Training Today's Army for Tomorrow's Threats

by Ms. Jennifer Dunn

Introduction

The U.S. Army has spent the past 4 years grappling with its role in confronting adversaries in joint multi-domain operations. In the future, the U.S. military will face a battlespace in which adversaries will contest it across all domains—it will no longer be assured freedom of action in the air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace domains. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is helping the Army prepare for this environment through the training, education, and development of both today's and tomorrow's force.

The TRADOC G-2 is the Army's proponent for developing and approving operational environments for training and opposing force (OPFOR) doctrine; its charter is the continuous analysis of peer, near-peer, and other potential threats. This analysis ensures that Army training, now and in the future, is relevant and representative of the kinds of actions our adversaries will take to challenge us in multi-domain operations. The fruits of TRADOC G-2's continuous analysis are two series of doctrinal publications. The first, the TC 7-100 series, includes training circulars designed to provide the U.S. Army training community with a challenging, realistic adversary for training events. The second, the ATP 7-100 series, includes four manuals designed to provide the Army with official unclassified assessments of real-world threats' tactics, applicable for both training environments and real-world threat analysis.

TC 7-100 Series

TC 7-100, *Hybrid Threat*

TC 7-100.2, *Opposing Force Tactics*

TC 7-100.3, *Irregular Opposing Forces*

TC 7-100.4, *Hybrid Threat Force Structure Organizational Guide*

TC 7-101, *Exercise Design*

TC 7-102, *Operational Environment and Army Learning*

TC 7-100 Series: Threat Best Practices for OPFOR Doctrine

The TC 7-100 series comprises six publications, produced to inform U.S. Army training exercises by facilitating exercise design and Army learning (TC 7-101 and TC 7-102) and by providing instructions on how the Army OPFOR should operate in a training environment in which the "enemy" is the U.S. Army (TC 7-100, TC 7-100.2, TC 7-100.3, and TC 7-100.4). These training circulars are the Army's official doctrinal support material for threat representation in training events. These manuals, in particular TC 7-100.2, *Opposing Force Tactics,* and TC 7-100.3, *Irregular Opposing Forces,* herein referred to as OPFOR doctrine, provide Army OPFOR practitioners with details on how a composite model threat actor would execute tactics and techniques if the United States were the enemy.

WHICH SOURCE SHOULD INFORM OPFOR TACTICS FOR AN EXERCISE?

Figure adapted from original graphic by Ms. Penny Mellies, OE Integration Directorate, TRADOC G-2

TRAINING CIRCULAR 7-100 Series The training circular series presents the Army with an assessment of how a <u>composite model threat actor</u> would execute tactics and techniques if the United States were the enemy.		ARMY TECHNIQUES PUBLICATION 7-100 Series The Army techniques publication series presents the Army with an assessment of how <u>specific threat actors</u> would execute tactics and techniques if the United States were the enemy.
Derived from merging practices from threats around the globe, creating a composite adversary	**SOURCE** WHERE THE INFORMATION COMES FROM	Derived from unclassified open-source intelligence on specific actors, replicating an explicit adversary
Use when directed to be representative of best practices of any combination of threat actors or when the use of a specific threat is not needed	**UTILITY** WHEN EACH SHOULD BE USED	Use when directed to add techniques and procedures from a specific threat actor and requiring the incorporation of the whole training package for effect
Composite model that represents best practices of real-world threats to create the toughest conditions	**DESIGN** THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE MODELS	Distinct model that represents best practices of specific actors to create tailored and particular conditions
Designed to challenge task proficiency, requiring increased rigor and agility to succeed against an optimized adversary	**TRAINING** SELECTION INFORMED BY TRAINING TASKS	Designed to challenge adversary-focused readiness, requiring threat familiarity and precision to succeed against the actions of an identified adversary
Best suited for decisive action exercises in order to yield maximum task proficiency	**IMPLEMENTATION** USING THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB	Best suited for regionally focused or mission-readiness exercises in order to develop specific capabilities

OPFOR Source Comparison

OPFOR doctrine, while not directly labeled or tied to any specific threat actor, is informed by threat analysis. These books were created through an intensive review of the tactics of state and non-state actors from around the globe for the sole purpose of identifying the *best practices* of those actors' tactics. It is important to understand this concept: The OPFOR doctrine composite model is *not* a threat model made up by intelligence specialists in the TRADOC G-2, but rather a model that is representative of the world's best tactical practices—an exemplar of the most dangerous adversary the United States could face in a tactical fight.

The TRADOC G-2 created this composite model for two reasons:

✦ To capture the types of actions executed by actors around the world that represent best tactical practices.

✦ To provide the U.S. Army an OPFOR capable of challenging every task a U.S. Army brigade may have to conduct.

