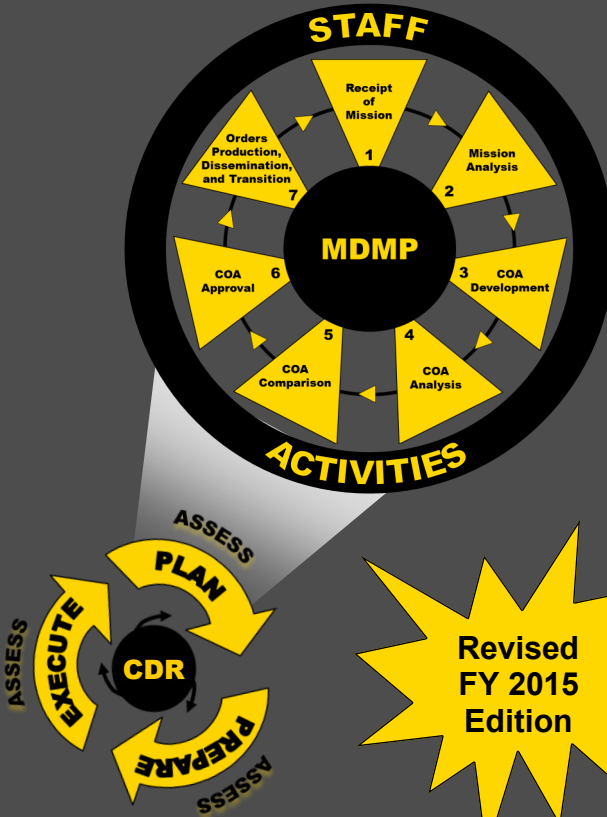


# DESK REFERENCE

## Military Decisionmaking Process



Revised  
FY 2015  
Edition

January 2015

This Handbook is a product of the:  
Training Analysis Feedback Team (TAFT)  
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 66027-2346

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Step 4

Step 5

Step 6

Step 7

## About This Book

### Purpose

This publication has been developed as a tool to assist unit commanders and staffs with the *seven steps* of the Military Decisionmaking Process (MDMP) and is aligned with doctrine 2015.

### How It's Organized

This revised publication is designed as a quick reference for use during the conduct of the MDMP or to “brush up” on the process before it is initiated. Organization of this book supports a simplified, checklist approach.

Each major task (step) of the MDMP is briefly described and followed by a graphic that highlights its key features. It is then separated into its supporting tasks with the following information provided: actions that must occur, typical performers of the action, results that should occur, and helpful tips to assist in task execution. A fill-in “Notes” section is provided at the end of each subtask. Selected tools to assist in task execution are also included, along with a glossary of applicable terms and acronyms.

### Note From the Author

*This revised edition is not intended to be an “end all” reference tool for the MDMP. To cover every possible staff position and staff-to-topic combination would require far more detail than a reference of this nature can provide. Successful employment of this tool lies in its collaborative use with other staff members, maintaining MDMP process focus, and “checking off” critical process requirements.*

*It is also impossible to write observations, insights, and lessons (OIL) to fit each reader / user. Suffice it to say that you must balance your MDMP staff duties and responsibilities with those of other staff personnel. As you proceed through the tasks of each step in the MDMP, whether you are the commander, XO, or principal / special staff, consider your support role and those of others in getting the job done. You may not have to take any action on a given task or associated observation or insight, but you should be the “eyes and ears” that the right action is being taken by the right person, on the right tasks, at the right time.*

## About This Book (cont)

### Special Information Legend

The following ICONs are included throughout this publication with the purpose of directing reader / user attention to information ranging from “considered critical” to noteworthy observations, insights, and lessons (OIL). These are author annotations and may not coincide with reader / user opinion.



Information is considered critical to task / mission accomplishment. Requires special scrutiny to ensure successful staff collaboration and unit execution



Stop for a minute! Based on the information provided, check that how you proceed is the most effective COA.



Note the reference listed if you need subject clarification or need to know more.



Every task “Tips” section contains valuable observations, insights and lessons.

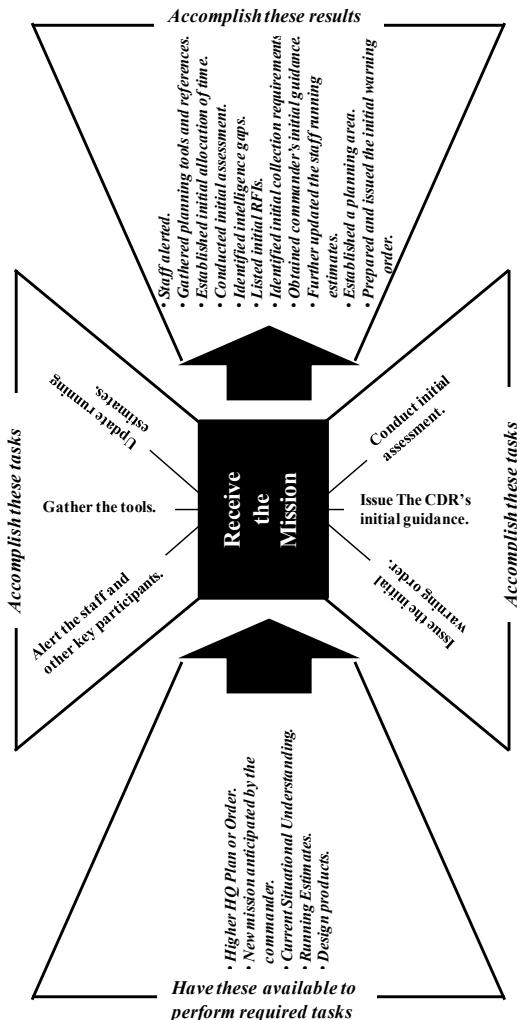
### Task Reference Legend

Before each step of the MDMP, a table identifying a by-task, paragraph reference to FM 6-0 has been included. While this book provides a task-by-task breakout of actions that should occur, who performs them, the results that should be achieved, and numerous observations, insights, and lessons (OIL) that will aid in task performance, it is important that a review of current doctrine (by task) be accomplished. As you proceed through the MDMP tasks that follow, use this table to quickly make that review.

## About This Book (cont)

### MDMP Step Inputs, Actions, and Outputs

Simply put . . . there are seven major steps / tasks and multiple sub-tasks. Each step is conducted in an iterative or repetitious manner, where key actions and products are needed as inputs to the tasks within each step, and performance of the tasks within each step produces key outputs . . . many of which will be needed as inputs to the succeeding MDMP step. Note the following example concerning the first step of the MDMP, *Receipt of Mission*. A graphic example unique to the MDMP step being addressed precedes each MDMP step in this publication.



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## Introduction to the MDMP

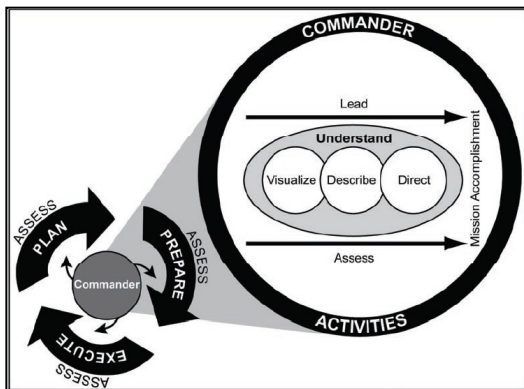
The MDMP is an iterative planning methodology that integrates the activities of the commander, staff, subordinate headquarters, and other partners to understand the situation and mission; develop and compare courses of action; decide on a course of action that best accomplishes the mission; and produce an operation plan or order for execution (ADP 5-0).

The MDMP

- Helps leaders apply thoroughness, clarity, sound judgment, logic, and professional knowledge to understand situations, develop options to solve problems, and reach decisions. **FM 6-0**
- Helps commanders, staffs, and others think critically and creatively while planning. **FM 6-0**
- Facilitates collaborative planning. The higher headquarters solicits input and continuously shares information concerning future operations through planning meetings, warning orders, and other means.
- Shares information with subordinate and adjacent units, supporting and supported units, and other military and civilian partners.
- Encourages active collaboration among all organizations affected by the pending operations to build a shared understanding of the situation, participate in course of action development and decisionmaking, and resolve conflicts before publishing the plan or order. **FM 6-0**
- Focuses on developing an understanding of the current situation and determining what to assess and how to assess progress using measures of effectiveness and measures of performance. **FM 6-0**

**TIP**

*At Receipt of Mission, a commander's first task is to achieve a clear understanding of the operational environment.*



## What's Involved?

The following MDMP table is nothing more than a “snapshot” of the process. The devil is in the details, as there are numerous tasks within each step that must be accomplished to effectively move through the process. Not all tasks within the steps of the MDMP are done sequentially. Many are done simultaneously, as will be pointed out in the explanations ahead. Consider the letter “Z” as you navigate this table. Note, this is not a mirror copy of Figure 9-1 in FM 6-0. It includes other key input and output information identified in the MDMP step sections of Chapter 9, FM 6-0.

Key inputs	Steps	Key outputs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Higher headquarters' plan or order or a new mission anticipated by the commander</li> </ul>	<p>Step 1: <b>Receipt of Mission</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commander's initial guidance</li> <li>Initial allocation of time</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commander's initial guidance</li> <li>Higher headquarters' plan or order</li> <li>Higher headquarters' knowledge and intelligence products</li> <li>Knowledge products from other organizations</li> <li>Army design methodology products</li> </ul>	<p>Step 2: <b>Mission Analysis</b></p>	<p>Warning order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Problem statement</li> <li>Mission statement</li> <li>Initial commander's intent</li> <li>Initial planning guidance</li> <li>Initial CCIRs and EEFFs</li> <li>Updated IPB and running estimates</li> <li>Assumptions</li> <li>Evaluation criteria for COAs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mission statement</li> <li>Initial commander's intent, planning guidance, CCIRs, and EEFFs</li> <li>Updated IPB and running estimates</li> <li>Assumptions</li> <li>Evaluation criteria for COAs</li> </ul>	<p>Step 3: <b>Course of Action (COA) Development</b></p>	<p>Warning order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>COA statements and sketches                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tentative task organization</li> <li>Broad concept of operations</li> </ul> </li> <li>Revised planning guidance</li> <li>Updated assumptions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated running estimates</li> <li>Revised planning guidance</li> <li>COA statements and sketches</li> <li>Updated assumptions</li> </ul>	<p>Step 4: <b>COA Analysis (War Game)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Refined COAs</li> <li>Potential decision points</li> <li>War-game results</li> <li>Initial assessment measures</li> <li>Updated assumptions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated running estimates</li> <li>Refined COAs</li> <li>Evaluation criteria</li> <li>War-game results</li> <li>Updated assumptions</li> </ul>	<p>Step 5: <b>COA Comparison</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluated COAs</li> <li>Recommended COAs</li> <li>Updated running estimates</li> <li>Updated assumptions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated running estimates</li> <li>Evaluated COAs</li> <li>Recommended COAs</li> <li>Updated assumptions</li> </ul>	<p>Step 6: <b>COA Approval</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commander approved COA and any modifications</li> <li>Refined commander's intent, CCIRs, and EEFFs</li> <li>Updated assumptions</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commander approved COA and any modifications</li> <li>Refined commander's intent, CCIRs, and EEFFs</li> <li>Updated assumptions</li> </ul>	<p>Step 7: <b>Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition</b></p>	<p>Warning order</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approved operation plan or order</li> <li>Subordinates understand the plan or order</li> </ul>

## Who Talks to Whom About What

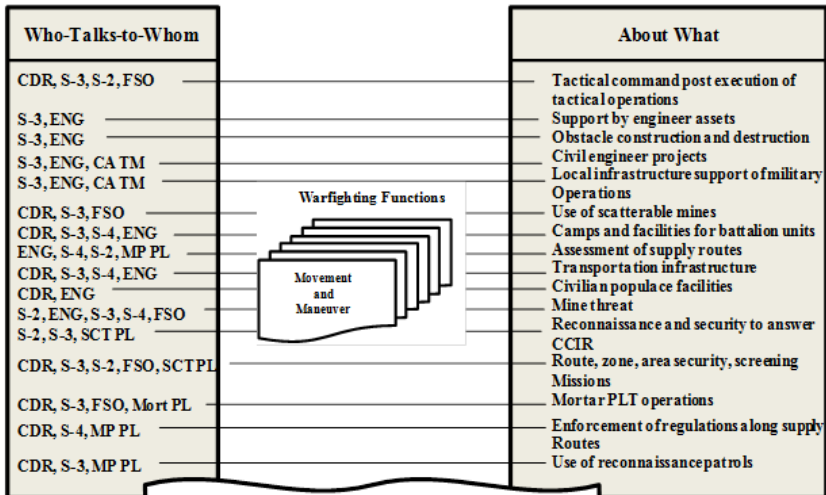
Remember the earlier comment about the “devil is in the details?” Nowhere is this more true than knowing who to communicate with to get the right answer or product, in the right sequence or format, at the right time. Planning standard operating procedures (SOPs) and Tactical SOPs should have this information . . . right? Don’t count on it.

As you train on the MDMP, check your SOPs, and find out if there are omissions in “who talks to whom about what.” For every task and product identified in the previous graphic, there are potentially a host of staff personnel interacting with one another to accomplish them.

**TIPs**

*Identify every key staff position involved in the execution of your unit’s MDMP, and ask the question . . . within this process, “who talks to whom about what”? Correct what is wrong and add the correct answers to your SOPs.*

**For every “what” topic you see in the below graphic, there is also a “why.” Consider “why” a particular staff member may need to collaborate about one of the “what” topics. You may discover a need to collaborate based on another staff member’s “why.”**



## Who Talks to Whom About What (cont.)

Following are examples of the executive officer’s (XO) interaction with the unit staff organized by two of the six warfighting functions (WFF), Movement and Maneuver and Intelligence. These lists (examples only . . . units may have different requirements than those shown) can be an important tool for the XO and the staff and should be included in unit SOPs. Don’t make the mistake of thinking that the following graphics only apply to the XO. Your staff position is addressed as well. Take the time to identify where you fit within each WFF. You are grouped with other key staff, and information topics (“About What”) that you and others may need to collaborate on. A complete list of collaboration topics within each WFF may be found in the TAFT *Staff Handbook*.

### WFF - Movement and Maneuver



Collaboration With	About What
CDR, S-3  CDR, S-3 CDR, All Staff CDR, All Staff CDR, S-3, S-1, S-4 CDR, S-3 CDR, S-3, S-2 S-3 CDR, S-3, CA, S-2 CDR, S-3, FSO, CA CDR, S-3  S-3 CDR, S-3  CDR, S-3, S-4 CDR, S-3 S-3, S-4 FSO, S-3, S-2 CDR, S-3	Shaping the area of operations (AO) and area of influence (AI) Conditions for successful decisive operations Synchronization of all the elements of combat power Commander’s (CDR’s) intent and concept of operations Combat status of all subordinate units Integration of attached units Support to deception, counter-deception operations Battalion (BN) Collection Plan Scope of Civil Affairs Unit taskings and assets to accomplish effects tasks Compatibility of other national military structures with U.S. systems Operational assessments Coordination with adjacent, attached, special operations forces, host nation, and coalition units Battalion unit movements Providing a reserve Mobility in the AO Integration of lethal and non-lethal effects Current operations
CDR, S-3, MP PL CDR, S-3, MP PL CDR, S-1, MP PL CDR, S-3, MP PL CDR, S-3, MP PL CDR, S-3, MP PL S-3, CA TM, S-2, MP PL CDR, S-3, MP PL, S-2 S-2, MP PL CDR, S-3, MP PL CDR, S-3, MP PL CDR, S-3 CDR, S-3  CDR, S-3, S-2 FSO, S-1, S-2, S-3, S-4	Use of reconnaissance patrols Law enforcement missions Criminal investigations Crowd and riot control operations Area damage control Reaction force operations Assessment of civil defense and local police Battalion detainee collection point Physical security Liaison with local police Personnel, convoy, very important person (VIP) security Assets from higher headquarters (HHQ) Training requirements, allocation of training resources, CDR’s training guidance Stability Operations (SO) planning Positioning of fires units

## Who Talks to Whom About What (cont.)

### WFF - Movement and Maneuver (cont.)

Collaboration With	About What
CDR, S-3, S-2, FSO S-3, ENG S-3, ENG S-3, ENG, CA TM S-3, ENG, CA TM CDR, S-3, FSO CDR, S-3, S-4, ENG ENG, S-4, S-2, MP PL CDR, S-3, S-4, ENG CDR, ENG S-2, ENG, S-3, S-4, FSO S-2, S-3, SCT PL CDR, S-3, S-2, FSO, SCT PL CDR, S-3, FSO, Mort PL CDR, S-4, MP PL CDR, S-3, MP PL	Tactical command post execution of tactical operations Support by engineer assets Obstacle construction and destruction Civil engineer projects Local infrastructure support of military operations Use of scatterable mines Camps and facilities for battalion units Assessment of supply routes Transportation infrastructure Civilian populace facilities Mine threat Information Collection and security to answer CCIRs Route, zone, area security, screening missions Mortar PLT operations Enforcement of regulations along supply routes Use of reconnaissance patrols

### WFF - Intelligence

Collaboration With	About What
CDR, S-2, CA TM, MISO, S-1 CDR, S-2, S-1, CA TM, MISO TM, IO CDR, S-2, S-3, CHEMO, S-1, Chaplain CDR, S-3, S-2, S-1 CDR, S-3, S-2, S-1  All Staff S-2, S-3, Fires, S-6 All Staff	Perceptions of the local population, belligerent factions, and local leaders The political dimension of the operational environment  The physical and mental health of the command  Casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) Plan Medical treatment to Soldiers, detainees (to include prisoners of war), and civilians Input to measures of effectiveness (MOE) assessment The brigade combat team (BCT) intelligence process Intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB), including integration of input from other staff sections
CDR, XO, S-2, S-3  S-2, S-3  S-2, S-3 S-2, S-3 S-2, BDE S-2 S-2, S-3, Patrol Leaders S-2, S-1, S-4, S-3  S-2, S-3, Fires, CA	Situation development, to include updating the enemy, terrain and weather, and civil considerations portions of the common operational picture (COP) Synchronization of intelligence support with combat and collections operations; commander's critical information requirements (CCIRs) (including priority intelligence requirements [PIRs] and friendly forces information requirements [FFIR]s), and other information requirements (IRs) to develop collection tasks and requests from higher and adjacent units Adjustments to the Collection Plan to facilitate integration Collection operations All-source intelligence that answers PIRs Patrol briefings and debriefings Oversight and support of military intelligence (MI) assets and units Pertinent demographic and economic issues

**Who Talks to Whom About What (cont.)**

*WFF - Intelligence (cont.)*

<b>Collaboration With</b>	<b>About What</b>
<p>CDR, S-3, S-2, CA TM</p> <p>CDR, S-3, S-2, CA TM CDR, S-3, CA TM</p> <p>CDR, S-3, CA TM CDR, S-3, MP PL S-2, CI, HUMINT, S2X, THT S-2, CMO, S2X, THT, G-2 S-2, S2X, S-6, THT CDR, S-3, S-2, THT</p> <p>S-2, S2X, THT</p>	<p>Preparation and integration of area assessments in support of civil-military operations (CMO).</p> <p>Civilian interference with military operations</p> <p>Performance of specific functions within the limits of the authority and liability established by international treaties and agreements</p> <p>Effects of the civilian population on BN operations</p> <p>Liaison with local civilian law enforcement authorities</p> <p>HUMINT Collection Plan to support the BN Collection Plan</p> <p>Coordination of HUMINT and counter-intelligence (CI) activities in the BN AO with national agencies</p> <p>Technical control measures for HUMINT and CI reporting</p> <p>Operational guidance (not operational control) to HUMINT collectors and CI agents</p> <p>HUMINT and CI activities supporting battalion effects priorities</p>
<p>S-2, CA, MISO TM</p> <p>S-2, THT, CA, Patrol Debriefs</p> <p>S-2, CA, Fires, THT</p> <p>S-2, ENG</p> <p>S-2, THT, CMO, CA, Patrols</p> <p>S-2, Patrol Debriefs, G-2 S-2, Patrol Debriefs, THT S-2, Patrol Debriefs, THT S-4</p> <p>S-2, S-3, CDR S-2, S-2 Section</p> <p>S-2, S-3, Fires</p> <p>S-2, THT, Patrols</p> <p>S-2, CA, THT, IO</p> <p>All Staff S-2, XO, CDR, S-3 S-2, THT, CA, CMO</p>	<p>Third nation support to belligerents or other outside influences</p> <p>Indicators of continued / increased hostile activities</p> <p>Demographics that allow for encouragement, and/or discouragement of belligerent courses of action (COA)</p> <p>Observation and fields of fire, avenues of approach, key terrain, obstacles and movement, cover and concealment (OAKOC) analysis</p> <p>Belligerent groups and their relationship to each other. (Political, cultural, and economic allegiances between belligerent groups)</p> <p>Leadership links between belligerent groups</p> <p>Discipline and training of belligerent groups</p> <p>Capabilities of belligerent groups</p> <p>Supporting functions associated with belligerent groups for logistics, movement and populace support</p> <p>Responses from belligerent groups to US actions</p> <p>Synchronization effort to ensure every element of the BN understands the intelligence required and plays an active role in the collection and production of that intelligence</p> <p>Nomination of collection tasks to support battalion effects collection efforts</p> <p>Threat propaganda / recruitment teams within or through the area of responsibility (AOR)</p> <p>Current situation regarding enemy and environmental factors that will impact planning and operational execution</p> <p>Maintain IPB</p> <p>Intelligence production team</p> <p>Use of HUMINT</p>

## Who Talks to Whom About What (cont.)

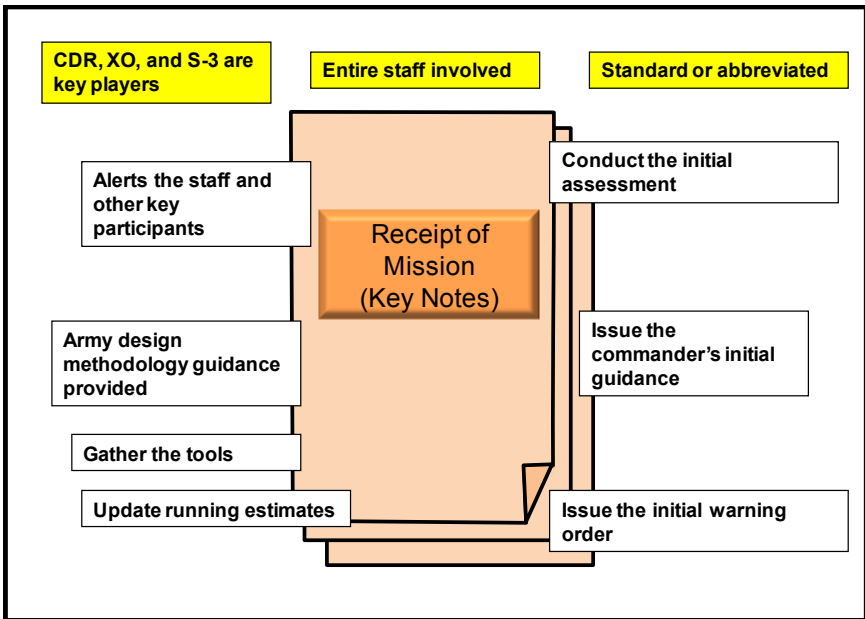
### WFF - Intelligence (cont.)

Collaboration With	About What
S-2, SSO	Release of classified US information in accordance with the multinational sharing agreements
S-2, S-3, NGO	Integration of NGOs, international organizations, host nation (HN) / police, civilian police, and others into the intelligence process
S-2, G-2	Integration of intelligence assets from higher levels
All Staff	The battalion (BN) Collection Plan
S-3, S-2	Assessment of the enemy to U.S. forces
S-3, S-2	Historic connections of other nations' involvement in the life of the host nation
S-3, S-2	Local political, social, and economic boundaries, and design of boundaries to capitalize on the administrative political boundaries of the host nation
S-4, S-3, S-2, S-1, FSO	Logistic preparation of the battlefield
S-4, S-2	Impact of operations on the local economy
S-4, S-2	Sustainment stability / capability / vulnerability input to running estimates and COA Analysis
S-4, S-3	The unique logistics capabilities of each member of the multinational force, if applicable
S-6, S-2	Threat force communications capability (UHF, VHF, long-range cordless phone, cell phone systems, commercial, couriers, signaling mirrors, etc.) regarding their potential impact on operations for the S-2
S-6, S-2	Mission Command Systems (MCS) vulnerability to enemy and civilian actions
FSO, S-2	Battalion Observation Plan
S-6, S-2, IO, CA, MISO TM	Battle damage assessment (BDA) and MOE are integrated into intelligence estimates
ENG, S-2	Terrain visualization on the effects of terrain on friendly and enemy operations
MISO TM, CDR, S-3, XO, S-2	Military information support operations (MISO) activities in support of the battalion
MISO TM, CDR, S-2	Enemy propaganda
CDR, S-3, CA TM	Public information media under civil control
CDR, S-3, FSO, CA TM	Culturally sensitive sites and protected targets

## Receipt of Mission

Commanders initiate the MDMP upon receipt, or in anticipation, of a mission. The **Receipt of Mission** step alerts all participants of pending planning requirements, enabling them to determine the amount of time available for planning and preparation and deciding on a planning approach, including guidance on the Army design methodology and how to abbreviate the MDMP, if required. Note the highlights of this step in the following graphic.

### MDMP Step 1 Highlights

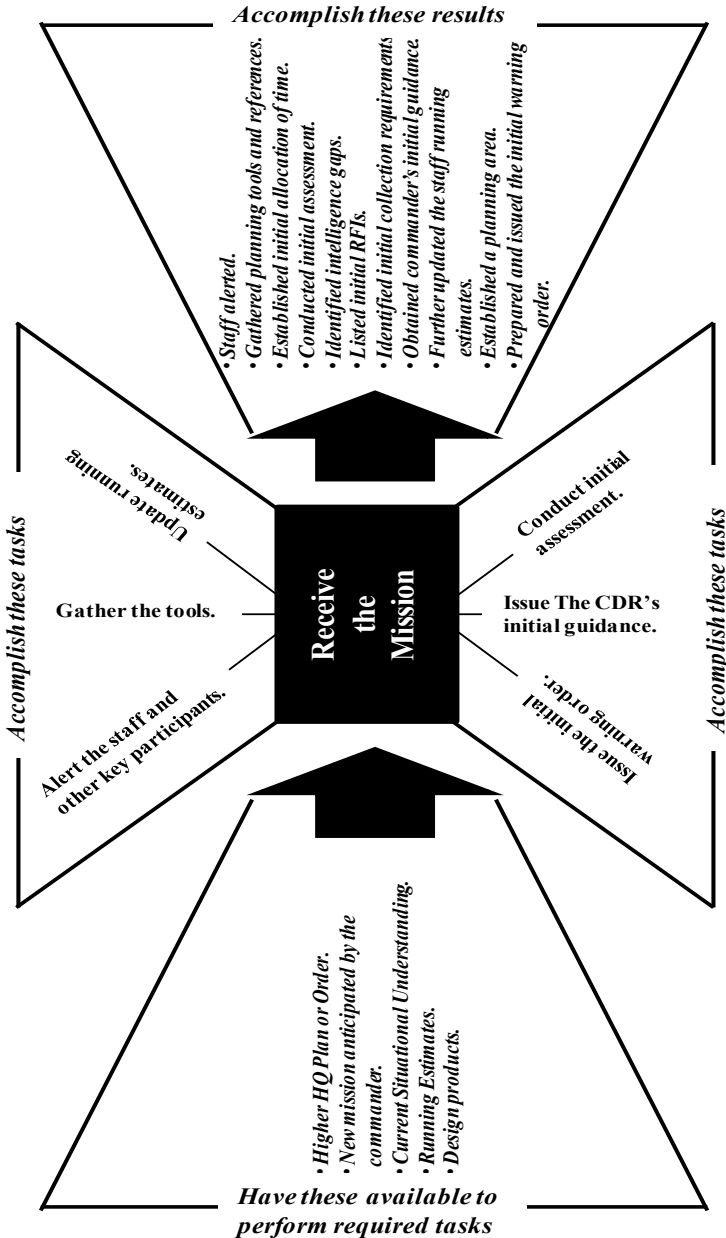






# Receipt of Mission (cont.)

## MDMP Step 1 Inputs, Actions, and Outputs



## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

**Task: Alert the Staff and other Key Participants**

### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Receipt of Mission

### *Process Tasks*

- Alert the staff and other key participants
- Gather the tools
- Update running estimates
- Conduct initial assessment
- Issue the commander’s initial guidance
- Issue the initial warning order

- ✓ Operations section alerts staff.
- ✓ Unit SOP identifies who participates.
- ✓ Other military, civilian, and host-nation organizations.

