



# Red Teaming



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U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

***Victory Starts Here!***

## Foreword

History, theory, and practice illustrate that how commanders and their staffs think about problems has influence on the courses of action they consider and select in their planning processes. Unlike in business or other endeavors, when our thinking is clouded and faulty, the results are not just a poor fiscal quarter or a faulty policy, but can have more serious consequences.

Our doctrine (FM 3-0, Operations) and concepts (TRADOC Pamphlet 525-5-500, Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design) emphasize the continual requirement for understanding the operational environment. Gathering and analyzing information – along with discerning the perceptions of adversaries, our partners, and the population of the region in which we fight – is necessary to correctly frame the range of problems we confront on the battlefield. In our formal military education, we counsel students to continually collaborate, learn, adapt, and think critically.

To aid commanders and their staffs to think critically and creatively, and to consider alternative perspectives, the Army and U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) have implemented a concept called “Red Teaming.” We are including this concept in our doctrine, building and fielding Red Teams as special staff elements, and training Soldiers to think differently.

In the past, Red Teaming was often associated with wargaming an enemy course of action. However, the Red Teaming concept, as outlined in this informational booklet, is a more holistic concept, with applicability to decision-making and as an enabler to the intelligence warfighting function. Red Teaming requires us to continually challenge our thinking to avoid false mindsets, bias, groupthink or using inaccurate analogies in problem framing and planning. It enables learning and innovation in our units and staffs by identifying vulnerabilities, opportunities, consequences and alternative perspectives and solutions for proposed and ongoing actions.

As an example of Red Teaming's continuing maturation, 2 years ago TRADOC created the University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies (UFMCS) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to train Red Teams for our Army and Joint operational forces, as well as to serve as a research center and repository of tools and best practices.

Red Teams assist commanders and staffs in current and future complex, lethal and ambiguous environments to think critically and creatively, and to be able to see things differently from various perspectives. TRADOC's role is to foster this capability for our Army and to ensure we continue to inoculate leaders and Soldiers with these types of skills.

Gen. William S. Wallace  
Commanding General  
U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command

## Summary and key points

Red Teams do not replace or duplicate existing staffs or staff processes. They exist to serve as the catalyst to challenge thinking, account for the complexity of the operational environment and to spur the development, examination and implications of estimates and courses of action from the perspectives of the enemy, partners and others. Red Teaming supports decision-makers in operational formations, within the intelligence community and other organizations. Not everyone can be an effective Red Teamer, but to be an effective Red Teamer requires an investment in education and training.

In essence, a properly trained Red Team with the right people and with the right “top cover” will provide timely value-added input to challenge the unit or staff's thinking and assumptions while identifying vulnerabilities, opportunities, consequences and alternative perspectives not captured. Red Teaming is about helping the organization learn, adapt and change before being forced to by the enemy or through other pressures. As Sun Tzu wisely counseled, “Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the changes in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after the changes occur.”



ered as part of the staff’s efforts, which ultimately leads to a better situational understanding of the battlespace by all members of the command.”

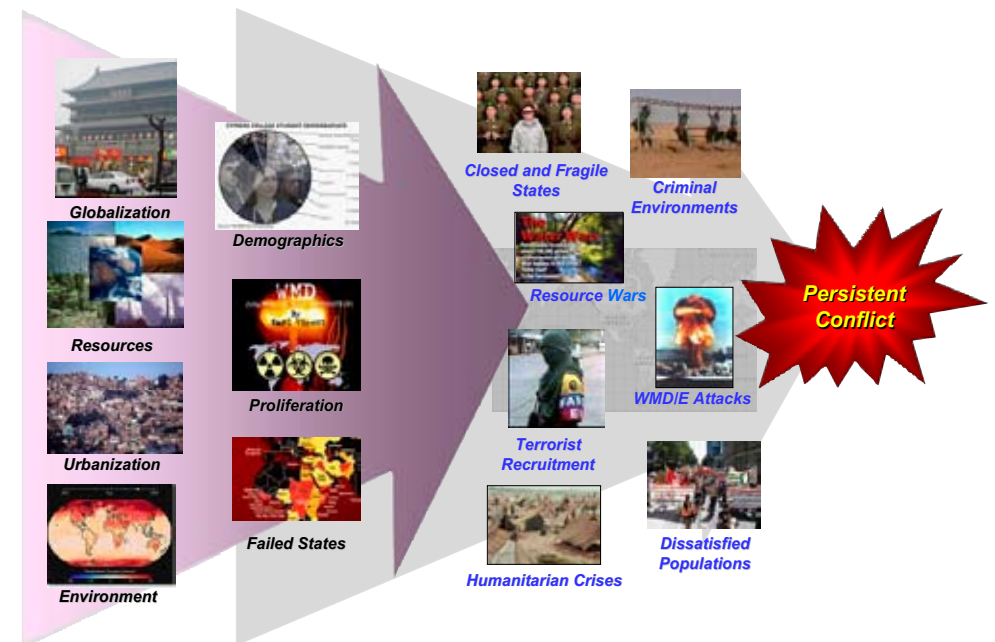
The value of Red Teams to Army operational forces, intelligence organizations and force-generating organizations like TRADOC has been acknowledged by the comments of leaders and, just as importantly, by staff members who work in these organizations. Red Teams have enabled them to gain insights and identify opportunities, vulnerabilities and gaps which would have remained unseen or unconsidered.

