

Ensuring a Seamless Army Narrative for the Operational Environment: Roles and Responsibilities of U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command and Army Futures Command



U.S. Army photo by CPT Chelsea Hall

Soldiers from 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, conduct explosive breaching using Bangalore torpedoes during a platoon live-fire exercise, August 14, 2019, on Fort Carson, CO.

by Colonel Jimmy Blejski and Colonel Rob Wagner

Introduction

As the U.S. Army transitions from an era marked by extended counterinsurgency operations in the Middle East and South Asia and reorients on great power competition and conflict, the need to understand and assess the operational environment (OE) becomes an essential task. This is not the first time the Army has addressed a critical transition; it has happened before—at the end of World War II, after Vietnam, and at the end of the Cold War. The Army has a long history of adapting to change and preparing Soldiers, leaders, and formations for the “next war.” Indeed, assessing who our next threat is, analyzing each event or series of events that could be the catalyst for war, and preparing to operate successfully in each environment wherever we will face our next foe is what keeps intelligence professionals up at night.

Maintaining a Competitive Advantage throughout History

A quick scan through the U.S. Army’s 245 years of existence shows that our focus on potential threats has included both state and non-state actors with various degrees of capabilities. As the Global War on Terrorism started to wind down, the Department of Defense began prioritizing efforts for the next conflict. Over the past 20 years, American Service members and the national intelligence community became well versed in fighting a counterinsurgency against non-state and state-sponsored adversaries while defeating terrorist threats to the United States. However, the required shift in the 2018 National Defense Strategy evolved with the focus toward larger, more dangerous threats, particularly by our peer competitors, China and Russia. To maintain our competitive advantage over our increasingly lethal and

most capable threats, the U.S. Army must carefully modernize and continue to improve in all facets of the doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF) framework. Two major Army commands have the important mission of helping to execute many of the complex tasks associated with preparing the U.S. Army to fight and win throughout the competition continuum.

Preparing the U.S. Army to Win the Next Conflict

Since the end of World War II, the Army has conducted several studies to review the command and control of Army ground forces within the continental United States, while assigning responsibilities for the critical functions of training, doctrine, leader, concepts, and capabilities development. The first major reorganization occurred in 1955, with the establishment of the Continental Army Command (CONARC). However, it became apparent that this formation had too large a span of control and too broad a focus. In 1973, as a result of an analysis from Operation Steadfast, CONARC was deactivated and divided into two new formations.

One formation became the U.S. Army Forces Command, which was responsible for the Army's active and reserve component combat and combat support elements in the continental United States. The second formation was the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC), which combined Service schools and individual training functions with the combat developments processes of a separate command, the Combat Developments Command. This integrated the development of doctrine and related equipment for the Army with the Service schools and functional training where it logically belonged.¹

Exactly 45 years later, after the publication of a revolutionary new National Defense Strategy, the Army decided it would require a renewed focus on the future and force modernization to ensure the transition to great power competition against near-peer and peer rivals, who are engaged in their own significant military modernization efforts. Thus, much like the decision in 1973 to establish TRADOC, the Army made the bold decision to establish U.S. Army Futures Command (AFC) effective 1 July 2018.² The establishment of AFC required the Army intelligence enterprise to create a new approach to understanding and assessing the OE that would continue to meet the needs of supporting training and doctrine, while at the same time adapting to the new demands inherent in AFC's mission. With regulatory oversight, policy, and support from the Headquarters, Department of the Army, G-2, and general support from the greater Army intelligence enterprise and intelligence community, TRADOC and AFC are responsible for describing and

The History of CONARC and Operation Steadfast

The establishment of the Continental Army Command (CONARC) combined the command and control of all active units and all training functions in a single headquarters.³ In 1962, during the height of the Cold War, another study broadened CONARC's mission and responsibilities to include all training centers, schools, and doctrine development. A result of the study also centralized all materiel functions in the Army under the Army Materiel Command and created the Combat Developments Command responsible for combat developments and concepts. By the early 1970s, with the de-escalation of U.S. participation in Southeast Asia and the necessary changes to the Army structure in the continental United States, it was evident that the span of control for CONARC was too large for a single headquarters.⁴ The Chief of Staff of the Army, GEN Creighton W. Abrams Jr., ordered another study, Operation Steadfast, as part of an overhaul of the entire U.S. Army structure. Orchestrated by Assistant Vice Chief of Staff, LTG William E. DePuy, Operation Steadfast resulted in the deactivation of CONARC on 1 July 1973 and the establishment of two new organizations in its place—U.S. Army Forces Command and U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.



This repository is part of the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Historian's archives at TRADOC Headquarters, Fort Eustis, VA. It depicts the volumes of data that went into Operation Steadfast and chronicles several previous studies.