### Receipt of Mission (cont.)

What follows is a simplistic tool you can use to accomplish the six sub-tasks that must be performed during *Receipt of Mission*. Each task is presented in four parts: the actions that must occur, the typical performers of those actions, the action results that should occur, and a check-the-box list of helpful tips.

#### **Task: Alert the Staff and Other Key Participants**

##### **Actions That Must Occur**

Check them off as you go.

- Current operations integration cell drafts and issues an alert to the staff to prepare them for planning.
- Primary staff officers coordinate and supervise the actions of their respective staffs.
- Coordinate staff actions required to ensure staff running estimates are current and staff elements have necessary mission analysis tools. Ensure shared network databases are current. Identify information gaps that may require staff action.

##### **Typical Performers of the Actions**

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Commander
- XO
- S-3 Section
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

##### **Results That Should Occur**

Check them off as you go.


- HHQ order or commander’s directive to initiate MDMP.
- Staff elements alerted.
- Staff coordination and supervision.
- Coordinated staff actions.
- Currency of shared network databases.
- Information gaps identified.

## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

OIL

## Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- When the unit receives a new mission, turn your immediate attention to alerting the staff and gathering the planning tools and products that will be needed. Check the unit Tactical SOP. It should all be there. 
- Know who should be notified (staff and subordinate commanders), their contact information, and their responsibilities upon notification.
- Have the **current operations integration cell** notify required participants. Make sure they have the required "attendee" list. Double check what the SOP requires.
- Know who should participate in mission analysis, who the alternates are, and where and when they should assemble.
- Ensure the current operations integration cell notifies other military, civilian, and host-nation organizations that impact upcoming operations.
- Get the unit Tactical SOP to supporting and attached units, have them review it, and ensure they are aware of their responsibilities.
- If there is a habitual relationship between your unit and another subordinate unit, ensure they have your Tactical SOP prior to mission planning.
- Consider the level of participation in the unit's planning process with the complexity of the mission, on-going mission support, the need for key leadership to be present, and the experience of both key leaders and staff representatives.
- Ensure maps are available (analog and digital) for overlay development for each WFF.
- Ensure digital systems supporting the operation are present with trained operators.
- Do an inventory of orders and overlays ensuring they complete. Know what needs to be duplicated for distribution.
- Check that all systems are a "go" for producing copies of the HHQ order and operations overlay.
- Determine who has the requirements for overlay production and how they are to be distributed. Ensure you address both analog and digital products and units both inside and outside the CP.

Training Analysis Feedback Team

### Receipt of Mission (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Check that all plans and orders are compliant with domestic and international law, and that all planning products are relevant and suitable for subordinates, based on the commander's intent.
- Refer to the staff's running estimates and check the status of committed and uncommitted subordinate units and key equipment. Generally, there are questions that will drive initial requests for information (RFI).
- Check that the internal RFI process is nested with the HHQ process.
- You know *Mission Analysis* is next, so prepare early. Set up the CP for it.
- Monitor external requirements / personnel tasks to ensure the necessary personnel are available for the MDMP.
- Check the plans SOP to see which staff tools will be required to complete the MDMP.
- Each member of the staff is responsible for (must read and/or analyze) what is in the base order and the annexes they have been assigned in the Tactical SOP. What is your status?



#### Notes

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## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### Task: Gather the Tools

#### “Task Snapshot”

## Receipt of Mission

### Process Tasks

- Alert the staff and other key participants
- **Gather the tools**
- Update running estimates
- Conduct initial assessment
- Issue the commander’s initial guidance
- Issue the initial warning order

- ✓ Appropriate field manuals, including FM 6-0 and ADRP 1-02.
- ✓ All documents related to the mission and area of operations (AO), including the higher headquarters’ OPLAN and OPORD, maps and terrain products, and operational graphics.
- ✓ Higher headquarters’ and other organizations’ intelligence and assessment products.
- ✓ Both their own and the higher headquarters’ SOPs.
- ✓ Current running estimates.
- ✓ Any Army design methodology products, including the design concept.



### Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

#### Task: Gather the Tools

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- Unit staff prepares for *Mission Analysis* by gathering the tools needed to perform it.
- Gather the HHQ order or planning directive from the commander. Anticipation of a mission also initiates the MDMP.
- Check the unit Tactical SOP / Plans SOP to ensure the necessary tools and any other special preparatory requirements are checked off.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- S-3 Section
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- References and tools for succeeding steps of the MDMP.
- Staff running estimates.

OIL

#### Helpful Tips


Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Check on these tools being available:
  - References (ADPs / ADRPs, field manuals (FM), etc.).
  - HHQ plan / order.
  - Maps.
  - Terrain products.
  - Operational graphics.
  - HHQ and other organization intelligence products.
  - Estimates and products from other military and civilian organizations.

## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Yours and HHQ SOPs.
- Current running estimates.
- Army design methodology products and concept.
- Ensure the Tactical SOP addresses who gets which annexes, that all annexes are assigned to a specific staff section, and who is the primary staff representative responsible for the annex.
- Review the reference section (located before paragraph 1: Situation) of HHQ operation plans and orders to identify documents (such as theater policies and memoranda) related to the upcoming operation.
- In addition to the base order, check to see if you have the task organization, functional annexes, and the operational graphics.
- Check that you have a list of tool requirements for the mission at hand, their relevancy, and when / if they will be available.
- Remember to gather and update knowledge products throughout the MDMP, not just as part of this MDMP step. 
- Has the current operations section posted the HHQ order (WARNORD, OPORD, or FRAGORD), graphics, and the anticipated new mission statement to the CP server home page? (Review it, and place it in the shared folder named for the mission at hand.)
- Check your running estimate to ensure currency and relevancy. (It should contain the minimum requirements addressed in the unit Tactical SOP.)
- Use pre-made charts to list PIRs and FFIRs recommended as proposed CCIRs. (Start thinking early about how CCIRs fits for anticipated decisions the commander must make.)
- Ensure maps are available (analog and digital) for overlay development for each WFF.
- Ensure digital systems supporting the operation are present with trained operators.





## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### *Task: Update Running Estimates*

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Receipt of Mission

### *Process Tasks*

- Alert the staff and other key participants
- Gather the tools
- **Update running estimates**
- Conduct initial assessment
- Issue the commander’s initial guidance
- Issue the initial warning order

- ✓ Critical facts and assumptions from each staff section.
- ✓ Information from other military and civilian organizations.
- ✓ Status of friendly units and resources.
- ✓ Key civil considerations that affect each functional area.
- ✓ Continuous throughout the Operations Process.

## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### Task: Update Running Estimates

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- The commander and staff quickly assess staff running estimates and/or information already available to assist planning.
- They review and revise running estimates as required.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Commander
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- Running estimates updated and ready for mission analysis.
- Identified gaps in staff running estimates.

OIL

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Start your estimate updates immediately upon mission receipt. Then, continue estimate updates throughout the Operations Process (Check to see that correct formats by WFF are included in the unit Tactical SOP).
- Know how estimate updates affect COA development.
- Look for "gaps" in the knowledge needed to plan successfully and convert them into IRs and RFIs.
- Be aggressive in seeking information important to your functional area, and know where to look for information.
- Be on the alert for updates regarding committed and uncommitted subordinate units and key equipment.









Receipt of Mission (cont.)

**Task: Conduct Initial Assessment**

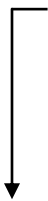
Step 1

*“Task Snapshot”*

**Receipt  
of  
Mission**

**Process Tasks**

- Alert the staff and other key participants
- Gather the tools
- Update running estimates
- **Conduct initial assessment**
- Issue the commander’s initial guidance
- Issue the initial warning order



- ✓ Time needed by headquarters and subordinate units to plan and prepare.
- ✓ Guidance on the Army design methodology and abbreviating the MDMP, if necessary.
- ✓ Outside agencies / organizations to incorporate in the planning process.
- ✓ Evaluation of staff experience, cohesiveness, rest, and stress.
- ✓ Initial allocation of available time.
- ✓ XO develops staff planning timeline.

### Receipt of Mission (cont.)

#### Task: Conduct Initial Assessment

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander and staff conduct an initial assessment of time and resources available to plan, prepare, and begin execution of an operation.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Initial allocation of available time.

Time needed to plan and prepare for the mission for both the headquarters and subordinate units.

Guidance on Army design methodology and abbreviating the MDMP, if required.

Staff experience, cohesiveness, and level of rest or stress.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Check the Tactical SOP lists for generic planning time lines (Remember, they are only a guide. Based on the factors of METT-TC, adjustments will occur).

Help the commander in visualizing, describing, and directing operations and planning.

Use the assessment to identify how you can optimize time for subordinate commanders to perform troop leading procedures.


Use the 1/3<sup>rd</sup>s - 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s rule to ensure sufficient planning and preparation time is provided to subordinate units.

## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

### Helpful Tips (cont.)


Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Be aware that the cognitive application of the Army design methodology and the formal planning process overlap.
- The commander's guidance regarding Army design methodology should address three distinct elements that collectively provide a design concept: framing the operational environment (what is the context in which the Army design methodology will be applied), framing the problem (what problem is the design intended to solve), operational approach (what broad, general approach will solve the problem). 
- During Army design methodology, the commander and staff must consider the conditions, circumstances, and factors that affect the use of capabilities and resources, as well as those that bear on decisionmaking.
- Avoid the need for immediate action to overly influence the need for detailed planning. An acceptable balance must be found.
- The commander, with the advice of his staff, must determine whether the time available for planning will permit a complete MDMP or if the process must be abbreviated to produce an OPORD.
- If the decision is made to shorten the MDMP, the commander must provide accompanying guidance.
- Carefully consider the resources available for planning. Each will have a critical supporting mission. Each will need to be positioned on the battlefield, and each will need to be directly involved in the planning process.
- The XO is responsible for the staff planning time line. To accomplish it, consider at a minimum the following:
  - Time from mission receipt to mission execution.
  - Time needed by the unit HQ and subordinate units to plan and prepare.
  - The current IPB products available.
  - The current running estimates and amount of updating required.

### Receipt of Mission (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Time required to position critical elements for the planned operation.
- Staff experience, time working together, fatigue, and stress factors.
- The staff planning time line should identify what products are due, when they are due, who is responsible for them, and who receives them.
- Understand the importance of meeting time requirements, benchmarks, simplicity, and a level of detail that will contribute to a successful plan.
- Organize your time line into planning, preparing, and executing segments. 
- Include time for meetings, briefings, briefing preparation, and rehearsals in all time estimates.
- Take a hard look at the operational time line and determine how long you believe you can spend on each step of the MDMP and which planning products will be produced by whom and by when.
- A possible allocation time associated with steps of the MDMP might be; *mission analysis* 30%; *COA development* 20%; *COA analysis / comparison / approval* 30%; *orders production / dissemination / transition* 20%.
- Do not overlook periodic “targeting cell,” “information collection,” and “risk management” team meetings being incorporated into the unit’s planning time line.
- Determine how to incorporate collaborative planning, should it be required.
- The Army design methodology fosters dialog and collaboration as commanders and staffs formulate conditions that define a desired end state and develop approaches that aim to achieve those conditions.





## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### **Task: Issue the Commander's Initial Guidance**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Receipt of Mission

### *Process Tasks*

- Alert the staff and other key participants
- Gather the tools
- Update running estimates
- Conduct initial assessment
- **Issue the commander's initial guidance**
- Issue the initial warning order

- ✓ Initial time allocation.
- ✓ Decision to initiate Army design methodology or go straight into the MDMP.
- ✓ How to abbreviate the MDMP, if required.
- ✓ Necessary coordination to perform, including liaison officers to exchange.
- ✓ Authorized movements and initiation of information collection.
- ✓ Collaborative planning times and locations.
- ✓ Initial information requirements (IR).
- ✓ Additional staff tasks.

### Receipt of Mission (cont.)

#### **Task: Issue the Commander's Initial Guidance**

#### **Actions That Must Occur**

Check them off as you go.

The commander issues his initial guidance (See Commander's Initial Guidance Reference Tool on page 69).

#### **Typical Performers of the Actions**

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander

#### **Results That Should Occur**

Check them off as you go.

- Initial time allocations.
- The decision to initiate the Army design methodology or go straight into the MDMP.
- How to abbreviate the MDMP (if required).
- Necessary coordination, including exchange of liaison officers.
- Authorized movements and initiation of information collection.
- Collaborative planning times and locations.
- Initial information requirements (IR).
- Additional staff tasks.

#### **Helpful Tips**

**OIL**

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- The commander's guidance orients the focus of planning and operations, linking desired conditions to potential combinations of actions the force may employ to achieve them.
- The staff must know whether the commander desires to go with the deliberate planning process or the abbreviated process.





## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Remember, based on the operational time line, the commander may feel that there is not enough time to accomplish the full MDMP process and some abbreviation must occur.
- If the commander decides in his guidance to abbreviate the MDMP, or portions thereof, available planning time, staff training levels, and position fills may need to change. 
- Check the current Tactical SOP. His standard guidance content should be there.
- Look at the planning time line carefully. It can be an ally or an enemy depending on the amount available.
- Know the key elements of initial guidance that you should expect from the commander. If you don't hear all that is necessary for planning, ask for it. **Always refer to the Tactical SOP!**
- Key is the commander's review of available intelligence products. Obtain guidance from him regarding any products he wants developed or collected to include the product and collection development time line.
- The commander's initial questions result in IRs or CCIRs and helps focus the staff on what he believes is important, e.g., the information collection planner will need to refer to them to reinforce whether the gaps he has found and the questions he has asked are adequate to answer the commander's questions. Ensure his questions are captured and addressed. 
- While the commander's initial guidance will greatly assist your setup for the initiation of planning, do not confuse it with the commander's planning guidance that occurs during mission analysis.
- Based on HHQ taskings, if available, review the information requirements that have been developed and have the S-2 provide draft indicators and / or Specific Information Requirements (SIRs) to guide collection assets. Initial guidance SIRs are key to the development of the initial Collection Plan.





## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### **Task: Issue the Initial Warning Order**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Receipt of Mission

### *Process Tasks*

- Alert the staff and other key participants
- Gather the tools
- Update running estimates
- Conduct initial assessment
- Issue the commander’s initial guidance
- **Issue the initial warning order**

*WARNORD includes, at a minimum...*

- ✓ Type of operation.
- ✓ General location of operation.
- ✓ Initial operational timeline.
- ✓ Information Collection tasks.
- ✓ Movements to initiate.
- ✓ Collaborative planning sessions.
- ✓ Initial IRs and CCIRs.

## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### Task: Issue the Initial Warning Order

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The current operations integration cell drafts and issues initial WARNORD to subordinate and supporting units to prepare them for planning.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Current operations integration cell or S-3 Section

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Initial WARNORD

OIL

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Always be aware of the impact of time on subordinate elements. Planning time saved at the headquarters level equates to more troop leading time given to subordinate elements (e.g., the preparation and assembly of required equipment, the conduct of battle drills, movement / repositioning).

Get a WARNORD out as quickly as possible after the commander's initial guidance and include as a minimum:

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The type of operation.

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The general location of the operation.

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The initial time line.

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Any movements or information collection to initiate.

The S-3 should designate a staff member to draft warning orders. This is a good task for a senior non-commissioned officer (NCO) from the S-3 Section.



## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

### Some Tools That May Help

As indicated by the exaggerated graphic below, many processes require a multitude of tools to achieve a successful end state. The MDMP is no different. This section on *receipt of mission* only has the space to provide a few key ones.

However, two editions of *The Azimuth*, July 2012 and First Quarter FY 2013, will provide a broad array of tools developed by training teams and “borrowed” from open sources within the training community. Each has been reviewed, updated with current doctrine, and been broken down, in many cases, into step-by-step procedures. The latest updates to these products (based on FM 6-0, May 2014, are available on the TAFT product disk).

There are numerous tools that are available to assist with the *receipt of mission*. One of the most useful is the OPORD Reading Responsibility Matrix, which has been included in this publication.

**TIP**

**The creation and use of planning tools separates successful staffs from staffs that struggle with processes.**



Which ones do I need? Which ones will work for me?

Receipt of Mission (cont.)

**Some Tools That May Help**

Commander's Running Estimate Worksheet

From:	Facts and Assumptions:	Fact	Assume
para 3a	Example: TF Iron is the brigade's initial main effort	X	

From:	Tasks:	S	I	E	Task to:
para 3i(4)	Example: establish combat outpost vicinity grid PK1234	x			A Co

From:	Constraints: a restriction placed on you by a HHQ that dictates an action or inaction, thus restricting your freedom (i.e. limit of advance, bypass criteria, size of reserve, ROE, certain GCMs)
para 3c(1)	Example: the use of AP mines requires Division Commander approval

Assets Available: be sure to consider attachments / detachments and their capabilities			
Unit	Major Equipment	Maintenance Status	Capabilities / Limitations

Risk: refer to ATP 5-19 and unit SOP	Probability	Severity	Controls
Example: fratricide	Seldom	Marginal	GCMs and BFT

Information Requirements (IRs) and EEFI: information needed by the Commander to make decisions, continue to plan, and / or to improve situational understanding	IR	CCIRs		EEFI
		PIR	FFIR	
Example: main effort at 75% combat power – decision to shift the main effort			X	



# Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

## Some Tools That May Help

### Commander's Running Estimate Worksheet (cont.)

#### List of Possible Planning Guidance Topics

(Describe the operation: communicate your visualization to the staff)

1. **Initial Guidance:** Once you decide to initiate design, conduct design and MDMP in parallel, or proceed directly into the MDMP, issue your initial guidance to the staff. (Use this guidance to focus the staff's mission analysis (MA) effort – tell them what to focus on during MA and also identify the things that you do not want them to waste time doing because you already understand it...ie. Clearly describe the capabilities and limitations of the attached engineer company). Although brief, the commander's initial guidance includes:

- Initial time allocations
- A decision to initiate design or go straight into MDMP
- How to abbreviate the MDMP, if required
- Coordination to perform, including LNCs to exchange
- Movements, reconnaissance, or surveillance to initiate
- Collaborative planning times and locations
- Initial information requirements
- Additional staff tasks (COA evaluation criteria)

Communicate (describe) your visualization to your staff and subordinates using the problem statement, commander's intent, planning guidance, CCIR (gaps in your visualization) and EEFI (information to be protected).

2. **Problem Statement:** (refer back to page 1 of this workbook or ADRP 5-0, Chap. 2)

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3. **Commander's Intent:** Commander's intent is a clear and concise expression of the purpose of the operation and the desired military end state that supports mission command, provides focus to the staff, and helps subordinate and supporting commanders act to achieve the commander's desired results without further orders, even when the operation does not unfold as planned (JP 3-0). It links the mission, concept of operations, and tasks to subordinate units. A clear commander's intent facilitates shared understanding and focuses on the overall conditions that represent mission accomplishment. During execution, the commander's intent spurs disciplined initiative. **The shorter - the better.** Typically, the commander's intent statement is three to five sentences long and must be easy to remember / understand two echelons down.

**Purpose:** Don't just restate the why from the mission statement. Rather address the broader purpose of the operation and its relationship to the force as a whole. (ie. to protect the flank of the brigade main effort, to enable host nation security forces to conduct independent operations, to rebuild civic infrastructure)

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**Key Tasks:** List those activities the force must perform as a whole to achieve the desired end state. Key tasks are not specified tasks for any subordinate unit; however, they may be a source of implied tasks. Acceptable courses of action accomplish all key tasks. Consider addressing the effect(s) the force must have on the enemy or on elements of the operational environment. (ie. defeat enemy forces defending IVO OBJ BLUE; ensure freedom of movement on AXIS GOLD; restore public confidence in local leaders)

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**End state:** The desired future conditions that you want to exist when the operation is concluded. Consider addressing the desired relationship between friendly forces, the enemy, the terrain, and /or the local population (ie. two companies at 85% combat power in hasty defensive positions IVO Hill 871; local police forces respected by the population and able to conduct law enforcement operations without external assistance/support)

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# Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

## Some Tools That May Help

### Commander's Running Estimate Worksheet (cont.)

#### List of Possible Planning Guidance Topics

4. **Planning Guidance:** Planning guidance may be as broad or as detailed as circumstances require. The amount of detail will vary depending on the staff's level of experience (less experienced staff = more detailed guidance), the time available, and the degree of latitude allowed by the HHQ. Consider the following - but **you do not have to address everything**. Be particularly careful that your guidance does not conflict with itself (*ie. move rapidly through the enemy disruption zone, but don't by-pass enemy squad-sized elements*).

a. Where in time and / or space is the **decisive point**? (*a geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contributes materially to achieving success*) (JP 3-0) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b. Describe the **decisive operation** (*the operation that directly accomplishes the mission*) as well as how **shaping and sustaining operations** will contribute to the decisive operation.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Describe **specific COA(s) for the staff to consider** (how many and the priority for developing them):

• Friendly COA1:

o Form of maneuver or type of defense (*frontal attack, infiltration, area defense forward*)  
\_\_\_\_\_

o Operational Framework (*deep/close/security or decisive/shaping/sustaining*) TASKO, task-purpose by unit, where you will accept risk, if you want a reserve \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

o Sequential or simultaneous operation: \_\_\_\_\_

o Critical events and/or essential stability tasks: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

o Probable branches and sequels: \_\_\_\_\_

• Friendly COA2:

o Form of maneuver or type of defense (*frontal attack, infiltration, area defense forward*)  
\_\_\_\_\_

o Operational Framework (*deep/close/security or decisive/shaping/sustaining*) TASKO, task-purpose by unit, where you will accept risk, if you want a reserve \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

o Sequential or simultaneous operation: \_\_\_\_\_

o Critical events and/or essential stability tasks: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

o Probable branches and sequels: \_\_\_\_\_

# Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

## Some Tools That May Help

### Commander's Running Estimate Worksheet (cont.)

#### List of Possible Planning Guidance Topics

d. Identify Enemy COAs (ECOAs) for the staff to consider:

- Enemy task and purpose: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Most likely ECOA: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Most dangerous ECOA: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

e. Identify potential tactical **Decision Points**: For most operations there are about three to five big decisions that the commander will make personally. (*shift the main effort, commit the reserve*)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

f. **CCIRs**: *Less is better*. Too many CCIRs dilute the staff's collection effort. CCIRs help to confirm or deny the commander's visualization, and answering a CCIR will often enable the commander to make a decision. It's ok to have one set of CCIRs during planning and a different set during execution.

- **PIR**: what you need to know about the enemy (*also consider what asset(s) will collect it and how*):

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

- **FFIR**: what you need to know about your own forces or those adjacent to you:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

g. **Information Collection**: (consider using the following concepts, if they make sense to you)

- Focus/objective:
  - Terrain or enemy: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Recon push or pull: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Objective: \_\_\_\_\_
- Tempo:
  - Deliberate or Rapid: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Stealthy or Forceful: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Aggressive or Discreet: \_\_\_\_\_
- Engagement Criteria \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

# Receipt of Mission (cont.)

## Some Tools That May Help

### Commander's Running Estimate Worksheet (cont.)

#### List of Possible Planning Guidance Topics

h. **Deception Objective:** *(What asset will be used to execute deception operations - not addressing this is ok)*

- Who is the target audience? About what do you want to deceive the target audience?

\_\_\_\_\_

i. **Fires:** *(Don't forget non-lethal effects)*

- Desired effects: *(What effects do you want to achieve? How do you want to use specific assets such as CAS COLTs, PGMs? For example: provide 20 minutes of obscurity at the point of penetration.)*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- High Payoff targets: *(those assets that if lost will significantly degrade the enemy's capability)*

\_\_\_\_\_

j. **Security measures:**

- EEFI: *(What information do you want to prevent the enemy from knowing)*

\_\_\_\_\_

- Task and purpose for security forces: *(if not addressed elsewhere)*

\_\_\_\_\_

k. **Other priorities:** *What overall effect do you want from other warfighting functions?*

- Engineer priority of effort and priority of support:

\_\_\_\_\_

- Critical assets to be protected: *(those assets that if lost will significantly degrade your capability)*

\_\_\_\_\_

- Sustainment priority of effort and priority of support:

\_\_\_\_\_

- Communications: *(where, when, and with who you must be able to communicate):*

\_\_\_\_\_

- Timeline: *(including any collaborative planning sessions)*

Targeting / IC huddle:	_____	OPORD brief:	_____
COA Brief:	_____	Back-briefs:	_____
COA Decision Brief:	_____	CAR:	_____
WARNORD 3 issued:	_____	Other:	_____

- Type and location of rehearsals: \_\_\_\_\_

- Type of order to issue: \_\_\_\_\_

- Movements: which to begin and priorities: \_\_\_\_\_

l. **Initial evaluation criteria:** *What criteria do you want the staff to use during COA analysis? (Good criteria include a definition and a measurement metric, ie. Speed; # of hours to reach OBJ ALPHA; less is better)*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### List of Possible Planning Guidance Topics

The following is a list of items commanders *may want to consider* addressing in their initial guidance to focus the staff's mission analysis or as planning guidance prior to course of action development. It is neither mandatory nor desired that every item be addressed. You can also refer to Table 9-1 in FM 6-0.

#### INTELLIGENCE WFF:

- Gaps in knowledge required to improve understanding of the situation / operational environment.
- The effects of specific terrain (including identification of key terrain) and weather factors.
- Identification of key aspects of the environment, including civil considerations.
- Desired intelligence support from non-organic resources and special collection requests.

#### MOVEMENT AND MANEUVER WFF:

- Critical events.
- Task and purpose of subordinate units.
- Reserve guidance (composition, size, planning priorities, and command and control measures).
- Possible branches and / or sequels.
- Risk: (to friendly forces and of collateral damage or civilian casualties).
- Specific control measures to implement.

#### FIRES WFF:

- Synchronization and focus of fires (lethal and / or nonlethal) with maneuver.
- Requirements, restrictions, and priorities for special munitions.
- Counter-fire priorities and use of radars - critical friendly zones (CFZ) and call-for-fire zones (CFFZ).
- No-strike list, NFAs, RFAs, other restrictions due to cultural, religious, historical, and civilian issues.
- Military information support operations (formerly PSYOP) and military deception.

#### PROTECTION WFF:

- Specific measures to be implemented in order to avoid fratricide.
- Base, installation, and / or force protection measures.
- Chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear protection levels or measures.
- Explosive ordnance disposal measures.
- Personnel recovery considerations.
- Environmental considerations.

