part of the United States, any cyclical retreat into isolation, could mean catastrophe. Britain will have had no intention of getting involved in this war. But at this point it will have no choice, and it could bring something valuable to the table: a small, intact air force that, when coupled with U.S. intelligence, could seriously damage the Germans and the Turks. In addition, its advanced air defenses to protect against Turkish and German air strikes will make Britain a secure base of operations. Britain will appear to hold back, while stealthily redeploying a substantial portion of its air force to the United States, where air defenses and warning time will be even greater.

In the end, Poland will be attacked on two sides, from the west and south. The attacking forces will advance geographically as invaders have before, but the technology will be quite different. It won't be the massed infantry of Napoleon or the armored formations of Hitler; the force that will attack will be quite small in terms of actual troops. The human force will consist of armored infantrymen, fanned out as infantrymen usually are, but with clear and overlapping fields of fire—and these fields now will measure dozens of miles. Linked together by computer networks, they will command not only the weapons they carry but also robotic systems and hypersonic aircraft thousands of miles away that they can call on as needed.

The robotic systems will live on data and power. Cut off either, and they would be helpless. They need a constant stream of information and instructions. They also need a steady flow of power to keep them going. Since the space-based systems of the Turks are gone, the Turks will substitute unmanned aerial vehicles hovering, swooping, and flying around the battle space to give them information. The information will always be incomplete, as the UAVs will constantly be shot down. The United States will have much better data but will lack the air force to decimate the attackers.

Providing enough power for the infantrymen's armored suits and robots will also be a problem. These suits will be electrically driven and will need to be recharged or have their massive batteries swapped out every day or so. Tremendous advances will have been made in the storage of electrical power, but in the end the batteries will still run out. A key resource, therefore, will be the electrical power grid tied to electrical generation plants. Destroy the power generation plants, and the attackers will have to ship in massive charged batteries from wherever there is power and then distribute them around the battlefield. The farther the troops advance, the longer the supply line will become. If the defenders are prepared to shut down their own power grid and, when necessary, destroy their power plants—a scorched earth strategy—the attack would be slowed by lack of power. Everything will depend on the tactical delivery of electricity.

At a secret meeting of American, British, Chinese, and Polish commanders, a strategy will be worked out: the Poles will resist, and slowly retreat under the pressure of the Coalition forces. The two geographic thrusts from the west and one from the south, will converge on Warsaw. It will be agreed that the Poles will resist, fall back, and regroup endlessly, buying as much time as possible for the allies to rebuild their air forces. The Polish North Pole to St. Petersburg and deployed with the Polish troops in the delaying action. As the situation becomes more desperate, in late 2052 a available airpower in Britain will begin to be released to further slow the advancing Turkish armies. The Herculean American industrial effort will under way, as thousands of advanced hypersonic aircraft are built, capable of traveling twice as fast as prewar systems, and with a payload double in size. By mid-2052, the American force will be available for a massed and devastating strike that, when coupled with major improvements in space-based systems, will devastate Coalition forces worldwide. Until then, the rule will be hold, retreat, and buy time.

The Coalition will massively underestimate U.S. industrial capacity. They will think it has several years to battle the Polish forces. At first, the Coalition will choose not to attack Polish electrical generation systems, not wanting to have to rebuild them after the war and needing their power to fight after they've captured them. The Poles, on the other hand, will destroy r