Prelude to Operation Steadfast: A Timeline

- ◆ 1942, Army Ground Forces.
- ◆ 1948, Office of the Chief of Army Field Forces.
- ◆ 1955, CONARC.
- ◆ 1962, Project 80 reorganization.
- ◆ 1969, Parker Board.
- ◆ 1970, CONARC Management Improvement Panel.
- ◆ 1972, Establishment of Operation Steadfast.

delivering a consistent narrative spanning the current and future OE. The continuity of an OE narrative prevents disconnects between TRADOC's leader development, training, education, and doctrine; AFC's concepts and capabilities development; and all other Army-wide DOTMLPF missions.

Since its establishment, TRADOC has focused on leader development, training, education, doctrine, concepts, and capability development. The merging of these functions in 1973 was intended to ensure a holistic approach to an evolving Army ready for the challenges of the future. Many examples illustrate the impact and long-lasting effects TRADOC has had on the Army. TRADOC's efforts in training and leader development led to the creation of the combat training centers and Mission Command Training Program to ensure our leaders are prepared for their next threat. Its efforts in concepts and capabilities development led to the fielding of the "Big Five" combat systems, which have been steadily upgraded and are still dominant today against all adversaries.

The "Big Five" Combat Systems

In the 1970s and 1980s, the U.S. Army embarked on a series of procurement programs designed to revitalize the force, and to counter the overwhelming numerical advantage of the Warsaw Pact. The "Big Five" represented a collection of procurement programs designed to re-establish the technological supremacy of U.S. land forces, and reinvigorate conventional capabilities in the wake of the Vietnam War. These systems, including the M1A1 Abrams main battle tank, the Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the Patriot air-defense system, the AH-64 Apache attack helicopter, and the UH-60 Black Hawk utility helicopter, continue to provide the foundation of U.S. military landpower.⁵

TRADOC continues to record key observations and assessments of friendly and threat actions during all stages of competition, crisis, and conflict worldwide to produce relevant doctrine for the U.S. Army. One of the best and most recent examples of how doctrine, combined with concepts and capabilities development, was applied and executed with overwhelming success is the 1980s *AirLand Battle*. The Army first circulated FM 100-5, *Operations*, in 1981, and then carefully taught, trained, and exercised it throughout all institutional and operational structures with the sole objective to defeat the large combat formations of the Soviet Union in a potential conflict in Europe. This strategy was convincingly proven in the deserts of Iraq and Kuwait during Operation Desert Storm in 1991. More recently, FM 3-24, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*, provided a blueprint for United States Army operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, turning the tide into a more successful strat-

egy. Both of these doctrinal publications set the foundation for U.S. Army training, education, leader development, and force changes that acknowledged "the distilled wisdom" of combat captured in doctrine.

The realization that our peer competitors possess the intent and capability to challenge us in competition and conflict, combined with the realization that the current way of modernizing the Army was not going to keep pace, Army senior leaders decided to establish one command focused on modernization. The 2018 National Defense Strategy, highlighting Russia's and China's modernization activities, drove the Army to focus on threat-based modernization rather than capability-based modernization. The importance of maintaining overmatch in key warfighting functions and advancing key technologies is forcing the Army to look deeper both into the current threat and into the deeper future, including potential alternative futures. It immediately became apparent to TRADOC and AFC leadership that both organizations must work together to reach the desired end state of fielding a multi-domain operations-capable force that can prevail against our pacing threats in competition and conflict. It also became apparent that the first step in the process was the establishment of a close and effective working relationship between the elements of TRADOC and AFC tasked with understanding the OE. Two years since the historic decision to create a new command, the TRADOC and AFC relationship has matured as we continue to ensure consistency in the current OE and the future OE for the U.S. Army.

Roles and Responsibilities of the TRADOC G-2

Today, TRADOC—

- ◆ Recruits, trains, and educates the Army's Soldiers.
- ◆ Develops leaders.
- ◆ Supports training in units.
- ◆ Develops doctrine.
- ◆ Establishes standards.
- ◆ Builds the Army by developing and integrating operational and functional concepts and organizational designs for the fielded force.⁶

Within this structure, one of TRADOC's core functions under the TRADOC G-2 purview is the oversight and development of the Army's current OE. Specifically, the TRADOC G-2 is responsible for developing, describing, and delivering the current OE to support the Army's preparations to fight and win the Nation's wars. TRADOC accomplishes this by integrating support and fostering collaboration with Army and unified action partner stakeholders and partners from the intelligence community, academia, and industry.

