

PERSPECTIVE ON ARMY TARGET INTELLIGENCE



Introduction

Over the last 20-plus years, the U.S. Army intelligence enterprise focused its efforts on a counterinsurgency fight to defend our Nation against terrorism and violent extremist organizations. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were fought against an enemy that primarily used unconventional weapons and guerrilla warfare, which shaped how the United States Army now conducts intelligence and targeting operations against non-state actors. The United States continues to face multiple challenges—those involving peer threats in great power competition and persistent threats that require continuous monitoring. To prepare for 21st century conflict, the Army will need to revise the current methods of planning and the way we conduct intelligence and targeting operations.

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Making the Shift

The counterinsurgency-centric wars in the Central Command theater prompted a profound change in how the U.S. Army planned and conducted targeting and intelligence operations against our adversaries. This change put the emphasis for Army intelligence analysis mostly on supporting the dynamic targeting of non-state actors' organizations, personnel, and equipment. To meet theater and tactical objectives in this environment, a tactical echelon's target nominations were linked to centers of gravity within the social network analysis of personnel targets. Targeting intelligence primarily used organic air assets to characterize and assess enemy activity (previously known as pattern of life). This process provided positive identification of the adversary's activity and intentions so that U.S. forces could decide, detect, and deliver effective munitions to deny, degrade, and disrupt the adversary's intentions and actions. Positive identification assessments from intelligence sections provided targeting officers and joint terminal attack controllers with an initial assessment to prosecute a target and deliver effects on the battlefield.

The ability of theater and joint operations to gain and maintain air superiority proved vital to ground force operations. Additionally, U.S. ground forces maintained a significant tactical advantage with vastly superior ground systems and capabilities; however, a peer threat will contest this superiority in all domains during large-scale combat operations. Targeting operations against a peer threat will differ significantly based on the threats' ability to disrupt the battlespace and the Army's ability to "shoot, move, and communicate." To prepare for this shift, the Army can achieve its goal of being effective in the antiaccess and area denial environments and increase its intelligence support to joint targeting by—

- ◆ Acknowledging the nature of the threat outlined in the National Defense Strategy and its impact on modernizing the Army.
- ◆ Understanding how the tenets of Army multidomain operations in a joint environment affect intelligence support to targeting against enemy forces.
- ◆ Identifying where the Army can focus intelligence efforts today to improve the Army's readiness to support the joint force to fight and win tomorrow.

The European Theater and the Awoken Bear

As the Army modernizes for a peer or near-peer fight, much can be learned from the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Russia's "special military operation" turned protracted war in Ukraine presents an instable security environment in the European Theater. The conflict is having an enormous impact on the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (DIME) facets of national power. Russia is attempting to leverage aspects of DIME to pressure NATO and other European countries to stand by without intervening. Western allies identify Russia's unprovoked aggression as an effort to regain former Soviet Union territory and demonstrate Russia's superior military power in the region. Pro-Russia supporters leverage disinformation campaigns to link the special military operation with unifying ethnic Russians and countering NATO expansion to the east.

The war was supposed to be a hasty victory for the much more formidable Russia through military overmatch and political withdrawal. Russia's lack of planning and inability to employ a systematic approach to targeting, targeting intelligence, and logistics will ultimately make this war costlier than Russia and its supporters expected. Russia's failures in Ukraine illuminate the shortfalls in their ability to project power in a sustained military conflict. Russia's miscalculation of having the superior force in the conflict has led to considerable damage to their forces and future objectives. Their show of hand will have unintended consequences in shaping regional conditions for an expansion of Russian influence. The U.S. Army must capture the lessons from this conflict in combating a conventional force short of overmatch with improvised means. Learning from these events will assist the United States and our allies and partners in posturing for future conflict against a peer or near-peer threat.

Strategic Direction

The National Defense Strategy, published by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, provides a clear roadmap and identifies critical areas of focus and development to direct the Department of Defense (DoD) in meeting current and future objectives. For many years, the DoD followed the strategic direction outlined in the 2008 National Defense Strategy, which emphasized winning the "Long War" against violent extremist

Antiaccess and Area Denial¹

Antiaccess (A2) and area denial (AD) are two strategic and operational approaches to preclusion.

Antiaccess is an action, activity, or capability, usually long-range, designed to prevent an enemy force from entering an operational area (JP 3-0).

Area denial is an action, activity, or capability, usually short-range, designed to limit an enemy force's freedom of action within an operational area (JP 3-0).

Some examples of approaches to **A2** include:

- ◆ Intercontinental ballistic missiles.
- ◆ Long-range bombers.
- ◆ Surveillance and reconnaissance.

