Chapter Four

EMBEDDING THE WARGAMES IN BROADER ANALYSIS

The annual wargame series (Winter and Summer) is part of an ongoing process of examining warfare in 2020 and beyond. Several other activities are in progress that are designed to explore special aspects of future combat. This chapter suggests how all these activities might be integrated to achieve a more coherent process.

The role of the AAN study process is to generate and explore issues associated with future warfare with an eye to developing force structures. The ultimate goal of the AAN study process, however, is to design and field an Army force and develop operational concepts for war in the 2025 time frame. Central to the AAN process is an understanding of the nature of combat in the 2025 time frame that is embodied in the AAN objectives (see page 1). The issues that emerge from the games provide a rich set of study questions for further analysis.

Some of the more important issues will be used by TRADOC to design force structure, operational concepts, and scenarios for subsequent games. TRADOC also conducts a series of seminars, studies, and so forth that focus on the future technologies, military art, human and organizational issues, and the future geostrategic setting. These inform the scenario, force structures, and operational concepts. However, the coupling among all these activities has been rather weak in that the activities appear to be conducted independent of each other.

Needed is a strategy that embeds the annual AAN wargames into the annual AAN process. AAN wargame results and the AAN process must have external credibility if they are to influence policy—espe-
cially with respect to the allocation of scarce resources to support Army programs. The key to credible results is a thoughtfully executed and broadly supported AAN study program. The loose coupling between the annual wargame series and other AAN activities should be replaced with a stronger relationship in which AAN activities support—and are supported by—the annual AAN wargames.

One way to make this happen is to develop a series of activities—each informing one or more of the main themes in the June 1996 Report to the Chief of Staff:¹

- **The geostrategic setting.** The influence on warfighting of the future international environment, the rate of political change, and the effects of the information revolution provide the backdrop for the development of alternative scenarios that might be refined for use in the annual AAN wargames.

- **Technology and trends.** Information and precision-guided munitions will continue to be the key force multipliers through the first half of the next century. However, we will witness an increasing use of space to control the tactical and strategic battlefield. We should also see a parallel increase in the use of low-observable, unmanned aircraft to perform intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions. The important technological questions in this environment center on the command and control of forces and weapon systems.

- **Evolution in military art.** Future wars will involve joint operations, with increasing importance being placed on operational-level combat. Time will become an important factor in military operations. Planners will have to gauge the level of domestic support for operations and avoid wars of attrition that exhaust supplies of costly weapons and erode public support.

- **Human and organizational issues.** The single most important factor forcing organizational change is information technology. Military leaders will be increasingly challenged to think, decide, and act more rapidly. This accelerated pace of operations will place increasing demands on logistics systems and the allocation

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¹Army After Next Project, Report to the Chief of Staff of the Army, TRADOC, June 1996.
of forces and firepower. The size of deployed forces is likely to decrease, but the demand placed on them will not diminish.

The output from studies and research that focus on these themes will inform the process required to generate inputs to the annual wargame process. Conversely, the issues generated from the wargames will help inform the research direction.

Figure 4.1 illustrates our proposed AAN annual cycle. It is a process, not a chronology. The objective is to illustrate a process by which the annual AAN wargame series might be better integrated with a comprehensive analytic strategy.

**Annual wargames.** Although we strive to improve the analytic foundation of the AAN wargames, it should always be their goal to generate issues rather than conclusions or analytic findings. There are two primary reasons for this: (1) the games are set in the distant future (202X), where uncertainties are such that the adjudication process will continue to be dominated by best military judgment, and (2) the

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**Figure 4.1—Recommended Annual AAN Study Support Plan**
games involve too many teams and interactions to enable confident identification of cause-and-effect relationships.

**Annual report to the CSA.** The issues generated from the annual wargames serve as partial input to the annual report to the Chief of Staff. Guidance from the Chief of Staff helps focus the next round of analytic activity.

