

Institutional Strategy

Army Strategy Note



Headquarters, Department of the Army
Deputy Chief of Staff, G-3/5/7
1 April 2022

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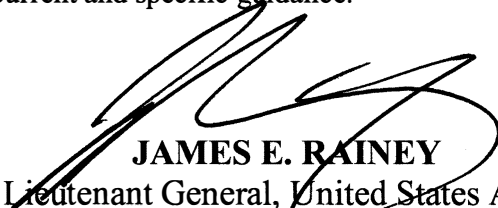
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Scope. This Army Strategy Note (ASN) examines institutional strategy. Specifically, this note describes the role and considerations of institutional strategy, the major organizations involved in institutional strategy, and the elements of institutional strategy. It also provides a discussion of how the Army develops and carries out institutional strategy in practice.

Purpose. An ASN serves as a primer for key strategic topics involving the Army and is intended to drive discussion and inform the development of doctrine, regulations, strategy, campaigns, or other Army documents. The purpose of this ASN is to provide a general, yet concise, description of institutional strategy. The primary audience is those Soldiers and Civilians put in a position to develop or carry out institutional strategy for the first time, although all members of the Army profession will benefit from reading this ASN. It should be read in conjunction with *How the Army Runs* and other key Army publications dealing with aspects of institutional strategy.

Application. The guidance in this ASN is not authoritative and should be viewed as simply an aid in understanding the complexity of Army processes rather than as binding doctrine or regulation. If conflicts arise between the contents of an ASN and any other Army publication, the Army publication will take precedence for the activities of Army forces, unless an Army leader with the requisite authority has provided more current and specific guidance.


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Foreword

When we think of “the Army,” the first thing that comes to mind is the sharp edge of deployable fighting forces. But the Army, as one of the Military Departments in the Department of Defense, is also an organization that creates landpower capabilities for the joint force, fulfills the legal direction issued to it by Congress, and carries out the strategic guidance of the Secretary of Defense and President, all while ensuring the health and welfare of its workforce, now and in the future. This Army Strategy Note describes how that happens. It is intended for use as a reference for personnel assigned to the organizations involved in institutional strategy. The intent after reading this document is for the reader to understand how their individual work contributes to the greater whole.

The Army has been doing this for a long time. At Valley Forge, American Soldiers overcame tremendous hardship to develop the discipline and skills needed to go toe-to-toe with the British and win our independence. Since the nineteenth century, our Corps of Engineers has performed a variety of critical civil works functions for our country. During World War II, the Army manned, trained, and equipped ninety-one divisions, providing the ground combat power needed to defeat the Axis powers. Since 1973, we have created and sustained the world’s best fighting force on an all-volunteer basis. This long history of success can easily obscure how difficult it is to generate a world-class army.

The Army’s priorities today remain People, Readiness, and Modernization. We must build cohesive teams that are highly trained, disciplined, and fit, while taking care of our families and fostering healthy command climates. We must continue to provide forces that are fully prepared to defeat our enemies and win. At the same time, we must balance our activities today with our desire to transform and win in the future. Sound institutional strategy enables the Army to successfully pursue these priorities and remain the world’s greatest fighting force.



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Chapter I. The Role of Institutional Strategy

Institutional strategy translates a senior leader’s vision for their organization into direction for the future force while meeting today’s commitments, consistent with their responsibilities and authorities.

—Joint Doctrine Note 2-19, *Strategy* (2019)

Institutional Strategy

In simple terms, institutional strategy is the mechanism by which Army senior leaders guide the department over the long term. It establishes policy and prioritization for resourcing, which gives coherence to the Department of the Army’s actions to provide trained and ready forces for employment, per Title 10 of U.S. Code.¹ The acronym DOTMLPF-P (doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy) provides a useful framework for understanding the multi-faceted outputs of institutional strategy. Institutional strategy is not restricted to tangible outputs such as deployable organizations made up of the right numbers of personnel and equipment. It also includes intangible outputs such as the development of a clear intellectual framework to enable doctrine for solving military problems or a commitment to professionalism and mission accomplishment shared by Soldiers and Army Civilians. Thus, despite the axiom that all the other elements of DOTMLPF-P should be derived from doctrine, it is institutional strategy that provides direction to the Department of the Army [hereafter, “the Army”].

Joint Doctrine Note 2-19, *Strategy* (2019) describes three types of military strategy: **national military**, **combatant command**, and **institutional**.² Institutional strategy differs from the other types of military strategy in several ways. The first difference is the actors. Military Departments and Services are primarily concerned with institutional strategy, though they do have a role in formulating and executing the other types of strategy. Conversely, joint organizations like the Joint Staff and combatant commands have a role in institutional strategy, even though their focus is on national military and combatant command types of strategy. Another

The Three Types of Military Strategy:

- National Military
- Combatant Command
- Institutional

—Joint Doctrine Note 2-19, *Strategy* (2019)

¹ Title 10 assigns the Secretary of the Army responsibility for all affairs of the Department of the Army, to include: recruiting; organizing; supplying; equipping; training; servicing; mobilizing; demobilizing; administering; maintaining; construction, outfitting, and repairs of military equipment; and construction, maintenance, and repair of buildings, structures, and utilities and the acquisition of real property and interests in real property necessary to carry out the responsibilities specified. See 10 U.S. Code, [§7013](#).

² Joint Chiefs of Staff, [Strategy](#), Joint Doctrine Note 2-19 (10 December 2019).

difference between the three types of strategy is the output. Institutional strategy builds, sustains, and provides military potential. National military and combatant command strategies employ that potential to achieve desired policy outcomes.

In practice, there is a constant dialogue, and often some tension, among the Services, combatant commands, and Department of Defense (DoD) to ensure institutional strategy meshes with national military and combatant command strategies. Institutional strategy requires the Army to envision potential operational approaches, whether in the present or the distant future, and take all of the DOTMLPF-P actions necessary to enable joint warfighters to devise appropriate, effective strategies to achieve desired policy objectives. Importantly, the Army's role in military competition is very much the result of institutional strategy.³

Though institutional strategy is formulated with policy and national military and combatant command strategy in mind, it operates on a different set of considerations, across a broader time horizon, and requires different mechanisms for formulation and implementation. Chapter II describes the unique considerations of institutional strategy. Chapter III describes the main organizations involved in institutional strategy and their functions. Chapter IV describes the major documents, processes, and forums of institutional strategy. Chapter V then gives examples of how all these elements come together in practice to shape the U.S. Army.

The Sources of Institutional Strategy

Reduced to its simplest form, institutional strategy forms the intellectual underpinning of, and outlines a plan for, how the Army will meet the demands of the country. Yet how does the Army know what is required? There are several sources of institutional strategy.

One of the most important sources of institutional strategy is **direction from national security policy, defense strategy, and military strategy**. This guidance is distributed across a number of sources: policy or strategy documents such as the *National Security Strategy*, direction from policymakers, global campaign plans, contingency and operations plans, and senior military leader consultation. Though these various sources will sometimes direct specific requirements for Army institutional strategy, more commonly they identify requirements for the collective joint force. In

The Sources of Institutional Strategy:

- Direction from national security policy, defense strategy, and military strategy
- Body of governing law and defense regulations
- Guidance directly from senior leaders
- Leader initiative
- Enduring need for a sustainable Army

³ For more on the Army's role in military competition, see Headquarters, Department of the Army, [*The Army in Military Competition*](#), Chief of Staff Paper #2 (1 March 2021).

those cases, the first step of institutional strategy is to identify what actions the Army must take to enable the desired characteristics and capabilities for the joint force. Some actions can be taken entirely within the Service, but others require cooperation directly with another Service or through joint mechanisms.