## The Operational Environment

As in the past, the U.S. Army will operate in complex operational environments. TRADOC G-2’s analysis of the trends found in the current and future operational environments will demand U.S. forces to conduct operations “[a]mong local populations with unfamiliar cultures, often in the midst of humanitarian crisis ... in urban settings or harsh, inaccessible lawless areas ... with an absence of local security or an effective local government ... containing competing factions locked in internal conflict ... against extremists, full spectrum and networked enemies embedded in the local population and possessing a wide range of advanced technologies and military capabilities including possible WMD ... employing adaptive and asymmetric combinations of traditional, irregular and criminal tactics ... tied to a sophisticated information campaign ... and conducted under the unblinking eye of an omnipresent media, potentially giving local events global significance.”<sup>1</sup>

Threats will range from traditional nation-state military forces to challenges posed by non-state actors. Adversaries may seek to possess weapons of mass destruction and attempt technological breakthroughs, gain access to niche technologies, or develop techniques to negate our technological capabilities.

### Global Trends & Persistent Conflict



<sup>1</sup> Extracted from TRADOC G-2 (Futures) Unclassified Briefing, “The Future Operational Environment: An Era of Persistent Conflict.” May 2008.

## Operational Environment

**Operational Environment.** A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that **affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander.**

**IMPERATIVE:** Understand systems, their interaction, and how system relationship change over time...understanding the continuous and complex **interaction of friendly, adversary and neutral systems...**



Joint Publication 3-0 Operations

The U.S. Army must be prepared to respond to each of these types of challenges – most often working in a Joint and multinational environment. While a study of trends, lessons-learned and history can inform decision-makers of how to frame and solve the problems found in these types of environments, exact solutions are rarely repeated since the conditions and variables differ in each specific environment. Forces will conduct full spectrum operations –simultaneously conducting combat and stability operations, with units smoothly transitioning to new tasks to accomplish the mission.

Commanders and their staffs must quickly identify and adapt to unanticipated challenges and opportunities. In an era of what the Chief of Staff of the Army has described as one of “persistent conflict,” they must think critically about the specific operational environment in which they will plan and conduct operations. They must also think creatively about solutions while also being able to see things from other points of view to ensure we account for these factors in our plans. Red Teams assist commanders and their staffs in accomplishing this task.

### What is Red Teaming?

The 2003 Defense Science Board Study on Red Teaming noted that “Red Teams and Red Teaming processes have long been used as tools by the management of both government and commercial enterprises. Their purpose is to reduce an enterprise’s risk and increase its opportunities. ... Red Teams are established by an enterprise to challenge aspects of that very enterprise’s plans, programs, assumptions, etc.”

Red Team education and training requires a commitment of time and money. Courses are taught in a seminar format requiring extensive interdisciplinary reading lists and are often taught by academic and subject-matter experts. These courses include country and historical case studies to allow the individual to practice Red Teaming using the “best practices” provided by the faculty, received from the field and learned from industry and throughout DoD. UFMCS conducts six-, nine- and 18-week courses to produce critical and creative thinkers capable of providing alternative perspectives in real time and with specificity, without frustrating the unit’s planning or operations processes.

UFMCS graduates are awarded an additional skill identifier by U.S. Army Human Resources Command (HRC).

To support collaborative learning, UFMCS hosts an unclassified and classified website (hosted by the existing Battle Command Knowledge System) used by students, faculty and deployed Red Teams. These sites serve as the beginning of a reachback capability to subject-matter experts and facilitate collaboration and the exchange of best practices.

Also, UFMCS has produced a course catalogue and conducts short duration and specific training based on leader-selected topics for DoD, Joint and Army organizations.