#### SUSTAINMENT WFF:

- Priorities in terms of tactical sustainment functions (arming, manning, fueling, fixing, etc).
- Personnel and religious support priorities.
- Health system support priorities.
- Movement of detainees and sustainment of internment and resettlement activities.
- Guidance on integrating HHQ enablers and assets (airdrop, sling-load, host nation, LOGCAP, etc).
- Task organization of sustainment assets - changes to tracked items list (CTIL).
- Requirements for through-put based on concept of operations.

#### MISSION COMMAND WFF:

- Rules of engagement and escalation of force.
- Command post positioning / location of the commander.
- Liaison officer guidance.
- Timeline guidance: both the timeline for planning and the operational timeline.
- Inform and influence activities: target audiences, intended effects, acceptable risks
- Civil affairs activities.
  - Establishing liaison with host-nation, interagency, and governmental and nongovernmental organizations.
  - Providing resources for humanitarian assistance.
  - Prioritizing allocated funds dedicated to civil affairs operations.





## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

### *Some Tools That May Help*

#### Commander's Initial Guidance Reference Tool

Once the commander returns from the HHQ operation order (OPORD) briefing, he generally has little time to formulate a great deal of guidance for the staff. This short tool brings together, in one place, all the necessary pieces of information the staff require to begin the Military Decisionmaking Process. This list generally includes, but is not limited to:

- Initial time allocations.
- A decision to initiate Army design methodology or go straight into the MDMP.
- How to abbreviate the MDMP, if required.
- Necessary coordination to exchange liaison officers.
- Authorized movements and initiation of any information collection activities.
- Collaborative planning times and locations.
- Initial information requirements.
- Additional staff tasks.

#### *Initial Time Allocations*

The commander must, as he travels back to his CP, determine exactly how much time is available for his and subordinate staffs to plan. This is done by looking at the time available from mission receipt to mission execution. Care must be given to ensure adequate time is allocated for planning, preparing, and executing both his and his subordinate unit missions. Based on this information and utilizing the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> - 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s rule, the commander makes a rough planning time line which the executive officer (XO) or chief of staff (CoS) will use to further develop the initial time line during receipt of mission.

#### *The Army Design Methodology or Straight into the MDMP*

Based on the complexity or the level of structure that has been defined by higher headquarters, the commander may have to use both critical and creative thinking to understand, visualize, and describe the problem and develop approaches to solve them. This is the function of the Army design methodology.

The commander is the central figure in Army design methodology and the more complex the problem, the more important the role of the commander. Design takes time and the commander must decide, in that short ride from the HHQ OPORD brief back to his staff, if the mission is well enough defined and adequate time is available to assemble the necessary members of the staff to better define the problem.

#### **Training Analysis Feedback Team**

## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Commander's Initial Guidance Reference Tool (cont.)

#### *Abbreviating the MDMP, if Required*

Based on the mission, the experience of the staff and the unit, the environment, and the amount of time available between receipt of mission and mission execution, the commander may determine that there is not enough time to conduct the full MDMP. When this happens, the commander must determine how to abbreviate the MDMP to allow subordinate elements the maximum time to plan and rehearse their operations. Any abbreviation of the MDMP process hinges on the commander being able to devote greater than normal time personally to the MDMP. He must also limit the courses of actions to be developed and considered during the process. Other ways to more successfully shorten the MDMP is through the use of both collaborative and parallel planning. By ensuring warning orders (WARNORDs) are produced quickly with the maximum amount of information available to enable subordinates to plan as their headquarters plans, the subordinate element can quickly transition from planning to preparing for an operation. Liaisons become key during abbreviated or time constrained MDMP planning. Through their use, critical information is quickly transferred from higher to lower allowing subordinate elements additional time to prepare their orders and their units.

#### *Necessary Coordination to Exchange Liaison Officers (LNO)*

Generally, liaison personnel are not exchanged for specific missions. This may become a necessity in some instances when the unit is conducting a mission that involves non-traditional unit involvement. An infantry company conducting a mounted river crossing using dedicated engineer assets may have an engineer LNO assigned to the command post to better pass necessary information from one unit to another. LNOs are critical during Joint, Interagency, Multinational, and Contingency operations. The use of LNOs decreases the risk of unfamiliar standard operating procedures (SOP) and the use and capabilities of unit specific equipment. Unless otherwise directed, the following practices generally apply to LNOs:

- Higher-echelon units establish liaison with lower echelons.
- Units on the left establish liaison with units on their right.
- Supporting units establish liaison with units they support.
- Units of the same echelon and units in the rear establish liaison with those to their front.
- Units not in contact with the enemy establish liaison with units in contact with the enemy.

#### **Training Analysis Feedback Team**

## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

### Some Tools That May Help

Commander's Initial Guidance Reference Tool (cont.)

#### *Necessary Coordination to Exchange Liaison Officers (cont.)*

- During a passage of lines, the passing unit establishes liaison with the stationary unit.
- During a relief in place, the relieving unit establishes liaison with the unit being relieved.

#### *Authorized Movements and Initiation of any Information Collection Activities*

A commander is generally limited on movement of personnel and any other ancillary movement by the higher headquarters. Sometimes, based on the initial location of his forces, he may direct that a movement toward what he feels would gain an advantage for his forces or a position that would better protect them is required. If the latitude of the HHQ permits, he may move the forces as he feels necessary. There may be issues of the movement of forces that, while better serving the unit commander, might have a detrimental effect on the HHQ plan. In these cases, authorization may be required for the movement of forces.

Depending on the current situation and the status of ongoing information collection efforts, the commander may, again based on authorization from the HHQ, either continue his collection efforts or initiate collection based on perceived gaps in information. Information collection or security operations may be done in an effort to gather information or prevent an enemy element from gathering information on friendly forces. Constraints may have already been put into place in the HHQ operations order that preclude the commander from deploying any forces or keep them from being deployed forward of a graphic control measure such as the forward line of own troops (FLOT) or the forward edge of the battle area (FEBA). In these cases, the commander may ask for authorization to have this constraint removed or accept the constraint as it stands.

#### *Collaborative Planning Times and Locations*

Conducting collaborative planning is not only done when conditions exist that require an abbreviated process. Collaborative planning with both higher and lower echelons is a labor reducing technique that provides additional time to subordinate elements as well as promoting a greater synchronization between elements. The utilization of the scout platoon leader or reconnaissance squadron commander, while building the information collection plan, adds both their tremendous knowledge to the planning team as well as allowing them input into operations involving their Soldiers.

#### **Training Analysis Feedback Team**

## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Commander’s Initial Guidance Reference Tool (cont.)

#### *Collaborative Planning Times and Locations (cont.)*

Knowing the types of missions their elements will be participating in at an early stage of planning allows them to begin preparations that will allow them to meet execution timelines with less turbulence.

The XO is key here. Building and executing the planning time line is critical to determining when these subordinate elements must be available for collaborative planning sessions. Unlike the planning staff these subordinate elements have additional responsibilities built around executing the current mission and preparing for future ones.

#### *Initial Information Requirements and Staff Tasks*

Generally, these two sections are the “extra stuff” spaces. Any additional questions the commander feels require answers prior to continuing with the planning process are addressed here. Additionally, based on guidance received during the HHQ OPORD briefing, there may be additional staff tasks the commander wishes to address early in the planning process. These additional tasks are addressed in this section.

The information presented in the past three pages is meant to clarify the short bullets from FM 6-0 (*Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*) referencing the issuance of the commander’s initial guidance. Should you already have a method for the commander to identify his initial planning requirements and articulating it to the staff, you are probably in good shape. If not, the following Commander’s Initial Guidance Card may serve as a short tool to help the commander organize his thoughts and be prepared to provide meaningful guidance to the planning staff following his return from the HHQ OPORD briefing.

**Notes:**

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### Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

## Some Tools That May Help

### Commander's Initial Guidance Card

Commander's Initial Guidance Card	
Initial Time Allocation	Authorized Movements / Initiation of Information Collection Tasks
Design / MDMP	Collaborative Planning Times and Locations
MDMP Abbreviation Techniques	Initial Information Requirements
Coordination / Liaisons	Additional Staff Tasks
Any Additional Guidance	

### Notes:

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## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

### Some Tools That May Help

WARNORD Format w/Instructions (Re. Figure C-4, FM 6-0)

[CLASSIFICATION]

(Change from verbal orders, if any) (Optional)

Copy ## of ## copies

Issuing headquarters

Place of issue

Date-time group of signature

Message reference number

**WARNING ORDER [number]** Example: **WARNING ORDER #8**

(U) **References:** Refer to higher headquarters' OPLAN or OPORD and identify map sheets for operation (Optional).

(U) **Time Zone Used Throughout the OPLAN/OPORD:** (Optional).

(U) **Task Organization:** (Optional).

1. (U) **Situation.** The situation paragraph describes the conditions and circumstances of the operational environment that impact operations in the following subparagraphs:

- a. (U) Area of Interest.
- b. (U) Area of Operations.
- c. (U) Enemy Forces.
- d. (U) Friendly Forces.
- e. (U) Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Nongovernmental Organizations.
- f. (U) Civil Considerations.
- g. (U) Attachments and Detachments. Provide initial task organization.
- h. (U) Assumptions. List any significant assumptions for order development.

2. (U) **Mission.** State the issuing headquarters' mission.

3. (U) **Execution.**

- a. (U) Initial Commander's Intent. Provide brief commander's intent statement.
- b. (U) Concept of Operations. This may be "to be determined" for an initial WARNORD.
- c. (U) Tasks to Subordinate Units. Include any known tasks at time of issuance of WARNORD.
- d. (U) Coordinating Instructions.

4. (U) **Sustainment.** Include any known logistics, personnel, or health service support preparation tasks.

5. (U) **Command and Signal.** Include any changes to the existing order or state "No change."

**ACKNOWLEDGE:**

[Commander's last name]

[Commander's rank]

**OFFICIAL:**

[Authenticator's name]

[Authenticator's position]

**ANNEXES:** List annexes by letter and title.

**DISTRIBUTION:** List recipients.

[page number]

[CLASSIFICATION]

**Training Analysis Feedback Team**





Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Some Tools That May Help

Unit MDMP Benchmark Chart

Begin MDMP Time		From	To	Initial Guidance	Initial Timeline	WARNO RD 1							
MDMP Step		Benchmark Times											
Receipt of Mission													
Mission Analysis		From	To	WFF WS to S 2	Initial TGT MTG	Information Collection Huddle	Develop Evaluation Criteria (S-3 / XO)	MAWS to S3	MA Slides Complete	MA Brief Rehearsal	MA Brief	WARNO RD 2	
COA Development		From	To	Generate Options	Develop COAs	COAD Slides Complete	COAD Brief Rehearsal	COAD Brief					
COA Analysis		From	To	Set-up Complete	War-game COA 1	War-game COA 2	WFF Draft OPO RD Products Complete						
COA Comparison		From	To	DECIMAT Complete									
COA Approval		From	To	Decision Brief Slides Complete	Decision Brief Rehearsal	Decision Brief	WARNO 3						
OPO RD Production, Dissemination, and Transition		From	To	WFF Final Products Complete	OPO RD Completed	OPO RD Brief Slides Complete	OPO RD Brief Rehearsal	OPO RD Brief					
Rehearsals		From	To	Back-briefs	Rehearsal Site / Terrain Model Complete	CAR Rehearsal	CAR	Support Rehearsal	Battle Drill / SOP Rehearsal (At CP-9)				
End MDMP Time													

Step 1



## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

### Some Tools That May Help

Unit Planning Time Line Chart

Start	End	Action / Deliverable	Who	
<b>Day 1 (1 Jan 2014)</b>				
0430	0530	Receive OPORD Brief from HHQ	CDR, S-3, S-2, FSO	
	0700	Initial timeline developed	XO	
	0700	Receive commander's initial planning guidance	All	
0630	0700	Determine evaluation criteria	CDR, XO, S-3	
	0815	WFF Worksheets turned in to S-2	All	
0830	0915	Initial Targeting Meeting	CDR, XO, S-2, S-3, FSO, CA	
0915	0945	Initial Information Collection Huddle	S-3, S-2, FSO, CA	
	0945	Mission Analysis worksheets turned in to S-3	All	
	1000	WARNORD 1 produced and distributed	S-3	
0900	1000	Build MA Briefing slide deck	S-3	
1015	1055	Mission Analysis Briefing Rehearsal	All	
1100	1200	Mission Analysis Briefing	All	
1200	1215	Commander's intent and guidance	All	
1215	1245	Generate options complete	CDR, XO, S-3	
1245	1500	COA Development Tools complete	COA Tms 1 and 2	
	1400	WARNORD 2 Produced and Distributed	S-3	
	1500	COA Statements and Sketches complete	COA Tms 1 and 2	
	1500	COA Briefing slides complete	S-3	
1515	1530	COA development briefing rehearsal	All	
1530	1600	COA development briefing	All	
1600	1615	Gather tools and prepare COA analysis site	S-3	
1630	2030	Execute analysis of COA 1	All	
2030	2215	Execute analysis of COA 2	All	
	2215	DECMAT complete	All	
	2300	WFFF / staff section OPORD products complete	All	
	2300	WFF Decision Briefing slides complete and turned in to S-3	All	
2315	2330	Rehearse COA decision briefing	All	
2330	2400	COA decision briefing	All	
<b>DAY 2 (2 Jan 2014)</b>				
0001	0245	Execute OPORD production	All	
	0230	WARNORD 3 produced and disseminated	S-3	
	0245	OPORD compiled	All	
	0245	Annexes compiled	All	
	0245	Operation graphics complete	All	
	0300	OPORD briefing slides complete	S-3	
	0300	OPORD complete with associated graphics	S-3	
0315	0400	Rehearse OPORD briefing	All	
0400	0600	OPORD briefing to subordinate elements	All	
0600	0730	Bn CDR backbriefs	Cdrs, staff	
<b>DAY3 (3 Jan 2014)</b>				
0700	1000	Build terrain model	All	
	1000	Terrain model complete	All	
1000	1100	Rehearse Combined Arms Rehearsal (CAR)	All	
1100	1300	CAR	All	
1300	1400	Support rehearsal	XO, S-1, S-4, FSC Commander	
1400	1500	Information collection rehearsal	XO, S-3, S-2	
1400	UTC	Battle drill / SOP rehearsals	All	
1700	1800	Units move from Aas to Attack Positions	Sub units	
	1800	Units cross LD	Sub units	

	Receipt of mission tasks
	Mission analysis tasks
	COA development tasks
	COA analysis tasks
	COA comparison tasks
	COA approval tasks
	OPORD production, dissemination, and transition tasks



Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

Some Tools That May Help

OPORD Reading Responsibility (Battalion-level)

	CDR	XO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	IO	S9	FSO	SPO
Base OPORD	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Annex A (Task Organization)	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Annex B (Intelligence)				X								
Appendix 1 (Intelligence Estimate)	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Tab A (Terrain)	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Tab B (Weather)	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Tab C (Civil Considerations)	x	x	x	X	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x
Tab D (IPB Products)	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Appendix 2 (Counterintelligence)				X								
Appendix 3 (Signals Intelligence)				x				X	x			
Appendix 4 (Human Intelligence)				X	x							
Appendix 5 (Geospatial Intelligence)				X								
Appendix 6 (Measurement and Signature Intelligence)				X								
Appendix 7 (Open Source Intelligence)				X								
Annex C (Operations)					X							
Appendix 1 (Army Design Methodology Products)	x	x			X							
Appendix 2 (Operation Overlay)	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Appendix 3 (Decision Support Products)	x	x			X							
Tab A – Execution Matrix	x	x			X							
Tab B – Decision Support Template and Matrix	x	x			X							
Appendix 4 (Gap Crossing Operations)					X							
Tab A – Traffic Control Overlay					X	x						x
Appendix 5 (Air Assault Operations)					X	x		x			x	x
Tab A – Pickup Zone Diagram					X	x		x			x	x
Tab B – Air Movement Table					X	x		x			x	x
Tab C – Landing Zone Diagram					X	x		x			x	x
Appendix 6 (Airborne Operations)					X						x	x
Tab A – Marshalling Plan					X						x	x
Tab B – Air Movement Plan					X						x	x

Legend: X=Primary x=Also reads

Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Some Tools That May Help

OPORD Reading Responsibility (Battalion-level) (cont.)

	CDR	XO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	IO	S9	FSO	SPO
Tab C -- Drop Zone / Extraction Zone Diagram					X						X	
Appendix 7 (Amphibious Operations)					X						X	
Tab A -- Advance Force Operations					X						X	
Tab B -- Embarkation Plan					X						X	
Tab C -- Landing Plan					X						X	
Tab D -- Rehearsal Plan					X						X	
Appendix 8 (Special Operations)					X						X	
Appendix 9 (Battlefield Obscuration)					X						X	
Appendix 10 (Airspace Control)					X						X	
Tab A -- Air Traffic Services					X						X	
Appendix 11 (ROE)			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Tab A -- No Strike List			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Tab B -- Restricted Target List			X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Appendix 12 (Cyber Electromagnetic Activities)					X							
Tab A -- Offensive Cyberspace Operations					X							
Tab B -- Defensive Cyberspace Operations -- Response												
Actions												
Tab C -- Electronic Attack					X							
Tab D -- Electronic Protection					X							
Tab E -- Electronic Warfare Support					X							
Appendix 13 (Military Information Support Officer)					X				X			
Appendix 14 (Military Deception)					X				X			
Appendix 15 (Information Operations)					X				X			
Annex D (Fires)					X	X					X	X
Appendix 1 (Fire Support Overlay)					X						X	
Appendix 2 (Fire Support Execution Matrix)					X						X	X
Appendix 3 (Targeting)					X						X	
Tab A -- Target Selection Standards					X						X	
Tab B -- Target Synchronization Matrix					X						X	
Tab C -- Attack Guidance Matrix					X						X	
Tab D -- Target List Worksheets					X						X	
Tab E -- Battle Damage Assessment					X						X	
Appendix 4 (Field Artillery Support)			X		X						X	X
Appendix 5 (Air Support)					X						X	
Appendix 6 (Naval Fire Support)					X						X	
Appendix 7 (Air and Missile Defense)					X						X	
Tab A -- Enemy Air Avenues of Approach					X						X	
Tab B -- Enemy Air Order of Battle					X						X	
Tab C -- Enemy Theater Ballistic Missile Overlay					X						X	
Tab D -- Air and Missile Defense Protection Overlay					X						X	X

Legend: X=Primary x=Also reads

Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Some Tools That May Help

OPORD Reading Responsibility (Battalion-level) (cont.)

	CDR	XO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	IO	S9	FSO	SFO
Annex E (Protection)					X							
Appendix 1 (Operational Area Security)					X							
Appendix 2 (Safety)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Appendix 3 (Operations Security)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Appendix 4 (Intelligence Support to Protection)					X		X					
Appendix 5 (Physical Security)					X		X					
Appendix 6 (Antiterrorism)					X		X					
Appendix 7 (Police Operations)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X
Appendix 8 (Survivability Operations)					X				X			
Appendix 9 (Force Health Protection)					X							
Appendix 10 (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defense)					X							
Appendix 11 – Explosive Ordnance Disposal					X							
Appendix 12 – Coordinate Air and Missile Defense					X							
Appendix 13 – Personnel Recovery					X							
Appendix 14 – Detainee and Resettlement					X							
Annex F (Sustainment)			X			X						X
Appendix 1 (Logistics)			X			X						X
Tab A (Sustainment Overlay)			X			X						X
Tab B (Maintenance)			X			X						X
Tab C (Transportation)			X			X						X
Exhibit 1 – Traffic Circulation and Control			X			X						X
Exhibit 2 – Traffic Circulation Overlay			X			X						X
Exhibit 3 – Road Movement Table			X			X						X
Exhibit 4 – Highway Regulation			X			X						X
Tab D (Supply)			X			X						X
Tab E (Field Services)			X			X						X
Tab F (Distribution)			X			X						X

Legend: X=Primary x=Also reads

Receipt of Mission (cont.)

**Some Tools That May Help**

OPORD Reading Responsibility (Battalion-level) (cont.)

	CDR	XO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	IO	S9	FSO	SPO
Tab G (Contract Support Integration)			x			X						
Tab H (Mortuary Affairs)			x			X						x
Appendix 2 (Personnel Services Support)			X			x						x
Tab A – Human Resources Support			X			x						x
Tab B – Financial Management			X			x				x		x
Tab C – Legal Support			X			x						x
Tab D – Religious Support			X			x						x
Tab E – Band Operations			X			x						x
Appendix 3 (Health Service Support)			X			x						x
Annex G (Engineer)												
Appendix 1 (Mobility-Countermobility)					x							x
Appendix 1 (Obstacle Overlay)					x							x
Appendix 2 (Survivability)					x							x
Appendix 3 (General Engineering)					x							x
Appendix 4 (Geospatial Engineering)					x							x
Appendix 6 (Environmental Considerations)							x					
Tab A – Environmental Assessments							x					
Tab B – Environmental Assessment Exemptions							x					
Tab C – Environmental Baseline Survey							x					
Annex H (Signal)					x			X				
Appendix 1 – Defensive Cyberspace Operations					x			X				
Appendix 2 – Information Network Operations					x			X				
Appendix 3 – Voice, Video, and Data Network Diagrams					x			X				
Appendix 4 – Satellite Communications					x			X				
Appendix 5 – Foreign Data Exchanges					x			X				
Appendix 6 – Spectrum Management Operations					x			X				
Appendix 7 – Information Services					x			X				
Annex I (not used)												
Annex J (Public Affairs)			x						X			
Appendix 1 (Public Affairs Running Estimate)									x			
Appendix 2 (Public Affairs Guidance)									X			
Annex K (Civil Affairs)												
Appendix 1 (Execution Matrix)										X		
Appendix 2 (Populace and Resources Control Plan)										X		
Appendix 3 (Civil Information Management Plan)										X		

Legend: X=Primary    x=Also reads



Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Step 1

Some Tools That May Help

OPORD Reading Responsibility (Battalion-level) (cont.)

	CDR	XO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	IO	S9	F50	SPO
Annex L (Information Collection)			x		X	x					x	x
Appendix 1 (Information Collection Plan)			x		X	x					x	x
Appendix 2 (Information Collection Overlay)			x		X	x					x	x
Annex M (Assessment)	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x		x	x
Appendix 1 (Nesting of Assessment Efforts)	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x		x	x
Appendix 2 (Assessment Framework)	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x		x	x
Appendix 3 (Assessment Working Group)	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x		x	x
Annex N (Space Operations)					X			x				
Annex O (Not used)												
Annex P (Host Nation Support)						X						
Annex Q (Knowledge Management)					x							
Appendix 1 – Knowledge Management Decision Support Matrix					x			X				
Appendix 2 – Common Operational Picture Configuration Matrix								X				
Appendix 3 – Mission Command Information Systems Integration Matrix					x			X				
Appendix 4 – Content Management					x			X				
Appendix 5 – Battle Rhythm					x			X				
Annex R (Reports)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Annex S (Special Technical Operations)					X			x				
Appendix 1 (Special Technical Operations Capabilities Integration Matrix)								X				
Appendix 2 (Functional Area I Program and Objectives)					X			X				
Appendix 3 (Functional Area II Program and Objectives)					X			X				
Annex T (Spare)												
Annex U (Inspector General)			x		X							
Annex V (Interagency Coordination)	x	x			X							
Annex W (Operational Contract Support)					x	X						
Annex X (spare)												
Annex Y (spare)												
Annex Z (Distribution)		x			X							

Legend: X=Primary x=Also reads

Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Some Tools That May Help

OPORD Reading Responsibility (Brigade-level)

Step 1

	CDR	XO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	IO	S9	FSO	EN	ADO	JAG	PAO	PMO	AVN	WEVO
Base OPOD	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Annex A (Task Organization)	x	x	x	X	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Annex B (Intelligence)			X															
Appendix 1 (Intelligence Estimate)	x	x	X	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Tab A (Terrain)	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						
Tab B (Weather)	x	x	X	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						
Tab C (Civil Considerations)	x	x	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x						
Tab D (IPB Products)	x	x	X	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x						
Appendix 2 (Counterintelligence)			X	X	x													
Appendix 3 (Signals Intelligence)					x			X										
Appendix 4 (Human Intelligence)				X	x													
Appendix 5 (Geospatial Intelligence)			X	X														
Appendix 6 (Measurement and Signature Intelligence)			X	X														
Appendix 7 (Open Source Intelligence)				X														
Annex C (Operations)					X													
Appendix 1 (Army Design Methodology Products)	x	x			X													
Appendix 2 (Operation Overlay)	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Appendix 3 (Decision Support Products)	x	x			X													
Tab A – Execution Matrix	x	x			X													
Tab B – Decision Support Template and Matrix	x	x			X													
Appendix 4 (Gap Crossing Operations)					X													
Tab A – Traffic Control Overlay					X	x						x						
Appendix 5 (Air Assault Operations)					X	x		x			x	x						
Tab A – Pickup Zone Diagram					X	x		x			x	x						
Tab B – Air Movement Table					X	x		x			x	x						
Tab C – Landing Zone Diagram					X	x		x			x	x						
Appendix 6 (Airborne Operations)					X	x					x							
Tab A – Marshalling Plan					X						x							
Tab B – Air Movement Plan					X						x							

Legend: X=Primary x=Also reads

Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Some Tools That May Help

OPORD Reading Responsibility (Brigade-level) (cont.)

	CDR	XO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	IO	S9	SPO	ADO	JAG	PAO	PMC	AV	NEW	WC	
Tab C – Drop Zone / Extraction Zone Diagram					X														
Appendix 7 (Amphibious Operations)					X														
Tab A – Advance Force Operations					X														
Tab B – Embarkation Plan					X														
Tab C – Landing Plan					X														
Tab D – Rehearsal Plan					X														
Appendix 8 (Special Operations)					X														
Appendix 9 (Battlefield Obscuration)					X														
Appendix 10 (Airspace Control)					X														
Tab A – Air Traffic Services					X														
Appendix 11 (ROE)					X														
Tab A – No Strike List					X														
Tab B – Restricted Target List					X														
Appendix 12 (Cyber Electromagnetic Activities)					X														X
Tab A – Offensive Cyberspace Operations					X														X
Tab B – Defensive Cyberspace Operations – Response																			
Actions																			
Tab C – Electronic Attack					X														X
Tab D – Electronic Protection					X														X
Tab E – Electronic Warfare Support					X														
Appendix 13 (Military Information Support Officer)									X										
Appendix 14 (Military Deception)									X										
Appendix 15 (Information Operations)									X										
Annex D (Fires)																			
Appendix 1 (Fire Support Overlay)																			X
Appendix 2 (Fire Support Execution Matrix)																			X
Appendix 3 (Targeting)																			X
Tab A – Target Selection Standards																			X
Tab B – Target Synchronization Matrix																			X
Tab C – Attack Guidance Matrix																			X
Tab D – Target List Worksheets																			X
Tab E – Battle Damage Assessment																			X
Appendix 4 (Field Artillery Support)																			X
Appendix 5 (Air Support)																			X
Appendix 6 (Naval Fire Support)																			X
Appendix 7 (Air and Missile Defense)																			X
Tab A – Enemy Air Avenues of Approach																			X
Tab B – Enemy Air Order of Battle																			X
Tab C – Enemy Theater Ballistic Missile Overlay																			X
Tab D – Air and Missile Defense Protection Overlay																			X

Legend: X=Primary x=Also reads

Receipt of Mission (cont.)

**Some Tools That May Help**

OPORD Reading Responsibility (Brigade-level) (cont.)

