



Red Team Reign: Red Team Support to Joint Task Force Decision Processes

If you know the enemy and know yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you know yourself but not the enemy, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you know neither the enemy nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.

Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

SUN TZU'S ADMONITION to know your enemy was taken to heart during US European Command's (USEUCOM) premier annual joint and combined forces exercise, *Austere Challenge 2009* (AC09). The Joint Task Force (JTF) staff—formed from US Army Europe as the core—fully integrated red team capabilities into JTF decision cycles and across all planning and operations time horizons. Though the use of a red team in military exercises is not a new concept, the level of integration and methods of integrating the JTF Red Team were taken to a new level, beyond what had been practiced in any previous Joint Chiefs of Staff-directed, Combatant Command-executed theater exercise. The JTF Commander directed all planning efforts and specific staff elements to integrate red team products, perspectives, and recommendations into their processes. The JTF Commander further stipulated that the Red Team should act beyond threat emulation or what is often called red cell efforts. In short, during AC09, the JTF Red Team operated as a full spectrum decision support red team, the overarching goal of which was to enhance effectiveness of the JTF's actions by presenting to the Commander and staff alternative viewpoints as a germane element of all planning processes.

Background and Context

Austere Challenge is a theater level, Major Combat Operation (MCO), joint and combined exercise characterized by very complex and challenging scenarios. In this case, a belligerent nation-state invaded a smaller neighboring nation-state, occupying approximately forty percent of the latter's territory and seizing control of its strategic resources. The adversary's approach integrated diplomatic, informational, military, and economic activities to accomplish its own strategic objectives. Although the invader successfully isolated the capital city, the national government remained intact, and the US and allied nations retained Embassy presence in the besieged capital throughout the period of conflict. The US-led coalition response called for an integrated approach to crisis resolution involving regional governments, UN actions, international organizations, and non-governmental agencies performing either conflict termination tasks or stability and recovery tasks.

Given the complexity of the scenario and challenges associated with the operational environment, the preponderance of JTF-level planning and coordination was not focused on the military actions; rather, regional shaping

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activities, engagement and maintenance of the coalition, and Strategic Communication and Information Operations campaigns were central to the JTF's efforts. The JTF Commander worked closely with component commanders to achieve the operational campaign objectives by lethal and non-lethal means.

Though the adversary enjoyed significant military capability and overwhelming combat power relative to its smaller neighbor, the adversary understood that its invasion force would be clearly overmatched if/when US and Coalition Forces intervened. The adversary further recognized that intervention significantly altered (a) the decision calculus and (b) its continued use of military force in the face of an UN-sanctioned coalition response, and it planned for that eventuality. Irregular warfare proved an expected and integral component of the adversary's conflict strategy. The adversary had prepared for a lengthy campaign to continue pressure against the neighboring government and to disrupt JTF and Coalition governmental assistance. Further, the adversary held asymmetric views of time (different perspectives on the operational and strategic uses of time; asymmetric views of outcomes); beliefs that an operational defeat can transform into a strategic victory; and asymmetric views of war shaped by a millennia of historic and cultural perspectives on conflict. The Commander provided clear and succinct guidance to the JTF in approaching this adversary: "We will *not* 'mirror image.'"

Operational and tactical planning and execution conducted by JTF components—land, air, maritime, and special operations—accomplished the Phase III combat tasks, compelling the adversary to remove military forces from sovereign territory. The JTF operated as a joint force with mission-based orders, coordination, priorities, and enabling conditions (set by the JTF). However, the JTF plan envisioned that Phase III would not terminate the crisis. Instead the JTF plan concluded that significant post-combat operations would be required to conclude operations successfully.

JTF planners oriented on conditions envisioned in the post-conflict operational environment while operations staffs focused on assessing JTF actions and monitoring execution of the campaign. The JTF staff worked closely with the US Ambassador and Embassy staff, EUCOM, and Interagency partners. Red team integration proved far more extensive, and began much earlier in the design and planning processes, than evidenced in other major joint and combined exercises. During the design phase for post combat operations, the Red Team proved effective in challenging assumptions, offering critical reviews of early concepts, and insuring that the "threat" perspective remained foremost in everyone's mind.