Another significant source of institutional strategy is the **body of governing statutory law and defense regulations**. This statutory and procedural framework outlines the Army's roles and responsibilities, most of which relate to the Service's role in relation to the rest of DoD. Some responsibilities relate to other agencies or civil authorities or, as most clearly seen with the work of the Corps of Engineers, directly to the public. In contrast to the guidance from policy and military strategy, statutory and regulatory requirements tend to be explicit and relatively stable. Though these requirements are more routine, they cannot be taken for granted; institutional strategy is necessary to prioritize, align, and guide resources and actions to satisfy legal and regulatory requirements.

A common source of institutional strategy is **guidance directly from senior leaders**. The Secretary of the Army is legally responsible for all affairs of the Army. Additionally, the Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army maintain visibility over the entire Army enterprise and regularly interact with DoD leadership and various outside stakeholders. As a result, these Army senior leaders at times may issue direct guidance to ensure the Army's responsibilities are optimally executed, both today and in the future. Such guidance better positions the Army to react to emerging aspects of the strategic, operational, and fiscal environments.

Leader initiative is also a frequent source of institutional strategy. Acting within senior leader intent, individuals regularly create strategy instead of waiting to be told. They employ vision, knowledge, strategic art, and experience to determine which institutional strategy to pursue. Individuals identify the need for change, craft options to institute the change, and, once approved, oversee the change. Often the initiator has access to a structural mechanism that has the authority to implement change within the Army. In many instances, the results are creative solutions to complex problems.

Another source of institutional strategy is the **enduring need for a sustainable Army**. To an extent, this quality is inherent to satisfying all of the requirements outlined in the preceding paragraphs. Nonetheless, the task of sustaining the long-term health of the force is distinct and important enough to merit specific mention. This health manifests itself in many ways, but some of the most important are consistent adherence to professional norms of conduct, competence, and ethics; a climate of inclusion that fosters a sense of belonging among all members of the Army family; esprit de corps and pride that sustains units and organizations under the most difficult conditions; and a high quality of life matched with a sense of fulfillment that attracts and retains the country's best. These and similar attributes are already hallmarks of the U.S. Army. Yet it must be remembered they do not occur naturally but are products of plans and resources aligned to strategic ends—that is, sound institutional strategy.

Chapter II. Considerations of Institutional Strategy

Institutional Strategy and the Allocation of Risk

In an ideal world, the Army would have the capability to answer every possible national demand now and in the future, fulfill every regulatory requirement, and sustain itself without strain. **The essence of institutional strategy lies in making hard choices among competing demands with finite, and possibly uncertain, resources.** This chapter discusses some of the recurring considerations and constraints facing Army senior leaders when making those decisions.

These decisions can take many forms: how to organize a specific type of tactical unit, how much to spend on equipment modernization, or how to prioritize allocations of personnel to units? Many of these issues are fundamentally decisions about the allocation of risk, which Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3105.01A, *Joint Risk Analysis Methodology* (2021) defines as the probability and consequence of an event causing harm to something valued.⁴ One of the distinguishing factors of institutional strategy as opposed to other types of military strategy is that institutional leaders must balance more diverse types of risk, which come in several forms and across several time horizons. These risks include:

Risk over time. Institutional strategy encompasses many different processes that operate on widely varying time horizons. The Service budget in any given year includes money devoted to the operations and maintenance of forward deployed units that might literally have to “fight tonight,” infrastructure that will take years to build, and investments in basic scientific research and development that might not be incorporated into weapons systems until the next decade. Allocating risk over time is not solely a matter of money, for it also occurs in other areas such as force structure and personnel policies. The choice between placing one of the best, most experienced leaders in a deployed operational unit or as an instructor in a school to train the next cohort of leaders and Soldiers for the future is also a form of allocating risk over time. Often, risk over time involves weighing the readiness of today’s Army against long-term modernization.

Risk among missions and requirements. Institutional strategy is inherently forward looking and involves careful consideration of eventualities because the Army must provide forces for routine actions in competition on a day-to-day basis, while also maintaining

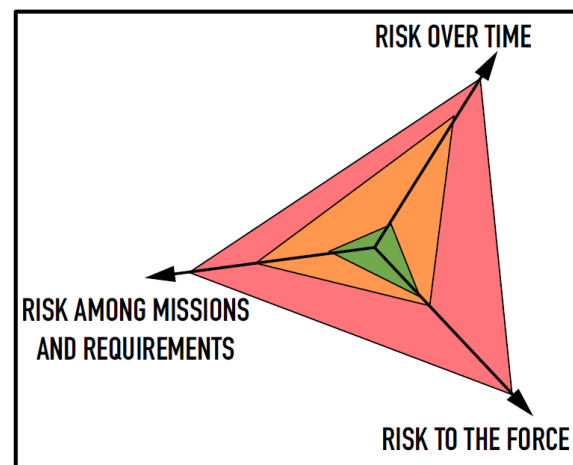


Figure 1 Balancing Forms of Risk

⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, [Joint Risk Analysis Methodology](#), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3105.01A (12 October 2021), B-1.

readiness to respond to potential crises or conflicts. Thus, senior leaders are continually balancing risk among actual demands in the present against a vast range of possible demands in the future. Because the most critical missions generally fall into the category of possible contingencies, this creates a tension between routine missions that are certain to happen and low probability events that could have catastrophic consequences if the Army fails. As discussed below, the adaptability of Army forces means that the allocation of risk is rarely a stark choice between completely ignoring either the present or the future. Instead, the allocation of risk among missions is a matter of degree. Rather than whether the Army can accomplish a given mission at all, the question is whether to accept risks like a slower initial response, the need to accept less ambitious objectives, or to accept greater casualties and destruction due to a less advantageous position at the outset of a campaign.

Risk to the force. The requirement to sustain the long-term health of the force means that the Army can run flat out only for short periods. How much of the potential is being consumed at any given time is a key variable for senior leaders to manage. Soldiers join the Army to serve their country, so there is a risk to both individual satisfaction and collective esprit de corps in not having enough activity. But it is possible to have too much activity, unpredictability, or churn that causes fatigue among Soldiers and Families that can lead to loss of morale and effectiveness, retention problems, or the perception that the Army is not an attractive option for talented, driven individuals. Institutional strategy allocates risk to the force through obvious means like establishing the operational tempo for units. But risk to the force must also be managed through other elements of institutional strategy, such as quality facilities and services that enhance quality of life or personnel policies dictating the frequency of changes of station or that provide Soldiers and Army Civilians with greater control over their careers.

Contrasting Approaches: Generalist Flexibility vs. Specialized Optimization

As already mentioned, the inherent flexibility of Army forces alleviates some of the tensions in allocating risk. Well-trained, well-led formations with a broad range of capabilities have the ability to accomplish a wide range of missions under many different conditions. An army of adaptive generalists—whether individuals or units—can meet many needs. Because the Army has so many varied possible requirements, a preference for generalists is necessarily the default position.

Specialization does increase effectiveness for particular tasks. Whether in relation to a specific kind of mission, operational environment, or geographic region, more focused training, optimized equipment, and specific expertise will simply yield better results in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, or both. Some examples of specialized optimization include using Security Force Assistance Brigades rather than standard brigade combat teams for advise and assist missions, tailoring units to a specific environment or region, or creating narrower career or specialty fields.

