Chinese Threat Conference

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Recommended Citation
DFIRST was developed by SRI International for the Defense Department Advanced Research Projects Agency under the SIMITAR program. SIMITAR was initiated after the 1991 Persian Gulf War to provide more realistic operational training for Army National Guard units.

Testing by the Idaho National Guard culminated in a force-on-force training exercise where nine M1A1 tanks from Alpha Company, 2d Battalion, mounted a mock attack on a ridge line defended by eight tanks from Charlie Company. Each Abrams tank was outfitted with DFI RST instrumentation prior to the exercise.

DFIRST instrumentation provides position location for all participants and engagement simulation of combatant offensive actions including weapon firing, target indication, real-time casualty assessment, damage indication and kill removal. DFI RST can also sow virtual minefields and simulate artillery fire in the exercise area.

During the 29 October exercise at the Idaho Guard’s Orchard Training Area, all eight defenders were killed or disabled during the simulated fire fight. Only two tanks from the victorious Alpha Company were fully operational when the battle ended.

Shortly after the exercise, participants watched an instant replay of the skirmish on a large-screen monitor in an after-action review (AAR) trailer. Commanders studied the replay in slow motion and stop action, noting mistakes and planning new tactics for the next engagement.

DFIRST equipment includes a test control base station housed in a 28-foot trailer; an AAR trailer; a lunch-box size participant instrumentation package containing GPS, communications and processing equipment, which is installed in Guard vehicles, and associated cabling and antennas. As currently configured, DFI RST can track up to 60 participants. With relay antennas deployed, the base station recorded exercise data throughout the Idaho Guard’s 20 by 30 kilometer training area.

Pointing angle for shooters, M1A1 tanks and M2/M3 Bradleys, is derived using GPS interferometry. The technique uses two GPS receivers mounted on special meter-long jigs that are mounted on gun barrels. Real-time calculation of the relative position of the two antennas provides a pointing accuracy of approximately 2 to 3 milliradians. When a shooter fires, a cone-shaped beam, instead of a round, is projected across the battlefield. Damage to an intended victim operating within the cone at the moment of trigger pull is calculated at the base station using statistical tables. Visual and digital displays on board the target indicate results that can range from a near-miss to a catastrophic kill.

DFIRST project leader Chris Terndrup summarized DFI RST capabilities, saying, “For the first time ever, Army Guard units can replay exercises conducted at local ranges. Also, since the GPS instrumentation does not require time-consuming calibrations like current laser systems, DFI RST frees up several additional hours of training time during compressed weekend training schedules. Finally, DFI RST can simulate near-misses, mobility kills, firepower kills or catastrophic kills. Current systems offer only the near-miss or catastrophic kill options.”

SRI took 16 months and spent approximately $4.6 million developing the system.

AH-64A Apache Longbow Program

Two US Army AH-64A Apaches, the first of more than 750 Apaches scheduled for remanufacture into the advanced AH-64D Longbow Apache configuration, have landed on the McDonnell Douglas flight line. The Apaches, which arrived 17 November 1995, will be stripped to their basic fuselage and remanufactured beginning in 1996. First deliveries are scheduled for early 1997.

R emanufacturing will give the Apache even greater capabilities as it will incorporate proven technologies that emerged after the AH-64A went into service in 1986. The Army plans to remanufacture its entire AH-64A Apache fleet over the next decade. The remanufacturing program gained momentum in October when the Department of Defense (DOD) authorized the Army to enter into full-rate production of the Longbow Apache aircraft and the Longbow fire control radar system. The Longbow Apache enhancements will help set the standard for future combat helicopters.

The two initial Longbow Apache aircraft are veterans of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm and were used by the 1/82d Attack Helicopter Battalion at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, from October 1987 until April 1994. The Apaches were then transferred to the 6th Cavalry Brigade at Fort Hood, Texas. The 6th Cavalry officially delivered the two helicopters for the remanufacturing program.