Ultimately, the Red Team succeeded for three reasons. First, as a disinterested party the Red Team operated from a more objective perspective than those charged with designing and planning the campaign. Second, the team operated across the staff, offering effective early criticism and providing a useful sounding board to both the design and planning teams. Finally, the Command "bought in" to the idea of decision support red teaming.

The JTF Red Team for AC09 consisted of four red teamers—three civilians from the Army Directed Studies Office (ADSO) and one US Army Lieutenant Colonel from the University of Foreign Military and Cultural Studies (UFMCS). This small, highly trained team with regional expertise provided valuable perspectives, contributing to critical staff groups and decision forums throughout the 10-day exercise. From the beginning, the JTF staff embraced the Red Team as an asset to be integrated for direct support to key decision-making processes. The Red Team operated under the guidance and direction of the J2, and they did so with the view of fully supporting JTF Boards, Bureaus, Centers, Cells, and Working Groups (B2C2WG). The JTF Commander, J2, J3/5, J5, and various B2C2WGs—in particular, the Strategic

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JTF Integration of Red Team Capabilities

Beginning with the Crisis Action Planning phase of AC09, the JTF Commander directed all planning efforts to include red team reviews and assessments. To meet this directive, the J2 and J3 staffs created an ad hoc “in-house” red team process. This process produced basic analyses and reviews using Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment predictive analysis, incorporating multidimensional wargaming reassessments of the Blue (JTF) plan. This “in-house” process provided valuable insights during Crisis Action Planning, identified adversary “red lines” for escalation, likely adversary Objectives, and adversary decision points (DP). It also provided the Commander prioritized recommendations for Blue branches to the base operations plan (OPLAN) to mitigate risk. However, it lacked *full* red team capabilities and regional expertise that the JTF needed and later leveraged during the exercise. The JTF J2 reached back by formally requesting red team capabilities resident at US Army Intelligence and Security Command (INSCOM) and US Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

The Red Team from ADSO, in conjunction with UFMCS, began working *virtually* with J2-Plans soon after receiving the request for support—collaborating and file-sharing weeks prior to AC09 execution. The Red Team began their work with a full review and critique of the OPLAN and then evaluated branch plans. Through these actions, the Red Team quickly closed the gap in operational understanding, providing substantive products for the JTF staff and alternate perspectives to the JTF Commander on key elements of the plan prior to execution.

Beginning of Red Teaming

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

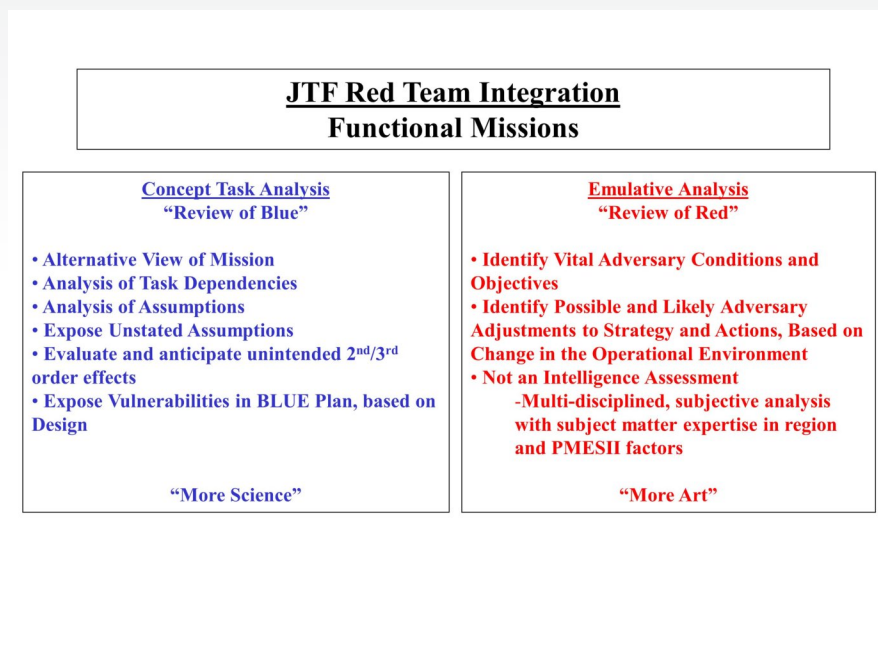
Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics.
Defense Science Board Task Force. The Role and Status of DoD Red Teaming Activities (Unclassified). September 2003, page 2.