Some examples of approaches to **AD** include:

- ◆ Land-based missiles.
- ◆ Long-range artillery.



organizations while preventing adversaries from acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction as the central objective of the United States.² This strategy also sought to further shape China and Russia as stakeholders in the international system. It looked to India to assume greater responsibility commensurate with its growing economic, military, and soft power. This emphasis continued to shape the way we fought wars in the Middle East for the next 12 years, while Russia and China put their attention on growing power and influence in other regions.

In 2022, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin developed a new National Defense Strategy to focus the Department’s “path forward. . . from helping to protect the American people, to promoting global security, to seizing new strategic opportunities, and to realizing and defending our democratic values.”³ The Secretary identifies The People’s Republic of China as the Department’s pacing challenge in supporting a stable and open international system. The Department must also collaborate with NATO allies and partners against Russian aggression while not forgetting the necessity to mitigate and protect against threats from North Korea, Iran, and violent extremist organizations. In crafting the 2022 National Defense Strategy, the Department integrated its strategic reviews—the National Defense Strategy, the Nuclear Posture Review, and the Missile Defense Review—into one consolidated document to better link strategies with resources. “The Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) describes United States nuclear strategy, policy, posture, and forces in support of the National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Defense Strategy (NDS).”⁴ “The 2022 Missile Defense Review (MDR) provides direction to the Department of Defense (DoD) and guidance to its interagency partners on U.S. missile defense strategy and policy in support of the National Defense Strategy (NDS).”⁵ The consolidated strategy outlines deterrence objectives and establishes the framework of *integrated deterrence* for flexible deterrent options during competition, crisis, and conflict. Achieving integrated deterrence occurs by implementing actions of denial, resilience, and cost imposition to reduce our adversaries’ perceptions of the benefits to adverse behaviors. The United States will employ new operational concepts that will strengthen and sustain deterrence and, if necessary, enable the force to prevail in conflict. The Secretary prioritizes a future force that is lethal, sustainable, resilient, survivable, agile, and responsive.⁶

The Army Futures Command leads the Army’s priority to modernize the force, which it executes through a gamut of cross-functional teams, organizations, governance boards, and enterprise solutions. The DOTMLPF–P⁷ framework for design will enable and assist in realigning manpower, systems, equipment, and personnel to support multidomain operations.

Multidomain Operations

Multidomain operations is a warfighting concept to focus U.S. Army operations on the “*use of all available combat power from each domain to accomplish missions at least cost.*”⁸ Multidomain operations are how Army forces maintain a competitive edge across the competition continuum to deter adversaries while assuring our allies and partners. This concept “proposes detailed solutions to the specific problems posed by the militaries of post-industrial, information-based states like China and Russia.”⁹ For the Army to posture itself, it must continue to evolve as a part of the joint force. In parallel to the National Defense Strategy, multidomain operations focus on the threats that China and Russia pose from competition to conflict in an information-dominant environment. These adversaries pose a significant threat to the ability of the United States to project power and maintain military advantage in the regions where they operate.

The tenets of multidomain operations are attributes that relate to how to employ the Army’s operational concept. They are—

- ◆ Agility.
- ◆ Convergence.
- ◆ Endurance.
- ◆ Depth.

The tenets are critical to the success of the Army and the joint force as they assist in gaining a relative advantage across the competition continuum. As the United States shifts its mission course from the Global War on Terrorism, a realignment of resources, personnel, and equipment will quickly follow to reassign organizations to a broader mission and operational set. The containment and eradication of terrorism and violent extremist organizations have long been the focus

of U.S. military operations and will continue to exist, but less so in a future conflict. A new force structure will enable the Army to be better organized, trained, and equipped for great power competition in large-scale combat operations and multidomain operations. The second tenet—convergence—in the context of multidomain operations and modernization is “an outcome created by the concerted employment of capabilities from multiple domains and echelons against combinations of decisive points in any domain to create effects against a system, formation, decision maker, or in a specific geographic area.”¹⁰ Convergence creates opportunities for mission accomplishment.

Improving Target Intelligence

Target intelligence is a multidisciplinary and multifaceted culmination of the operations and intelligence processes. The modernization of Army target intelligence should posture the Service to best support the joint force from competition to crisis against a peer or near-peer adversary. To modernize hastily for a future fight, the civilian sector and industry’s emerging technologies must be part of the technological solution. The Army’s transition to large-scale combat operations and multidomain operations will rely heavily on the ability of the Army intelligence enterprise to provide more persistent, penetrating, and reliable intelligence solutions to meet the demand for deliberate and dynamic targeting.