**Step 1**

	CDR	XO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	IO	S9	FSO	SPO	ADO	JAG	PAO	PMO	AVN	EWC
Annex E (Protection)					X													
Appendix 1 (Operational Area Security)					X													
Appendix 2 (Safety)					X													
Appendix 3 (Operations Security)	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x			x	x	x		x	x	x	
Appendix 4 (Intelligence Support to Protection)	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x			x	x						
Appendix 5 (Physical Security)					X													
Appendix 6 (Antiterrorism)					X													
Appendix 7 (Police Operations)					X													
Appendix 8 (Survivability Operations)	x	x	x	x	X	x	x	x	x		x	x			X			
Appendix 9 (Force Health Protection)					X													
Appendix 10 (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear Defense)					X													
Appendix 11 – Explosive Ordnance Disposal					X													
Appendix 12 – Coordinate Air and Missile Defense					X								x					
Appendix 13 – Personnel Recovery					X													x
Appendix 14 – Detainee and Resettlement					X													
Annex F (Sustainment)		x				X						x						
Appendix 1 (Logistics)		x				X						x						
Tab A (Sustainment Overlay)		x				X						x						
Tab B (Maintenance)		x				X						x						
Tab C (Transportation)		x				X						x						
Exhibit 1 – Traffic Circulation and Control		x				X						x						
Exhibit 2 – Traffic Circulation Overlay		x				X						x						
Exhibit 3 – Road Movement Table		x				X						x						
Exhibit 4 – Highway Regulation		x				X						x						
Tab D (Supply)		x				X						x						
Tab E (Field Services)		x				X						x						
Tab F (Distribution)		x				X						x						

Legend: X=Primary      x=Also reads

## Receipt of Mission (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### OPORD Reading Responsibility (Brigade-level) (cont.)

	CDR	XO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	IO	S9	FSO	ISPO	ADO	JAG	PAO	PWO	AV	EW
Tab G (Contract Support Integration)			x			X												
Tab H (Mortuary Affairs)			x			X												
Appendix 2 (Personnel Services Support)			X			x					x							
Tab A - Human Resources Support			X			x					x							
Tab B - Financial Management			X			x				x								
Tab C - Legal Support			X			x					x							
Tab D - Religious Support			X			x					x							
Tab E - Band Operations			X			x					x							
Appendix 3 (Health Service Support)			X			x					x							
Annex G (Engineer)																		
Appendix 1 (Mobility/Counter-mobility)											x							
Tab A - Obstacle Overlay											x							
Appendix 2 (Survivability)											x							
Appendix 3 (General Engineering)											x							
Appendix 4 (Geospatial Engineering)											x							
Appendix 6 (Environmental Considerations)																		
Tab A - Environmental Assessments											x							
Tab B - Environmental Assessment Exemptions											x							
Tab C - Environmental Baseline Survey																		
Annex H (Signal)																		
Appendix 1 - Defensive Cyberspace Operations																		
Appendix 2 - Information Network Operations																		
Appendix 3 - Voice, Video, and Data Network Diagrams																		
Appendix 4 - Satellite Communications																		
Appendix 5 - Foreign Data Exchanges																		
Appendix 6 - Spectrum Management Operations																		
Appendix 7 - Information Services																		
Annex I (not used)																		
Annex J (Public Affairs)																		
Appendix 1 (Public Affairs Running Estimate)			x															
Appendix 2 (Public Affairs Guidance)																		
Annex K (Civil Affairs)																		
Appendix 1 (Execution Matrix)																		
Appendix 2 (Populace and Resources Control Plan)																		
Appendix 3 (Civil Information Management Plan)																		

Legend: X=Primary x=Also reads

Receipt of Mission (cont.)

Some Tools That May Help

OPORD Reading Responsibility (Brigade-level) (cont.)

	CDR	XO	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	IO	S9	FSO	SPO	ADO	JAG	PAO	PMO	AVN	EWO
Annex L (Information Collection)				X	X						X	X					X	X
Appendix 1 (Information Collection Plan)				X	X	X					X	X					X	X
Appendix 2 (Information Collection Overlay)				X	X	X					X	X					X	X
Annex M (Assessment)				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Appendix 1 (Nesting of Assessment Efforts)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Appendix 2 (Assessment Framework)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Appendix 3 (Assessment Working Group)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						
Annex N (Space Operations)				X	X			X					X					
Annex O (not used)																		
Annex P (Host Nation Support)					X									X				
Annex Q (Knowledge Management)					X			X										
Appendix 1 – Knowledge Management Decision Support Matrix					X			X										
Appendix 2 – Common Operational Picture Configuration Matrix					X			X										
Appendix 3 – Mission Command Information Systems Integration Matrix					X			X										
Appendix 4 – Content Management					X			X										
Appendix 5 – Battle Rhythm					X			X										
Annex R (Reports)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Annex S (Special Technical Operations)					X			X										
Appendix 1 (Special Technical Operations Capabilities Integration Matrix)					X			X										
Appendix 2 (Functional Area I Program and Objectives)					X			X										
Appendix 3 (Functional Area II Program and Objectives)					X			X										
Annex T (Spare)																		
Annex U (Inspector General)				X	X									X				X
Annex V (Interagency Coordination)					X										X			
Annex W (Operational Contract Support)	X	X			X	X												
Annex X (spare)																		
Annex Y (spare)																		
Annex Z (Distribution)		X			X													

Legend: X=Primary    x=Also reads

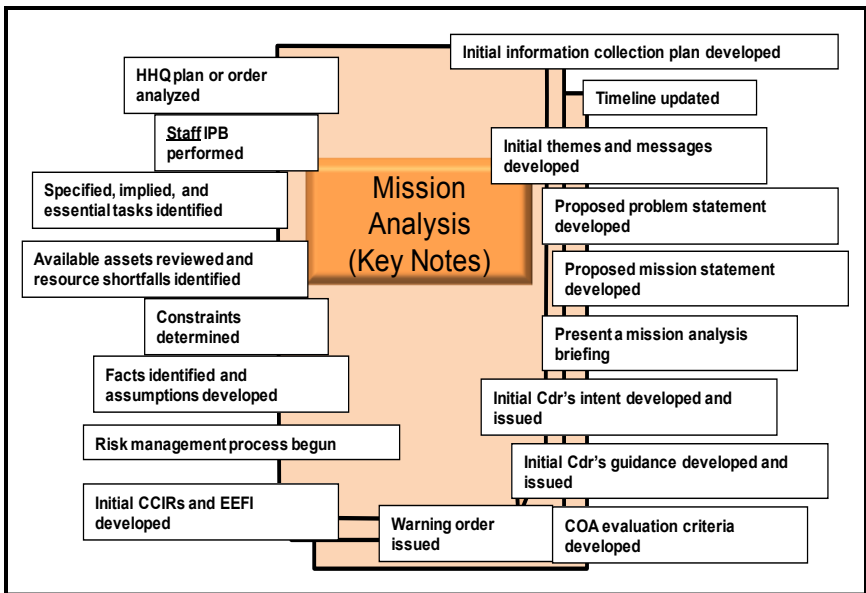


### Mission Analysis

Commanders (supported by their staffs and informed by subordinate and adjacent commanders and by other partners) gather, analyze, and synthesize information to orient themselves on the current conditions of the operational environment. The commander and staff conduct **Mission Analysis** to better understand the situation and problem, and identify what the command must accomplish, when and where it must be done, and most importantly, why - the purpose of the operation. Since no amount of subsequent planning can solve a problem insufficiently understood, **Mission Analysis** is the most important step in the MDMP. This understanding of the situation and the problem allows commanders to visualize and describe how the operation may unfold in their initial commander’s intent and planning guidance. **FM 6-0**



#### MDMP Step 2 Highlights



What follows is a simple tool you can use to accomplish the eighteen sub-tasks that must be performed during **Mission Analysis**. Each task is presented in four parts: the actions that must occur, the typical performers of those actions, the action results that should occur, and a check-the-box list of helpful tips.

#### Training Analysis Feedback Team



## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task Reference Legend

The following table is designed to assist commanders and staff members with a by-task, paragraph reference to FM 6-0. As you proceed through *Mission Analysis*, use this table to quickly make that review.

Step 2

**STEP 2 — Mission Analysis.....9-25 thru 9-81**

- Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order.....9-28 thru 9-29
- Perform Initial Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield.....9-30 thru 9-31
- Determine Specified, Implied, and Essential Tasks.....9-32 thru 9-36
- Review Available Assets and Identify Resource Shortfalls.....9-37
- Determine Constraints.....9-38 thru 9-40
- Identify Critical Facts and Develop Assumptions.....9-41 thru 9-43
- Begin Risk Management.....9-44 thru 9-45
- Develop Initial Commander’s Critical Information Requirements and Essential Elements of Friendly Information.....9-46 thru 9-52
- Develop Initial Information Collection Plan.....9-53 thru 9-55
- Update Plan for the Use of Available Time.....9-56 thru 9-57
- Develop Initial Themes and Messages.....9-58 thru 9-60
- Develop a Proposed Problem Statement.....9-61 thru 9-64
- Develop a Proposed Mission Statement.....9-65 thru 9-68
- Present the Mission Analysis Briefing.....9-69 thru 4-72
- Develop and Issue Initial Commander’s Intent.....9-73 thru 9-75
- Develop and Issue Initial Planning Guidance.....9-76 thru 9-79
- Develop Course of Action Evaluation Criteria.....9-80
- Issue a Warning Order.....9-81

### Training Analysis Feedback Team

# Mission Analysis (cont.)

## Trends (Current Comments)

The following trends comments are not meant to be all inclusive of the myriad recorded by trainers during staff exercises. They have been focused to address those **Mission Analysis** tasks that have historically challenged battalion and brigade battle staffs. Staff personnel are encouraged to cross reference trends comments with the applicable step.

**TASK: Perform Mission Analysis**  
*Step 2—Perform Initial Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield*

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

IPB Products:

- S-2s do not always develop the IPB products needed to support the battalion commander's guidance.*
- S-2s frequently concentrate on only one enemy situation template (SITTEMP).*
- Even when initial IPB products are satisfactory, intelligence sections often fail to refine their products as the situation changes and new information becomes available.*

*S-2s often fail to tie the IPB process into the information collection and security process.*

*Staffs often fail to adequately support reconnaissance and surveillance assets with essential information.*

**DISCUSSION**

At the end of initial IPB, the S-2, at a minimum, should have produced the Modified Combined Obstacle Overlay (MCOO), multiple enemy SITTEMPS, an HVT list, and gaps in intelligence. Each should be relevant to the commander's anticipated decision requirements.

Even when more than one is produced, only one is fully developed. By preparing only one detailed SITTEMP, the S-2 fails to present the full range of enemy tactical options, and causes the commander to have difficulty calculating friendly force capabilities to employ at critical points to achieve his intent. The S-2 should develop and concentrate his efforts on the enemy's most probable and dangerous COAs.

IPB product update requirements should be addressed and formatted in the unit Tactical SOP.

Information Collection assets will normally be ineffective if the S-2 fails to integrate the collection plan with the S-3's maneuver COAs before the commander's decision brief. A failed collection effort that provides inadequate coverage of Named Areas of Interest (NAI) may hamper the staff's ability to determine a threat weakness that can be exploited. An unfocused collection plan usually places the staff in the position of reacting to events in the area of operations, rather than proactively shaping it to achieve the commander's objectives.

The main problem is usually inadequate staff planning for a timely collection effort during the decision making process. While commanders and S-3s recognize the need to get collection assets out early, they fail to ensure timely and complete instructions are issued before employment. In some cases the Information Collection Plan is developed in a vacuum with limited input from the entire staff.

# Mission Analysis (cont.)

## Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

Step 2

**TASK: Perform Mission Analysis**  
Step 2—Perform Initial Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

*Staffs often fail to understand the capabilities of available collection assets and their locations on the battlefield, and do not have an established SOP that tasks them.*

*S-2s do not always identify possible locations of HVTs when they develop situation templates.*

**DISCUSSION**

The S-3 is responsible for, and has tasking authority over, maneuver elements, and in terms of intelligence collection assets, the S-2 makes recommendations to the S-3 or the commander. The S-2 is usually the prime user of most intelligence collection assets within the battalion, and in many battalions, will actually task them. However, this should only be done after the Collection Plan is approved by the commander and S-3. Every unit should include collection asset tasking procedures in their unit Tactical SOP. The S-3 may not have the time to prepare and publish separate collection tasks.

The S-2 needs to evaluate each HVT and decide whether they should be nominated as potential HPT (once friendly COAs have been developed). This will allow the staff to determine if the targets are in range of friendly fire assets and what is the priority to interdict those targets. The S-2 should list each HVT, by category, on each SITTEMP, and be prepared to discuss them during war-gaming.

**TASK: Perform Mission Analysis**  
Step 3—Determine Specified, Implied, and Essential Tasks

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

Tasks:

- Essential tasks from the brigade operations order (OPORD) are sometimes overlooked in the battalion OPORD.*
- Subordinate unit tasks do not adequately support the battalion's shaping operation or the decisive operation.*

**DISCUSSION**

Essential tasks are specified or implied tasks that must be executed to accomplish the mission. They must be included in the battalion's mission statement. The battalion staff must conduct a detailed analysis of the brigade order and the brigade commander's guidance to determine specified and implied tasks. Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the brigade order, annexes, overlays, and paragraphs 4 and 5 for sustainment tasks should be thoroughly reviewed. The brigade commander's oral guidance may also provide assigned tasks.

Just as a cross walk of specified and implied tasks with the overall concept of operations is an essential staff task, a similar cross walk with the battalion's designated shaping operation or the decisive operation is also critical. By identifying and comparing each tactical task of the shaping / decisive operation as to who / what performs them, when and where they must be accomplished, and how they will be performed with the final list of specified and implied tasks, voids, if there are any, are readily identified.

# Mission Analysis (cont.)

## Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

Step 2

**TASK: Perform Mission Analysis**  
Step 6—Identify Critical Facts and Assumptions

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**  
*Staffs sometimes fail to have an effective Request for Information (RFI) tracking system to record and follow-up on information requests.*

**DISCUSSION**  
Problems in this area generally fall into two categories: no RFI tracking system established or a tracking system exists, but is not known or used by the staff. Staffs need to develop an RFI tracking system that consolidates, records, and monitors all RFIs that are processed through the Command Post. The system can be a simple matrix that includes some type of tracking number, a brief description, the staff section initiating the RFI, the section that the RFI was forwarded to for action, and its current status. Additionally, the matrix should include RFIs received from the company level, initiated internally, and forwarded to brigade.

**TASK: Perform Mission Analysis**  
Step 7—Begin Risk Management

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**  
*Commanders and staffs do not always conduct all five steps of the risk management process, resulting in information shortfalls that affect subordinate units during their planning processes.*

**DISCUSSION**  
When the commander issues planning guidance at the end of mission analysis, he provides risk mitigation measures for the staff to incorporate into their COA development. If the risk management process is overlooked in the MDMP and troop-leading procedures, expect flawed planning and execution. Commanders and staffs must create a risk management process that becomes an integral part of their SOP and includes benchmarks for company and platoon-level risk-management products.

**TASK: Perform Mission Analysis**  
Step 8—Determine Initial CCIRs and EEFI

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**  
*CCIRs are sometimes designated without being tied to decisionmaking criteria.*

**DISCUSSION**  
This is a commander task. The commander alone decides what is critical. The staff may nominate CCIR for the commander's selection, but the decision always rests with the commander. The initial CCIRs developed during mission analysis must focus on those decisions the commander believes he will have to make to successfully execute his assigned mission. This focuses the staff to arrive at the optimum COA.

# Mission Analysis (cont.)

## Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

Step 2

**TASK: Perform Mission Analysis**  
*Step 10—Develop Initial Information Collection Plan*

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

*Information collection planning is often hastily developed by the S-2 and lacks proper staff integration.*

*Information collection execution lacks proper staff oversight and management to answer the commander's PIRs and confirm or deny ECOAs.*

*S-2s struggle with developing a comprehensive collection plan that fully incorporates all required elements.*

*The S-2's initial collection planning is often unorganized and does not provide the specifics that must be understood by collection assets or commanders.*

**DISCUSSION**

Ownership of the information collection fight must be the responsibility of the entire staff and not solely the S-2's responsibility. The Information Collection Plan must be collectively managed through the efforts of the S-2, S-3, and the collection manager. They must ensure that through synchronization meetings and daily monitoring, correct assets are available, tasked, and actually collecting on the tasked NAIs and targets. Staffs must continuously train on collection planning and execution and embed it into every MDMF.

The challenges to collection management are often identified well in advance of execution and are clear indicators of the effectiveness of collection operations. Information collection execution is the result of a progressive IPB process and requires collective involvement of the entire staff to be successful. One of the most telling indicators of an effectively managed collection operation is S-3 involvement in collection planning and execution. S-3 involvement, or lack thereof, clearly indicates the importance of information collection throughout the battalion. The S-3's involvement shows whether he believes that finding the enemy is essential to the maneuver plan...e.g., how can you defeat an enemy without finding them first? PIRs and IRs provide the initial focus of the collection effort. These are obtained by analysis of HVTs and HPTs. The collection plan should answer the PIRs and should be linked to enemy events, particularly which COA the enemy will adopt.

Development of a comprehensive collection plan must fully incorporate specific information requirements (SIR), collection tasks, named areas of interest (NAI), and the proper times and placement of units to confirm or deny the ECOA.

If the intelligence synchronization matrix (ISM) does not include the latest time intelligence is of value (LTIOV) or latest event of intelligence value (LEIOV) for NAIs, collectors and planning staffs will not have "time on" or "time off" for collection on NAIs. This may result in the commander having to maintain 24-hour collection on all assigned NAIs. By ensuring all factors are included in the ISM, the S-2 can confidently answer PIRs and support the commander's tactical decisions.

# Mission Analysis (cont.)

## Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

**TASK: Perform Mission Analysis**  
**Step 10—Develop Initial Information Collection Plan**

**Step 2**

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

*The battalion's collection effort is not always refocused when changes impact successful implementation.*

*The development and execution of observer input to the battalion's collection plan is not always synchronized with fire support tasks and the scheme of fire and maneuver.*

*Staffs fail to gather and use collection information from all available sources.*

*S-2s tend to overwhelm the Scout Platoon with collection requirements.*

**DISCUSSION**

The battalion S-2 may recommend to the commander refocusing the collection effort when the threat changes, a collection task is satisfied, or brigade executes a branch or sequel. When the S-2 is unable to apply collection assets to meet collection requirements, the commander must become involved.

When observer actions are developed after war-gaming, they lack the detail and synchronization required to ensure observers are in position to execute the scheme of fires. When observation synchronization is lost, target execution may not be timely or occur at all, few, if any, missions will be adjusted, and a key tracking mechanism between the decisive and shaping fight is lost. Target refinement to the company / team level and the use of digital terrain products are essential to collection planning.

Collection information may be found in numerous areas available to the battalion staff, including: the base order; Annex B (Intel); Annex D (Fires): Integration of fire support radars, architecture to interdict HPTs, Annex C (Operations): What ROE causes limitations on your ability to conduct information collection; Annex E (Protection): Integration of air and missile defense radars, architecture to interdict HPTs, assessment of ECOA, integration of CBRN systems (e.g., FOX vehicle) into collection architecture; Annex H (Signal): Collection architecture, Intelligence Reach; Annex L (Information Collection): Collection plan. Another collection asset that may be available is aviation. For example, many operations (cordon and search, raid, etc.) include aviation support, such as OH-58s or AH-64s. The S-2 should consider coordination with the S-3 to task them to collect on NAIs. Aviation platforms have exceptional sensors and are usually already operating in the battalion AO.

The first step in collection planning should be a listing of available assets. This is not just limited to the Scout Platoon. Often S-2s assign too many NAIs to units because they fail to review available assets. They also fail to analyze necessary troops-to-tasks for successful information collection execution.

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

**TASK: Perform Mission Analysis**  
 Step 10—Develop Initial Information Collection Plan

**Step 2**

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

*Commanders and staffs often fail to clearly establish what the battalion needs to know from employment of its collection assets.*

*S-3s sometimes fail to use the S-2's collection plan to formally task subordinate units to help answer battalion PIRs.*

**DISCUSSION**

The first step in information collection management is to develop requirements...determine what you need to know. The battalion staff must study the IRs that have been identified, any SOR from HHQ and RFIs received from subordinate and adjacent units. Every IR should be prioritized and related, as a minimum, to a potential ECOA, fires and targeting, and contribute to information that will facilitate decisions. The battalion will not be able to collect on everything, so take the top five or six IRs and recommend them as PIRs.

Most companies eventually contribute to the battalion collection effort by conducting their operations, but the company effort is rarely synchronized with the rest of the battalion when it comes to information collection. For example, maneuver companies can be tasked to conduct a patrol in an area where the S-2 has templated a mortar. A patrol could be conducted in daylight to try and confirm or deny if a mortar system has been in the area by looking for baseplate indentations, dunnage, and other indicators, such as all-terrain vehicle (ATV) tracks. Or, the patrol could establish an ambush at the templated mortar position during the assessed firing times.

**Notes:**

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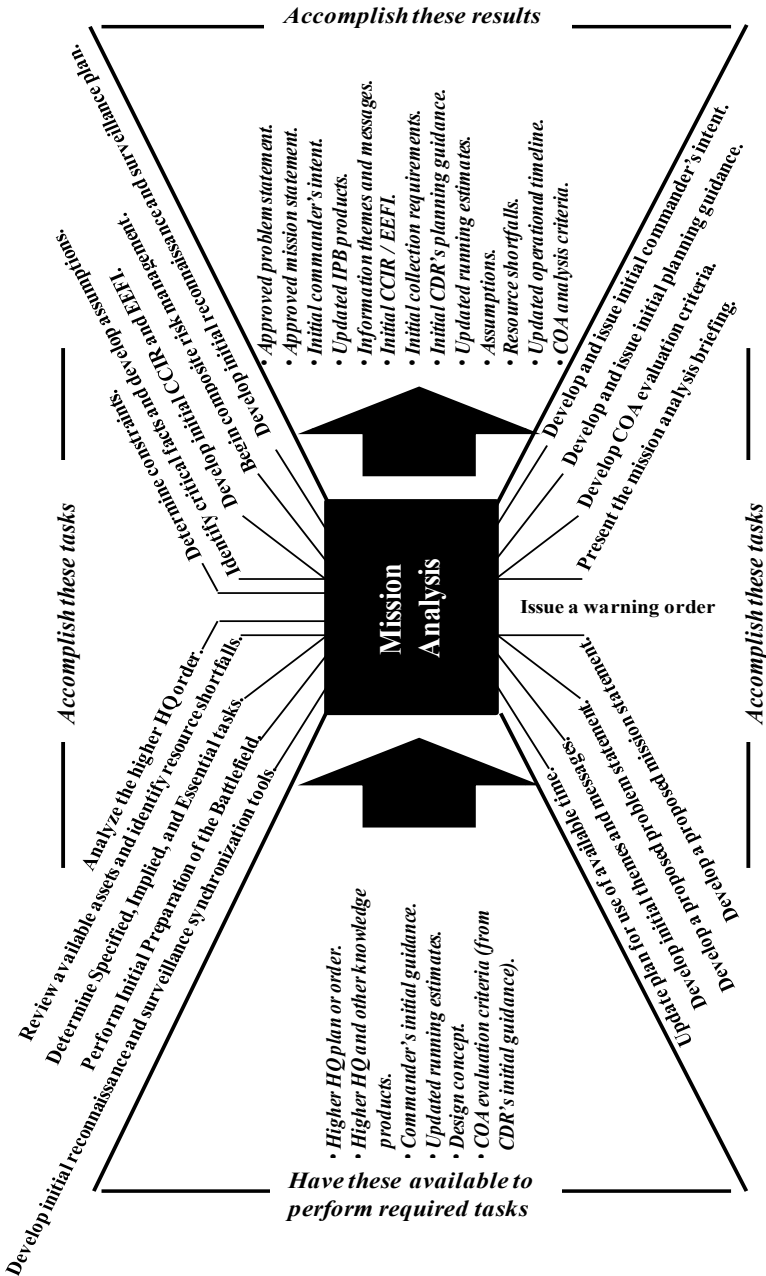
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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### MDMP Step 2 Inputs, Actions, and Outputs



**Step 2**



## Mission Analysis

### Task: Analyze the Higher Headquarters' Order

#### “Task Snapshot”

### Mission Analysis

#### Process Tasks

1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters' Plan or Order
2. Perform Initial IPB
3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks
4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls
5. Determine constraints
6. Identify critical facts & develop assumptions
7. Begin risk management
8. Develop initial CCIRs & EEFI
9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan
10. Update plan for use of available time
11. Develop initial themes & messages
12. Develop a proposed problem statement
13. Develop proposed mission statement
14. Present mission analysis briefing
15. Develop and issue initial commander's intent
16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance
17. Develop COA evaluation criteria
18. Issue warning order #2

- ✓ The Higher headquarters' –
  - Commander's intent.
  - Mission.
  - Concept of the operation.
  - Available assets.
  - Timeline.
- ✓ Mission of adjacent, supporting, and supported units and their relationship to the higher headquarters' plan.
- ✓ Missions of interagency, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizations that work in the area of operation.
- ✓ Their assigned area of operations.

Step 2

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

What follows is a simplistic tool you can use to accomplish the nineteen sub-tasks that must be performed during **Mission Analysis**. Each task is presented in four parts: the actions that must occur, the typical performers of those actions, the action results that should occur, and a check-the-box list of helpful tips.

### Task: Analyze the Higher Headquarters' Order

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander and each staff section analyze the mission and order for his/her area of expertise and/or responsibility.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate

Commander

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Initial analysis of HHQ order.



#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Ensure collaborative and parallel planning with like WFF at the HHQ level.

Use liaison officers (LNO) and requests for information (RFI) to obtain information.

Check the Tactical SOP to see if it outlines the planning and information gathering methodologies expected in each WFF.

The S-3 records in detail the "must knows" from the HHQ order, and checks for common staff understanding. This should be included in the Tactical SOP / Plans SOP for a minimum list of required information in order to begin staff planning.







## Mission Analysis (cont.)

**Task: Perform Initial Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield**

### “Task Snapshot”

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order
2. **Perform Initial IPB**
3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks
4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls
5. Determine constraints
6. Identify critical facts & develop assumptions
7. Begin risk management
8. Develop initial CCIRs & EEFI
9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan
10. Update plan for use of available time
11. Develop initial themes & messages
12. Develop a proposed problem statement
13. Develop proposed mission statement
14. Present mission analysis briefing
15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent
16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance
17. Develop COA evaluation criteria
18. Issue warning order #2

- ✓ Define the Operational Environment.
- ✓ Describe Environmental Effects on Operations.
- ✓ Evaluate the Threat / Adversary.
- ✓ Determine Threat / Adversary Courses of Action.
- ✓ (Initial Targeting Meeting).<sup>1</sup>

*<sup>1)</sup> Conduct initial targeting meeting once consolidated High Value Target List (HVTL) and Situational Template (SITTEMP) are developed.*

Step 2

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Task: Perform Initial Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

Commander and staff, lead by the S-2, provide input to IPB.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Understanding of the enemy, terrain, weather, and other aspects of the operational environment:


Terrain and weather products.

Likely enemy COAs.

High-value target list.

Explanations of how key civil considerations affect the operation.

Gaps in information.

List of IRs / RFI based on intelligence gaps.

#### Helpful Tips



Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

*The S-2 should guide the staff through the IPB process, but do not leave IPB completely up to the S-2. Every staff section should assist the S-2 and contribute to the development of IPB products, especially the situation template (SITTEMP) and the modified combined obstacle overlay (MCOO).*





## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.