The TRADOC G-2 has historically produced a suite of products that not only outlines lessons learned, threat tactics, and assessments of particular OEs but also provides forecasts 10 to 15 years into the future in a series of OE estimates. The most recent estimate is *The Operational Environment and the Changing Character of Warfare*, released initially in 2018 and officially published as TRADOC Pamphlet 525-92 in October 2019. This document provides a concise overview of trends and emerging threats the Army will confront from our strategic competition in an increasingly contested battlefield across every domain. The intent of the TRADOC G-2's work is like all organizational intelligence organizations—to inform the commanding general's decisions. In this case, it informs decisions about the azimuth for training, leader development, education, and changes needed for the fielded force to deal with near-term threats and circumstances.

role in ensuring the threat is accurately replicated through the accreditation of the opposing force at the combat training centers and Mission Command Training Program, and indirectly throughout all home station training. Additionally, the TRADOC G-2 is a key advisor throughout the training and education's program objective memorandum discussions and budget cycles affecting Army readiness and modernization investments.

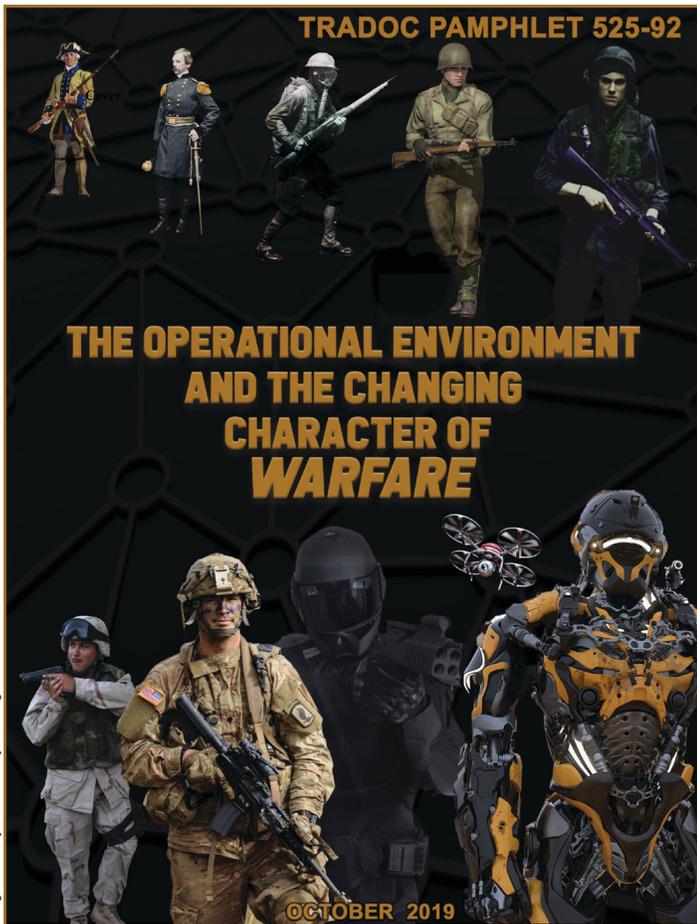
Roles and Responsibilities of the AFC Directorate of Intelligence and Security

As outlined in AGO 2018-10, *Establishment of United States Army Futures Command*, AFC leads the Army's future modernization enterprise. Specifically, AFC—

- ◆ Assesses and integrates the future operational environment, emerging threats, and technologies to develop and deliver concepts, requirements, and future force designs.
- ◆ Supports the delivery of modernization solutions.
- ◆ Postures the Army for the future by setting strategic direction.
- ◆ Integrates the Army's future force modernization enterprise.
- ◆ Aligns resources to priorities.
- ◆ Maintains accountability for modernization solutions.⁷

In AGO 2018-10, AFC's first task was to describe and assess the future operational environment and emerging threats, looking 15 to 30 years into the future to design the next Army. The command set out on a path to undertake an early and continuous assessment of the future operational environment and to closely monitor future threats. AFC is leading a transformation of Army modernization in order to provide future warfighters with the concepts, capabilities, and organizational structures they require to dominate a future battlefield. This involves thoroughly examining the future operational environment and assessing how our adversaries will fight. The first publication of the AFC future operational environment is AFC Pamphlet 525-2, *Future Operational Environment: Forging the Future in an Uncertain World, 2035-2050*. This document describes four alternative futures based on two key drivers—the concentration of power and the rate of technology adaptation.