Finding one single actor in the real world that has the equipment and organization and executes tactics in a way that can adequately challenge the task proficiency of a brigade has historically not been possible. For this reason, training events that focus on task proficiency should reference the OPFOR doctrine manuals because the composite model, as an *optimized adversary,* best yields maximum task proficiency.

ATP 7-100 Series: Threat Tactics Doctrine

While the Army needs an OPFOR doctrine that is representative of the most challenging adversary it could expect to encounter, it also needs to have unclassified assessments of how specific threat actors would execute tactics and techniques. These assessments would provide the Army with an understanding of the nuanced differences between the actor application of tactics and techniques, in particular the application of those tactics and techniques in a conflict with the U.S. Army.

The TRADOC G-2 is undertaking an initiative to produce threat tactics doctrine in order to deliver this information to the Army. This doctrine, the ATP 7-100 series, will provide the Army with official unclassified assessments of projected tactics from four countries. The series comprises ATP 7-100.1, *Russian Tactics;* ATP 7-100.2, *North Korean Tactics;* ATP 7-100.3, *Chinese Tactics;* and ATP 7-100.4, *Iranian Tactics*.

These four tactical assessments contain similar information:

✦ Introductions to the actors' national strategies.

✦ Descriptions of how they perceive their place on the international (and/or regional) stage.

✦ Overviews of their entire military force.

✦ Details on their ground forces' organizations.

✦ In-depth reviews of the tactical actions their ground forces are likely to employ in conflict with the United States.

While some of the material is also in other U.S. Government publications, these manuals are unique in the level of detail they provide. For example, they include information that explores *how* these actors would likely approach specific types of tactical actions if confronted with U.S. Army formations enabled by joint multi-domain operations capabilities as an enemy.

Due to the actor-specific focus of these Army techniques publications, these documents are not well suited for use in decisive action training events that need to challenge task proficiency, unlike the training circular series of OPFOR doctrine. Rather, these manuals serve as source material of specific actor tactics and techniques that can be used to challenge U.S. Army adversary-focused readiness. They are best suited for mission rehearsal exercises or other training events in which the success of U.S. forces is dependent upon familiarity with a specific threat. The intent of the Army techniques publications series of threat doctrine is to provide familiarity with a specific threat's tactics and techniques, the sum of which may not challenge all U.S. tasks.

The Army techniques publication series also serves another function for the U.S. Army. As the Army's official unclassified doctrinal source of the tactics of countries like North Korea, China, Russia, and Iran, this material serves as a foundational baseline assessment for each actor. These assessments are based on the most up-to-date information available. Subject matter experts within the Department of Defense and intelligence communities have vetted them, ensuring their veracity and applicability to the greater Army training and intelligence community. Additionally, the material in the Army techniques publications serves as a starting point for the concept and capabilities development community. The Army techniques publications, in conjunction with the TRADOC G-2's battlefield development plans, have informed TRADOC's and Army Futures Command's simulations and tests that will drive changes to the Army's future force as it prepares for joint multi-domain operations.[1]

What's Next?

Unlike the existing training circular series, the Army techniques publication series is in production. The first one,

ATP 7-100.2, *North Korean Tactics,* is in the final stage of review with publication anticipated in early 2021. The next Army techniques publication will be ATP 7-100.3, *Chinese Tactics,* with an expected publication by mid-2021. Release of the publications describing Russian and Iranian tactics will not occur until late 2021. In the meantime, the Combined Arms Doctrine Directorate will conduct a worldwide staffing of these two publications. Those interested in participating in their review should contact the element of their command that distributes Army doctrine staffing.

Many of the manuals in the training circular series of doctrine are nearing their 10-year anniversary. The TRADOC G-2 has been collecting material over the past several years and will continue to collect material throughout the production of the Army techniques publications with the intent to inform updates to the training circular series of manuals. Right now, an update is planned for TC 7-101, *Exercise Design,* and TC 7-102, *Operational Environment and Army Learning*. TC 7-101 will likely transition to an Army field manual as part of the update. Additionally, in fiscal year 2021, the TRADOC G-2 will undertake an update to the OPFOR doctrine to ensure the Army's OPFOR training materials still provide the most robust and most dangerous enemy the Army could encounter in a tactical fight.

For the Army to remain ahead of its adversaries, training against a robust and realistic threat for task proficiency is essential. It is also essential for the Army, especially for the regionally aligned elements, to thoroughly understand the adversary they are most likely to encounter in future conflicts. Collectively, the training circulars and Army techniques publications series of doctrine provide the Army the most up-to-date realistic unclassified threat material needed to enable success in future conflicts against any enemy.

Endnote

1. The U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) G-2 battlefield development plans are classified analytic assessments of Russian and Chinese systems warfare. They were produced to support TRADOC's concept and capabilities development in light of joint multi-domain operations.

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