Step 2

- Each staff section should develop a SITTEMP and MCOO within their own area of expertise or WFF. Provide this data to the S-2 for consolidation into a joint staff product for planning. While this may be difficult to achieve based on staff experience and available time, an IPB meeting of some sort should be conducted. The S-2 could develop (as part of the unit SOP) an IPB "input required" checklist for other WFFs that is provided during the IPB meeting that helps focus the other staff/ WFFs. 
- The XO should guide the staff in accomplishing the following four actions: define the operational environment, describe environmental effects on operations, evaluate the enemy, and determine enemy COAs.
- Know the commander's IPB focus. His desired focus and your assistance in initial IPB are critical. All staff sections should take the time to become knowledgeable of the intelligence WFF. FM 2-19.4, *Brigade Combat Team Intelligence Operations* and FM 2-01.3 *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield* are excellent references. 
- In order for the staff to successfully accomplish IPB and assist the commander with decisionmaking, as a minimum, they should:
  - Use HHQ intelligence products as much as possible.
  - Identify gaps in intelligence.
  - Develop a MCOO and show and explain the impact of terrain, and identifying key terrain along key routes, at the objective, and around the Forward Operating Base (FOB), if applicable.
  - Brief the effects of weather on the unit and the enemy at critical times during the planned operation; understand that weather impacts different type units in different ways; a maneuver headquarters' IPB products may not address specific information your unit requires for planning.
  - Identify high-value targets (HVT).
  - Develop IPB templates.
  - Develop initial event templates.
  - Develop an initial intelligence collection plan; during this early step in the MDMP, this may be no more than leveraging HQ controlled collection assets against HHQ tasked collection requirements.
  - Update facts and verify assumptions.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Pre-made briefing charts for weather and terrain can save time. They should be visual and show and explain the effects of weather and terrain on the unit and the enemy at critical times during the operation.
- Go back to the commander's initial guidance. If he decided that the MDMP must be abbreviated, then it follows that the IPB process must be abbreviated as well, as discussed in FM 2-01.3. 
- You must rapidly determine anticipated decision (information) requirements and look for the S-2 Section to develop supporting IPB products as a priority (a MCOO, for instance, may not be a priority product).
- The Operations Section should include a wind speed / direction arrow on all operational maps.
- Only brief information that is perceived to impact the operation. If the commander prefers digital (e.g. PowerPoint) briefing formats, ensure a disk is kept with the tactical SOP so the staff doesn't have to recreate products.
- Have a capabilities template already completed and use it to visually highlight those types of enemy units and weapons systems that will have the greatest impact on the operation. Standardizing running estimate formats for each WFF streamlines this process.
- Develop and submit a list of HVTs related to their WFF. Each is the SME in their WFF and should have a good mindset for what would be good HVTs in their respective WFF. These should be collected by the S-2 and used for the initial targeting meeting during Mission Analysis.
- Staff members should spell out / explain acronyms and abbreviations. The CP library should have copies of ADRP 1-02 and JP 1-02. 
- The staff should compare enemy systems with like friendly systems to better explain capabilities. This should be done by each WFF, not just the S-2.

Step 2




## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.


Step 2

- Be prepared to brief the specifics of each enemy system in your WFF by reviewing data contained in the *World Wide Equipment Guide*. If you do not have this guide, get one, and include it in the CP library. 
- Many of the questions that arise as part of enemy evaluation can be anticipated. The staff procedures for handling them should be identified in the unit tactical SOP.
- Provide the S-2 input on their analysis of their enemy counterpart. Put on your "Red Hat" for your WFF.
- The Operations Section should put up an enlarged map or cartoon so all, especially the commander, can clearly see the impact of enemy activity on the friendly operation. This should be different than the planning map.
- The staff should brief task and purpose of enemy units in the order that may be seen in the planned operation. There should be a method to the briefing . . . from LD to LOA, by specific unit or by battlefield geometry (Disruption Zone, Battle Zone, Support Zone). Be careful here. OPFOR tactical tasks and purposes are different from U.S. doctrinal tactical tasks and purposes, as are insurgent tasks, etc.
- Set a specific time to have input to the S-2. Using a product from each WFF / staff section that addresses specific section / WFF concerns during IPB will streamline this process. A WFF IPB worksheet is recommended.
- Check to see that any identified gaps in intelligence are used to establish initial IRs and RFIs, and become part of the Targeting Process.
- While the definition of key terrain is constant, each staff member may view key terrain differently as it impacts their WFF. Regardless, the input is needed to assist in the development of the unit's key terrain. Key terrain for the unit is based on an assessment as to that terrain that provides a marked advantage to whoever possesses it.

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- The unit's enemy SITTEMP is only as good as the input from each staff member in relation to their WFF. Monitor and enforce the requirement.
- Check to see if the initial IPB products are those products that the commander directed to be produced. Check to see if they are relevant to the commander's decision requirements. 
- Overlaying all enemy COA graphics on top of each other and identifying where the enemy COAs are different and then labeling these as named areas of interest (NAI), provides a document that aids the S-2 in determining which COA the enemy has adopted. This is the basis for the Event Template.
- The commander will want a leader / staff reconnaissance as early as possible to confirm or deny initial assessments. Be ready. The staff, and the commander, are dependent on others for updates on the enemy. Ask yourself . . . who are they (brigade and division command posts, companies, adjacent units, MP units, civil affairs units, civilian authorities)? Know how they can be contacted. Identify where these sources are located.
- COA detail is critical. Make sure the S-2 provides an enemy COA that is sufficiently detailed for the commander to use during the unit's *COA Development (COA-D)*. Have a "red" smart book handy. Think in terms of IPB products that support the commander and the staff and are essential to estimates, targeting, and decisionmaking.
- At the end of initial IPB, at a minimum, expect to see the MCOO, enemy SITTEMPs, an HVT list, and any gaps in intelligence.
- The amount of products the S-2 and staff can produce are determined by three things: The amount of time available for Mission Analysis, the amount of personnel in each section that can be devoted to IPB tasks, and the experience / training levels of specific staff sections. The S-2 is the "long pole in the tent." Historically, the S-2 at unit level is the least trained officer on the staff. While he might have school training, he might not have tactical experience and vice-versa. Ensure the XO / commander gives good guidance to the S-2 as to how they want him to allocate his time.





## Mission Analysis (cont.)

**Task: Determine Specified, Implied, and Essential Tasks**

### *“Task Snapshot”*

Step 2

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order</li> <li>2. Perform Initial IPB</li> <li>3. <b>Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks</b></li> <li>4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls</li> <li>5. Determine constraints</li> <li>6. Identify critical facts &amp; develop assumptions</li> <li>7. Begin risk management</li> <li>8. Develop initial CCIRs &amp; EEFI</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan</li> <li>10. Update plan for use of available time</li> <li>11. Develop initial themes &amp; messages</li> <li>12. Develop a proposed problem statement</li> <li>13. Develop proposed mission statement</li> <li>14. Present mission analysis briefing</li> <li>15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent</li> <li>16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance</li> <li>17. Develop COA evaluation criteria</li> <li>18. Issue warning order #2</li> </ol> |
|--|---|

- ✓ Specified in higher order.
- ✓ Implied are required but not in higher order.
- ✓ Determine primary stability tasks.
- ✓ Essential are mission success dependent.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Task: Determine Specified, Implied, and Essential Tasks

##### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander and staff analyze the HHQ order to determine specified, implied, and essential tasks for their area of expertise / responsibility.

##### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander  
Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

##### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Specified tasks.  
Implied tasks.  
Essential tasks.

OIL

##### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

In the context of operations, a task is a clearly defined and measurable activity accomplished by Soldiers, units, and organizations that may support or be supported by other tasks. Remember, the "what" of a mission statement is always a task. The manner of how well the "what" is defined becomes the basis for the use of Army design methodology.



Be able to differentiate between types of tasks: a specified task is a task specifically assigned to a unit by its HHQ. An implied task is a task that must be performed to accomplish a specified task or mission but is not stated in the HHQ order. An essential task is a specified or implied task that must be executed to accomplish the mission and must be addressed in the unit mission statement.

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 2

- Paragraphs 2 and 3 of the HHQ order state specified tasks. Some specified tasks may also be found in paragraphs 4 and 5, annexes, overlays, and given orally during collaborative planning sessions or in directives from the higher commander.
- Look for implied tasks during your analysis of the HHQ order, the enemy situation, the terrain, and civil considerations. Don't overlook the possibility of finding implied tasks when you analyze the doctrinal requirements for a specified task.
- Understand the requirements and purpose of all tasks, whether selected as specified or implied, or deemed essential. Remember, every task you identify (specified or implied) will eventually become a task that must be addressed during COA-D and assigned to a subordinate element. A good list should be maintained and displayed in the CP.
- Check the mission statement. Pay particular attention to stability tasks. While some may be specified, commanders and staffs should also consider the primary stability tasks found in FM 3-07 (*Stability Operations*) as sources for implied tasks. Because of the complexity and numbers of tasks associated with stability operations, HHQ generally leave the mission task vague and require subordinate elements to "fish out" the tasks required of them within their AO to support the HHQ mission.  
- Every staff section should submit specified and implied tasks, even if theirs are not used in the staff process to get them familiar with the process. Understand that essential tasks are "essential" to the entire unit, not just your individual section and are required to successfully accomplish the tasks assigned to them.
- One method is for the Operations Section to list them on one chart and checked as to "S," "I," or "E". Also have them reference the "S," "I," or "E" tasks from the HHQ order by annex, page, and paragraph number. The S-3 should perform a "sanity check" on them and check for duplicates before they make it to the chart and the eyes of the commander. Typically, a consolidated specified, implied, and essential task list is easier to brief and eliminates duplication. The chart should identify where the task was found and who on the staff identified it.





## Mission Analysis (cont.)

**Task: Review Available Assets and Identify Resource Shortfalls**

### “Task Snapshot”

Step 2

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order
2. Perform Initial IPB
3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks
4. **Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls**
5. Determine constraints
6. Identify critical facts & develop assumptions
7. Begin risk management
8. Develop initial CCIRs & EEFI
9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan
10. Update plan for use of available time
11. Develop initial themes & messages
12. Develop a proposed problem statement
13. Develop proposed mission statement
14. Present mission analysis briefing
15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent
16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance
17. Develop COA evaluation criteria
18. Issue warning order #2

- ✓ Additions & deletions to current task organization.
- ✓ Support relationships.
- ✓ Composition, disposition & capabilities.
- ✓ Civilian, NGO, etc.
- ✓ ID shortfalls.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Task: Review Available Assets and Identify Resource Shortfalls

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander and staff review available assets for their area of expertise and/or responsibility and examine additions to, and deletions from, the current task organization, their status (current capabilities and limitations), support relationships, and to determine additional resources needed for mission success.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander  
Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Assessment of troop-to-task relationship.  
Current capabilities and limitations of available assets.  
Early identification of major resource shortfalls based on perceived mission and current task organization.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.



Resource shortfalls must be derived by a thorough understanding of the mission and your unit's part in it. If you are travelling five hundred miles and you only have organic fuel carrying capacity to sustain the unit for three hundred miles, there is a resource shortfall. If you must attack an objective and there is a river between you and the objective and you have no bridging assets, there is a resource shortfall. If you have fifteen tasks and you don't think you have the manpower to do adequate troop to task, this is not a resource shortfall and must be war-gamed to identify if, and how many, additional assets you require. If you "think" you need an additional twelve Iridium phones, this is not a resource shortfall but must be war-gamed.

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 2

- Remember, this is the first formal look at assets available versus tasks required, a more detailed analysis will come during COA-D and will be finalized during *COA Analysis* (COA-A).
- The S-3 should work with the staff to develop an assets available (by WFF) chart. When current, it is a useful planning tool throughout the MDMP. Develop a unit “standard” for portraying assets. Insist on early development.
- The S-3 should examine additions to, and deletions from, the current task organization, support relationships, and status (current capabilities and limitations) of all units. Remember, pay particular attention to any deviations that are made to the normal task organization and highlight additions or deletions to the S-3.
- Remember, while the unit will fight two levels down (platoons), they should also list all combat multipliers (Sniper Section / teams, FIST / FO teams) as assets. They tend to be forgotten if not visibly listed. Design asset charts to allow for the addition of attached / operational control (OPCON) units. Asset monitoring and update is a job for the entire staff. 
- Using icons for elements two-levels down and specialty units that are even smaller is a great way to ensure a quick transition to *COA Development and Analysis*.
- Use “Decision Support Graphics” (Fig. 10-3, *ADRP 1-02*) as you depict assets. This will become useful in *COA Development*. 
- The S-3 should review the assets chart and verify that it reflects what is really in, or available to, the unit.
- The S-3 should conduct a task analysis by carefully considering relationships among essential, specified, and implied tasks, and between them and available assets. He should compare assets to tasks, and determine shortage deltas, if any. If there is a perceived need for additional resources, the S-3 should prepare the list, and be prepared to determine, through the war game, if it needs to be submitted to the HHQ.



## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Determine Constraints

### “Task Snapshot”

Step 2

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order</li> <li>2. Perform Initial IPB</li> <li>3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks</li> <li>4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls</li> <li><b>5. Determine constraints</b></li> <li>6. Identify critical facts &amp; develop assumptions</li> <li>7. Begin risk management</li> <li>8. Develop initial CCIRs &amp; EEFI</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan</li> <li>10. Update plan for use of available time</li> <li>11. Develop initial themes &amp; messages</li> <li>12. Develop a proposed problem statement</li> <li>13. Develop proposed mission statement</li> <li>14. Present mission analysis briefing</li> <li>15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent</li> <li>16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance</li> <li>17. Develop COA evaluation criteria</li> <li>18. Issue warning order #2</li> </ol> |
|--|---|



- ✓ Restrictions placed on the command by higher.
- ✓ Dictates an action or inaction.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Task: Determine Constraints

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander and staff analyze the HHQ order to identify constraints, both requirements (must do's) and prohibitions (can't do's), which may restrict freedom of action in their respective areas of expertise and/or responsibility.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander  
Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

List of constraints.  
Understanding of all constraints.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

A higher commander normally places some constraints on subordinate commanders. You and the staff help the commander identify and understand these constraints.  
While constraints are primarily found in paragraph 3 of the OPORD, annexes to the order may also contain some (e.g. the operations overlay containing a restrictive fire line or a no fire area). They may also be issued orally, in WARNORDs, and policy memoranda.  
Be a critical reviewer and carefully look at what the unit must do and how restrictions impact. Then, determine what the unit cannot do.  
Always check Annex C (Operations) for possible constraints (e.g. a restrictive fire line or no fire area).

Mission Analysis (cont.)

Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

○

The S-3 should develop a list of constraints. *Constraints, by definition, restrict the freedom of action you have for planning,* so accurate identification is critical. The S-3 or his designated representative should consider how the constraints may be changed, if at all. Remember, the staff may often find more constraints within annexes than within the base OPORD; especially Appendix 11 (ROE) to Annex C.



Step 2

Notes:

[Lined area for taking notes]

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Identify Critical Facts and Develop Assumptions

#### “Task Snapshot”

Step 2

### Mission Analysis

#### Process Tasks

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order</li> <li>2. Perform Initial IPB</li> <li>3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks</li> <li>4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls</li> <li>5. Determine constraints</li> <li>6. <b>Identify critical facts &amp; develop assumptions</b></li> <li>7. Begin risk management</li> <li>8. Develop initial CCIRs &amp; EEFI</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan</li> <li>10. Update plan for use of available time</li> <li>11. Develop initial themes &amp; messages</li> <li>12. Develop a proposed problem statement</li> <li>13. Develop proposed mission statement</li> <li>14. Present mission analysis briefing</li> <li>15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent</li> <li>16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance</li> <li>17. Develop COA evaluation criteria</li> <li>18. Issue warning order #2</li> </ol> |
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- ✓ Commanders and staffs gather facts and develop assumptions as they build their plan.
- ✓ Facts concerning the operational and mission variables serve as the basis for developing situational understanding.
- ✓ In the absence of facts, the commander and staff consider assumptions from their higher headquarters.
- ✓ Having assumptions requires commanders and staffs to continually attempt to replace those assumptions with facts.
- ✓ The commander and staff should list and review the key assumptions on which fundamental judgments rest throughout the MDMP.



## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Identify Critical Facts and Develop Assumptions

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- The commander and staff analyze the HHQ order to identify critical facts and develop assumptions in their respective areas of expertise and/or responsibility to fill perceived gaps in guidance.
- The staff lists all appropriate assumptions received from HHQ, states expected conditions over which the commander has no control but which are relevant to the plan, and lists conditions that would invalidate the plan or its concept of operations.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Commander
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- List of critical facts and assumptions.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL


Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Pay particular attention to facts concerning the mission variables of METT-TC, as they will be the basis for developing situational understanding, continued planning, and assessing progress during preparation for and execution of operations.
- Appropriate assumptions used during planning have two major characteristics: they are likely to be true, and they are essential to continue planning.
- Use assumptions carefully. Ensure they are not based on preconceptions, bias, false historical analogies, or simple, wishful thinking.
- Be on the lookout for unstated assumptions.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Continuously question the assumptions that have been made to ensure they are still valid throughout the planning and operations process. Check to see that:
  - Assumptions are logical, realistic, and considered likely to be true.
  - There are not too many assumptions.
  - That branches and sequels are developed for key assumptions that may prove false.
- Remember, an unstated assumption may prove more dangerous than a stated assumption proven wrong. 
- In the absence of facts, consider assumptions from the higher headquarters and then develop your own assumptions for continued planning. Assumptions can relate to any mission variable.
- The staff gathers two categories of information concerning assigned tasks - facts and assumptions.
- The Operations Section should serve as the single point of contact responsible for collecting, documenting, sanity checking, and distributing all RFIs. As RFIs are returned to the unit, they should share the answers by reviewing them with the entire staff (not just the section who initiated the RFI).
- In terms of actions to be taken, work to:
  - First, identify those pieces of information concerning the situation at hand that are "known" (factual) regarding such things as enemy and friendly disposition, troop strengths, etc.
  - Second, identify assumptions that have been received from HHQ. Look again at the assumption definition. Making a supposition about the present and pre-supposing the future are difficult tasks. For each piece of information, ask yourself . . . can it be assumed true without proof, and does the commander need it to understand the situation and make a decision on a COA? The staff should state those expected conditions over which the commander may have no control, but which are relevant to the plan, and list the conditions that may invalidate the plan or its concept of operations.

Step 2

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 2


Third, the staff should identify the information needed to convert assumptions into facts and submit them back as IRs. Note: This is a critical task because as the commander gathers information to make a decision, he may designate the IRs as one or more of his CCIRs.

Fourth, after the staff determines IRs that involve the enemy and the environment and they are approved, get them to the S-2, who in turn may incorporate them into the initial Collection Plan.

Replace assumptions with facts as soon as possible.

**Notes:**

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# Mission Analysis (cont.)

## Task: Begin Risk Management

Step 2

### “Task Snapshot”

#### Mission Analysis

##### Process Tasks

- |  |   |
|--|---|
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- ✓ Identifying, assessing, and mitigating risks.
- ✓ Making decisions that balance risk costs with mission benefits.

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Begin Risk Management

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander and staff, overseen by the S-3 (or protection cell if the unit has one), conduct risk management for their respective areas of expertise and/or responsibility, identifying hazards and making an initial assessment of the risk level for each hazard.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.


Commander

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.


Hazards associated with the operation.

Initial assessment of risk.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.


The XO, commander, and staff must assess risk whenever hazards are identified. They cannot wait until a set point in the planning cycle.

In the past, the Army separated risk into two categories, tactical risks and accidental risks. Current doctrine (ATP 5-19, *Risk Management*) requires that commanders and staffs pursue step 1, "Identify Hazards," using the factors of METT-TC.



Be familiar with the five steps of risk management (ATP 5-19): identify hazards; assess hazards; develop controls and make risk decisions; implement controls; supervise and evaluate.


The S-3, (or the protection officer if there is a protection cell) in coordination with the safety officer integrates risk management into the MDMP.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 2

- Exercise caution . . . this is a step that is easily overlooked, either accidentally or intentionally.
- The staff should identify the hazards that may be encountered during a mission. A hazard is a condition with the potential to cause injury, illness, or death of personnel, damage to or loss of property, or mission degradation. If you use a *Mission Analysis Worksheet*, ensure "identify risks" is included and the form is returned to the S-3 / protection officer in a timely enough manner to allow consolidation.
- For each hazard identified, ensure that staff members determine its direct impact on the operation.
- Initial risk determination is characterized by both the probability and severity of a potential loss that may result from the presence of an adversary or a hazardous condition.
- Risk assessment must be controlled and supervised. Someone should do that and annotate it in the Tactical SOP / Plans SOP.
- Ensure the use of the *Risk Management Worksheet*, DD Form 2977, to track the process of hazards and risks. 
- Each staff element should submit their sample risk assessment with only hazards and initial risk level filled out.
- The staff's advice to the commander is key. He will have to make decisions that balance risk costs with mission benefits.

**Notes:**

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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

**Task: Develop Initial Commander's Critical Information Requirements and Essential Elements of Friendly Information**

### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters' Plan or Order
2. Perform Initial IPB
3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks
4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls
5. Determine constraints
6. Identify critical facts & develop assumptions
7. Begin risk management
8. **Develop initial CCIRs & EEFI**
9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan
10. Update plan for use of available time
11. Develop initial themes & messages
12. Develop a proposed problem statement
13. Develop proposed mission statement
14. Present mission analysis briefing
15. Develop and issue initial commander's intent
16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance
17. Develop COA evaluation criteria
18. Issue warning order #2



- ✓ Identifies gaps in information.
- ✓ Situation dependent.
- ✓ Commander and selected staff meet prior to the mission analysis brief to approve the initial CCIRs and EEFI.

**Step 2**



### Mission Analysis (cont.)

**Task: Develop Initial Commander's Critical Information Requirements and Essential Elements of Friendly Information**

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- The staff develops information requirements and nominates (to the commander) those of sufficient importance that may need to become commander's critical information requirements.
- The commander considers these nominations and designates CCIRs. The staff identifies and nominates essential elements of friendly information.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Commander
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- Information requirements list.
- Recommended inputs to CCIRs.
- Initial essential elements of friendly information (EEFI) list.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- CCIRs are situational dependent and specified by the commander for each operation.
- Commanders should continuously review CCIRs during the planning process and adjust them as situations change.
- While EEFI are not CCIRs, they have the same priority.




## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 2

- Help the commander filter information available by defining what is important to mission accomplishment.
- Focus on information needed to determine which COA to choose. (During preparation and execution, CCIRs focus on information needed to validate the selected COA or determine when to initiate critical events, such as a branch or sequel).
- Potentially inclusive of the latest time information is of value (LTIOV) to indicate time sensitivity.
- Inclusive of PIRs and FFIRs (CCIRs must be focused enough to generate relevant information).
- Because CCIRs directly affect the success or failure of a mission, you and the staff must clearly communicate on information that will help the commander make a time-sensitive decision in a specific situation.
- Know what information the commander deems critical. As information requirements are developed, some will be important enough to be nominated as CCIRs.
- The commander should limit CCIRs to ten or fewer. Too many will reduce the staff's comprehension. Three-to-five is best. 
- Use pre-made charts to list PIRs and FFIRs recommended as proposed CCIRs. Expect PIRs to change based on how much is known about the enemy.
- Check, double-check, then re-check HHQ CCIRs. Situational changes may dictate changes to CCIRs.
- The Operations Section should post the latest CCIRs at each radio-telephone operator (RTO) station and ensure each RTO is familiar with them. They are often the first to receive information.
- Review CCIRs during lulls in the battle and always during battle update briefs (BUB) and shift change briefs.
- Initially, CCIRs will aid you in selecting a COA, but later, CCIRs should shift to information the commander needs to make decisions during execution.





## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop Initial Information Collection Plan

Step 2

### “Task Snapshot”

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order
2. Perform Initial IPB
3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks
4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls
5. Determine constraints
6. Identify critical facts & develop assumptions
7. Begin risk management
8. Develop initial CCIRs & EEFI

9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan
10. Update plan for use of available time
11. Develop initial themes & messages
12. Develop a proposed problem statement
13. Develop proposed mission statement
14. Present mission analysis briefing
15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent
16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance
17. Develop COA evaluation criteria
18. Issue warning order #2

- ✓ Ensures all available information concerning the enemy, terrain, weather, and civil considerations is obtained through intelligence reach, RFIs, or information collection tasks.
- ✓ Develop the Information Collection Plan by developing –
  - The collection tasking matrix.
  - The collection overlay.
  - The collection scheme of support.
  - Issue order (warning, operation, or fragmentary order).

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop Initial Information Collection Plan

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

Develop the Information Collection Plan by developing the collection tasking matrix, collection overlay, and collection scheme of support.

The S-3 leads the staff through collection integration to task available collection assets to satisfy IRs identified in the initial collection matrix.

The S-3 issues a tasking order (WARNORD, OPOORD, or FRAGORD).

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

S-2 Officer

S-3 Officer

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Initial collection tasking matrix.

Information collection overlay.

Collection scheme of support.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

The initial Information Collection Plan is crucial to begin or adjust the collection effort to help answer IRs identified during requirement development. It sets information collection in motion.



## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Upon completion of planning (after COA decision), the initial Information Collection Plan becomes the Annex L (Information Collection) of the OPORD.
- This is a difficult task, and requires continuous supervision and monitoring. There are three steps to the information collection process (plan requirements and assess collection, task and direct collection, and execute collection) and the S-3 must guide the staff through each of them. During mission planning, the staff will need to first determine the information requirements, then develop a collection plan, and finally implement the collection plan through specific taskings or requests for collection. During mission execution, the S-2 will disseminate intelligence, combat information, and targeting data. The S-2 will then evaluate reporting from collection assets. Finally, the S-2 and S-3 will update collection planning to ensure synchronization with current operations.
- The collection planning process is sequential and driven by IPB. The staff should pursue parallel planning to save time.
- The S-2 should report gaps in the intelligence effort and determine what assets are available to collect against those gaps.
- Consider using a pre-formatted WARNORD or FRAGORD. This also saves time.
- The S-3 should execute FRAGORDs that task collection assets to collect information on identified gaps.
- The FSO, S-2, and S-3 should coordinate to synchronize fire support with collection plans, especially where named areas of interest (NAIs) could become target areas of interest (TAIs).
- Consider the development of information collection planning teams.
- The staff should know what the commander expects in the initial collection plan. Go back to the unit Tactical SOP. It should be there, so point that out to others.

**Step 2**



### Mission Analysis (cont.)

**Helpful Tips (cont.)**

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Don't overlook troop leading procedures. Collection assets require planning time too.

The initial and final Collection Plan are not just S-2 products. The S-3 is the staff proponent and requires assistance from the S-2 and uses the Collection Plan to task and direct available information collection assets.



Remember, during Mission Analysis, a plan for the operation has not been developed. All collection tasks that are going to be addressed in the initial Collection Plan will be based on collection taskings from the HHQ and to answering questions that have arisen during *Receipt of Mission* and *Mission Analysis*.

**Notes:**

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**Step 2**



## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Update Plan for the Use of Available Time

#### “Task Snapshot”

Step 2

### Mission Analysis

#### Process Tasks

1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order
2. Perform Initial IPB
3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks
4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls
5. Determine constraints
6. Identify critical facts & develop assumptions
7. Begin risk management
8. Develop initial CCIRs & EEFI
9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan
10. **Update plan for use of available time**
11. Develop initial themes & messages
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15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent
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17. Develop COA evaluation criteria
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- ✓ Time needed to accomplish essential tasks.
- ✓ Compare operational timeline w/enemy timeline.
- ✓ Determine windows of opportunity.
- ✓ Briefings.
- ✓ Collaborative planning sessions.
- ✓ Rehearsals.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### **Task: Update Plan for the Use of Available Time**

#### **Actions That Must Occur**

Check them off as you go.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

The commander and XO:

Refine the initial plan for the use of available time and compare the time needed to accomplish essential tasks to the HHQ timeline to ensure mission accomplishment is possible in the allotted time.