Execution

The Red Team integrated its processes with those of team members in J2, J35, and J5, as well as the StratComm and IO B2C2WGs. The Red Team’s perspectives began strengthening the JTF staff’s efforts almost immediately. The JTF Commander received red team reviews and perspectives directly in several venues, including the daily JTF Commander Intelligence Update, the Joint Planning Group’s Commander Updates, and the StratComm and IO decision forums.

It is important to fully understand the JTF approach to leveraging this critical (red team) capability for decision-making: the Red Team became a bona fide part of the JTF Team, not a separate, isolated element that prepared alternative analyses solely for the Commander. Rather, it was integrated as an element within the JTF's staff processes and battle rhythm to aid in shaping and strengthening the JTF's decisions through planning and execution.

The Red Team took an active role in the development of branch plans and Operational Planning Team (OPT) projects throughout the exercise. Additionally, they provided verbal and written inputs to a variety of working groups, including the Campaign Assessments Working Group. To accomplish this, the Red Team relied on two of its core competencies: *Concept task analysis* and *emulative analysis*. These are two distinctively different techniques with separate yet complementary goals. These competencies were developed and have been refined in the Army's red team community over the past several years.



Review of Blue

Concept task analysis is designed to provide the Commander and staff with alternative, objective looks at their plans, preferably while they are still in development. Because the *concept task analysis* methodology differs from that used by those who create plans, vulnerabilities that might otherwise remain hidden are generally exposed. During AC09, these vulnerabilities alerted the staff of the need to adjust their plans, addressing faulty or unstated assumptions of which they were unaware. In other cases, *concept task analysis* worked to provide awareness of additional DPs and branch plans that might be needed to ensure successful operations. While the JTF staff conducted a version of *concept task analysis* as part of their JTF Joint Operational Planning Process and "in-house" red team efforts, they were neither as thorough nor objective as like processes that the ADSO-UFMCS Red Team brought to bear for the JTF.

The JTF Red Team used its *concept task analysis* tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) to review the operations order (OPORD) several weeks before AC09 began. They began by identifying all specified and implied tasks within the order. The Red Team then reviewed each task *separately*, looking to uncover additional key assumptions and dependencies, or necessary Blue

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actions that underlie each task and must occur before a given task can be successfully undertaken. After listing “challengeable” assumptions and dependencies, the Red Team then listed second- and third-order effects that might occur if the tasks were successful/unsuccessful. Then the individual tasks were laid out sequentially to identify redundant tasks, some with multiple and/or identical assumptions and dependencies. When they completed this process, the Red Team graphically portrayed this information. A review of the graph indicated that success of the planned operation created critical dependencies upon a few key assumptions. The graph also identified which tasks in the plan were most vulnerable to assumptions that may be proven false. Additionally, it demonstrated which tasks were heavily coupled to one another such that, should one task fail, the other(s) would likewise fail.

The JTF Red Team completed a *concept task analysis* on the AC09 OPORD before the exercise began. This revealed that tasks close to the transition from one phase to the next had a higher probability of failure than other tasks within the order. This analysis also showed that the transition between phases would be uneven and vary widely in time from one geographical location to another. This could have resulted in undesirable second- and third-order effects. These are just two examples among many of how the Red Team’s *concept task analysis*, utilized in a timely manner, assisted planners in adjusting to account for vulnerabilities not readily apparent when relying solely on military planning processes. As a result of the Red Team’s *concept task analysis*, the JTF staff was able to mitigate risk, adjust some elements of execution, and monitor critical dependencies more closely.

Ideally, the Red Team would have joined the JTF during Crisis Action Planning as a key component of the staff planning process during the design phase. Still, the process and results were meaningful and greatly enhanced the AC09 decision processes at large.

