BACKGROUND

By approximately 2010, equipment fielded to support Force XXI will be entering its wear-out period. Replacement weapon systems and supplemental operational concepts will thus be needed to ensure the timely phasing of Army After Next (AAN) in the 2025 time frame.

To help senior Army leaders anticipate how changes in international relations, technology, and organization may affect combat during the first quarter of the new century, the Chief of Staff of the Army initiated TRADOC’s AAN project in February 1996. The project’s goals are to link Force XXI, the transitional Army between the current force and the AAN, to a long-term vision of the Army, extending well into the next century, and to ensure that this vision informs evolving Army research and development requirements. Among other things, it will test potential future U.S. forces against those of major competitors who might emerge in Europe or Asia.

To implement the project’s charter, TRADOC has created an AAN Project Office responsible for conducting broad studies of warfare through the year 2025. These studies include a series of seminars, workshops, conferences, research projects, and several wargames, including annual wargames played over a week or more and involving hundreds of participants from various levels of the national security community.

The objectives listed below were developed by TRADOC and together articulate the broad goals of the AAN study.
2  Issues from the 1997 Army After Next Winter Wargame

- By 2020, can qualitative advantages offset quantity in a war of strategic depth and width? If so, how?
- In 2020, what elements of a strategic posture deter and prevent conflict?
- How can the United States control escalation or geographic expansion of war?
- What are war termination options for the United States against major competitors?
- What are the strategic and operational implications of deployment of effective national and theater missile defenses?
- What are the strategic and operational implications of forward-based forces?
- What are the strategic and operational implications of greatly improved power sources on U.S. capabilities?

A more complete discussion of these objectives and the issues associated with them appears in Appendix A. The purpose of the AAN Winter Wargame (WWG) is to explore issues associated with the AAN objectives, and the WWG designers used these goals to shape the game’s design.

The Arroyo Center was asked to analyze the strategic-level play in the WWG. We interpreted this to mean that we were to focus on those issues and insights emanating from the game that could affect national policy objectives. The mandate extended to operational and tactical issues only insofar as those cases involved national policy objectives. We interpreted this to include matters pertaining to national security and military strategy and the characteristics of a future U.S. Army circa 2020. The Arroyo Center team drafted its own goals to focus its analysis of the wargame.

The Arroyo Center’s tasks consisted of assisting TRADOC by: (1) providing an analytical framework to evaluate the AAN, based on RAND’s “strategies-to-tasks” methodology; (2) identifying issues, derived from strategic objectives in the framework, that could be explored in the wargames; (3) managing the collection of data from
high-level participants in the games; and (4) assessing game results.¹ The formal project description for this report is in Appendix B.

PURPOSE

This report serves two purposes: to describe the strategic issues and insights from the game and to articulate the role of wargaming in supporting the broader aims of the AAN study.

HOW THE REPORT IS ORGANIZED

The report has three parts. Chapter Two briefly describes the background of the AAN project leading to the WWG and the organization and procedures of the game. Chapter Three describes issues of future national security strategy and the characteristics of a future U.S. Army raised during the 1997 Winter Wargame. The report concludes with a proposal that future Winter Wargames become part of a unified and systematic plan for studying the AAN, with tight linkages between the inputs and outputs of the games, exercises, seminars, workshops, and other analyses that make up the current project managed by TRADOC’s AAN Project Office. The report also has two appendixes, one that provides an expanded discussion of objectives and issues and one that contains the approved project description.