# Introduction

Preparation for each step of the Military Decisionmaking Process (MDMP) is critical for the effective and efficient completion of the process. The lead is the executive officer (XO); who is the lead for everything the staff does. The primary executer of preparation is the Operations NCO in the Plans Cell. The Section NCOs ensure that the representative of their section in the Plans Cell/Working Group has the appropriate resources to execute planning.

# Prior to Deployment (or Training Event)

* Planning footlocker or field desk
  + Doctrinal manuals (on DVD)
  + Planning SOP (on DVD)
  + Tactical SOP (on DVD)
  + Modified Table of Organization and Equipment (MTOE) for organic, assigned, and attached units (on DVD; FMSweb)
  + Pre-formatted worksheets (on DVD) and poster boards (laminated)
  + Writing pens, highlighters, poster markers
  + Other office supplies as required (binder clips, 550 cord, packing tape, duct tape)
  + Blank map graphics and icons
  + Printer and paper
  + Projector
* Poster paper (butcher block) or melamine (dry erase) panels with easels
* Acetate
* Projector screen
* Map board(s) with wing boards (as per SOP)
* Information and knowledge management SOPs
* Identify the planning working group/cell
  + Planner (primary and alternate from each warfighting function)
  + Runner (one from each warfighting function/section is optimal)
  + Scribe (primary and alternate)
  + Digital systems operator (primary and alternate for each system used)
* Country study for the theater of operation
* Terrain model footlocker

# Receipt of Mission

Products to Gather

* Higher headquarters intelligence products
* Higher headquarters warfighting function estimates
* Estimates and products from joint, interagency, intergovernmental, multinational, and non-governmental organization estimates
* Higher headquarters tactical and planning SOPs
* Subordinate unit capabilities briefs and status reports (liaison)

Preparing the Planning Area

* Post (see preparation for mission analysis)
  + Map
  + Synchronization/execution matrix
* Arrange
  + Seating
  + Projectors
  + Writing pads
  + Work areas
  + Break area
* Communications
  + Electricity
  + Digital (equipment, network, and information management)
  + Voice
  + Visual (projector)
  + with Current operations

Staff Preparation

* Know the doctrine, techniques, and procedures associated with your unit mission, warfighting functional area, and assigned functional area
* Learn how your enemy warfighting function counterpart fights (tactics, techniques, procedures, capabilities, people-personnel, equipment, supplies, time, location, training)
* **Develop, establish, and maintain a running estimate**
* Familiarize yourself with doctrinal MDMP and your unit’s Planning SOP
* Read the order
* Review higher headquarters products relative to your warfighting function

Essential Products From Higher Headquarters For Specific Staffs

* Maneuver Enhancement/Engineer/Military Police/Air Defense
  + Critical and defended asset list
  + Survivability methods and effects
* Intelligence/Reconnaissance Squadron
  + Information collection matrix
  + Decision support matrix
* Aviation/Field Artillery/Air Defense
  + Target list
* Sustainment
  + Theater sustainment directive
  + Supporting unit distribution plan
* Every staff
  + Operational graphics
  + Execution/synchronization matrix
  + Decision support matrix/template
  + Enemy most likely and dangerous course of action sketch and statement
  + Counter-part’s running estimate

# Mission Analysis

Preparation for mission analysis begins with the notification of receipt of a mission or task. First, post the map and prepare of overlays. A synchronization or execution matrix blank is an excellent method of presenting mission analysis information produced. Staff officers or NCOs begin by annotating information found in the higher headquarters order, then refine it as they complete analysis.

* Map
  + Area of operation (S3)
  + Area of interest and influence (staff)
  + Higher headquarters operational graphics overlay (S3)
  + Higher headquarters enemy situation template overlay (S2)
  + Higher headquarters modified combined obstacle overlay (staff)
* Synchronization/Execution Matrix
  + Weather data (S2)
  + Enemy tasks-purpose/event template (S2)
  + Higher headquarters mission and commander’s intent (S3)
  + Higher headquarters concept of operation and warfighting function schemes of support (S3-staff)
  + Adjacent unit tasks-purpose (S3)
* Latest task organization (S1)
* Commander’s initial guidance (XO)
* Problem identification (blank)
* Task analysis (blank)

# Working Groups

Mission analysis works most effectively as a collaborative process; where there is a representative from every section to participate. A method is to use “working groups” within the Plans Cell to focus work on particular process steps and development of specific products. A battalion staff is not large enough to execute concurrent working groups; this technique uses the same people, but focuses the subject. Each working group requires the products listed above.