The Red Team actively engaged the J3/5 and J5 sections during the development of a number of branch plans and related products. These directorates welcomed the Red Team’s inputs and incorporated them into the design of their branch plans. In the joint exercise environment, the concept task analysis techniques were completed at a much faster pace and with less collaboration than a red team normally employs in longer term projects. However, the planning leads agreed that the resulting branch plans were significantly better than those developed absent red teaming efforts.

Review of Red

The second core competency that the Red Team employed during AC09 was *emulative analysis*. This form of analysis provided the Commander and staff with an understanding of the enemy by providing a frame of reference by which to assess him. This frame addressed what is vital (to the enemy) and how he might react when faced with changes in the environment caused by Blue Forces (BLUFOR) or natural or other man-made factors. Integrity in *emulative analysis* requires a deep familiarization with multiple aspects of the enemy’s environment. This allows BLUFOR to think like the enemy, understand his decision-making cycle, and accurately project how he may act or react to specific changes in his environment. This analysis, by its very nature, requires a multidisciplinary approach. Grounded in an understanding of the enemy’s culture, it encompasses the enemy’s understanding of his own history; religion; distinctive social groupings (i.e., tribes, clans, ethnic and/or racial identities, and linguistic communities); economic structures (legitimate and illegitimate); physical geography; military capabilities; relations with others in the region; and its political decision-making processes (both formal and informal)—just to name some of the disciplines examined in detail. All of these issues help to shape and inform the *emulative analysis* process. To be clear, *emulative analyses* requires in-depth regional and functional training for

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the analysts and specific process training to be effective. Analysts must develop a long-term view facilitated by the appropriate training and education.

Because of its broad interdisciplinary approach, red teaming works best when there is a wide array of experience among its members. Collaboration among team members with expertise in diverse areas is imperative for a red team to have maximum effectiveness. A red team must be just that—a team; a small group of people from different backgrounds who collectively study a people or region and are able to work together to form an overall impression of the enemy’s motives and actions. It is worth noting that one or two individuals trying on their own to emulate an enemy will likely not produce useful results; the information is generally too complex for an individual to learn and incorporate it into an overall impression of a country or group. During AC09, this effort did not compete with the J2’s doctrinal responsibility to estimate the threat, but rather it employed the J2’s outputs to examine the problem from the threat perspective.

Red teams may use a variety of methods over an extended period of time to collect and assimilate pertinent information. These include conducting academic research and interviews, attending lectures, hosting seminars with world-renowned academicians, consulting with subject matter experts, and working on various projects related to a given region. Academicians and subject matter experts frequently disagree and contradict each other, making *emulative analysis* much more of an art than a science. Using subject matter experts requires the same level of critical thinking as does rigorous review of books and other written works. As red team members sift through these materials and debate with each other, an understanding of the enemy gradually emerges. What the red team is seeking is an understanding of how the enemy—be it a nation or group—sees itself, its place in the region, and ultimately its place in the world.

With a broad understanding of the enemy’s self-perception, the red team begins to identify the enemy’s primary goals and objectives which are consistent with its self-understanding. When the red team reaches this stage in the *emulative analysis* process, it is postured to assess what the enemy might do if or when there is a change in its environment caused by the military, diplomacy, or other factors.

The J2 provided superb support and access to JTF intelligence analysts and to the National Intelligence Support Teams (NIST) colocated in the JTF Joint Intelligence Center. Collaboration and sharing throughout the daily battle rhythm was the norm. It is important, however, not to confuse red team *emulative analysis* products with intelligence assessments. Intelligence assessments are based on tangible, verifiable facts. A red team *emulative analysis*, on the other hand, is often speculative based on an understanding of the enemy’s society—drawn from such intangible factors as culture, religion, history, and a people’s self-perception.

During AC09, the Red Team used *emulative analysis* effectively in a variety of ways. One of the first documents produced by the team defined what “success” and “failure” meant from the enemy’s perspective. In the given scenario, the enemy’s idea of success and failure was vastly different from the BLUFOR’s perspective. Later, the Red Team also looked at other nations in the region to determine how their interests were either met or frustrated by the activities of the JTF.