Officer career fields are an excellent example of the tensions between generalists and specialists. In the late twentieth century, Army officers maintained a “dual-track” career structure in which they maintained both a basic branch and a functional specialty. But problems with proficiency and talent optimization led the Army to adopt the present “single-track” system, in which officers can pursue full career specialization in fields like foreign area officer, force manager, or strategist. There are clear advantages to this system, such as improved proficiency, increased experience, and greater talent alignment within those fields. Nonetheless, many allies use something like the “dual-track” system for those same skills. This is not because they do not see the advantages of specialization but because smaller military establishments cannot pay the organizational cost of specialization in terms of assignment flexibility and career field sustainability.

Similarly, there is a significant difference between a standard unit that might have some additional equipment and devote more training time to specialized tasks like Arctic warfare but that can still deploy and fight anywhere and one that has an entirely unique organization, set of equipment, and training plan oriented on that environment and that would require a complete reorganization to deploy elsewhere. The latter is highly effective in the region but places strain on the rest of the force if there are high operational demands in other areas because it cannot alleviate some of the operational tempo.

The Army continually adjusts the degree of generalization and specialization for individuals and units as the budgetary and operational environments change. Typically, specialization occurs when there is a mission of overriding importance and relatively plentiful resources, both conditions often associated with periods of armed conflict. Conversely, when there are many competing missions, there is great uncertainty about how the Army might be employed, or resources are particularly limited, the Army tends toward generalist flexibility. The latter set of conditions has been the historic norm.

Constraints and Decision Space in Institutional Strategy

One of the difficulties in institutional strategy is that at any given time, senior leaders have only a limited range of choices. There are four main factors that limit flexibility.

The first factor is the extent to which institutional processes are **constraints imposed by the many stakeholders** outside of the Army. The Army is an open system. As described in the previous chapter, law, policy, and regulations dictate many tasks the Army must perform; specify the amount, purpose, and timing of congressional appropriations; dictate many procedures for the Army to follow; and deliberately withhold authorities so that the Army must seek approval from Congress or the Executive Branch for certain actions. These constraints are not fixed. One of the key roles that senior leaders play in institutional strategy is to seek changes to law or policy when they are harmful or restrict success. Changing law and policy, however, is generally a leader- and staff-intensive process that is more effective when it is concentrated on a few key issues rather than seeking many changes. In short, senior leaders must prioritize their efforts to change policy or law.

The second factor in limiting flexibility is the **size and internal complexity** of the Army. It is only capable of performing so many different missions and functions because it has a well-established system of processes that allow intricate functions like acquisitions, resource allocation, and installation management to be carried out without a constant stream of directives from higher headquarters. Yet these deeply carved patterns of organizational relationships and processes make it very difficult to change when something different must be done. Altering those institutional grooves also requires significant senior leader effort, and so, much as with external actions, it requires focus on just a few key areas.

The third factor constraining flexibility is **the need to maintain current readiness while modernizing for the future**. Today's demands often impede the Army's ability to transform and develop future force capabilities needed to deter adversaries and win future conflicts. This constant tension between ensuring the readiness of today's fielded force and developing the future force is less about achieving equilibrium and more about sustaining consistent progress in developing the future force with the least amount of disruption to current readiness.

The final factor impeding flexibility is **the limited extent of change that can be achieved in any given year**. Though the Army's annual budget is significant, it is only a small addition to the existing stock of land and buildings, aircraft and vehicles, and human capital that have been built up over decades and, for some infrastructure, centuries. Thus, institutional strategy drives incremental change that gradually accumulates into significant change only when steadily applied according to a long-term plan.

The Requirements for Success in Institutional Strategy

The need to balance among multiple forms of risk, flexibility and specialization, and the limited decision space described in this chapter set institutional strategy apart from the other types of strategy and mean there are different requirements for success. These requirements are:

Persistence to achieve desired ends. With the many constraints already outlined, success requires synchronization and full institutional effort, typically over a prolonged period. Solutions to difficult institutional problems usually cannot be solved by short, sharp bursts of aggressive activity. The Army cannot unilaterally open significant new lines of effort or divest itself of mandated tasks, organizations, or installations. The phrase "bureaucratic trench warfare" is apt as the closest operational equivalent is a war of attrition. Success requires careful planning and sustained effort over time to avoid culmination before reaching a distant objective. Because the time required to implement many institutional solutions exceeds the tenure of any individual senior leader, maintaining consistency of effort is one of the most significant challenges in institutional strategy.

Collaboration across the enterprise. One of the critical differences between tactics and strategy is that unlike in tactics, a senior leader may not directly control the resources necessary to operationalize a strategy. Similarly, big problems in institutional strategy often transcend a single leader's sphere of authority. Chapter III describes the basic roles of the most significant organizations involved in institutional strategy, but there are also many external stakeholders as

well, such as the other Services, DoD policymakers and agencies, other Executive Branch departments, industry, communities, and Congress. Institutional leaders set conditions for success not just by collaborating at their level but also by creating a culture of collaboration for their subordinates, ensuring there are formal mechanisms for collaboration, and resourcing the linkages among organizations.

Constant communication and synchronization of both vision and detail. A clear organizational vision is not enough for institutional strategy, which requires that subordinates make nuanced trade-offs between competing valid demands. These decisions are often linked to other similar decisions made elsewhere within the institution and therefore require synchronization. These choices are part of a series of decisions that occur over time and within a fluctuating environment, which require the ability to, when necessary, adjust both the vision and details of the plan.

Integration of those involved. Force generation is a complex task that requires synchronizing many different functions and balancing risk across multiple missions and time horizons, all the while preserving the health of the force. The wide variety of organizations involved in institutional strategy—discussed in Chapter III—reflects that complexity. Rarely are problems of institutional strategy confined solely within the limits of responsibility of a single organization. Therefore, successful institutional strategy requires integration across the organizations involved in institutional strategy and steady application over time.

The Army's tools for institutional strategy, described in Chapter IV, are designed to help meet these particular challenges of institutional strategy. Before describing those tools, it is necessary to identify the organizations that use them.

Chapter III. The Institutional Force

The Institutional Force

Per Army Doctrine Publication 1, the Army consists of operating forces and the institutional force.⁵ It is useful to think of the institutional force as being responsible for the generation of combat power and operating forces as the part of the Army that executes military operations. Without the institutional force, operating forces cannot function. Without operating forces, the institutional force has no purpose.

This chapter describes the major organizations involved in institutional strategy, most of which are within the institutional force: Headquarters, Department of the Army (the Head); the Army Commands (the Implementers and Shapers); the Army Service Component Commands (the Bridges); and the Direct Reporting Units and Field Operating Agencies (the Specialists). See Army Regulation 10-87 for the official description of many of these organizations' roles and responsibilities.⁶

The Head: Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA)

In institutional strategy, HQDA sets the overall vision for the Army; provides direction; allocates resources; and synchronizes and, in some cases, oversees execution. The HQDA staff also supports Army senior leaders as they make decisions by adding to the leaders' situational awareness of the strategic, operational, and institutional environment and developing options.