### What is the assessment of a Red Team’s value?

Red Teams and UFMCS graduates currently support selected brigade, division and corps headquarters in the United States and in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Additionally, UFMCS graduates are employed as Red Teams within the Defense Intelligence Agency and at a number of combatant commands and other DoD organizations and agencies.

While it is difficult to quantify the value of a three, four or five man Red Team supporting a division or corps headquarters, comments and input from both the graduates and unit leaders demonstrate the value-added of a Red Team in supporting planning and operations.

Col. Alan Batschelet, in his article “Risking Critique,” published in the November 2007 *Armed Forces Journal*, wrote, “The need for a Red Team stemmed from experience, not as a substitute for it. ... Today Red Teamers ... are in the fray. ... Most often their struggles are in the meeting, working group or briefing room, focused on making better decisions and orders. ... While our focus is Baghdad and the foreign culture we encounter there, we are confident the long-term result will also shape the American military profession for the better.”

Brig. Gen. Joseph Anderson, the former Multinational Corps-Iraq (III Corps) chief of staff, recently noted, “Red Teams provide an excellent opportunity for commanders and staffs to think out of the box. These teams are a valuable asset in the staff planning and decision-making process because they assist organizations with alternative views of thinking. They also ensure that political, social, economic, cultural and informational factors are always consid-

professionals. Red Teams challenge the assumptions made by the intelligence staff about the enemy, others stakeholders on the battlefield (for instance, tribes, major factions, neighbors) and the other critical variables found in the operational environment. They identify when staffs are using an unstated assumption in the estimate process. During wargaming, the Red Team guards against wishing away the enemy or subscribing unrealistic motives, goals or capabilities.

Within the Joint community, Red Teams have been formally added as an organizational element within the newly created combatant-command-level Joint Intelligence Operations Centers (JIOC). Initial reports of their additive value have been good. For example, a U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) JIOC branch leader, in a recent *Joint Forces Quarterly* article, noted that the Red Teams allow them “to tap the expertise of critical and creative thinkers ... to encourage consideration of overlooked possibilities, challenge assumptions and present issues in a cultural context or from a different perspective.”

Given time and the intellectual distance of not having to produce routine staff products, but as part of the unit, the Red Team assists the staff from being captured by the process.

## Where and how are Red Teams trained?

The basis of Red Team success relies on education and training grounded in theory, doctrine, cultural anthropology, the operational environment and focused Red Team techniques. This educational basis allows Red Teams to approach problems differently and to provide alternative perspectives and conclusions.

UFMCS began educating and training Red Teams in 2006 using a diverse curriculum organized along five major themes:

- Critical and creative thinking;
- Red Team techniques, to include communication, negotiations and group dynamics;
- Understanding the impact of culture in the operational environment;
- Understanding the trends and interrelationship of the critical variables found in the operational environment; and
- Western, non-Western and non-military (competitive) theory.



While many other TRADOC and Department of Defense schools include these topics in their curricula to enhance the individual Soldier’s knowledge and duty performance, UFMCS is unique in its approach to education. UFMCS combines these diverse topics to enable a Red Team to improve the organization’s performance and learning through Red Team insights and observations.

The *AUSA Torchbearer*’s “National Security Report on Key Issues Relevant to Actionable Intelligence,” published in June 2005, identified Red Teaming as a major initiative which provides “continuous analysis of the operational environment, the threat and the cultural implications of military operations, asking different questions and offering different perspectives.”

In 2005, the Army established the University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies (UFMCS) at Fort Leavenworth Kansas, to do the following:

- Develop the Red Teaming concept;
- Fill the gap in the education and training of Red Teams; and
- Serve as a research center and repository of tools and best practices.

The Army defines Red Teaming as a “function executed by trained, educated and practiced team members that provides commanders an independent capability to fully explore alternatives in plans, operations, concepts, organizations and capabilities in the context of the operational environment and from the perspectives of our partners, adversaries and others.”

Red Teams help organizations examine what they are planning and doing to enable them to adapt, innovate, learn and to identify weaknesses, vulnerabilities and unseen opportunities. Red Teams also enable a deeper and broader understanding of the key variables found in the operational environment and better identification of their interrelationship, to include accounting for the cultural implications of the environment in our plans and operations.

## Why do we need Red Teams?

The right mindset is critical to success on the battlefield. *Joint Publication* 3-0, Joint Operations, notes that this “cognitive dimension” – or how commanders and their staffs “think, perceive, visualize and decide” – results in either successful or unsuccessful battles and campaigns. Army doctrine recognizes that even the best units in complex environments, conducting fast-paced operations, can succumb to groupthink, tunnel vision and other critical-reasoning errors.