During the daily Commander’s Intelligence Brief, the Red Team used *emulative analysis* to provide the Commanding General with the enemy’s perspective of the battle. In his role as JTF Commander, this gave him more insights into how the enemy was thinking and helped identify likely actions that the enemy might pursue. This alternative analysis took into account intelligence received from the J2 but was grounded in the historical, cultural,

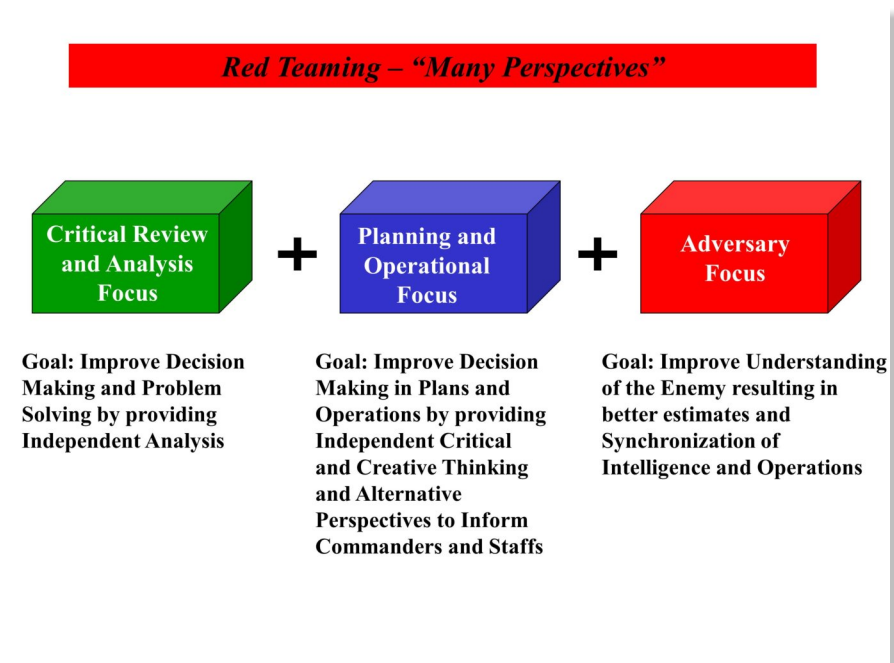
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economic, and political understanding that the team had developed of the enemy. This perspective stemmed literally from months of research and exchanges focused on seeking to understand the seeming contradictions inherent in the enemy’s perspective.

The StratComm Working Group (SCWG) was another area where the Red Team employed *emulative analysis* by identifying potential vulnerabilities in the (StratComm) themes and messages. The Red Team proved able to assist the SCWG in tailoring the JTF’s key strategic themes and messages to have the greatest impact in order to achieve desired outcomes. The Red Team also projected likely messaging that the enemy would use. Anticipating enemy propaganda put the SCWG a step ahead of the enemy and gave it much needed time to craft counter-messaging. Due to the Red Team’s in-depth knowledge of the region, they were able to advise the group on what media outlets would be effective and which ones would be detrimental in promulgating its messaging. For example, the Red Team advised against using some local television stations because they were perceived by the population as being propaganda mouthpieces for the State, and the messages communicated by them would not be considered credible.

In the Assessments Working Group, the Red Team’s inputs were valued as they helped to develop guidelines for measuring the relative success or failure of Coalition Forces. This working group was also responsible for identifying unintended consequences in the event that the Coalition achieved its objectives. Relying on their understanding of the region, the Red Team helped the working group identify unplanned effects. This was instrumental in helping them develop risk mitigation procedures that fit within the framework of the culture, history, and societal norms of the people being affected.