Leading HQDA are the Secretary of the Army, the civilian authority who is the head of the Army, and the Chief of Staff of the Army, who is the Secretary's principal military advisor as well as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. HQDA is organized into two parts: the Secretariat and the Army Staff (see figure 2).⁷

The Secretariat is led by the Undersecretary of the Army, the Assistant Secretaries of the Army, and various other civilian and military principal officials. As it relates to institutional strategy, "The Secretariat will develop policies and programs that are fully consistent with national security objectives...and oversee the effective and timely implementation and execution of those policies and programs."⁸ The Secretariat focuses on providing policy and civilian oversight over key institutional functions designated by law or delegated by the Secretary of the Army. These functions tend to fall into those areas in which historically the Army has had the

⁵ Headquarters, Department of the Army, [The Army](#), Army Doctrine Publication 1 (Washington, D.C.: July 2019), 1-5.

⁶ Headquarters, Department of the Army, [Army Commands, Army Service Component Commands, and Direct Reporting Units](#), Army Regulation 10-87 (Washington, D.C.: 11 December 2017).

⁷ For the functions and responsibilities of HQDA Principal Officials, see Headquarters, Department of the Army, ["Assignment of Functions and Responsibilities within Headquarters, Department of the Army,"](#) General Order No. 2020-01 (Washington, D.C.: 6 March 2020, as amended by [General Order No. 2021-09](#), dated 18 October 2021).

⁸ Headquarters, Department of the Army, ["Assignment of Functions and Responsibilities within Headquarters, Department of the Army,"](#) 2.

most impact on and interaction with society: procurement and interactions with industry, setting the conditions for who can serve and under what conditions, the use of military installations, and public works.

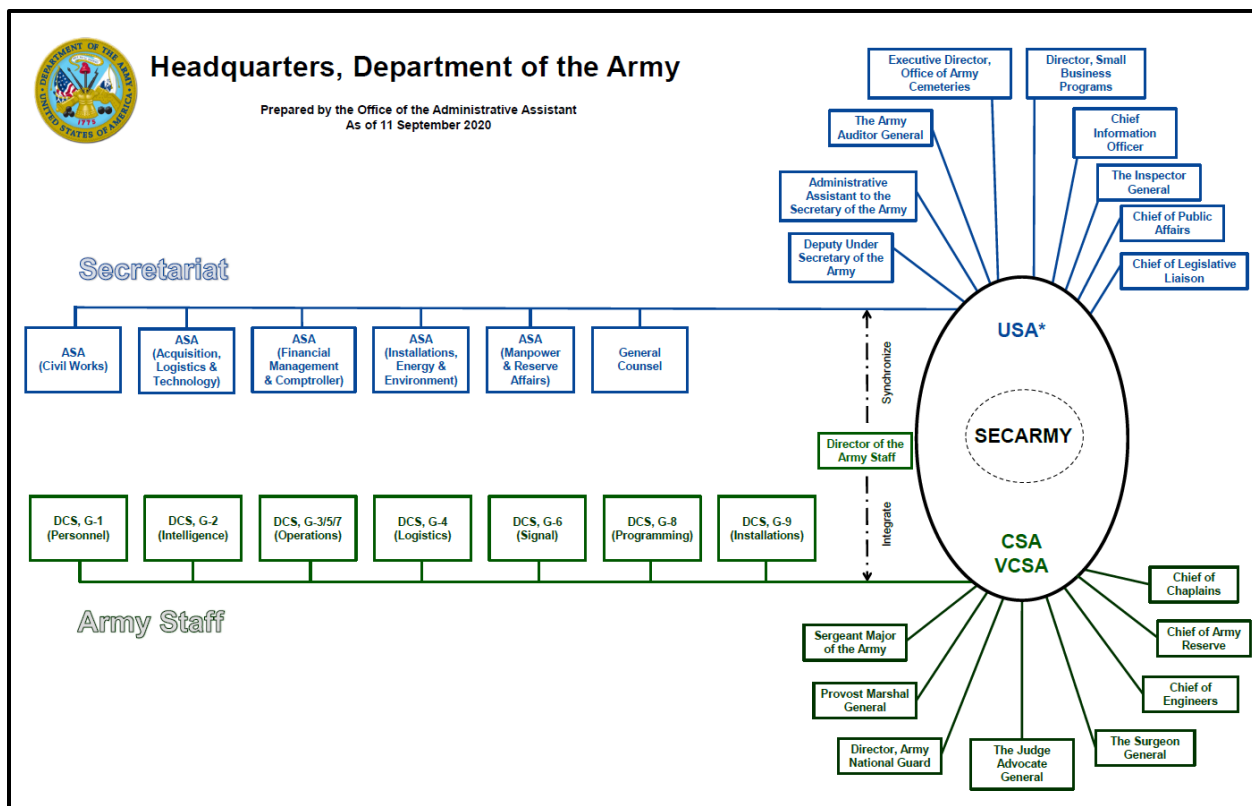


Figure 2 Headquarters, Department of the Army

The Army Staff (ARSTAF) supports Army senior leaders in the discharge of their duties, works with the Secretariat in the development of policy, and synchronizes the other elements of the institutional force. The main building blocks of the ARSTAF are the numbered “G-code” directorates similar to those used in operational headquarters. The office of the Chief of the Army Reserve also falls within HQDA.

The Director of the Army National Guard represents the Chief of the National Guard Bureau on Army matters such as program and policy formulation and implementation.

Within HQDA, three key figures integrate and synchronize the development and execution of institutional strategy across the multiple organizational and functional lines. The Director of the Army Staff (DAS) manages the process by which decisions are brought to senior leaders and then synchronizes and manages the taskings that flow from those decisions. The Deputy Chief of Staff (DCS), G-3/5/7 develops the overall institutional strategy and many of its subordinate elements, prioritizes resources for training and operations, and synchronizes execution across functions. The DCS, G-8 coordinates the resourcing requests across functions that are submitted for senior leader decision.

The Implementers and Shapers: Army Commands (ACOMs)

ACOMs are the main implementers of institutional strategy, while also serving important roles in shaping and informing future decisions and priorities. ACOMs have a role in policy development and generate proposals and options for senior leader decision, while also making the Army run now and in the future by executing their assigned functions under the oversight of a four-star commanding general. There are four ACOMs:

Forces Command (FORSCOM). FORSCOM commands most conventional operating forces stationed in the continental United States. FORSCOM trains, mobilizes, demobilizes, organizes, administers, and sustains these units. FORSCOM, as the Service Force Provider for Army conventional forces, plays a key role in determining which units are used to fulfill any given operational mission or deployment and exercises training and readiness oversight of Reserve Component conventional forces based in the continental United States not assigned to a combatant command. Thus, FORSCOM's planning horizon usually spans from the present to five years and FORSCOM has a significant role in identifying and balancing risk to mission and risk to force. For example, FORSCOM might recommend a Stryker brigade combat team fill a particular request for forces that would normally best be filled by an armored brigade combat team to improve the operational tempo of the Army's armored brigades. This lowers the risk to force by alleviating stress on the armored brigades but increases risk to mission due to the Stryker brigade being suboptimal for the mission. Alternatively, FORSCOM might recommend sending an armored brigade due to the importance or complexity of the mission, thus raising the risk to force but lowering risk to mission.

Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC). TRADOC conducts a wide array of institutional tasks: recruiting the enlisted force and some officers through Officer Candidate School; leading, and recruiting cadets into, the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) program; administering Junior ROTC; conducting initial military and functional training for all Soldiers; and providing professional military education for all leaders. Additionally, TRADOC determines what Army leaders must be, know, and do for promotion to each rank. TRADOC, primarily through its Centers of Excellence, develops most of the Army's doctrine, organizational structure, and training products, and it oversees the personnel development of the majority of the Army's branches, functional areas, and career management fields. As a result of the variety and number of areas in which it is involved, TRADOC has the predominant role in DOTMLPF-P integration across the Army. These tasks can take years to carry out; thus, TRADOC usually operates from the current year to seven years' time frame and has a key role in managing risk over time. For example, the Fires Center of Excellence might advocate for the redesign of an existing type of unit to fill a capability gap. This action likely assumes greater risk in the near term due to the need to reorganize personnel and equipment, develop new collective training tasks, and write new or updated doctrine, but in the long term it reduces risk by producing a unit better able to complete assigned missions.

Army Materiel Command (AMC). AMC is the lead materiel integrator for the Army. The nature of logistics at the operational and strategic level means that AMC simultaneously

encompasses elements of both the institutional force and the operating forces. AMC manages the Army's organic industrial base of arsenals, depots, and ammunition plants, providing the necessary infrastructure, equipment, and ammunition for the Army to execute its missions. This includes war reserve stockpiles, pre-positioned stocks, and the Army's power projection and mobilization infrastructure and capabilities. These requirements mean AMC has a key role in managing risk between present operations and readiness for future conflicts while also managing risk among those potential future conflicts. As the manager of the Army's installations, AMC manages risk to the force through oversight of installation infrastructure, housing, and quality of life programs, enabling the Army's ability to project power from home station to the forward edge of contact. AMC is a supporting command for force employment, force development, and force design responsible for managing sustainment risk over time in support of strategic readiness of current and future Army requirements.

Army Futures Command (AFC). AFC leads the Army's modernization enterprise, securing technological overmatch today and for our future Warfighters. AFC assesses the future operating environment, develops and delivers concepts and requirements, designs and delivers the future force, and enables the delivery of modernization solutions across the lifecycle. In partnership with the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology), AFC aligns science and technology development to projected future demands. AFC brings together concept developers, threat experts, researchers, capability developers, scientists, and engineers to develop new ways of operating and conduct priority science and technology research, development, and engineering, including areas with critical operational potential and medical impact. AFC delivers modern capability solutions designed by technical specialists and informed by practitioners through deliberate Soldier Touch Points and experimentation. AFC enables the Army to bridge the technology gap and balance operational risk over time by ensuring near-term investment decisions are informed by long-term objectives, threat demands, and scientific transformational opportunities, enabling the development of future capabilities.

The Bridges: Army Service Component Commands (ASCCs)

In institutional strategy, ASCCs are the bridges between the institutional and operating forces and between the Service and joint force. Each ASCC is a subordinate headquarters to one or two combatant commands and so is part of the operating forces in that each ASCC conducts joint training and planning under the combatant commander's direction, helps set conditions for joint operations, and is often assigned operational responsibilities. ASCCs also perform key institutional force missions in that they normally man, train, and equip Army forces assigned to the combatant command and regularly relate joint warfighting needs to the Service, while at the same time representing Army equities within the combatant command. ASCCs routinely interact with HQDA, the ACOMs, and other ASCCs and regularly balance Service and joint requirements to fulfill their institutional and operational responsibilities. Some of the "functional" ASCCs have additional roles in recruiting, training, education, force modernization, and/or proponentcy that also make them force generators, such as U.S. Army Special Operations

Command (USASOC) and U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command (USASMDC). In addition to USASOC and USASMDC, the other ASCCs are U.S. Army Europe and Africa, U.S. Army Pacific, U.S. Army Central, U.S. Army North, U.S. Army South, U.S. Army Cyber Command, and Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command. In short, ASCCs enable the Army to fully execute institutional strategy across the globe while ensuring such efforts remain relevant to the joint force.

The Specialists: Direct Reporting Units (DRUs) and Field Operating Agencies (FOAs)

The Army has specialist organizations dedicated to some unique aspect of force generation. Many of these DRUs and FOAs report to HQDA and provide a mechanism for implementing the policy guidance on behalf of that element. For example, the U.S. Army War College is a DRU that prepares select senior leaders with the intellectual tools required to solve strategic problems. The Center for Army Analysis (CAA) is a FOA reporting to the DCS, G-8 that specializes in theater-level analysis of joint and combined operations, strategic and campaign level wargames, and stationing analysis.

Conclusion: Multiple Options

The benefit of such a diverse range of organizations as described above is that it gives senior leaders options to address problems. One approach is to use the HQDA staff to issue detailed guidance directly to the force. However, this approach requires HQDA to collaborate extensively with ACOMs and ASCCs to formulate direction and certainly relies upon them to execute. An alternative approach is for senior leaders to give broad guidance and responsibility to the commanding general of an ACOM or some other senior commander to solve the problem. Regardless of the approach taken, integration, as discussed in Chapter II, remains central to success. The next chapter describes the documents, forums, and processes that help make such integration occur.

Chapter IV. Elements of Institutional Strategy

The Elements of Institutional Strategy

This chapter summarizes the structural elements that support institutional strategy. It describes many of the documents, processes, and forums that comprise the **Army Strategic Planning System (ASPS)**, which is the primary method by which the Army develops and implements institutional strategy (see figure 3). This chapter further describes how the components of ASPS work together to successfully carry out institutional strategy.

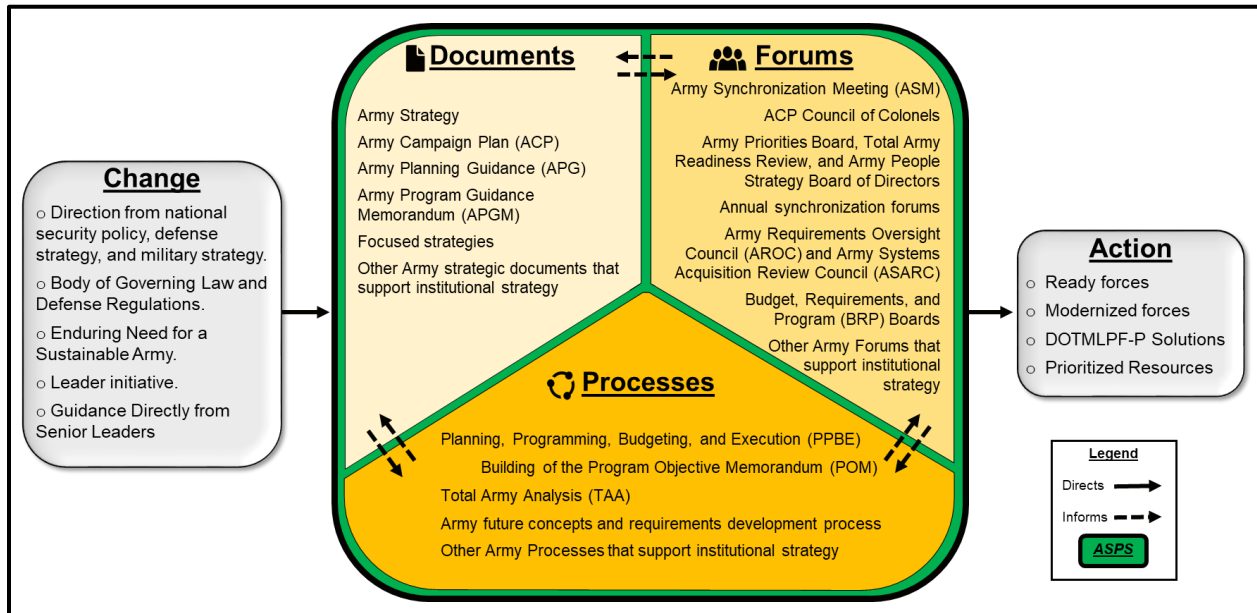


Figure 3 The Army Strategic Planning System

The Army's Strategic Documents

The Army publishes, maintains, and updates multiple publications that provide strategic guidance to the force. The **Army Strategy** is the Army's principal strategic document—it codifies the Secretary and the Chief of Staff of the Army's intent for how the Army will support national and DoD policies and strategies, fulfill the requirements issued to it by Congress, and sustain the long-term health of the force. The Army Strategy provides top-level guidance across all time horizons, from the present to the far term. All institutional strategies and plans are nested with the Army Strategy. The DCS, G-3/5/7 leads preparation of the Army Strategy.