Compare the timeline to the enemy timeline developed during IPB to determine windows of opportunity for exploitation or times when the unit will be at risk from enemy activity and projected timelines within the civil sector regarding how conditions are anticipated to unfold.

Know when, where, and how briefings resulting from the planning process will be conducted, if they will use collaborative planning sessions (if so, when, and on what network), and when, where, and in what form they will conduct rehearsals.

Work with liaison officers (LNO) to stay abreast of changes at the unit..

#### **Typical Performers of the Actions**

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Commander

XO

#### **Results That Should Occur**

Check them off as you go.

<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>

Revised timeline.

Times of collaborative planning sessions and the medium over which they will take place.

Briefing schedules (subject, time, and location of briefings the commander requires).

Rehearsal information (times, locations, and form).

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

OIL

### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.



The XO is the timeline manager.



The task at hand is to refine the initial plan based on what you now know as available time. Check the time you need to accomplish essential tasks, compare to the HHQ timeline, and if mission accomplishment in the allotted time is not possible, discuss with the commander.



The S-2 should provide you the enemy's timeline. Compare your timeline with his, and determine the windows of opportunity for possible unit exploitation or times the unit may be at risk from enemy activity. The enemy timeline is an excellent thing to have displayed. It will help the commander and staff during *COA Development and Analysis*.



Develop interim times for checking the progress of each staff section and the development of products. Set specific times for each sub-task (e.g. times for all staff input to the S-2 for IPB, well prior to the MA brief, to allow consolidation and synchronization).



Put brigade, battalion, and enemy critical events, including preparatory tasks, back briefs, and rehearsals, on a time chart in the CP. Identify when the commander will not be there and that there is a start and end time for each event. Define the battle rhythm and maintain it on a chart for all to see. Some units have gone as far as to place the HHQ and their own battle rhythm on a "CP clock."



Use every possible technique to maximize staff and subordinate element planning time (e.g., LNOs, FRAGORDs, timely guidance, use of the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> – 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s rule, etc.).



Strive to give your subordinates more planning time. Modern information planning techniques and collection capabilities may enable you to obtain more of a 1/5<sup>th</sup> – 4/5<sup>th</sup>s planning ratio rather than the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> – 2/3<sup>rd</sup>s planning ratio.



Stress backward planning. It will help eliminate planning oversights.



Announce upcoming events well ahead of time.



## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop Initial Themes and Messages

### “Task Snapshot”

Step 2

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order
2. Perform Initial IPB
3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks
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18. Issue warning order #2

- ✓ Identify and engage those actors that matter to their operational success.
- ✓ Expresses the purpose for military action.
- ✓ Tied to objectives, lines of effort, and end state conditions transmitted to those actors whose perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors matter to the success of an operation.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Task: Develop Initial Themes and Messages

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- The commander and staff develop a set of themes and messages and desired effects for the mission.
- The public affairs officer and the staff:
  - Review HHQ themes and messages.
  - Analyze the human aspects of the operational environment.
  - Determine the relevant actors.
  - Build the themes and messages for their command.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Commander
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- A set of themes and messages.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Commanders and their units coordinate what they say and do through the expression of the supporting themes and messages and desired effects for a specified mission. These describe the message to external stakeholders whose perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors are relevant to the operation.
- Themes and message considerations that have been identified assist the commander in accounting for potential information-related tasks in bridging the gaps among existing conditions, desired conditions, and development of the operational approach.





## Mission Analysis (cont.)

**Task: Develop a Proposed Problem Statement**

**Step 2**

### “Task Snapshot”

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order</li> <li>2. Perform Initial IPB</li> <li>3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks</li> <li>4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls</li> <li>5. Determine constraints</li> <li>6. Identify critical facts &amp; develop assumptions</li> <li>7. Begin risk management</li> <li>8. Develop initial CCIRs &amp; EEFI</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan</li> <li>10. Update plan for use of available time</li> <li>11. Develop initial themes &amp; messages</li> <li><b>12. Develop a proposed problem statement</b></li> <li>13. Develop proposed mission statement</li> <li>14. Present mission analysis briefing</li> <li>15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent</li> <li>16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance</li> <li>17. Develop COA evaluation criteria</li> <li>18. Issue warning order #2</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

As part of the discussion to help identify and understand the problem, the staff -

- ✓ Compares the current situation to the desired end state.
- ✓ Brainstorms and lists issues that impede the commander from achieving the desired end state.
- ✓ Based on this analysis, the staff develops a proposed problem statement - a statement of the problem.

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop a Proposed Problem Statement

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander, staff, and other partners develop a problem statement as part of Army design methodology.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.


Commander

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Proposed problem statement describing the primary issue or issues that may impede the unit from achieving the desired end state.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.


The commander determines, at an early time, if the mission statement from HHQ is defined enough for he and the staff to develop a plan to implement the HHQ commander's intent.

If the commander determines there is insufficient guidance, he, with members of the staff and other participants, executes Army design methodology to determine specific issues that must be addressed to allow the unit to accomplish the HHQ commander's intent within his guidance.



Design activities may not necessarily happen prior to *Mission Analysis*. If they do not happen, a problem statement must be addressed prior to *COA Development*.

The formulation of the problem leads to particular solutions. Because of this, it is imperative commanders determine the "right" problem to solve.

Ensure the problem is clearly articulated in a problem statement.



## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop a Proposed Mission Statement

### “Task Snapshot”

Step 2

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order</li> <li>2. Perform Initial IPB</li> <li>3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks</li> <li>4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls</li> <li>5. Determine constraints</li> <li>6. Identify critical facts &amp; develop assumptions</li> <li>7. Begin risk management</li> <li>8. Develop initial CCIRs &amp; EEFI</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan</li> <li>10. Update plan for use of available time</li> <li>11. Develop initial themes &amp; messages</li> <li>12. Develop a proposed problem statement</li> <li><b>13. Develop a proposed mission statement</b></li> <li>14. Present mission analysis briefing</li> <li>15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent</li> <li>16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance</li> <li>17. Develop COA evaluation criteria</li> <li>18. Issue warning order #2</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

- ✓ **Who will execute the operation (unit or organization)?**
  - ✓ **What are the units essential tasks (tactical mission task)?**
  - ✓ **When will the operation begin (by time or event) or what is the duration of the operation?**
  - ✓ **Where will the operation occur (AO, objective, grid coordinates)?**
  - ✓ **Why will the force conduct the operation (for what purpose)?**

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop a Proposed Mission Statement

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The XO or the S-3 drafts the proposed mission statement based on *Mission Analysis* to this point.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

XO  
S-3

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Proposed mission statement containing the elements of who, what, when, where, and why.



#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Either the XO or the S-3 should review the commander's initial guidance and intent, enemy COAs (most likely and most dangerous), specified, implied, and essential tasks, available assets, constraints, risks, CCIRs (PIRs, FFIRs), EEFI, commander's information collection guidance, the operational timeline, and doctrinally approved tasks (breach, bypass, etc.).

Paying close attention to the who, what, when, where, and why dynamics of a mission statement, the XO or the S-3 should then prepare a recommended mission statement. Once completed, the recommended mission statement is incorporated into the Mission Analysis Briefing to gain the commander's approval. Double check that the correct tasks are included and the purpose for including them.



Check for staff, subordinate element, and attached element understanding of the mission.

The mission statement may have more than one essential task (e.g. if an operation is phased, there may be separate essential tasks for each phase).







## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Present the Mission Analysis Briefing

### “Task Snapshot”

Step 2

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order</li> <li>2. Perform Initial IPB</li> <li>3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks</li> <li>4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls</li> <li>5. Determine constraints</li> <li>6. Identify critical facts &amp; develop assumptions</li> <li>7. Begin risk management</li> <li>8. Develop initial CCIRs &amp; EEFI</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan</li> <li>10. Update plan for use of available time</li> <li>11. Develop initial themes &amp; messages</li> <li>12. Develop a proposed problem statement</li> <li>13. Develop a proposed mission statement</li> <li><b>14. Present the mission analysis briefing</b></li> <li>15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent</li> <li>16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance</li> <li>17. Develop COA evaluation criteria</li> <li>18. Issue warning order #2</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

- ✓ Mission and commander’s intent of HHQ two levels up.
- ✓ Mission, commander’s intent, concept of operation, of the headquarters one level up.
- ✓ A proposed problem statement.
- ✓ A proposed mission statement.
- ✓ Review of the commander’s initial guidance.
- ✓ Initial IPB products, including civil considerations that impact the conduct of operations.
- ✓ Specified, implied, and essential tasks.
- ✓ Pertinent facts & assumptions.
- ✓ Constraints.
- ✓ Forces available and resource shortfalls.
- ✓ Initial risk assessment.
- ✓ Proposed themes and messages.
- ✓ Proposed CCIRs and EEFI.
- ✓ Initial Information Collection Plan.
- ✓ Recommended timeline.
- ✓ Recommended collaborative planning sessions.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Task: Present the Mission Analysis Briefing

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.


S-3 conducts and chairs the Mission Analysis Briefing to the commander (time permitting). *Note: The commander may forego the briefing if he obtains the Mission Analysis information from a shared database.*

The commander issues guidance to the staff for continued planning based on situational understanding gained from the Mission Analysis Briefing.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.


S-3

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.


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Mission Analysis Briefing is comprised of:

Mission and commander’s intent of the headquarters two levels up.

Mission, commander’s intent, and concept of operations of the headquarters one level up.

A proposed problem statement.

A proposed mission statement.

Review of the commander’s initial guidance.

Initial IPB products including civil considerations that impact the conduct of operations.

Specified, implied, and essential tasks.

Pertinent facts and assumptions.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Results That Should Occur (cont.)

Check them off as you go.

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- Constraints.
- Forces available and resource shortfalls.
- Initial risk assessment.
- Proposed themes and messages.
- Proposed CCIRs and EEFI.
- Initial Information Collection Plan.
- Recommended timeline.
- Recommended collaborative planning sessions.

Step 2

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

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- The Mission Analysis Briefing promotes a shared understanding of the requirements of the upcoming operation.
- Ideally, the commander will hold several informal meetings with key staff members before the Mission Analysis Briefing to include meetings to develop and approve CCIRs, the problem statement, the mission statement, and themes and messages. These meetings are very beneficial as they promote a common understanding, pass information to the staff, and issue guidance for certain activities such as information collection operations or assisting the commander with developing the initial commander's intent and planning guidance.
- The S-2 should brief the **enemy Reconnaissance and Surveillance Plan**. (Are there ongoing imminent enemy reconnaissance operations directed against the unit? What are the likely enemy PIRs, and what are their reconnaissance objectives?)
- If sufficient time is available, the staff should brief the commander on the *Mission Analysis* that has been accomplished. While the commander can require any briefing format he chooses, careful consideration should be given to those pieces of information that will contribute to an end state where the commander, staff, and subordinates have a shared understanding of the requirements of the upcoming operation.

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.



Each staff member should know what they are to address in the Mission Analysis Briefing. Check the unit SOP to see if it is up to date and covers what you know the commander expects.



The S-3 should consolidate input from the staff to ensure the briefing is "built" in time to rehearse before briefing the commander.



The commander expects his staff to analyze the information from each WFF and give him the "so what." This is the information he must key on.



Don't overlook something as simple as everyone being able to see the briefing charts.



Use terrain depiction as a centerpiece. It will always impact the mission.



The objective is to gain a briefing end state of an approved mission statement, the commander's intent, and his planning guidance. Every staff member must contribute to that end state.



Standardized charts save time. Include the chart formats and briefing methodology in the unit Tactical SOP / Plans SOP so all know what and how to brief.



Remember, while the Mission Analysis Briefing is given to the commander, it is also for the staff, as it ensures that everyone is starting from a common reference point.



Ensure a briefing environment where everyone can ask a question and does.



The staff should prepare and keep updated *Mission Analysis* worksheets either by section or WFF. They are invaluable during preparation for the Mission Analysis Briefing. They also serve as a basis for running estimates.



During the Mission Analysis Briefing or shortly thereafter, the commander will approve the problem statement, mission statement, themes and messages, and CCIRs. He then must develop and issue his initial intent and planning guidance.





## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop and Issue Initial Commander's Intent

### “Task Snapshot”

Step 2

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters' Plan or Order</li> <li>2. Perform Initial IPB</li> <li>3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks</li> <li>4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls</li> <li>5. Determine constraints</li> <li>6. Identify critical facts &amp; develop assumptions</li> <li>7. Begin risk management</li> <li>8. Develop initial CCIRs &amp; EEFI</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan</li> <li>10. Update plan for use of available time</li> <li>11. Develop initial themes &amp; messages</li> <li>12. Develop a proposed problem statement</li> <li>13. Develop proposed mission statement</li> <li>14. Present mission analysis briefing</li> <li>15. <b>Develop and issue initial commander's intent</b></li> <li>16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance</li> <li>17. Develop COA evaluation criteria</li> <li>18. Issue warning order #2</li> </ol> |
|---|--|

- ✓ Based on their situational understanding, commanders summarize their visualization in their initial commander's intent statement.
- ✓ The initial commander's intent links the operation's purpose with conditions that define the desired end state.
- ✓ Commanders may change their intent statement as planning progresses and more information becomes available.
- ✓ Typically, the commander's intent statement is three to five sentences long.

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop and Issue Initial Commander's Intent

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander personally develops and revises his initial intent statement and, when possible, delivers it face-to-face. (During *Mission Analysis*, the commander begins his visualization and develops his initial intent for the operation. His intent statement to the staff, which is clear and concise, provides a link between the mission and the concept of operations.)

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Commander's initial intent statement.

OIL

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

The commander, based on his situational understanding, summarizes his visualization in his initial intent statement.

The principal purpose of his intent is to link the operation's purpose with conditions that define the desired end state. It is not unusual for the commander's intent statement to evolve as planning progresses and more information becomes available.

The XO's role here is to focus staff planning. To do that successfully, he must talk with the commander and stress to him that his intent needs to be easily understood two echelons down, addresses the key tasks, is written if possible, and is brief (typically three to five sentences) and clear.

In the absence of orders, the commander's intent, coupled with the mission statement, directs subordinates toward mission accomplishment. When opportunities appear, subordinates will use the commander's intent to decide whether and how to exploit them.





## Mission Analysis (cont.)

**Task: Develop and Issue Initial Planning Guidance**

**Step 2**

### “Task Snapshot”

#### Mission Analysis

##### Process Tasks

1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order
2. Perform Initial IPB
3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks
4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls
5. Determine constraints
6. Identify critical facts & develop assumptions
7. Begin risk management
8. Develop initial CCIRs & EEFI
9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan
10. Update plan for use of available time
11. Develop initial themes & messages
12. Develop a proposed problem statement
13. Develop proposed mission statement
14. Present mission analysis briefing
15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent
16. **Develop and issue initial planning guidance**
17. Develop COA evaluation criteria
18. Issue warning order #2

- ✓ **Must be understood by subordinates two echelons down.**
- ✓ **Must be brief & clear.**
- ✓ **In narrative or bullet form.**
- ✓ **Not to exceed five sentences.**

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop and Issue Initial Planning Guidance

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander provides the staff with enough additional guidance (preliminary decisions) to focus their activities in planning and developing COAs. The guidance may be placed on a shared database to ensure a common base of planning effort within the unit.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Commander's initial planning guidance.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

The commander will issue planning guidance when conducting Army design methodology and at specific points during the MDMP. The first time is upon receipt of, or anticipation of, a mission (initial planning guidance). Subsequently, guidance will be issued following Mission Analysis (planning guidance for *COA Development*); following *COA Development* (revised planning guidance for COA improvements), and *COA Approval* (revised planning guidance to complete the plan).

The level of guidance detail depends on situational understanding, time available, staff proficiency, and the latitude the next higher commander allows.

As commanders formulate their planning guidance, they may want to address assumptions prepared by the staff or HHQ.

Don't forget guidance that may be applicable to the unit's role in enabling other organizations and activities (joint, interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational).



### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 2

- The guidance focuses on essential tasks, emphasizes in broad terms when, where, and how he intends to mass his combat power, and includes priorities for all combat and support elements and how he envisions their support of his concept.
- This is a task where the XO can better assist the staff by first assisting the commander.
- Since the planning environment is usually tense and most everyone is tired, the XO should ask the commander if he would mind writing out his guidance. It is generally accepted that doing this helps organize the thought process.
- Once again, the Tactical SOP is key. The basic content and format for the commander's guidance should be listed within. Remind the commander that it is there and the staff and subordinate commanders will refer to it to know what to expect, as a minimum, from his guidance.
- As a rule, commanders should use the elements of operational design appropriate to their situation and echelon to focus their guidance:
  - Desired end state.
  - Conditions.
  - Centers of gravity.
  - Operational approach.
  - Decisive points.
  - Lines of operation and lines of effort.
  - Operational reach.
  - Tempo.
  - Simultaneity and depth.
  - Phasing and transitions.
  - Culmination and risk.
- For detailed information regarding the guidelines for the commander's planning guidance carefully review FM 6-0, Table 9-1. It is particularly useful regarding WFF information specificity.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.



Step 2

- Be able to address with the commander the “pros and cons” regarding the amount of guidance given.
- Understand the “why” in the commander’s guidance.
- Check the commander’s intent for implication and impact across all WFFs.
- Note taking is important!
- The commander is under the same strain you are. Many times, the Mission Analysis Briefing is the first time he has seen the staff’s understanding and refinement of the tactical problem. As such, he may require a small amount of additional time to refine his guidance based on staff input.
- Be prepared to ask questions. The commander expects that of his staff. Any question left unasked may lead to assumptions that will contribute to COAs that don’t meet your commander’s FADS-C test.

Notes:

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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop COA Evaluation Criteria

#### “Task Snapshot”

Step 2

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order
2. Perform Initial IPB
3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks
4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls
5. Determine constraints
6. Identify critical facts & develop assumptions
7. Begin risk management
8. Develop initial CCIRs & EEFI
9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan
10. Update plan for use of available time
11. Develop initial themes & messages
12. Develop a proposed problem statement
13. Develop proposed mission statement
14. Present mission analysis briefing
15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent
16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance
17. **Develop COA evaluation criteria**
18. Issue warning order #2

- ✓ Evaluation criteria are standards the commander and staff will later use to measure the relative effectiveness and efficiency of one COA relative to other COAs.
- ✓ Evaluation criteria address factors that affect success and those that can cause failure.
- ✓ Criteria change from mission to mission and must be clearly defined and understood by all staff members before starting the war game.
- ✓ Commanders adjust criterion selection and weighting according to their own experience and vision.
- ✓ The staff presents the proposed evaluation criteria to the commander at the mission analysis brief for approval.

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Develop COA Evaluation Criteria

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- The XO initially determines the proposed criteria with weights based on the assessment of their relative importance and the commander’s guidance.
- The commander adjusts criteria selection and weighting according to his own experience and vision.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Commander
- XO
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- COA evaluation criteria with evaluation metrics.

#### Helpful Tips



Check them off as you go. If you don’t do them, check that someone has.

- Evaluation criteria are factors that the staff uses to measure the relative effectiveness and efficiency of one COA to other COAs after the war game.
- The importance of evaluation criteria cannot be understated. For every conceived COA, there are “pros and cons,” and arriving at what they are is a matter of having a set of criteria and metrics from which an evaluation can be made. Evaluation criteria concerns are inherent to every level of planning, and during the MDMP emerge during *Mission Analysis*. They may receive some refinement during COA Development, but must be approved prior to *COA Analysis* in order to be used effectively during *COA Comparison*.



### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 2



Review the problem solving process in Chapter 4 of FM 6-0 (the third step in the problem solving process is developing criteria) to better understand the need for evaluation criteria.



Maintain a mindset of problem solving. As a problem solver, you will better understand the need to develop criteria to assist in formulating and evaluating possible solutions to a problem.



As each criterion is selected / developed, ensure that it is based on facts or assumptions. The S-3 should be actively involved in this confirmation.



Staff consideration should be paid to the understanding screening, and developing evaluation, criteria.



Consider these questions as you begin to determine criteria:

Does the COA facilitate flexibility (e.g., once we reach a certain point, do we have any options remaining?)?

Does the COA allow us to mass combat power on the objective area (e.g., how many squads / platoons can we mass on the objective / engagement area?)?

Does the COA facilitate good mission command (e.g., how many / what types of units is each subordinate commander responsible for?)?

How simple or complex is the COA?

How about the element of surprise (e.g., at what point can we realistically expect the enemy to realize what we are doing?)?




With maximum input from the staff, determine what criteria should be used to analyze and compare each COA. Refer back to the commander's initial guidance or what he has used as evaluation criteria for the same type of mission in the past. The staff should review the unit Tactical SOP for common evaluation criteria, and match them up with possible metrics to save valuable planning time. Following are some examples that should be included:

Mission accomplishment at an acceptable cost.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- The principles of war.
- Doctrinal fundamentals for the type and form of operation being conducted.
- The commander's guidance and intent.
- The level of tactical risk.
- Measures of performance.
- Get a final sensing of the commander's criteria priorities (he should have a good idea as to how he prioritized the selected evaluation criteria), and have the staff define the selected criteria based on the doctrinal elements of: Short Title—the criterion name, Definition—a clear description of the feature being evaluated, Unit of Measure—a standard element used to quantify the criterion. Examples of units of measure are US dollars, miles per gallon, and feet, Benchmark—a value that defines the desired state, or "good" for a solution in terms of a particular criterion, Formula—an expression of how changes in the value of the criterion affect the desirability of the possible solution. State the formula in comparative terms (for example, more is better) or absolute terms (for example, a night movement is better than a day movement). This will establish how the solutions offered by each COA are affected.
- Remember to stress clarity in defining the evaluation criteria, e.g., simplicity - number of task organization or main effort changes during the attack; speed - amount of time it takes from the LD to consolidation on the objective; Mass - amount of combat power available at the decisive point; vulnerabilities - number of enemy vulnerabilities exploited and friendly vulnerabilities exposed.
- Check for common staff understanding of the evaluation criteria. For example, the S-3 may view "ease of movement" from a maneuver point of view, while the engineer may view it primarily as trafficability. 
- Keep in mind that it is not wrong for WFF concerns to dominate a particular view of an evaluation criterion, but all views must be expressed and resolved by developing a single metric for common understanding.

Step 2

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 2



The staff should have the mindset that every mission has a unique set of evaluation and weighting criteria, that they must be clearly defined and understood by all before war-gaming begins, and that factors addressing mission success or potentially causing mission failure must be addressed.



Ask the commander to check on the analysis process, provide guidance, and ensure that the COA still meets his intent.



Your metrics must be quantitative, not qualitative. Simplicity should be defined as "least number of subordinate commands" rather than "easiest to control."



Be very careful when determining weighting during this process. An evaluation criterion with a weight of two will remove two evaluation criteria with a weight of one. Doctrinally, weighting is not mandated. If the commander feels that a specific evaluation deserves a weight of three vice one, it should probably be the only evaluation criteria.



Try to develop your evaluation criteria in odd numbers. This will help during COA comparison and will make the process more quantitative than qualitative. An even number of evaluation criteria may result in a tie between two or more COAs. While the commander expects the staff to support their decisions with logic and their respective expertise, difficulties always arise during a tie.



It is generally a good idea for the commander to approve evaluation criteria while he is available at the Mission Analysis Briefing.

**Notes:**

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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

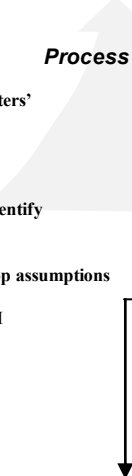
### Task: Issue Warning Order #2

### “Task Snapshot”

Step 2

## Mission Analysis

### Process Tasks

- 
1. Analyze the Higher Headquarters’ Plan or Order
  2. Perform Initial IPB
  3. Determine specified, implied, and essential tasks
  4. Review available assets and identify resource shortfalls
  5. Determine constraints
  6. Identify critical facts & develop assumptions
  7. Begin risk management
  8. Develop initial CCIRs & EEFI
  9. Develop initial Information Collection Plan
  10. Update plan for use of available time
  11. Develop initial themes & messages
  12. Develop a proposed problem statement
  13. Develop proposed mission statement
  14. Present mission analysis briefing
  15. Develop and issue initial commander’s intent
  16. Develop and issue initial planning guidance
  17. Develop COA evaluation criteria
  18. Issue warning order #2

**WARNORD** that contains, at a minimum—

- ✓ The approved mission statement.
- ✓ The commander’s intent.
- ✓ Changes to task organization.
- ✓ The unit AO (sketch, overlay, or some other description).
- ✓ CCIRs and EEFI.
- ✓ Risk guidance.
- ✓ Priorities by warfighting functions.
- ✓ Military deception guidance.
- ✓ Essential stability tasks.
- ✓ Specific priorities.

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Issue Warning Order #2

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

S-3 Section issues a WARNORD to subordinate and supporting elements immediately after the unit commander provides his guidance.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

S-3 Section

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

WARNORD to subordinate / supporting units.

#### Helpful Tips



Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.


Immediately after the commander gives the planning guidance, ensure the development and issuance of a WARNORD (often referred to as WARNORD # 2) to subordinate and supporting units.

Once again, check the Tactical SOP. Everything that should be in the WARNORD should be listed.

Take the WARNORD to the commander for his review and approval or determination that a modification is required.



Remember, time is paramount.

At a minimum, the WARNORD should contain:

The approved mission statement.

The commander's intent.

Changes to task organization.

Attachments and detachments.

### Mission Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 2

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○

The unit AO (sketch, overlay, or some other description).

CCIRs and EEFL.

Risk guidance.

Priorities by WFF.

Military deception guidance.

Essential stability tasks.

Specific priorities.

WARNORD # 2 provides a solid basis for putting together the final OPORD, and staffs should be in OPORD formatting / production at this point. Waiting until Step 7 will result in time-driven failure.

**Notes:**

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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

As indicated by the exaggerated graphic below, many processes require a multitude of tools to achieve a successful end state. The MDMP is no different. This publication on *Mission Analysis* only has the space to provide a few key ones.

Step 2

However, two editions of *The Azimuth*, July 2012 and First Quarter FY 2013, will provide a broad array of tools developed by training teams and “borrowed” from open sources within the training community. Each has been reviewed, updated with current doctrine, and been broken down, in many cases, into step-by-step procedures.

There are numerous tools that are available to assist with the conduct of *Mission Analysis*. Arguably, the best is the Mission Analysis Worksheet, which has been included in this document.

#### TIP

The creation and use of planning tools separates successful staffs from staffs that struggle with processes.



Which ones do I need? Which ones will work for me?