**Analytic supporting activities.** These represent the studies and research that are either ongoing or that should be part of the ongoing AAN analytic support process. The relationships among the activities are depicted in the diagram and all directly influence the annual tactical wargames held at TRAC and the various games designed to explore special topics. The idea is to establish standing analytic tracks in each of these areas that inform the annual wargames through:

- Scenarios that have been exposed to a much broader audience than at present.
- Better trained players and assessors. We would expect that the participants in the annual research efforts would form a nucleus of player/assessors that would bring both continuity and experience to the process.
- Force structures and their accompanying operational concepts. These form an important element of the annual wargames in that they directly influence the issues generated. A systematic approach to generating alternative force structures and operational concepts will ensure that technology is applied credibly, that the force is realistically deployed and employed, and that projected force costs are reasonable.
- Using the annual tactical wargames held at TRAC to increase the existing set of adjudication rules by adding to the set of vignettes. Encouraging the participation of the other services in the tactical wargames will broaden the adjudication rule set and move us closer to (but surely never arrive at) a complete rule set.

The annual wargame series can be viewed as capstones to a year or more's study or as the foundation for the next round of research. Both views are correct in that the wargames generate issues that focus subsequent research, and they draw on research results to pro-
vide game inputs, rationalize the adjudication process, and train players and adjudicators.

The supporting activities are seen as standing research and study groups that meet periodically to report on significant results. It is not the intent of this process to focus entirely on producing inputs for the annual AAN wargame series, but rather to provide a continuing dialog focusing on issues affecting the Army beyond the current Program Objective Memorandum cycle. We recommend that the following activities be institutionalized for this purpose:

- **Scenario generation.** The primary objective is to examine and understand a wide range of contingencies for 202X. It is useful to have a series of scenarios that will facilitate understanding of the nature of future warfare. The objective is not to write the scenarios for the AAN wargames, but rather to provide a resource to the wargame designers as they prepare for the next game.

- **Technology assessment.** Military planners must understand the technologies that have military potential. Sifting through the wide range of projected technological applications to find those with true military potential requires a study team with a mix of scientists and military operators. The studies will inform the developing force structures and operational concepts. It may also be possible for these technologies to pose interesting scenario variants. For example, the introduction of a nonfossil fuel may produce a strategic vulnerability if there are only a small number of locations where such fuel is processed—and the sites are well known.

- **Development of force structures.** The development of a future force structure is not the primary objective of the annual AAN wargame process. However, the technologies, manpower, logistics, and training needed to support a future force directly affect near-term as well as future budgets. Consequently, the force structures used in the wargames play a direct role in fulfilling the CSA’s goal to connect the Army’s long-term vision to the research and development process.

- **Operational concepts generation.** The development of an operational concept usually takes place in conjunction with the development of the force structure the concept is designed to sup-
port. However, how a unit fights also depends upon social and moral dynamics as well as upon new technologies inherent in the structure. Domestic support for prolonged operations and tolerance of wars of attrition will clearly color operational concepts. A more practical view is that the reliance on expensive high-technology equipment and the personnel to operate it will clearly affect how the forces are employed.

- **Tactical wargames.** The tactical wargames held annually at TRAC provide the adjudication rules needed to rationalize the assessment process. As time goes on, the set of vignettes will increase to cover a wider variety of combat situations to include situations involving other services' forces. Figure 4.2 depicts the process and the supporting studies and analysis.

Although depicted chronologically, the annual AAN study process is more likely to be a parallel process. That is, as AAN wargames are
being planned, planners will draw on the most recent reports generated by the various study groups. Therefore, instead of directly affecting the next game, the output from an analysis group may be felt only several games later. This is especially true if the TRADOC planners adhere to the currently planned summer/winter schedule.

The AAN process must be viewed as the execution of a coherent, analytically sound research plan focused on informing the AAN strategic objectives. Given the importance of this process to the long-term vision of the Army there is a strong argument to be made that this process, or some refined version of it, should become institutionalized within the Army as a means of constantly reviewing its future direction.

The WWG was extremely successful as a process for exploring and generating important issues about combat in 2020. In fact, all participants surfaced issues, not just the players. Most participants were disappointed with some aspect of the game; however, almost all felt that the process was worthwhile and were willing to give the Army high marks for being as inclusive as it was.

Although the AAN wargames are not analytic, more structure can be introduced to drive them closer to the analytic game format without sacrificing the informal atmosphere that is so conducive to generating new ideas.

Improvements in the wargames center on changes in the design and execution of the games and in technical and administrative game processes. It is important that the AAN process achieve external credibility. To do this, it must be seen as an analytically sound process in which the annual wargame series is embedded in a more comprehensive analytic program.