The **Army Campaign Plan (ACP)** operationalizes the Army Strategy through the integration, synchronization, and assessment of efforts across the Army. The ACP turns strategic direction into concrete action. Although the document itself may cover various periods of time, the ACP is published annually by HQDA G-3/5/7 and establishes the campaign objectives necessary to realize the intent given in the Army Strategy. Each of these campaign objectives has a designated portion of the Army Secretariat responsible for providing primary oversight, a

designated portion of the Army Staff responsible for integration, and a supported command or commands. Campaign objectives, however, are cross-cutting and typically require input and cooperation from many elements beyond those organizations tasked with oversight, integration, and serving as a supported command. Ensuring the synchronization and integration of large complex tasks is the purpose of the ACP. The DCS, G-3/5/7 leads ACP development.

The final two principal strategic documents provide guidance relating to resources, a critical element of institutional strategy. The DCS, G-3/5/7 annually produces the **Army Planning Guidance (APG)**, which provides general prioritization guidance. The HQDA G-8 then develops the **Army Program Guidance Memorandum (APGM)**, typically in January, which provides preliminary technical direction and additional detail to the teams creating the Army's five-year spending plan, the Program Objective Memorandum (POM). These efforts are aligned according to functional Program Evaluation Groups (PEGs) that recommend precise funding levels within their specific functions, such as training, equipping, or installations. One of the major tasks of institutional strategy is to enable force integration and the synchronization of these functional stovepipes so that, for instance, a unit receiving new equipment has the money to train to gain proficiency, as well as the right kind of facilities to maintain and store or park the equipment.

The Army also publishes **focused strategies** dealing with specific aspects of its Title 10 responsibilities. These documents deal with subjects either of such import that they warrant more detailed strategic guidance to the institutional force (e.g., *The Army People Strategy*) or are the result of a modest change in the strategic direction of the force (e.g., *Army Multi-Domain Transformation*). Such documents are nested with the Army Strategy.



The Army's Institutional Processes

The Army's institutional processes enable the timely exchange of information and the synchronization of efforts. The Army's **planning, programming, budgeting, and execution (PPBE)** process aligns identified Army requirements with anticipated and appropriated funding.⁹ Army activities compete for funding within PPBE to obtain the funds necessary for execution. The Army concurrently executes each phase of PPBE, although the focus of each phase at any given time is sequenced chronologically. For example, in October 2021 the Army planned for fiscal years (FY) 2025-2029, programmed for FY 2024-2028, budgeted for FY 2023, and executed, beginning on 1 October, FY 2022 and earlier appropriated funds.

The most talked about, but often least understood, institutional process is the annual **"building of the POM,"** a part of PPBE but of such importance it deserves focused attention. The POM, as earlier stated, stands for "Program Objective Memorandum," which is nothing more than the Army's proposal for how it will spend available funds over the next five years. The process usually begins in July and ends the following June with submission of the POM to

⁹ For more on the Army's PPBE process, see Headquarters, Department of the Army, [*Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution*](#), Army Regulation 1-1 (Washington, D.C.: 23 May 2016).

DoD. It usually includes the “POM Offsite,” a Secretary and Chief of Staff of the Army chaired event attended by senior leaders from the Secretariat, Army Staff, and ACOMs to synchronize the institutional force in aligning projected resources with strategic guidance. Preparation for the POM Offsite is nearly as important as the event. The guidance issued at the POM Offsite is captured in the APGM. The Office of the Secretary of Defense and the White House can modify the Army’s POM before it goes into the President’s Budget, which Congress can then also modify. As one can imagine, building the POM requires input from across the force.

Total Army Analysis (TAA) is the process by which the Army determines how best to organize itself to fulfill its Title 10 requirements during the next two to seven years by comparing possible organizational structures against possible operational scenarios. Because there are many potential contingencies, ultimately TAA is the method by which Army senior leaders make decisions about how to allocate finite force structure to be ready for an infinite number of potential contingencies. This is one of the key processes by which they allocate the different forms of risk discussed in Chapter II. The major output of TAA is the Army Structure memorandum (ARSTRUC), which provides a full blueprint of the Army’s fielded force, to include how many units of each type of organization and where they will be stationed across the Regular Army and Reserve Component. The ARSTRUC enables ACOMs and others in the institutional force to conduct further DOTMLPF-P integration, such as assignment of facilities or creation of doctrine for new units.

Finally, the **Army future concepts and requirements development process** is the method the Army uses to identify how Army Forces, as part of the joint and multi-national force, will fight, be equipped, and organize in the future based on intelligence assessments/estimates of the future operational environment, threats, and technology. In simple terms, a concept is an aspirational description of how military forces could fight in the future, based on the employment of new technology, using existing technology in new ways, or both. Both the Services and joint force develop warfighting concepts, the approaches of which must be experimented with before changes are implemented to ensure the new ideas are more effective. Each concept has three main components: the Military Challenge seeking to be addressed, the Central and Supporting Ideas that enable the joint force to overcome the Military Challenge, and the Concept Required Capabilities required of military forces to execute the concept.¹⁰ Army concepts also identify priority science and technology areas for which focused research and investments could help address critical operational gaps. Concept Required Capabilities provide a robust assessment of missions, functions, and tasks the future force must execute in the context of threat and environment to identify and quantify capability requirements. Identified capability requirements are then compared with the existing and programmed capability solutions across the Services and joint force to identify potential capability gaps. Capability gaps which represent unacceptable risk may require new or modified materiel or non-materiel capability solutions and the application of resources. The level of risk and the timeliness of the threat will drive the

¹⁰ For detailed guidance on joint concept development, see Joint Chiefs of Staff, [*Guidance for Developing and Implementing Joint Concepts*](#), Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Manual 3010.02E (17 August 2016).

appropriate Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) requirements documentation and validation process.¹¹ The “Army concepts framework” is the collection of approved concepts the Army uses to describe how it will fight in the future.¹²



The Army's Forums

Institutional strategy is more than documents and processes. Integrating and synchronizing these complex staff functions in an ever changing operational and institutional environment requires constant senior leader involvement and direction. The Army's forums are where those involved in institutional strategy exchange information, coordinate ongoing or future activities, and make decisions. While each forum has regular members, attendees vary depending on the topic under discussion.

One of the most important forums with respect to institutional strategy is the **Army Synchronization Meeting (ASM)**. The ASM is the ACP's governance forum for decision-making and information sharing regarding issues ranging from near to long-term planning horizons. While campaign objective decisions and issues take priority, ASM attendees routinely present other topics during the ASM to ensure Army-wide integration and synchronization. Co-chaired by the Director of the Army Staff and the DCS, G-3/5/7, and attended by Secretariat, ARSTAF, ACOM, ASCC, and DRU leaders, the ASM synchronizes the entire Army in carrying out institutional strategy.