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

WARNORD Format w/Instructions (Re. Figure C-4, FM 6-0)

<p>[CLASSIFICATION]                  (Change from verbal orders, if any) (Optional)</p>	<p>Copy ## of ## copies                  Issuing headquarters                  Place of issue                  Date-time group of signature                  Message reference number</p>
<p>WARNING ORDER [number] Example: WARNING ORDER #8</p>	
<p>(U) <b>References:</b> Refer to higher headquarters' OPLAN or OPORD and identify map sheets for operation (Optional).</p>	
<p>(U) <b>Time Zone Used Throughout the OPLAN/OPORD:</b> (Optional).</p>	
<p>(U) <b>Task Organization:</b> (Optional).</p>	
<p>1. (U) <b>Situation.</b> The situation paragraph describes the conditions and circumstances of the operational environment that impact operations in the following subparagraphs:</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. (U) <u>Area of Interest.</u></li> <li>b. (U) <u>Area of Operations.</u></li> <li>c. (U) <u>Enemy Forces.</u></li> <li>d. (U) <u>Friendly Forces.</u></li> <li>e. (U) <u>Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Nongovernmental Organizations.</u></li> <li>f. (U) <u>Civil Considerations.</u></li> <li>g. (U) <u>Attachments and Detachments.</u> Provide initial task organization.</li> <li>h. (U) <u>Assumptions.</u> List any significant assumptions for order development.</li> </ul>	
<p>2. (U) <b>Mission.</b> State the issuing headquarters' mission.</p>	
<p>3. (U) <b>Execution.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. (U) <u>Initial Commander's Intent.</u> Provide brief commander's intent statement.</li> <li>b. (U) <u>Concept of Operations.</u> This may be "to be determined" for an initial WARNORD.</li> <li>c. (U) <u>Tasks to Subordinate Units.</u> Include any known tasks at time of issuance of WARNORD.</li> <li>d. (U) <u>Coordinating Instructions.</u></li> </ul>	
<p>4. (U) <b>Sustainment.</b> Include any known logistics, personnel, or health service support preparation tasks.</p>	
<p>5. (U) <b>Command and Signal.</b> Include any changes to the existing order or state "No change."</p>	
<p>ACKNOWLEDGE:</p>	
<p>[Commander's last name]                  [Commander's rank]</p>	
<p>OFFICIAL:</p>	
<p>[Authenticator's name]                  [Authenticator's position]</p>	
<p>ANNEXES: List annexes by letter and title.</p>	
<p>DISTRIBUTION: List recipients.</p>	
<p>[page number]                  [CLASSIFICATION]</p>	

Step 2



# Mission Analysis (cont.)

## Some Tools That May Help

Unit MDMP Benchmark Chart

MDMP Step		From	To	Initial Guidance	Initial Timeline	WARNO RD 1							
Receipt of Mission		Benchmark Times											
Mission Analysis		From	To	WFF WS to S2	Initial TGT MITG	Information Collection Huddle	Develop Evaluation Criteria (S3 / X0)	MA Slides Complete	MA Brief Rehearsal	MA Brief	WARNO RD 2		
COA Development		From	To	Generate Options	Develop COAs	COA-D Slides Complete	COA-D Brief Rehearsal	COA-D Brief					
COA Analysis		From	To	Set-up Complete	Wargame COA 1	Wargame COA 2	WFF Draft OPO RD Products Complete						
COA Comparison		From	To	DECMAT Complete									
COA Approval		From	To	Decision Brief Slides Complete	Decision Brief Rehearsal	Decision Brief	WARNO RD 3						
OPORD Production, Dissemination, and Transition		From	To	WFF Final Products Complete	OPORD Complied	OPORD Brief Slides Complete	OPORD Brief Rehearsal	OPORD Brief					
Rehearsals		From	To	Backbriefs	Rehearsal Site / Terrain Model Complete	CAR Rehearsal	CAR	Support Rehearsal	Battle Drill / SOP Rehearsal (At CP 3)				
End MDMP Time		Benchmark Times											










## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### Unit Planning Timeline Chart

Start	End	Action / Deliverable	Who
<b>Day 1 (1 Jan 2014)</b>			
0430	0530	Receive OPORD Brief from HHQ	CDR, S-3, S-2, FSO
	0700	Initial timeline developed	XO
	0700	Receive commander's initial planning guidance	All
0630	0700	Determine evaluation criteria	CDR, XO, S-3
	0815	WFF Worksheets turned in to S-2	All
0830	0915	Initial Targeting Meeting	CDR, XO, S-2, S-3, FSO, CA
0915	0945	Initial Information Collection Huddle	S-3, S-2, FSO, CA
	0945	Mission Analysis worksheets turned in to S-3	All
	1000	WARNORD 1 produced and distributed	S-3
0900	1000	Build MA Briefing slide deck	S-3
1015	1055	Mission Analysis Briefing Rehearsal	All
1100	1200	Mission Analysis Briefing	All
1200	1215	Commander's intent and guidance	All
1215	1245	Generate options complete	CDR, XO, S-3
1245	1500	COA Development Tools complete	COA Tms 1 and 2
	1400	WARNORD 2 Produced and Distributed	S-3
	1500	COA Statements and Sketches complete	COA Tms 1 and 2
	1500	COA Briefing slides complete	S-3
1515	1530	COA development briefing rehearsal	All
1530	1600	COA development briefing	All
1600	1615	Gather tools and prepare COA analysis site	S-3
1630	2030	Execute analysis of COA 1	All
2030	2215	Execute analysis of COA 2	All
	2215	DECMAT complete	All
	2300	WFFF / staff section OPORD products complete	All
	2300	WFF Decision Briefing slides complete and turned in to S-3	All
2315	2330	Rehearse COA decision briefing	All
2330	2400	COA decision briefing	All
<b>DAY 2 (2 Jan 2014)</b>			
0001	0245	Execute OPORD production	All
	0230	WARNORD 3 produced and distributed	S-3
	0245	OPORD compiled	All
	0245	Annexes compiled	All
	0245	Operation graphics complete	All
	0300	OPORD briefing slides complete	S-3
	0300	OPORD complete with associated graphics	S-3
0315	0400	Rehearse OPORD briefing	All
0400	0600	OPORD briefing to subordinate elements	All
0600	0730	Bn CDR backbriefs	Cdrs, staff
<b>DAY 3 (3 Jan 2014)</b>			
0700	1000	Build terrain model	All
	1000	Terrain model complete	All
1000	1100	Rehearse Combined Arms Rehearsal (CAR)	All
1100	1300	CAR	All
1300	1400	Support rehearsal	XO, S-1, S-4, FSC Commander
1400	1500	Information collection rehearsal	XO, S-3, S-2
1400	UTC	Battle drill / SOP rehearsals	All
1700	1800	Units move from Aas to Attack Positions	Sub units
	1800	Units cross LD	Sub units

	Receipt of mission tasks
	Mission analysis tasks
	COA development tasks
	COA analysis tasks
	COA comparison tasks
	COA approval tasks
	OPORD production, dissemination, and transition tasks



# Mission Analysis (cont.)

## Some Tools That May Help

Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 1)

Step 2

**Mission Analysis Worksheet**  
 FM 6-0 *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*, (May 2014)

Staff Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Prepared by: \_\_\_\_\_ DTG: \_\_\_\_\_

- Analyze the Higher Headquarters' Plan or Order
  - The higher headquarters' -
    - ⇒ Commander's intent:
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
    - ⇒ Mission:
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
    - ⇒ Concept of Operations:
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
    - ⇒ Available assets:
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
    - ⇒ The missions of adjacent, supporting, and supported units and their relationships to the higher headquarters' plan:
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
    - ⇒ The missions of interagency, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental organizations that work in the operational areas:
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
    - ⇒ Their assigned area of operations:
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_



# Mission Analysis (cont.)

## Some Tools That May Help

Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 2)

Step 2

- Perform Initial IPB (FM 2-01.3 *Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield* October 2009)  
**Operational Environment: (Operational and Mission Variables, ADP 3-0 pg 2)**
  - ⇒ Operational Variables = PMESH-PT
  - ⇒ Mission Variables = METT-TC (Civil Considerations = ASCOPE)

**1. Define the Operational Environment:** Identifies for further analysis specific features of the environment or activities within it and the physical space they occupy that may influence available courses of action (COA) or the commander's decision. Efforts are focused on the areas and characteristics of the operational environment that will influence the command's mission. (Chapter 2, FM 2-01.3).

- Identify significant characteristics of the environment:
  - ⇒ Identify which threat forces are anticipated to be in the operational environment:
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
  - ⇒ Analysis of terrain characteristics to develop the military aspects of terrain (OAKOC), examples:
    - ◆ Hydrological data.
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
    - ◆ Elevation data.
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
    - ◆ Soil composition.
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
    - ◆ Vegetation.
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
- Identify the limits of the command's area of operation.
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
- Establish the limits of the command's area of influence and area of interest.
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_
   
\_\_\_\_\_

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 3)

Step 2

- Evaluate existing databases and identify intelligence gaps.

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- Initiate collection of information required to complete IPB.

#### 2. Describe environmental effects on operations. (Chapter 3, FM 2-01.3 for detailed information)

- Terrain analysis (OAKOC):

- ⇒ Observation and fields of fire.

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- ⇒ Avenues of approach.

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- ⇒ Key and decisive terrain.

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- ⇒ Obstacles.

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- ⇒ Cover and Concealment.

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- Weather Analysis (Military considerations for weather analysis):

- ⇒ Atmospheric Environment

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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 4)

Step 2

⇒ Atmospheric Environment.

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⇒ Maritime Environment.

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⇒ Terrestrial Environment.

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⇒ Space Environment.

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- Weather Analysis (Military aspects of weather):

⇒ Visibility.

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⇒ Wind.

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⇒ Precipitation.

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⇒ Cloud cover.

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⇒ Temperature.

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⇒ Humidity.

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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 5)

Step 2

⇒ **Meteorological and oceanographic (METOC) standards for operational consideration.**

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⇒ **Additional weather considerations.**

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• **Civil considerations: ASCOPE**

⇒ **Areas:** political boundaries, districts, location of government centers, social, political, religious, or criminal enclaves, trade routes, agricultural/ mining regions, temp settlement of d islocated civilians, or other civil functions.

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⇒ **Structures:** bridges, power plants, communication towers, dams, churches, mosques, schools, hospitals, jails, warehouses, TV/ radio stations, or toxic industrial material locations.

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⇒ **Capabilities:** required to save, sustain, or enhance life, public administration, public safety, emergency services, food, public works, utilities, health, resources as interpreters, laundry services, and construction materials and equipment.

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⇒ **Organizations:** nonmilitary groups or institutions in AO – church groups, fraternal, patriotic or service organizations, labor unions, criminal organizations, and community watch groups. NGOs and multinational corporations.

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⇒ **People:** nonmilitary personnel – civilians within an AO as well as outside the AO whose actions, opinions, or political influence can effect the mission.

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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 6)

Step 2

⇒ **Events:** National and religious holidays, agriculture crop / livestock and market cycles, elections, civil disturbances, and celebrations, disasters from natural, manmade, or technological sources, military deployments, redeployments, or paydays.

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- Describe the environmental effects on operations and threat / adversary and friendly courses of action (Chapter 3, page 3-20, FM 2-01.3).

3. Evaluate the threat (Chapter 4, FM 2-01.3 for detailed information).

- Update or create threat models:
  - ⇒ Convert threat doctrine or patterns of operations to graphics.

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⇒ Describe the threat's tactics and operations.

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⇒ Identify high-value targets (HVT) and high-payoff targets (HPT) (see next page for HVT considerations).

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4. Determine threat courses of action (Chapter 5, FM 2-01.3 for detailed information):

- Identify the threat's likely objectives and desired end state.

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- Identify the full set of COAs available to the threat.

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- Develop each COA in amount of detail required and as time allows.

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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 7)

Step 2

- Identify initial collection requirements (event template, event matrix, and initial R&S plan).

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**High Value Target (HVT):** a target the enemy commander requires for the successful completion of the mission. The loss of high-value targets would be expected to seriously degrade important enemy functions throughout the friendly commander's area of interest (JP 3-09). The following categories may be useful.

- Identify assets that are key to executing the primary threat operation or sequels.
  - ⇒ Command, control, and communications.

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- ⇒ Fire support.

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- ⇒ Maneuver.

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- ⇒ Air Defense / Radar.

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- ⇒ Engineers.

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- ⇒ Information collection capabilities.

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- ⇒ CBRNE capabilities.

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- ⇒ Radio electronics or electronic warfare capabilities.

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- ⇒ Logistic capabilities (fuel).

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- ⇒ Logistic capabilities (ammunition with storage sites).

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- ⇒ Logistic capabilities (maintenance and repair).

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- ⇒ Logistic capabilities (lift).

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- ⇒ Lines of communications (LOC).

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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 8)

Step 2

- Existing intelligence studies, evaluation of the database, patrol debriefs, and SALUTE reports.

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- A review of threat's TTPs and previous operations.

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- Understanding the threat's objectives, tasks, purpose, and intent.

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- Consider the threat's ability to substitute other assets as well as branches and/or sequels.

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• Determine Specified, Implied, and Essential Tasks	Where found in OPOD	S	I	E	Task to:

















• Review Available Assets and Identify Resource Shortfalls

**Mission Analysis (cont.)**

**Some Tools That May Help**

Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 9)

**Step 2**

Combat Power / Personnel Status	Combat Power / Personnel Status
 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Team _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Overall strength % _____</p> <p>Critical shortages:</p> </div> </div>	 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Overall strength % _____</p> <p>Critical shortages:</p> </div> </div>
 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Team _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"></div> </div>	 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"></div> </div>
 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Team _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"></div> </div>	 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"></div> </div>
 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Team _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"></div> </div>	 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"></div> </div>
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine constraints (restrictions placed on a command by a higher command - generally things within the order that specify what the unit “must” do or “can’t” do).</li> </ul>	Where found in OPORD





## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 11)

Step 2

EEFI

• **Develop Initial Information Collection requirements:**

⇒ Identify requirements and intelligence gaps.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

⇒ Evaluate available assets (internal and external) to collect information.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

⇒ Determine gaps in the use of those assets.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

⇒ Recommend those collection assets controlled by the organization to collect on the IRs.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

⇒ Submit requests for information (RFI) for adjacent and higher collection support.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

⇒ Submit information gathered during information collection planning to the S-3 for integration and development of the Information Collection Plan.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 12)

Step 2

• **Develop Initial Information Collection Plan:**

⇒ Develop the initial information collection scheme of support.

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⇒ Develop the initial information collection tasking matrix.

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⇒ Develop the initial information collection overlay.

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⇒ Issue the initial collection order [WARNORD, OPORD, or fragmentary order (FRAGORD)].

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• **Update plan for the use of available time (mission execution and planning time):**

⇒ Subject, time, and location of the briefings the commander requires.

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⇒ Times of collaborative planning sessions and the medium over which they will take place.

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⇒ Times, locations, and forms of rehearsals.

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• **Develop initial themes and messages:**

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## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 13)

The commander, staff, and other partners develop the problem statement as part of design. During mission analysis, the commander and staff review the problem statement and revise it as necessary based on the increased understanding of the situation. If design activities do not precede mission analysis, then the commander and staff develop a problem statement prior to moving to COA development.

- **Develop a proposed problem statement:**

- ⇒ Compare the current situation to the desired end state.

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- ⇒ Brainstorm and list issues that impede the commander from achieving the desired end state.

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- ⇒ Develop a proposed problem statement (a statement of the problem to be solved) for the commander's approval.

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- **Develop a Proposed Mission Statement** : A mission statement is a short sentence or paragraph that describes the organization's essential task (or tasks) and purpose – a clear statement of the action to be taken and the reason for doing so. The mission statement contains the elements of who, what, when, where, and why, but seldom specifies how. The mission statement includes all "on order" missions but not "be prepared" missions. (JP 5-0).

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- **Present the Mission Analysis Briefing.**

- **Develop and issue commander's intent.** (Refer to commander's running estimate worksheet earlier in the publication)

- **Develop and issue initial planning guidance.** (Refer to commander's running estimate worksheet earlier in the publication as well as table 9-1, FM 6-0)

## Mission Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Mission Analysis Worksheet (Page 14)

Step 2

- Develop Course of Action Evaluation Criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Proposed Weighting (Does not have to be done)	Proposed Metric	* Definition of success

\*(More is better;  
fewer than 2 is good, etc.)

- Issue a Warning Order (to include at a minimum):
  - ⇒ The approved mission statement.
  - ⇒ The commander's intent.
  - ⇒ Changes to Task Organization.
  - ⇒ The unit AO (include a sketch, overlay, or other description).
  - ⇒ CCIRs and EEFI.
  - ⇒ Initial risk guidance.
  - ⇒ Priorities by warfighting function.
  - ⇒ Military deception guidance.
  - ⇒ Essential stability tasks.
  - ⇒ Specific priorities.





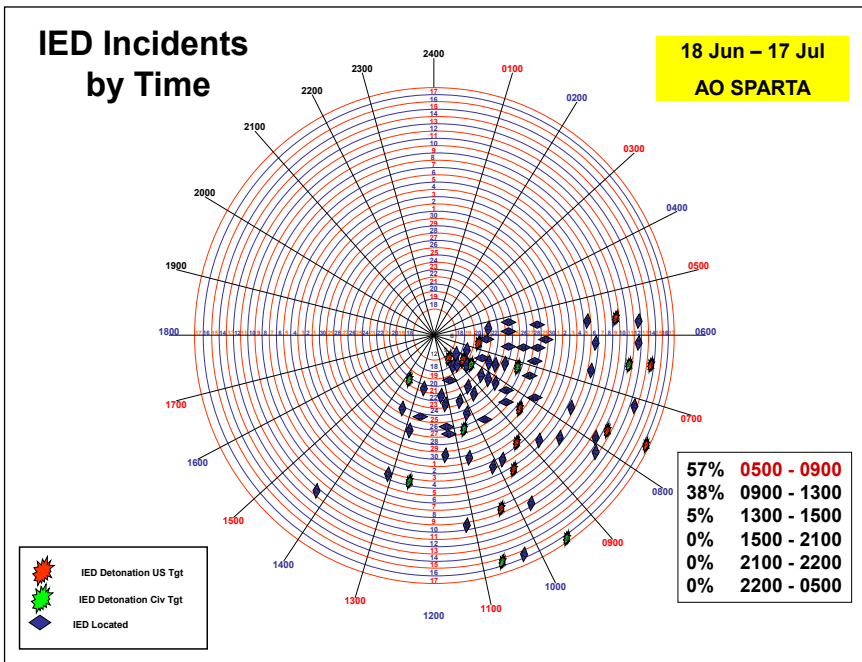
### Mission Analysis (cont.)

## Some Tools That May Help

### Pattern Analysis Wheel (Radial Graph)

By separating events and depicting them on their own pattern analysis wheel, specific patterns emerge. In this example, all of the IEDs identified, as well as those detonated, occurred during hours of daylight, specifically between the hours of 0500 and 1500 with 95% occurring between 0500 and 1300 hours. The analysis associated with this sends two very distinct messages. First, the friendly force night observation capability is such that insurgents will not risk emplacement nor detonation during hours of darkness, and, second, the greater density of vehicles and better IED detection capabilities afforded during daylight hours aids in detection, but also creates a greater number of targets for insurgents. The lack of night vision device (NVD) parity is mitigated during daylight hours allowing insurgents to operate with less signature.

### Sample Pattern Analysis Plot Sheets (Wheel)







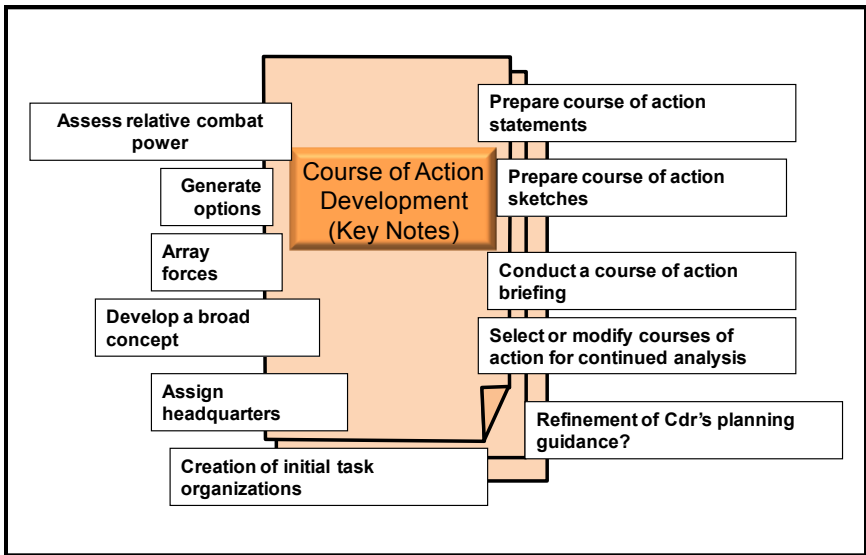
## Course of Action Development

A COA is a broad potential solution to an identified problem. The **COA Development (COA-D)** step generates options for follow-on analysis and comparison that satisfy the commander's intent and planning guidance. During **COA Development**, planners use the problem statement, mission statement, commander's intent, planning guidance, and the various knowledge products developed during *Mission Analysis* to develop COAs. Embedded in **COA Development** is the application of operational and tactical art. Planners develop different COAs by varying combinations of the elements of operational design such as phasing, lines of effort, and tempo. (See ADRP 3-0.) The approved COA statement is converted into the concept of operations.



Step 3

### MDMP Step 3 Highlights



## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Task Reference Legend

The following table is designed to assist commanders and staff members with a by-task, paragraph reference to FM 6-0. As you proceed through the *Course of Action Development* tasks that follow, use this table to quickly make that review.

<b>STEP 3 — Course of Action Development.....</b>	<b>9-82 thru 9-120</b>
Assess Relative Combat Power.....	9-90 thru 9-94
Generate Options.....	9-95 thru 9-102
Array Forces.....	9-103 thru 9-108
Develop a Broad Concept.....	9-109 thru 9-114
Assign Headquarters.....	9-115
Prepare Course of Action Statements and Sketches.....	9-116 thru 9-118
Conduct a Course of Action Briefing.....	9-119
Select or Modify Courses of Action for Continued Analysis.....	9-120

**Notes:**

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**Step 3**

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Trends (Current Comments)

The following trends comments are not meant to be all inclusive of the myriad recorded by trainers during staff exercises. They have been focused to address those **Course of Action Development** tasks that have historically challenged battalion and brigade battle staffs. Staff personnel are encouraged to cross reference trends comments with the applicable step.

**TASK: Perform Course of Action Development**

- Analyze relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array initial forces
- Develop concept of operations
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statement and sketches

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

1. Courses of action are often selected / directed based upon incomplete commander's guidance.
2. Unit staffs do not organize for COA-D in a manner that efficiently integrates all warfighting functions (WFF). Ensure each WFF is equally represented for each COA.



**DISCUSSION**

1. The commander's guidance serves to focus the staff with respect to his intent, concept, and concerns about a mission. A commander should consider all of the requirements and time constraints that his staff is faced with when selecting or directing a course of action. If, as an example, the commander omits specific guidance to the S-2, valuable time will be wasted if the S-2 does not understand the aspects of the enemy that the commander is most concerned with (initial PIRs), the commander's concept for deploying collection assets, his concept of target acquisition, his intent for employing friendly assets, etc. The battalion Tactical SOP should address the components of the commander's planning guidance, at a minimum, those outlined in Chapter 9 of FM 6-0. It is incumbent on the staff to ask questions when guidance is unclear or needs amplification. Additionally, the staff must constantly review and analyze the guidance at hand. As the situation changes and new information becomes available, the commander may need to alter his guidance to the staff. The most valuable resource the staff possesses is time. Once lost, it cannot be recovered. The commander must take time to mentally form a picture in his mind of what he expects, and just as importantly, what he does not want or need from the staff.
2. Developing courses of action provides battalion subordinate elements the flexibility and guidance to execute assigned tasks within the commander's intent. Each warfighting function must be considered when deciding whether a COA meets the FADS-C criteria (feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, suitable, and complete). A staff-developed COA provides an execution framework where each warfighting function may have a significant part in its efficiency and effectiveness. The unit Tactical SOP should address which staff personnel should attend the COA-D process, what tools they bring, and the WFF specific products and information that will be needed. The XO, or in his absence, the S-3 directs, supervises, coordinates, and ensures staff integration during COA-D.

Step 3

# Course of Action Development (cont.)

## Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

- TASK: Perform Course of Action Development**
- Analyze relative combat power
  - Generate options
  - Array initial forces
  - Develop concept of operations
  - Assign headquarters
  - Develop COA statement and sketches

Step 3

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

3. COA-D process steps are sometimes omitted in the interest of time available. Staffs often get in a hurry to begin war-gaming and fail to formulate each warfighting function role in the developed COAs. They then use the war-gaming process to continue the development of courses of action. This wastes valuable time.

4. Courses of action are not developed in sufficient detail.



**DISCUSSION**

3. While commanders have the option to accelerate the planning process by employing MDMP in a time-constrained environment, careful attention must be made to any planning step that is omitted. If the commander must conduct the MDMP in a time-constrained environment, he will be actively involved in deciding on a single COA that meets doctrinal screening criteria. Staffs will be focused on the branches and sequels of a single COA, not analyzing and comparing multiple COAs. Conversely, when planning is not accelerated, it is incumbent on unit staffs to follow each process step and consider the impacts of each WFF. Failure to do so will generally result in entering the war-gaming process with problems like, critical events and known decision points not identified and briefed to the staff, relative combat power not examined, the battlefield framework not developed, critical events list incomplete because of no fully developed scheme of maneuver, and synchronization during execution. The lack of a developed and integrated COA before war-gaming results in the war-gaming process becoming a COA development session.

4. Insufficient detail in a course of action may stem from time availability, process steps omitted, and incomplete commander's guidance, but the result is always the same...a COA that is not synchronized to a point of precision that will facilitate successful execution. While a commander may dictate the level of detail for a COA, the staff will normally achieve the necessary detail by analyzing the requirements for each of the screening criterion. To be "feasible," have available time, space, and resources been applied to accomplish the mission? To be "acceptable," is the operational advantage gained by executing the COA justified in terms of resource expenditure, casualties, and other costs? Is the COA clearly "distinguishable" from other COAs (task organization, scheme of maneuver, etc.)? Does the COA meet the "suitability" criterion of accomplishing the mission and complying with the commander's guidance? Is the COA "complete?" Will the decisive operation accomplish the mission? Will shaping operations contribute to success of the decisive operation? Will sustaining operations enable shaping and decisive operations? The unit Tactical SOP should include a detailed checklist for COA elements and what each WFF will contribute.

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

**TASK: Perform Course of Action Development**

- Analyze relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array initial forces
- Develop concept of operations
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statement and sketches

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

5. During COA-D, commanders sometimes decide on a particular COA option with insufficient staff input.
6. On occasion, only one or two members of the unit's staff develop COAs, often without other WFF input / participation



**DISCUSSION**

5. Based on the commander's experience and tactical knowledge ("Commanders rely on their own expertise, intuition, creativity, and knowledge of the environment and of the art and science of warfare..." Re. FM 6-0), it is not unusual for him to be able to separate "wheat from chaff" in a rapid fashion during COA development. However, caution must be exercised. WFF input, if omitted or inadequate, may cause an otherwise sound COA to be ineffective. There are numerous checks and balances during conduct of the MDMP, but at this critical juncture, the aforementioned COA checklist will serve the commander (and staff) well. Following are just a few of the numerous requirements that should be considered:
  - How recent is the IPB that may affect the COA?
  - Are there event templates for the enemy COAs that may impact the COA?
  - Does the COA comply with HHQ requirements (mission and intent)?
  - Is there a COA statement and sketch? Do they meet doctrinal standards? Why are units arrayed as shown on the sketch? What prompted the control measures that are on the sketch?
  - What are the COA's critical events?
  - Has there been a relative combat power analysis? How does it affect the COA? What deductions can be made?
  - Does the current list of facts and assumptions support successful accomplishment of the COA? How does the COA stand up to screening criteria?
6. As a rule, the XO and S-3 will review the facts and assumptions (at the conclusion of mission analysis) to ensure they are up to date before beginning COA development. After receiving the restated mission, commander's intent, and planning guidance, the staff begins the development of COAs. The key word is staff. Even if employing MDMP in a time-constrained environment, detailed input from the entire staff is critical. Updated IPB and running estimates are a must. Limiting staff participation after initial brainstorming (e.g., just the S-2 and S-3) and consciously or unconsciously, omitting staff WFF input incurs the risk of arriving at COAs that are unsupportable...a problem that may not be discovered until wargaming (see trend number 3).

