



Contribution ID: 304

Type: **Paper Abstract (Closed Panels)**

## **The “Transparent Battlefield” and its Implications for Western Movement and Maneuver Warfighting**

*Thursday 26 June 2025 15:30 (20 minutes)*

Ever since the Gulf War, the Western way of war has been firmly anchored in network-centric combined arms operations and executing them with a Clausewitzian concentration of forces to disarm the enemy. For this dislocating attack to effect psychological shock and operational and tactical surprise, speed and agility in movement are essential. The undiminished belief in unrivaled AirLand supremacy in Western defense establishment circles notwithstanding, the Ukraine War suggests significant impediments to maneuver warfare, with Luttwak going as far as declaring it impossible. The key obstacle to breaking through is what has come to be called the “transparency of the battlefield.” Because the enemy can see, track, and lock on to a (moving) ground target in real-time, amassing a large enough force to overwhelm him—which takes time, space, and organization that can be detected—has proven challenging. With geospatial data from satellites, advanced radar systems, and precision surveillance unmanned aerial vehicles, a stalemate has ensued where a lot of the friction and attrition of one’s own fighting capacity occurs without even beginning to approach the front-line. One can think of first-person view loitering munitions and long-range precision fire in shoot-and-scoot counter-battery duels. This article answers three questions. First, how have technological innovations making the battlefield “transparent” impacted Western movement and maneuver warfighting? Second, has the defensive regained dominance in the tactical offense/defense balance? Third, if this is the case, what implications does this have for the European force structure (and procurement) and warfighting doctrine –should Europe move to attrition warfare premised on the strategic defensive?

**What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?**

Security Studies

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No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

**Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?**

Yes

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**Session Classification:** Military Interventions