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Recommendations

BUILD THE TEAM. In order to leverage red team processes in future joint and combined exercises and in real-world operations, senior Commanders must invest in red teams as inherent components within their organizations’ structures. Considerable effort within the military services is underway. For example, the Army and Navy both have Department-level red teams. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) has also provided resources to the

Geographic Combatant Commands (COCOM) to develop red teams that are organic to their Joint Intelligence Operations Centers. The US Army is developing structure for decision support red teams from the COCOM's Service Component Commands to Division-level and requiring that each Brigade Combat Team train two "dual-hatted" Red Team Soldiers. Quality education and training are available within TRADOC and INSCOM to provide selected individuals fundamental red team skills such as the *concept task analysis* and *emulative analysis* processes employed within the JTF. UFMCS at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, offers introductory courses in the art of red teaming; ADSO in Alexandria, Virginia is committed to enabling red teams by offering additional training and support. Ideally, a red team should consist of four to eight people. Fewer than four individuals may be too small to leverage the diverse disciplines that a red team must integrate; more than eight makes it difficult to reach consensus on complex issues and may not fully employ the team members in all projects. Any command that builds a red team may require augmentation for specific areas of expertise, or regional and cultural perspectives. Reachback to TRADOC and INSCOM is available for integration of specific capabilities.

CAPTURE RED TEAM INTEGRATION AND PROCEDURES AS BEST PRACTICES IN JOINT STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (JSOP). A red team capability is clearly a function of established processes, training, and education which is rapidly becoming institutionalized within the red team community and expanding unilaterally into operational formations. Army Service Component Commands and COCOMs should adopt red team employment techniques and provide descriptive references in JSOPs of the JTF and Joint Component Headquarters echelons.

INTEGRATE RED TEAMS INTO SENIOR COMMAND LEVELS (JTF AND JOINT COMPONENT COMMENTS) AND INTO ALL FUTURE JOINT AND COMBINED EXERCISES. Given the current state of world affairs, somewhat intangible factors such as culture, history, and self-perception play an ever-increasing role in the planning and execution of military missions. The red team is a vital link by which the Command can remain engaged and savvy in dealing with these factors. For this reason, the red team is a value-added capability that should be integrated into all future joint, combined exercises and real-world scenarios.

Final Thoughts

Without question, having a red team participate in AC09 greatly enhanced the quality of products generated by the JTF staff and the B2C2WGs in which they participated. For the planners, the Red Team's *concept task analysis* was particularly helpful. From the JTF Commander's perspective, the J2—and various working groups whose efforts the *emulative analyses* helped shape—was aided by considering the operational environment in novel ways.

Red team integration into AC09 was effective for three primary reasons. First is the fact that red teaming, as a military discipline, has greatly matured. Over the past several years standards, competencies, education, and training have become institutionalized. The core competencies of *concept task analysis* and *emulative analysis*—with their accompanying techniques and procedures—produced a reliable standard that proved valuable throughout the exercise. Second, the team succeeded because its members were well-informed about the enemy and the region in general. The team's understanding of the enemy—to include its culture, history, economy, and politics—greatly enhanced the Red Team's credibility. It was evident that the AC09 Red Team had thought through many of the "thorny" and challenging issues. Not only did they know their subject very well, they were also skilled

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in communicating their importance to the Commander and his staff. Building a red team from scratch is not a quick or easy task. Having the depth of understanding of a culture to be an effective red team takes years to cultivate, but the experience at AC09 demonstrated that the end result is well worth the investment. Third, and arguably most important, the AC09 Red Team was accepted by the JTF Commander and staff as a full mission partner. The team was well integrated into the JTF staff processes, and its products were effectively incorporated into the Commander's decision cycle. The Red Team's intellectual capital and creativity enabled the JTF staff to perform deeper analyses and to provide better recommendations to the Commander.

A red team, however, is not a "silver bullet." It will not clear the fog of war, nor is it a quick fix to shore-up vulnerabilities in plans and orders. What it provides is a valuable tool to help commanders and staffs more fully understand the nuances and complexities of the asymmetric battlespace. These may be caused by culture, history, economics, language, religion and other intangible—yet vital—aspects of 21st century warfare. Red teaming is a combat multiplier for full spectrum operations.

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About RED TEAM JOURNAL

The RED TEAM JOURNAL Web site (www.redteamjournal.com) was launched in 1997 to further the practice of red teaming and alternative analysis. The current iteration of the site is designed to help analysts and decision makers improve their ability to generate effective national security and business strategies.

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