The **Army Priorities Board (APB)** is an important decision-making and guidance forum for the Secretary, Chief of Staff, Under Secretary, and Vice Chief of Staff of the Army. APB topics, which generally deal with aspects of modernization, are first introduced to the **ACP Council of Colonels** prior to the ASM to ensure Army-wide awareness and identification of potential friction points. The **Total Army Readiness Review** and **Army People Strategy Board of Directors** also serve as important forums for readiness and people topics, respectively.

There are four important **annual synchronization forums**. These forums—the Army Modernization and Equipping Conference (AMEC), Army People Synchronization Conference (APSC), Army Synchronization and Resourcing Conference (ASRC), and Army Modernization Planning Conference (AMPC)—not only synchronize the execution of institutional strategy but also reveal friction or decision points that need to be reconciled to ensure the successful execution of institutional strategy.

The **Army Requirements Oversight Council (AROC)** and **Army Systems Acquisition Review Council (ASARC)** are important modernization forums. The AROC, chaired by the Chief of Staff of the Army, unless delegated to the Vice Chief of Staff of the Army, or CG, AFC, validates recommended DOTMLPF-P capabilities and approves requirements documents

¹¹ For detailed guidance on joint capability requirement development, see Joint Chiefs of Staff, [Manual for the Operation of the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System](#) [CAC Enabled] (30 October 2021).

¹² For more information on the Army concepts framework, see Headquarters, Department of the Army, [Warfighting Capabilities Determination](#), Army Regulation 71-9 (Washington, D.C.: 29 June 2021), 2.

necessary to support warfighting commanders.¹³ The ASARC is a forum led by the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Acquisition, Logistics and Technology) (ASA (ALT)) and is the Army's senior-level review body for Army acquisition programs.¹⁴

The **Budget, Requirements, and Program (BRP) Boards** determine sourcing solutions for financial shortfalls in the current and next fiscal years identified by requirement owners. Thus, the BRP Boards enable the short-term reallocation of funds, as directed by Army senior leaders. The DCS, G-3/5/7; DCS, G-8; and Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management & Comptroller) tri-chair the Three-Star BRP Board. The Two-Star and Colonel BRP Boards assist, as required.

Synchronization

The documents, processes, and forums of the ASPS work together to synchronize Army efforts within the Service and in support of the joint force. The strategic documents provide near-, mid-, and long-term guidance that enable those involved in the institutional processes and forums to base their actions and decisions on the same strategic guidance. The processes and forums, in turn, allow unforeseen issues not addressed in the publications to be identified, staffed, adjudicated, and reconciled. In this way, the ASPS enables the Army to adapt to change yet still deliver modernized and ready formations to the joint force, now and in the future. Chapter V describes how this is done in practice.

¹³ Headquarters, Department of the Army, [Warfighting Capabilities Determination](#), 20.

¹⁴ Headquarters, Department of the Army, [Army Acquisition Policy](#), Army Regulation 70-1 (Washington, D.C.: 10 August 2018), 6.

Chapter V. Institutional Strategy in Practice

This chapter describes how institutional strategy functions. In general, the Army carries out institutional strategic planning under one of three conditions: enduring, adaptive, or crisis scenarios. This framework enables the Army to conduct deliberate planning, while also remaining flexible to adapt to ever-changing strategic and operational environments. Under which condition strategic planning occurs is generally a function of the effect a change will have on the strategic trajectory of the Army.

Enduring institutional planning utilizes the current Army documents, processes, and forums of the ASPS to issue, receive, and carry out strategic guidance. The enduring scenario initiates when any of the sources of institutional strategy create *fundamental change in the strategic direction of the Army*.

Consider, as a notional example, that a new National Defense Strategy (NDS) published in January 2022 outlines a new strategic approach for DoD. Additionally, the NDS tasks the Army to “build posture” in a priority theater outside the continental U.S. in fiscal year 2025. To nest with the NDS, the Army produces a new Army Strategy, which includes directing activation of a new combined arms battalion within the designated theater. The Army Strategy informs APG 25-29, TAA 25-29 (as well as the resultant ARSTRUC 25-29), and POM 25-29. The ACP establishes a new campaign objective, with the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) providing oversight, the DCS, G-3/5/7 responsible for integration, and the ASCC whose theater the new unit will reside as the supported command. The ASM receives periodic updates on the new unit’s fielding. By July 2025, AMC, in coordination with HQDA, provides the new unit’s facilities (e.g., headquarters and motor pools), ASA (ALT) delivers the battalion’s newly procured equipment (e.g. Abrams tanks), AMC redistributes equipment existing in the Army inventory required by the unit (e.g., Bradley Fighting Vehicles), Human Resources Command (HRC) assigns the required personnel, and the ASCC oversees the unit’s training and readiness. In this way, strategic guidance leads to the concrete fielding of Army capabilities.

Institutional Strategic Planning Scenarios:

- Enduring
- Adaptive
- Crisis

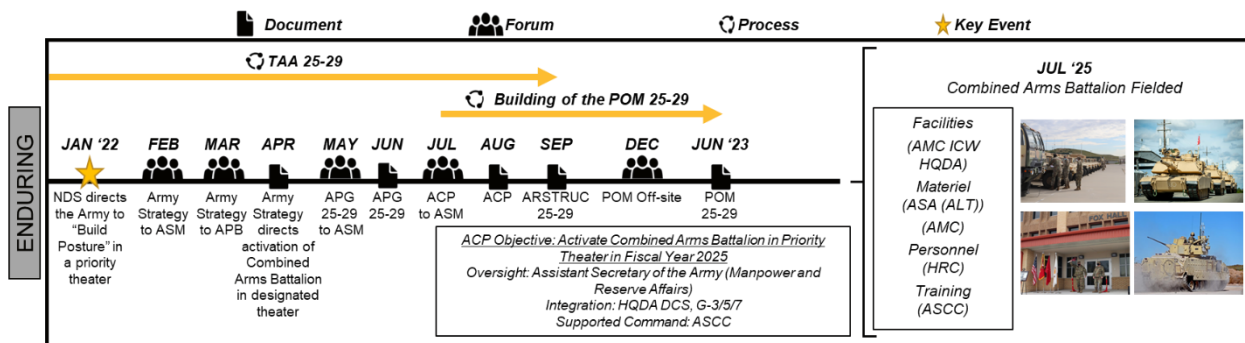


Figure 4 Enduring Scenario Example

Adaptive institutional planning occurs when the Army receives new guidance—whether from DoD, Congress, or Army senior leaders—that results in *modest change to the strategic direction of the Army*. In this scenario, the new guidance could result in an update to the Army Strategy during the document’s next iteration or in the publication of a focused strategy. Current Army mechanisms might be insufficient to carry out Army senior leader intent; thus, ad hoc documents, processes, and forums might be developed. As soon as possible, planning integrates into the enduring scenario. This scenario also accounts for those actions the Army takes once it foresees challenges to carrying out its institutional strategy.