The AFC Directorate of Intelligence and Security (DoIS) orchestrates activities throughout the intelligence and security communities to describe and assess the future operational environment and protect the Army's investments. The future is inherently unknowable and difficult to forecast. To provide the Army modernization enterprise with strategic



Once those decisions are made, the TRADOC G-2 develops and delivers OE content to support those decisions across the U.S. Army. The threat tactics Army techniques publications, the opposing force manuals (TC 7-100 series), and the decisive action training environment series are examples of this work. The TRADOC G-2 actively maintains and updates these references for relevancy. They play a critical

FUTURE OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: FORGING THE FUTURE IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

2035-2050



"The Future Operational Environment will force us to think differently and seek opportunities in nontraditional space. If we do not imagine large and reach deep, we will not be successful in future battlefields."
-General John "Mike" Murray

U.S. ARMY FUTURES COMMAND

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intelligence estimates that look into the deep future, DoIS works collaboratively with the intelligence community, academia, think tanks, and other Department of Defense organizations to develop a series of products supporting the decision cycle of Army modernization. For example, DoIS leads a monthly session for AFC's Commanding General, focusing on a specific intelligence topic that describes what activities and investments our adversaries are making now to gain overmatch in the future. DoIS shapes future investments by anticipating and identifying emerging threats as they evolve. These efforts confront the loss of overmatch to a range of peer, near-peer, and non-state actors.

AFC DoIS provides critical threat intelligence to Army modernization efforts, prioritizes technology protection strategies, integrates intelligence and requirements, provides security guidance and oversight, and informs modernization investment strategies. DoIS coordinates a shared, and validated, threat picture that supports Army modernization. This is done by developing and understanding potential future operational environments, reviewing intelligence products for the Army Requirements Oversight Council and the Strategic Portfolio Analysis and Review, and driving the publication of relevant Validated Online Lifecycle Threat products. DoIS also operates closely with the testing and

modeling and simulation communities to ensure the developers of systems evaluation capabilities and concepts pursue future Army systems in direct response to realistic and adaptive future threats.

Beyond intelligence, DoIS implements protection and security requirements in support of Army modernization, and directly supports the Army's transformation to a threat-based force. To achieve and maintain overmatch, AFC DoIS provides guidance and oversight with intelligence, protection, and security elements working together to shield intellectual property, key technologies, and specific program details as part of a systematic effort. Maintaining speed and agility requires situational awareness of various security threats and a better understanding of specifically what, and when, to protect. Because of limited resources, these security and protection tasks are only accomplished with rigorous engagement, partnership, and coordination with the whole community of security-focused organizations.

Collaborative Relationships, Consistency, and the Way Ahead

Today, the TRADOC G-2 provides support to training and readiness, leader development, education, doctrine development, and fielded force integration for the Army. TRADOC G-2's role in this effort is to develop current OE forecasts and content, and to develop and maintain baseline and supporting functional and regional OE assessments. These products and services inform fielded force integration; synchronize with AFC's future operational environment work for concepts, capability development, and related activities; and support the establishment of representative conditions for individual and collective training across the Army. These functions underpin how the Army organizes, trains, equips, and operates in the near- and mid-term, and they assist the Army in developing the "Waypoint Force" that describes an Army of 2028. The Waypoint Force is a comprehensive initiative that merges near-term needs by operational forces and provides the platform to achieve the "Aimpoint Force" of 2035. Key to this effort is satisfying the near-term needs for Army forces while not creating evolutionary dead ends that would squander resources in moving to the Aimpoint Force. This ensures that OE content provides the complex OE foundation to foster internal Army warfighting functions, combined arms, and joint and multinational force integration.

To ensure the continuity of the narrative describing the OE and threats, both current and future, AFC DoIS and TRADOC G-2 continuously collaborate on intelligence products. As the current threat transforms and modernizes into the threats of the future, it is critically important for the fielded

force to understand what threats it will face in the near future. It is just as critical for the future force to understand what potential future environments and threats it will face and to prepare early to operate in those environments and counter those threats.

The TRADOC G-2 and AFC DoIS have the challenging task of assessing current capability gaps caused by threat activities and changes to the OE, while also working through the Army’s complex force management process. At the same time, they must keep an eye toward the future. Forecasting the future is not designed to describe “what will be” but rather to project “what could be” the future conditions the Army might face. One will not ever get it right, but the challenge is to be close. To quote a great American philosopher, Yogi Berra, “The future ain’t what it used to be.” 

Endnotes

1. Jean R. Moenk, *Operation STEADFAST Historical Summary, A History of the Reorganization of the U.S. Continental Army Command (1972-1973)* (Fort McPherson, GA: U.S. Army Forces Command, 1974).
2. Department of the Army, General Orders (AGO) 2018-10, *Establishment of United States Army Futures Command* (Washington, DC, 4 June 2018), 1.
3. Moenk, *Operation STEADFAST*.
4. Ibid.
5. Robert Farley, “What if the U.S. Army’s ‘Big Five’ Weapons Programs Had Failed?” National Interest website, September 1, 2018, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/imagine-army-never-built-m1-140000807.html>.
6. Department of the Army, AGO 2018-10, *Army Futures Command*, 2.
7. Ibid., 1.

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