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“The Chinese Threat: Theory or Reality” conference was held 1 December 1995 in Los Angeles, sponsored by The Claremont Institute and The Institute of International Relations, Taiwan. Defense experts speaking at the conference included Mike Pillsbury, Atlantic Council; Senior Fellow; Ambassador James Lily, Visiting Scholar, Claremont McKenna College; Bernard Cole, National Defense University; and Mark Clark, Director, National Security Studies Program, California State University, San Bernardino. Several current diplomats from various Asia-Pacific countries also presented their views.

The conference was attended by 65 government, academic, military and industry representatives from both the United States and East Asia. Panels on “PRC [People’s Republic of China] Military Capabilities and Intentions,” “Responding to the Chinese Threat 1: China’s Immediate Neighbors” and “Responding to the Chinese Threat II: The US Response” were held. Key points and themes raised during this event were:

- Projections made by the RAND Corporation, the World Bank and others suggest that, by 2020, China’s gross national product will be 8 trillion dollars—slightly greater than that of the United States.
China currently has weak military forces that are no match for the Armed Forces of the United States. By 2020, however, China will have advanced weaponry and systems that will emerge from the revolution in military affairs (RMA). The United States will not be able to match Chinese defense spending in this regard because of the costs incurred in maintaining older US force structures.

Over the last year, some very advanced RMA-focused articles have appeared in Chinese military journals. Some of these journals are specifically dedicated to the study of RMA-based warfighting. RMA articles that appear in US military journals are now regularly translated for study by the Chinese military.

The Taiwan Straits and the South China Sea are potentially the two most important flash points in East Asia because of Chinese military activity. It is suggested, however, that because of China's current military weakness, it is unlikely now to risk a war over territorial claims such as the Spratly Islands.

By 2020, triangular nuclear equivalence will be likely between China, Russia and the United States because of the drawdowns the latter two nations are conducting as a result of strategic arms limitations treaties.

Although a containment strategy is unnecessary now, the current policy of engagement is insufficient to moderate aggressive Chinese behavior. Two other alternatives exist in our relations with China—balancing and a strategy of linkages. Balancing represents a forward-deployed US military presence in East Asia as a counter to Chinese military forces, while linkages would represent a related strategy that would link aggressive Chinese behavior to specific US-led responses. Both of these alternatives would likely require the deployment of theater missile defenses to protect US forces and regional allies.

For the past three years, Chinese leaders have promoted the idea that the United States is organizing a containment strategy. It was a widely shared view that China's leaders were using this idea as a diplomatic tool to forestall a US-led alliance against them, especially as China approaches superpower status.

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Almost every item in the military supply system can be found at a Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office (DRMO). The military services turn in excess property at DRMOs located on or near most US military facilities worldwide. As bases realign or close, property is being received at a volume that has not been seen since the end of World War II.

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Property available for reutilization is listed on the DRMS Homepage via the Internet World Wide Web at: http://131.87.1.51. The database includes Local Stock Numbers (LSN) as well as NSNs, allowing customers to search by NIIN, Federal Supply Class (FSC), Federal Supply Group (FSG) or noun (nomenclature) name. Searches can also be conducted by specific DRMO or by geographic zone. A "clickable" site field at the bottom of the homepage allows customers to "pull down" DRMO addresses and phone numbers.

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20th Army Science Conference

The 20th Army Science Conference, sponsored by the assistant secretary of the Army (Research, Development and Acquisition), will be held at the Norfolk Waterside Marriott and Norfolk Convention Center, 24 to 27 June 1996. Inaugurated in 1957, the Army Science Conference provides a professional forum for presentation, discussion and recognition of leading-edge achievements by Army civilian and military scientists and engineers. The 20th Army Science Conference will feature presentation of 150 papers and posters addressing the role of Science and Technology for Force XXI.

For information, call Catherine Kominos at (703) 697-3558.