For example, the implications of the 2018 NDS and U.S. Army Europe and Africa’s (USAREUR-AF) identification of the need for an additional command and control element drove the Secretary of the Army to decide to activate a new corps headquarters. HQDA included the requirement as part of TAA, and the resulting ARSTRUC contained the establishment of a new corps. In February 2020, the Secretary of the Army briefed the House Armed Services Committee on the new requirement. Meanwhile, HQDA G-3/5/7 led an operational planning team, with representation from each ACOM and USAREUR-AF, to enable V Corps to reach initial operating capability, with all necessary personnel and equipment by the time it activated at Fort Knox, Kentucky. The OPT, meanwhile, informed the BRP Boards, enabling the diversion of near-term funds to support establishment of the headquarters. AMC made available the facilities and redistributed the equipment within the existing Army inventory needed for the corps to reach full operational capability. ASA (ALT) delivered the newly procured equipment required, FORSCOM and USAREUR-AF oversaw the corps’ training plan and readiness progression, and HRC assigned the personnel. TRADOC’s Mission Command Training Program conducted Warfighter 22-1, the headquarters’ final validation. Through these actions, the Army adapted to meet a new requirement, but its overall strategic direction did not fundamentally change.

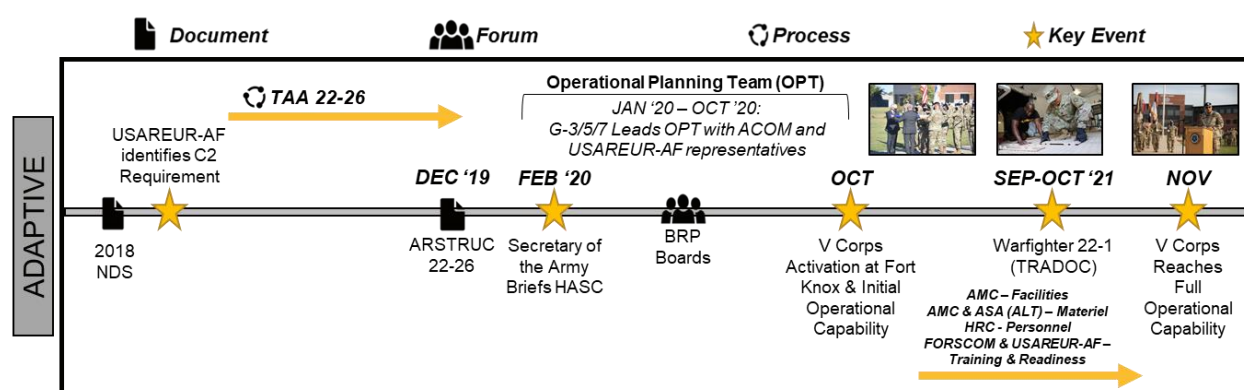


Figure 5 Adaptive Scenario Example

Crisis institutional planning takes place when an event occurs that could have *imminent and severe impacts* on the Army’s ability to fulfill its Title 10 requirements but that *does not result in change to the strategic direction of the Army*. In a crisis, current Army documents, processes, and forums are insufficient to carry out Army senior leader intent, making ad hoc forums and processes necessary. As with the adaptive scenario, crisis planning shifts to the

enduring scenario as soon as possible. For example, in March 2020 the Army initiated crisis planning in response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Army established multiple forums and developed the Army COVID Campaign Plan (AC2P) to synchronize crisis planning and execution of mitigation actions across the Army. In Summer 2020, the Army integrated AC2P efforts into the enduring Army strategic planning elements through integration into ACP 21 as a campaign objective synchronized by the ASM.

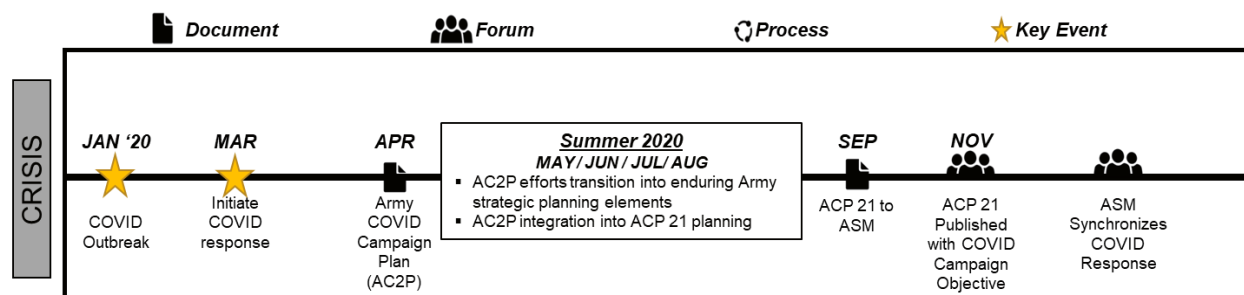


Figure 6 Crisis Scenario Example

While their exact characteristics may vary, each of these scenarios possess similarities. In each, for example, quick results are lacking, while stakeholders from across the Army, as well as organizations outside the Army, must be engaged to ensure the development of holistic plans. Obstacles—such as directed telework—create communication challenges for those involved, regardless of scenario. The institutional strategist, therefore, must remain flexible to ensure persistence, collaboration, communication and synchronization, and integration occur.

Chapter VI. Conclusion

Those involved in institutional strategy—the mechanism by which Army senior leaders guide the department over the long term—should possess a general understanding of its sources and considerations, the main organizations involved, and its elements. The sources of institutional strategy—national, DoD, and joint force guidance; congressional and defense regulations; senior leader guidance; individual leader initiative; and the enduring need for a sustainable Army—identify the requirements of institutional strategy and thus serve as its collective starting point. In developing courses of action to meet these requirements, Army senior leaders consider risk to force, risk among missions and requirements, risk over time, and specialist or generalist approaches. Senior leaders typically have a limited range of choices within institutional strategy due to constraints imposed by outside stakeholders, the size and complexity of the Army, the need to provide ready forces today while transforming for the future, and the limited extent of change that can be achieved in any given year. Success requires persistence, collaboration, communication and synchronization, and integration.

In institutional strategy, the Army organizations involved utilize its elements while typically operating under one of three conditions. HQDA (the Head) provides overall strategic direction, allocates resources, and synchronizes implementation. ACOMs (the Implementers and Shapers) are the main units that carry out and shape Army senior leader decisions. ASCCs (the Bridges) inform the Army of joint force requirements while representing Service equities inside combatant commands. DRUs and FOAs (the Specialists) perform unique force generation functions for the Army. Various documents (e.g., the Army Strategy), processes (e.g., the PPBE process), and forums (e.g., the ASM) that comprise the ASPS form the elements the Army uses to develop and execute institutional strategy. In general, the Army carries out institutional strategy under enduring, adaptive, or crisis scenarios.

This description of institutional strategy has several implications. First, individuals involved in institutional strategy should seek to develop an understanding of the sources, considerations, and elements outlined above. This understanding prepares these same individuals to represent, or advance, their organization's equities for the greater good of the Army. Proposed frameworks for understanding the enterprise environment can also assist institutional strategists in affecting change.¹⁵ Secondly, institutional strategy never ends. There are always new challenges to overcome or areas to improve in producing the best Army possible. The Army's Regionally Aligned Readiness and Modernization Model (ReARMM), for example, is a recent effort that seeks to balance today's readiness with transformation. Finally, institutional strategy requires the active participation of those involved. The persistence, collaboration, communication and synchronization, and integration required will not occur without the efforts of the Soldiers, Civilians, and contractors who develop and carry out institutional strategy.

¹⁵ See Charles Allen and Robert D. Bradford, "[Taking A Bite of the APPLE\(W\): Understanding the Defense Enterprise](#)," *Military Review* 98, 3 (May-June 2018): 64-73.

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