Red Teams help organizations to continually examine their thinking. Because of their unique Red Team education and training – in combination with their experiences and specialty training (for example, foreign area officer) – Red Teamers ask different questions, challenging ideas and bringing fresh perspectives and insights about the operational environment during the decision-making process.

In a 2007 *Armed Forces Journal* article, a division chief of staff noted the Red Team’s “value added” in offering an objective review of his organization’s decisions, challenging his organization’s biases, better accounting for foreign cross-cultural perspectives, and offering critical reviews and alternative perspectives.

Red Teams do not replace existing staffs or their products and processes. Rather, effective Red Teaming enhances existing organizations by asking the “what if” and other questions that many are hesitant to ask, and by helping the staff escape their own “Western military cultural mindsets” in problem framing and solving.

### Where are Red Teams found and what do they specifically do?

While Red Teams can and have supported Army force-generating organizations to improve processes and to analyze problems differently, the Army’s effort to create a standing Red Team capability for Army operational forces is new.

TRADOC validated the requirement to add a small (three to five officers) “special staff element Red Team” to each of the Army’s division-, corps- and Army-level headquarters. Implementation will begin in Fiscal Year 09. Emplacing these teams within units enhances their responsiveness to assist the command throughout the operations process (plan, prepare, execute, assess).

The selection of the right people with the right personality, skills and experiences is critical to the success of any Red Team. Red Teamers must be effective and tactful communicators, negotiators and listeners. Experienced officers must lead the team – in grades comparable to the primary staff officer’s grade (for example, the Red Team leader is a colonel at corps level) – to facilitate dialogue. They must have team members (normally majors) with the right set of experiences and skills – specifically, foreign area (Functional Area 48), strategist (FA 59) and military intelligence officers.

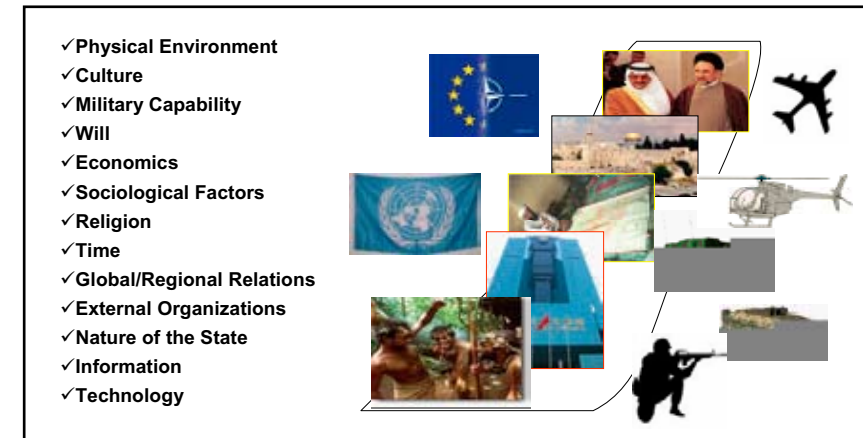
The Army identified the need for Red Team training in 2008 for the brigade combat team’s (BCT) assistant BCT plans officer and assistant BCT S-2.

Working for the commander or the chief of staff, the Red Team will provide an independent capability to support planning and operations – primarily working with the planning staffs. The Red Team will:

- Assist in problem and end-state framing;
- Challenge planning assumptions and staff estimates to avoid bias, mindsets, groupthink and other errors of reasoning within the plans team and to better account for the critical variables and their linkages found in the operational environment;
- Ensure the adversary and other perspectives are appropriately considered during planning (the military decision-making process, or MDMP) while identifying friendly and enemy vulnerabilities and opportunities not discovered by the staff;
- Offer alternative perspectives from the enemy, partner and other stakeholder perspectives;

- Assist the staff in designing and examining the unit’s assessment processes to ensure we are assessing the right things;
- Anticipate the consequences and implications of our actions through the cultural perspective of others; and
- Conduct independent critical reviews and analysis to identify potential weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

### ...The “Critical Variables” in the Operational Environment...



As noted in FM 3-0, *Operations*, Red Teams “provide insights into possible flaws in the plan as well as potential reactions by the enemy and other people,” that helps the staff “improve the plan and develop more effective branches and sequels.”



“Red teams provide **insight into possible flaws in the plan as well as potential reactions by the enemy and other people** in the area of operations. This information helps the staff improve the plan and develop more effective **branches and sequels.**”

When a Red Team is formed or is part of the intelligence staff, they help the unit avoid mirror-imaging by ensuring that intelligence estimates are made through the perspective of the enemy’s goals, intent and culture – an old lesson continually rediscovered by intelligence