**Intelligence Working Group**: Adds an area of interest/area of influence overlay, modified combined obstacle overlay, weather effects, enemy situation template, event template, and completes the “current operational environment” portion of the problem identification poster.

**Plans Working Group**: Completes the problem identification poster, identifies and defines tasks to include recommended evaluation criteria, known decision points, and sub-events, and develops the mission statement.

**Sustainment Working Group**: Determines resources required, identifies those available, and prepares requests for additional assets.

**Information Collection Working Group**: Identifies intelligence and friendly information gaps, reviews assumptions, and develops the information collection plan.

**Protection Working Group**: Conducts vulnerability assessment, determines the critical asset list, develops essential elements of friendly information, and initiates risk management.

# Course of Action Development

Course of action development preparation is essentially preparing and posting clean copies of the work produced during mission analysis. The Operations NCO and supporting Soldiers accomplish this while the briefers are preparing and rehearsing the mission analysis brief.

* Map (added)
  + Enemy situation template overlay (S2)
  + Modified combined obstacle overlay (staff)
* Synchronization/Execution Matrix (added)
  + Weather effects data (staff)
  + Enemy course of action/event template with triggers (S2)
  + Mission and commander’s intent (S3)
  + Task analysis matrix
    - Task-purpose
    - Evaluation criteria (S3)
    - Decision points (staff)
    - Resource analysis (staff)
    - High-payoff target list (staff)
    - Information collection requirements (staff)
    - Vulnerability assessment/risk analysis and essential elements of friendly information and critical assets list (staff)
* Task organization with status graphics and combat power rating (S4/S1)
* Commander’s planning guidance (XO)
* Enemy capabilities chart with combat power rating (S2)
* Information collection plan/matrix (assumptions) (staff)
* Constraints and authorities list (staff)
* Course of action narrative worksheet/poster (blank)
* Course of action sketch worksheet/poster (blank with…)
  + Known graphics
  + Enemy situation template (with combat power rating)

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# Course of Action Analysis

If the staff is going to use a terrain model, the Plans Operations NCO and supporting Soldiers begin preparation as soon as the XO or S3 has approved the area of influence during mission analysis. Using a synchronization or execution matrix to develop each course of action dramatically speeds up preparation for course of action analysis. In addition, this technique ensures that all aspects of the initial “action” phase for each event are complete.

* Map or terrain model with graphics and symbols
* Synchronization/Execution matrix (added)
  + Known events
  + Initial actions
  + Reaction & counteraction columns (w/known information)
* Event template
* Mission and Commander’s intent
* Evaluation criteria
* Assumptions
* Decision support matrix
* Fire support matrix
* Information collection matrix
* Loss worksheets (combat power, personnel, and equipment)
* Course of action narratives and sketches (scripts)
* Warfighting function specific synchronization matrices

# Course of Action Comparison and Approval

Course of action comparison requires a clean version of the refined course of action sketches, narratives, and synchronization matrices. Transitioning the planning area into a briefing area, or moving pertinent products into the briefing area for display is essential.

# Order Production

Order production requires a clean version of the approved course of action narrative and synchronization matrix. During order production, the transition from the Plans Cell to the Current Operations Cell occurs. Ensure that the clean versions of products meet the standards in the Tactical SOP or Command Post SOP for current operations charts.

# Digital Military Decisionmaking Process Techniques

Command Post of the Future (CPOF) is the Army’s system of record for planning as well as consolidating information for battle tracking. CPOF facilitates information sharing, collaborative, and concurrent planning. CPOF Pasteboards do not replace poster paper/ melamine panels charts and notes for creative thinking. Build graphic overlays and matrices (tables) in CPOF; use PowerPoint for briefs.