

5. Selection of Preferred Alternative

The analysis presented in Section 4 form the basis for the recommendation to select Alternative I (East/West) as a preferred alternative for use as training land by the NTC and Fort Irwin. Table 6.1-1 evaluates training mission requirements against the suitability of each alternative to meet the training objective(s).

Alternative I represents the culmination of significant compromises by DA and DOI, relative to previously proposed alternatives (e.g. 1996 DEIS). Prior to the negotiations and impact analysis contained herein, the Army's preferred alternative was alternative IV as it presented the best verity of training scenarios for use by rotational troops and best met the goal of the land expansion by adding the amount of acreage closest to that identified in the LURS. After evaluation of the effects, in particularly effects to the Paradise Valley and Coyote Basin population of tortoise, the Army changed it's preferred alternative to alternative I as the environmentally preferable alternative of the two. Alternatives III (East Gate) and V (East Gate/UTM 90) are less disruptive to the natural and cultural resource systems; however, both rated poorly with regards to meeting critical training mission requirements. Alternative II provides more land, but does not provide the type of land that the Army requires to train as it primarily consists of gently sloping bajadas, open areas and dry lakes. Militarily, such an area has little value for training. Additionally, alternative II would directly impact the most dense areas of desert tortoise that are present in the UTM 90 area and south of Fort Irwin along the eastern side of Fort Irwin Road.

In conclusion, and for the reasons stated in this SDEIS and analysis of the Army's requirements, Alternative I was chosen as the Army's preferred alternative.

Table 5.1-1: Evaluation of Alternatives						
CRITERIA	ALTERNATIVE I	ALTERNATIVE II	ALTERNATIVE III	ALTERNATIVE IV	ALTERNATIVE V	ALTERNATIVE VI
Adheres to Army Training Doctrine— "Train as you fight"	Good—effectiveness limited by requiring multiple crossings of Irwin Road	Poor	Poor - area provides some realism by pushing staging areas back to a distance further than present	Good—effectiveness limited by requiring multiple crossings of Irwin Road	Poor - area provides some realism by pushing staging areas back to a distance further than present	Poor—current land availability forces units to train in a compressed area
Amount of useable maneuver area	Excellent	Good - however, most land is unsuitable for force on force training due to lack of variations in terrain and presence of the Alvord Mountains and Coyote Dry Lake	Poor	Excellent	Poor	Poor - the amount of land presently available for training is inadequate to meet the needs of the NTC.
Terrain variation supports multiple training scenarios	Excellent—includes mountainous, rolling and flat terrain	Poor	Poor	Excellent	Poor	Good
Minimizes the amount of use of a single piece of land	Excellent	Good—maneuver options limited by Alvord Mountains	Poor	Excellent	Poor	Poor—units must utilize the same piece of land several times in order to accomplish their training goals
Allows units to train using doctrinal distances	Good	Good	Poor	Good	Poor	Poor—current capacity does not allow soldiers to utilize their military vehicles to their full capacities.
Airspace utilization	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good	Good