Target intelligence solutions should focus on assisting the theater army and geographic combatant commands in the processing and potential prosecution of hundreds, if not thousands, of targets across all domains. The pace of operations in future large-scale combat across time and space will significantly differ from counterinsurgency and any other conflict the U.S. military has faced. The Army must swiftly prevail in the contested areas of air, maritime, space, and cyberspace to meet theater and national objectives. The convergence of information, intelligence analysis, and targeting will be critical in shaping great power competition in the pursuit of Army 2030 and 2040 Force (formerly known as WayPoint 2028 and AimPoint 2035, respectively).

Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and Automation

Data in the 21st century is becoming more complex, versatile, and abundant. With the ever-expanding use of social media, web-based platforms, and mass data collection by the civil,

commercial, and intelligence community, we must be able to harness it. Effective utilization of foundational and intelligence data provides relevancy for tactical and strategic commanders alike. Artificial intelligence, machine learning, and automation will streamline the understanding, visualization, and wrangling of substantial amounts of data in the next war.

The wrangling of “big data” in a persistent race to understand the operational environment is critical for every theater’s indicators and warning intelligence.

With a growing apparatus of intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems, managing the processing, understanding, and visualization of a collective group of systems and sensors will be impractical without a solution to the mass collection, storage, and processing of information.¹¹ Big data without adequate algorithms and structured data sets will become pollution, in a sense, to the common operational picture and current intelligence picture.



Winning with People

To complement the joint force in the joint operational area, the Army must address shortfalls in grade plate, education, training, and experience in key leadership positions supporting target intelligence at the Army Service component command (ASCC) and geographic combatant command level. The current grade plate for target intelligence officers at the ASCC and echelons corps and below is in the rank of captain. Other Services assign a senior major or lieutenant colonel intelligence officer to manage target intelligence operations at this level. This slating disadvantages the Army by providing personnel with minimal key targeting experience who may lack the knowledge, depth, and skills required to manage and direct target intelligence operations at the theater and joint level.

In addition to grade plate increases, the Army must address education, training, and experience because they are critical to integrating Army target intelligence into the joint fight. In 2016 as the result of a study to identify gaps in Army targeting, the Chief of Staff of the Army, through the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, assigned the Fires Center of Excellence as the proponent for targeting modernization. The Fires Center of Excellence stood up the Army Multi-Domain Targeting Center with the evolving mission of addressing Army targeting doctrine, policy, and program oversight within the Army community. The Army Multi-Domain Targeting Center provides the Army with Defense Intelligence Agency and National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency accredited targeting

courses. The Army Multi-Domain Targeting Center fills a significant gap in the education and training of Army personnel on targeting and target intelligence.

Target Development Work Center

Over the last 3 years, the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) has developed a critical capability to support targeting and intelligence across multiple geographic combatant commands and ASCCs in the competition phase. INSCOM supports targeting and global campaign plans during competition through its established and accredited Target Development Work Center. A Target Development Work Center is an accredited space that has the systems, software, personnel, and training to conduct advanced target development. The work center's efforts include point precision measurement, combat assessment (also known as battle damage assessment), and collateral damage estimate. This capability provides the Army with augmented target development support at the joint and Army level.

Over the last 2 years, the Target Development Work Center has supported theater operational, contingency, and global integrated planning by providing intermediate and advanced target development products to geographic combatant commands and ASCCs. The Target Development Work Center also provides support to intelligence community programs to close the gap in foundational military intelligence and make significant contributions to maintaining and updating the Modernized Integrated Database. This military intelligence worldwide database provides data for basic order of battle, equipment, and facility holdings. These contributions provide decision makers at all levels the information and intelligence to better understand friendly and adversary locations.

Conclusion

The U.S. Army will be called upon to fight and win our Nation's wars within multidomain and joint all-domain operations environments in joint operational areas. To ensure operational and strategic success, we must invest Army resources in target intelligence personnel, systems, and capabilities to compete, penetrate, disintegrate, exploit, and recompete against our adversaries when called upon to act.

This transformation must drive change within the current DOTMLPF-P process (and faster methods) to inform modernization. The Army's investment in intelligence support to targeting increases the Army and joint force's lethality and readiness to fight and win our Nation's war—from competition to crisis and conflict. 

Endnotes

1. Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 1 October 2022), 2-9 –2-10; and Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication 3-0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: The Joint Staff, 18 June 2022), GL-7.
2. Department of Defense, 2008 *National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC, June 2008), 6–8.
3. Department of Defense, 2022 *National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC, October 27, 2022), iii.
4. *Ibid.*, 1.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, iii, 2, 8.
7. DOTMLPF-P: doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy.
8. Department of the Army, FM 3-0, *Operations*, 1-2 (emphasis added).
9. Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army in Multi-Domain Operations 2028* (Fort Eustis, VA: TRADOC, 6 December 2018), 5.
10. Department of the Army, FM 3-0, *Operations*, 3-3.
11. Department of the Army, Army Futures Command, "Data Science Basics" (PowerPoint presentation), 2-14.

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