**Step 3**

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

**TASK: Perform Course of Action Development**

- Analyze relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array initial forces
- Develop concept of operations
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statement and sketches

Step 3

#### FEEDBACK COMMENTS

7. Often, the enemy SITTEMP is not used during COA-D and results in planning that is not being driven by the IPB process.
8. Staffs do not always consider the multiple options available to the enemy commander when developing COAs.
9. Staffs do not always integrate critical FSO information into the COA-D process.

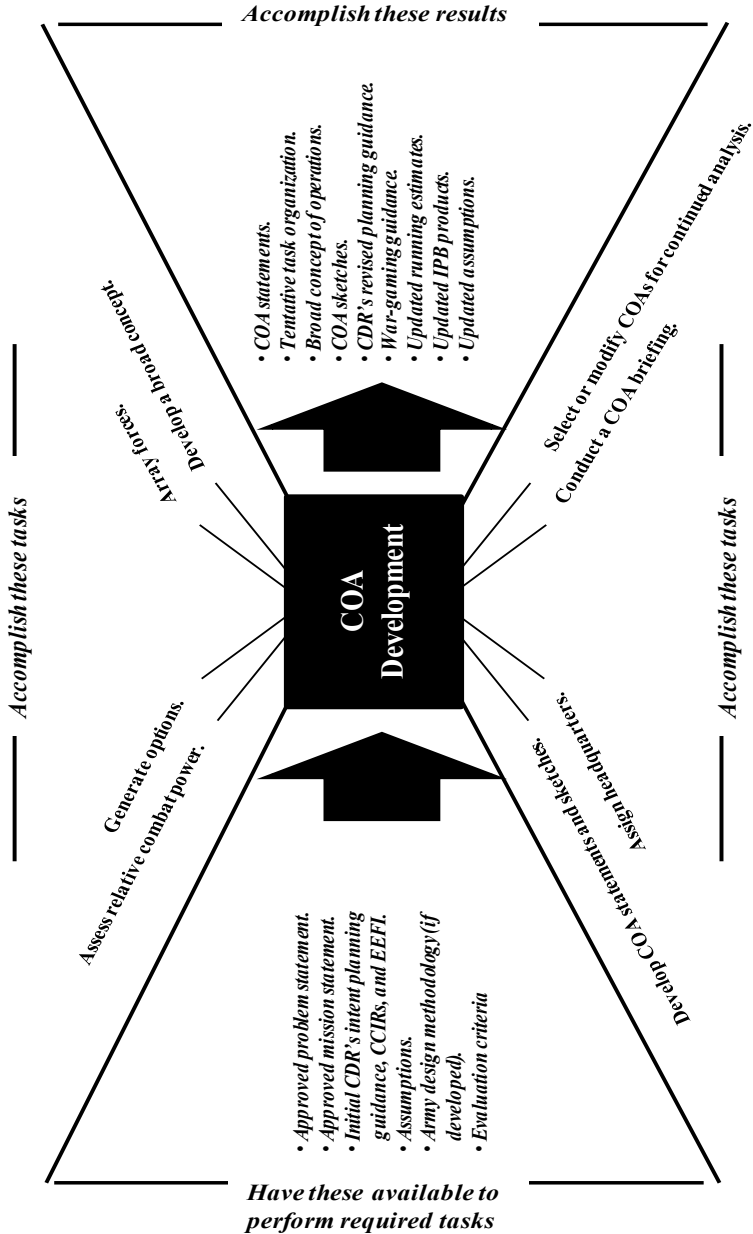
TTP

#### DISCUSSION

7. When the staff develops friendly COAs without using the SITTEMP, planning is not being influenced by IPB. Having the enemy SITTEMP during COA-D helps the staff take advantage of enemy weaknesses, analyze relative combat power, and array initial forces. Incorporating the results of IPB into COA-D ensures that each friendly COA takes advantage of the opportunities the environment and threat situation offer and ensures that each COA is realistic. During COA development, the S-2 prioritizes the SITTEMP and drafts an event template, if it was not developed during mission analysis.
8. The unit staff must consider multiple options available to the enemy commander when developing the battalion's scheme of maneuver and the branch plans to defeat the enemy. Potential enemy options may include variations in the types of formations employed, axes of advance, and location of the main effort. Consideration of the enemy's options during COA development will have a significant impact during war-gaming. In the time available, the staff will focus on the most likely enemy COA, but still attempt to adequately war-game contingencies.
9. The FSO, as the fire support expert on the staff, plays a key role in the development of COAs. As the staff begins the steps of COA development (analysis of relative combat power, generating options, arraying initial forces, and developing a concept of operations), the FSO must contribute at each step. For example, if the force ratios at a critical point are disadvantageous, the FSO determines methods to employ fires to set conditions before the maneuver fight. The FSO must determine where to find and attack Fire Support Task (FST) formations, and identify the high-payoff targets within those formations. He must devise a fire support plan for each FST, and validate (test for feasibility and suitability) whether planned fires will accomplish the COA. Finally, he must assist the S-2 in collection plan refinement (sufficient collection assets to find, track, and attack HPTs), and track and record the integration of fires during COA development.

# Course of Action Development (cont.)

## MDMP Step 3 Inputs, Actions, and Outputs



**Step 3**




## Course of Action Development (cont.)

What follows is a simplistic tool you can use to accomplish the eight sub-tasks that must be performed during *Course of Action Development*. First, there is a brief section on “getting started.” Go through each of the preparatory considerations listed. They will get you off to a “high RPM” start to this MDMF step. Each task is then presented in four parts: the actions that must occur, the typical performers of those actions, the action results that should occur, and a check-the-box list of helpful tips.

### Getting Started

Check them off as you go.


Step 3

- Work with other members of the staff on products (in the proper format) which will converge at the war game.
- Have all of the tools that will be needed assembled before you start. This should have been started during *Mission Analysis*.
- The Operations Section should contact the participants that are required by the Tactical SOP, or as designated by the commander, and give them a time and place. Do not assume they know. 
- The Operations Section should post the feasible, acceptable, suitable, distinguishable, and complete (FADS-C) COA screening criteria for all to see and refer to.
- Review the mission . . . again.
- Know the timeline and interim time hacks . . . be prepared to abide by them! A staff member should be assigned to monitor the timeline.
- Identify time saving techniques, e.g., if charts are used, standardize them; use standardized overlay pegs on map boards, magnets or pins to hold down overlays; if not using a digital COP, have a magnetic war game board with magnetic unit symbols, etc.
- Know the established standard for expected products and outcomes. It should be in the Tactical SOP.
- Someone should be designated to be in charge of each COA. Know who they are.
- Decide on a “good idea cutoff point.” Avoid changes thereafter.

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Getting Started (cont.)

Check them off as you go.

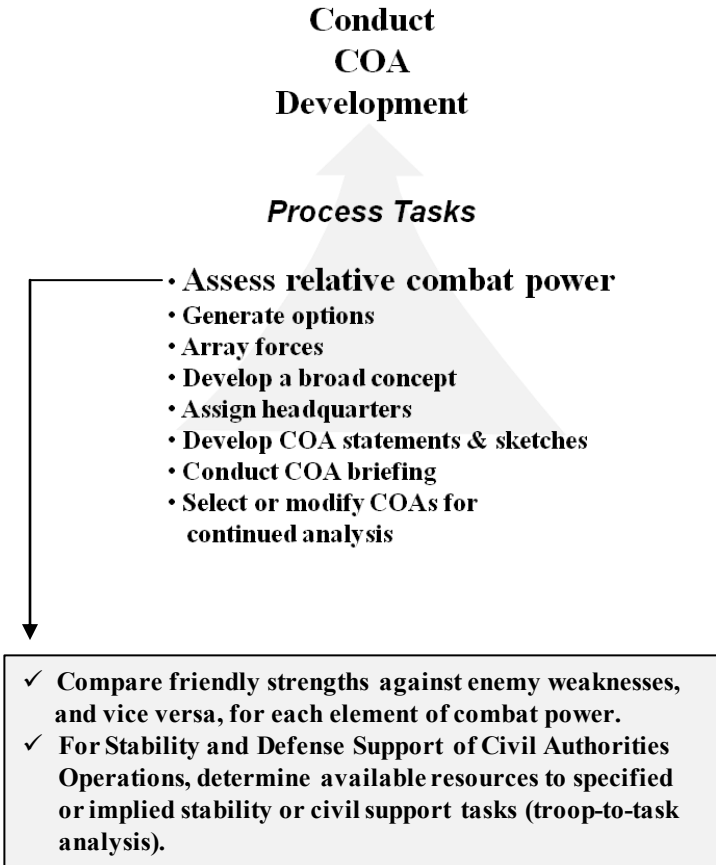
- The Operations Section should post the mission statement, commander's intent, and key tasks that must be achieved **where it is visible to all**. The S-3 should check the mission and commander's intent two levels up to ensure the unit mission stays nested.
- There should be a list of all specified and implied tasks found during Mission Analysis posted and available for each COA-D working group (each of these must be addressed during COA-D). Address the essential tasks and purposes for decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations. *It is important for FADS-C that the staff identifies essential tasks and arrays the appropriate forces which will assure mission accomplishment.* 
- The XO, the S-3, and the A/S-3 should spend twenty to thirty minutes drafting each COA through Step 2, *Generate Options*, and then have the rest of the staff refine and integrate their WFF information as applicable.
- Make sure the map is front and center. See the environment and the enemy (situation template (SITTEMP), modified combined obstacle overlay (MCOO), map, etc.). Always keep the terrain in sight.
- As you go through the process, maintain a positive attitude! Brainstorming is good, and the application of new ideas can be valuable. Be willing to go back and revise what you have already done.
- The fire support officer (FSO) should ensure that any critical pieces of fire support tasks the unit is responsible for executing are depicted on the sketch (targets, fire support coordination measures (FSCM), etc.) and addressed in the "fires" portion of the "COA statement."
- Check that the concept of maneuver includes the concept of the unit Collection Plan, and recheck the combat power status of units two levels down.
- Check on your understanding of the commander's guidance and intent, and as a minimum, understand the decisive operation and the essential tasks.
- Check to see which units are available (including attachments) and their asset capabilities and limitations.



## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Task: Assess Relative Combat Power

#### *“Task Snapshot”*



## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Task: Assess Relative Combat Power

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- The staff assists the S-3 to compute friendly and enemy force ratios and to compare friendly strengths against enemy weaknesses, and vice versa, for each WFF, plus leadership and information. The staff estimates the extent to which factors of METT-TC, the environment, human factors, friction, enemy will, and enemy intentions may affect the operation.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- Friendly and enemy force ratios.
- Troop-to-task analysis.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- This is not an easy staff task. The commander and the staff will need to apply both military art and science to be able to apply overwhelming combat power at the decisive point to accomplish the mission with the least cost. The focus of the staff must be to know what the unit is capable of before setting off to do it.
- To get this task underway, first the staff (initially the S-3 and S-2) *look at the forces available and compare the most significant strengths and weaknesses of the unit and the enemy.* Consider the commander's guidance along with the use of the elements of combat power to focus the information needed to make an assessment.
- Use the following example questions and their answers to guide the staff and assist in identifying the right information within each warfighting function.

Training Analysis Feedback Team

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

<input type="radio"/>	INTELLIGENCE:
<input type="checkbox"/>	What collection assets are available?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What intelligence exists about the enemy main effort and how will they employ combat multipliers to support their COAs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What are the key indicators to confirm or deny enemy COAs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Within the time available, have sufficient enemy COAs (starting with the most likely and including the most dangerous) been provided?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How will enemy, weather, and terrain affect potential COAs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How will current intelligence affect targeting?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What procedures are in place to maintain an up-to-date enemy picture?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What gaps exist in the unit Collection Plan?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have RFIs been planned / submitted to address those gaps?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do IPB products identify facts and assumptions that will assist in determining likely enemy COAs?
<input type="radio"/>	MOVEMENT and MANEUVER:
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do friendly and enemy elements have positional or mobility advantages or disadvantages relating to other friendly forces, the enemy, and the terrain?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Can a positional advantage be gained to deliver fires or fire potential to accomplish a task or purpose?
<input type="radio"/>	FIRES:
<input type="checkbox"/>	What are the advantages and disadvantages associated with indirect fire capabilities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	What are the weapons systems range capabilities, day and night target acquisition capabilities, non-lethal capabilities, joint capabilities, and sustainment capabilities?
<input type="checkbox"/>	How would enemy and friendly elements best use firepower to integrate with, and enhance the advantages of, maneuver to accomplish their task and purpose?

Step 3

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 3



#### PROTECTION:



What are the advantages and disadvantages associated with the ability to prevent the enemy from disrupting preparation and execution of the operation based on force protection measures?



How will information collection and security operations, passive and active security measures within the operating environment, engineer, air defense artillery, CBRN, signal capabilities, and lines of communication security capabilities impact protection?



Have considerations for safety, field discipline, and fratricide avoidance been factored in?



How is friendly combat power preserved while degrading enemy combat power?



#### SUSTAINMENT:



What are the on-hand quantities of critical classes of supply, and how will they affect potential COAs?



How will change of mission affect required stockage levels?



Are staff and subordinate units familiar with emergency re-supply procedures?



What plans are in place to conduct maintenance as far forward as possible?



Are current communications capable of allowing connectivity and visibility of assets and support for current and future operations?



What are the status of evacuation assets?



What are the status of personnel assets?



#### MISSION COMMAND:



What are the factors that may enhance or inhibit friendly / enemy ability to operate at an optimum level of proficiency?



How long has the friendly / enemy force been in combat?



What effects regarding casualties and replacements, unit reorganization changes, and communications capabilities should be considered?



What are the enemy's leadership vulnerabilities?



What factors may enhance or degrade friendly / enemy ability to conduct offensive or defensive information operations?

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- How will information-related capabilities (military deception, military information support operations, electronic warfare, operations security, physical destruction, computer network attack, counter-deception, counterpropaganda, counterintelligence, physical security, information assurance, public affairs, and civil-military operations), both offensive and defensive, by friendly / enemy elements create effects that will impact information systems and decision makers?
- The staff should develop a rough estimate of force ratios that incorporate both objective and subjective factors. Advise them to continue to use the elements of combat power but avoid developing and recommending COAs based solely on a mathematical force ratio analysis.
- After computing force ratios, the staff should consider the intangible aspects of combat power (morale, training levels, etc.) and compare friendly strengths with enemy weaknesses, and vice versa, for each element. Staff review and consideration of tangible and intangible factors must be well thought out, checked by the XO, and included as process methodology in the unit Tactical SOP.
- Finally, the staff should combine any numerical force ratio computations with the results of the analysis of the combat power intangibles. The desired end state here is to arrive at a force ratio advantage that meets mission requirements.
- While the breadth of this task can be daunting, considering the following imperatives will pay dividends:
  - Integrate the effects of these elements with other potential combat multipliers and available assets of other Services against the enemy.
  - Analyze force ratios and determine each force's strength and weaknesses as a function of combat power.
  - Consider intangible factors when analyzing relative combat power.
  - Determine capabilities that apply to assigned missions.
  - Compare unit capabilities with enemy vulnerabilities.
  - Identify host nation (HN) and multi-national resources.

Step 3







## Course of Action Development (cont.)

**Task: Generate Options****“Task Snapshot”**

**Conduct  
COA  
Development**

**Process Tasks**

- Assess relative combat power
- **Generate options**
- Array forces
- Develop a broad concept
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statements & sketches
- Conduct COA briefing
- Select or modify COAs for continued analysis

- ✓ Based on CDR's guidance / Enemy COAs.
- ✓ Brainstorming is preferred technique.
- ✓ Determine doctrinal requirements for operation.
- ✓ Consider possibilities created by attachments.
- ✓ Start with decisive operations in CDR's guidance.
- ✓ Consider shaping operations.
- ✓ Determine sustaining operations.
- ✓ Determine essential tasks for each operation.
- ✓ Screen each COA against screening criteria.

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Task: Generate Options

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- XO works with the staff to brainstorm options that meet the FADS-C criteria (feasibility, acceptability, distinguishability, suitability, and completeness).
- The staff begins with the decisive operation, then shaping operations, and, finally, sustaining operations.
- The staff determines doctrinal requirements for each type of operation being considered and considers possibilities created by attachments. They consider the purpose of the decisive operation issued in the commander's planning guidance, ensure it is nested within the HHQ concept of operations, and determine the best way to mass effects of overwhelming power to achieve that purpose.
- The staff then establishes a purpose for each shaping operation that is tied to creating or preserving a condition for the decisive operation. The staff then determines the sustaining operations necessary to create and maintain the required combat power for decisive and shaping operations.
- Lastly, the staff develops the operational organization for each COA and the essential tasks for each operation. Risk assessments are included for each COA, and METT-TC hazards are addressed for all operations.

Step 3

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- XO
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- Directed number of COA options.



## Course of Action Development (cont.)

OIL

### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.


Step 3

- The XO's ability to guide the staff to arrive at options may well depend on whether there is time available to consider several COAs. The development of options by the unit staff normally involves three basic steps: determine the decisive operation, determine unit shaping operations, and determine unit sustaining operations. Work closely with the S-3 to ensure that all of these steps include the inherent staff task of determining essential tasks and purpose for each type of operation being considered.
- Stay close to the commander as you execute this task. Since there is rarely enough planning time, the commander may limit the number of options in his guidance. 
- "Brainstorming" is the preferred technique for generating options and produces the widest range of choices, but it takes time, imagination, and creativity.
- Guide the staff to focus options on enemy COAs arranged in order of their probable adoption.
- It will be easy to slip into narrowing staff participation because of time. While this may be necessary, remember the optimum process should include discussion and input from as many WFFs as possible. 
- As staff efforts continue to determine shaping and sustaining operations, check carefully that the purpose and essential tasks for the main and supporting efforts are developed.
- A good rule of thumb when any option is developed is to apply the FADS-C test.
- As you monitor the staff's actions to determine decisive points and the decisive operation, be on the lookout for some of these imperatives:
  - Review the commander's guidance to determine what he identified as the decisive operation.

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Ensure the decisive operation is nested within the HHQ concept of operations.
- If not already stated by the commander, determine the decisive operation's purpose.
- Check to see if the decisive operation's purpose directly relates to accomplishing the mission.
- Review the decisive operation to decide how best to mass the effects of overwhelming combat power to achieve it.
- Determine the doctrinal requirements for the unit's operation.
- When determining the tasks for the main and supporting efforts, use doctrinal words and graphics, and prepare a sketch.
- Generally, time available drives the number of options the staff can generate. Know how much time you have, and be disciplined in how you use it.
- Ensure the S-2 and engineer are involved in determining the best terrain!
- Talk to the commander and the S-3 regarding the potential consideration of deception operations as they may influence unit positioning. Constantly remind the staff about searching for risks. It is critical that new risks are captured as they are identified.
- For the first force array, the Operations Section should depict an informal grouping of maneuver elements two levels down. Use stickers, a pencil, or computer icons first. The objective here is to arrive at a staff consensus that the unit's elements have been arrayed in an "achieve-the-mission" configuration. If there is shortfall, mitigate it by having the S-3 determine what forces can do multiple tasks, and consider whether re-tasking to achieve a similar or the same purpose with less force is feasible. 
- Have the S-3 use any remaining forces from the initial array to weight the decisive operation, the reserve, or to support collection operations. If you are considering having a reserve force, identify its purposes for commitment in a descending order of priority.

Step 3







## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Task: Array Forces

#### “Step Snapshot”

### Conduct COA Development

#### Process Tasks

- Assess relative combat power
- Generate options
- **Array forces**
- Develop a broad concept
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statements & sketches
- Conduct COA briefing
- Select or modify COAs for continued analysis

- ✓ After determining the decisive and shaping operation and their related tasks and purposes determine the relative combat power required to accomplish each task.
- ✓ In stability operations, consider force requirements by gauging troop density – the ratio of security forces (including host-nation military and police forces as well as foreign counterinsurgents) to inhabitants. Most density recommendations fall within a range of 20-25 counterinsurgents for every 1,000 residents in an AO.
- ✓ Initially array friendly forces starting with the decisive operation and continue with all shaping and sustaining operations.
- ✓ Normally array ground forces two levels down (ensure you include special sections i.e. Snipers, FIST).
- ✓ The initial array identifies the total number of units needed and identifies possible methods of dealing with the enemy and stability tasks.

### Course of Action Development (cont.)

#### Task: Array Forces

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The staff arrays friendly generic forces, normally two levels down, against the enemy forces to achieve the relative power required to accomplish each task, starting with the decisive operation, then each shaping operation, and finally, the sustaining operations.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

XO  
Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Initial array of generic friendly forces (e.g., total number of units required).

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

The objective here is to guide the staff in determining a force array that will accomplish the mission and provide a sound basis for the development of a scheme of maneuver. It is not a difficult task but requires the close coordination with the commander, S-3, and S-2.

As the staff determines the forces necessary to accomplish the mission, check for:

HHQ commander's intent and concept of operations.

Unit mission statement, the commander's intent and guidance on air and ground avenues of approach.

Threat COAs, starting with most likely and most dangerous.



Step 3

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 3

- Work closely with the S-3 to ensure that the staff's determination of relative combat power required to accomplish each maneuver task applies the right mix of available assets at the right place, at the right time, to accomplish the mission, starting with the decisive operation and continuing through shaping operations.
- Have the S-3 consider the minimum historical planning ratios that are available, but exercise caution that these tools are only for planning and cannot predict actual combat.
- Work with the S-3 to determine the extent of the unit's area of operations (AO), (forward edge of the battle area (FEBA), or line of departure (LD), depending on the mission). If the area is non-contiguous, ensure the inclusion of subordinate unit's AOs. The extent of the AO is critical to any COA and must be fully understood by staff planners and the commander.
- Have the S-3 array friendly combat power two levels down for decisive and shaping operations. Require the development of a working sketch. Look for the possibilities created by attachments.
- As you identify tasks that support shaping or sustaining operations, do not overlook collection tasks. If there is a shortfall, mitigate it by determining what force multipliers or which forces can do multiple tasks, and consider whether re-tasking to achieve a similar or the same purpose with less force is feasible. 
- The XO and the S-3 review the decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations and ensure that the purpose for each meets with the commander's guidance and intent. Once you are satisfied, review the tactical tasks that will accomplish the stated purpose of each and check for staff understanding.
- The XO and the S-3 review the doctrinal requirements for each operation being considered, including those tasks for subordinate and/or attached units. Share those requirements with the rest of the staff.
- Review the commander's guidance to confirm that the decisive operation is nested within the HHQ concept, and when executed, it will be the unit's main effort. 





## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Task: Develop a Broad Concept

#### “Task Snapshot”

#### Conduct COA Development

#### Process Tasks

- Assess relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array forces
- **Develop a broad concept**
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statements & sketches
- Conduct COA briefing
- Select or modify COAs for continued analysis

#### Concept includes:

- ✓ Purpose of operation.
- ✓ A statement where CDR will accept risk.
- ✓ ID of critical friendly events & transitions between phases.
- ✓ Designation of decisive operation along with its task and purpose, linked to how it supports the HHQs' concept.
- ✓ Designation of shaping operation along with their task and purpose, linked to how they support the decisive operation.
- ✓ Designation of sustaining operation along with their tasks and purpose, linked to how they support the decisive and shaping operations.
- ✓ Designation of the reserve, including its location and composition.
- ✓ Information Collection Operations.
- ✓ Essential stability tasks.
- ✓ ID maneuver options that may develop during operations.
- ✓ Assignment of subordinate AOs.
- ✓ Scheme of fires.
- ✓ Themes, messages, and means of delivery.
- ✓ Military deception operations.
- ✓ Key control measures.

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### **Task: Develop a Broad Concept**

#### **Actions That Must Occur**

Check them off as you go.

**Step 3**

- The staff develops a concept of operations (the “how”) for each COA. They start by designating the type of operation, to include: (1) the decisive operation with its task and purpose linked to how it supports the HHQ concept, (2) the shaping operations with their tasks and purposes linked to how they support the decisive operations, (3) the sustaining operations, each with their task and purpose linked to how they support the decisive and shaping operations, and (4) a reserve, including its location and composition.
- The staff (1) outlines the purpose of the operation, (2) the location of EAs or attack and counterattack objectives, (3) subordinate AOs, and unassigned areas, (4) any prescribed formations or dispositions, (5) priorities for each WFF, (6) the integration of obstacle effects with maneuver and fires, (7) effects of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) on the force, and (8) graphic control measures.
- The staff identifies where the commander will accept risk, the friendly critical events and transitions between phases (if phased), and maneuver options that may develop.
- The staff also considers concepts for information collection, information-related capability support to include military deception and non-lethal fires, security operations, stability operations, and fire support operations.
- The focus of risk management here is to ensure that effective controls are in place to address hazards associated with the employment of forces.

#### **Typical Performers of the Actions**

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Course of Action Development (cont.)

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- Friendly concept of operations, to include graphic control measures, for each COA.
- Types and numbers of units required.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- The key thing you start with is the commander's battlefield visualization. Ensure the staff is as familiar with it as you are. The concept that must be developed expresses the "how" of that visualization with arrayed forces. It summarizes the contributions of each WFF and information operations.
- Minimize risks to acceptable levels (based on your identification of hazards during Mission Analysis), and develop a concept of operations that best mitigates vulnerabilities and achieves the commander's mission intent and desired end state. Be ever vigilant that the critical consideration must always be the decisive operation.
- Before beginning the development of a concept of operations, The XO and the S-3 step back and review whether combat requirements exceed available combat power. It is especially important to have determined when "demand" (what you need to execute the mission) exceeds "supply" (what's available to execute the mission). This is very "broad stroke" and will not be finalized until the COA is war-gamed.
- The XO, S-2, and the S-3 work to achieve an understanding of force correlation by comparing possible threats with available combat power and the combat multipliers available to mitigate them.
- Brevity and simplicity in explaining the scheme of maneuver are critical. If the course of action and resulting scheme of maneuver are too complicated to be articulated in an operation order (OPORD) or fragmentary order (FRAGORD), you can count on coordination difficulty.



Step 3



## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 3

- If the staff determines that there is insufficient combat power, pursue a scheme of maneuver that achieves the maximum possible simultaneous action within each phase. Achieving overwhelming combat power across the AO would ideally involve decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations occurring at the same time. Before the XO recommends to the commander that he should employ simultaneous, as opposed to sequential, actions consider the following: the skill and size of the opponent, the size of the area of operations, operational reach, available support, and the scope of the mission.
- It is easy to fall into a complicated scheme of maneuver. While detail is important, have the staff balance it with brevity and simplicity in explaining the scheme of maneuver.
- Work with the S-3 to ensure that there are not too many graphic control measures. The goal is to have the minimum to clearly convey the scheme of maneuver, responsibility for terrain, initial direct and indirect fire planning, and any other coordination activities that contribute to subordinate units being able to accomplish their assigned task and purpose.
- Retrace your steps. Was the scheme of maneuver developed using the decisive point as the baseline from which to detail critical unit activities, tactical movements, how the unit reaches the decisive point of the operation, how the fight is to be won at the decisive point, and how the desired end state is to be achieved? If there are "no" answers, resolve them immediately.
- Graphic Control Measure Imperatives:
  - Control subordinate units during the operation.
  - Help commanders direct action by establishing responsibilities and limits.
  - May be permissive or restrictive.
  - May be graphical, written, or procedural.
  - Are based on the array of forces and the concept of operations.
  - Should not split avenues of approach or key terrain.





## Course of Action Development (cont.)

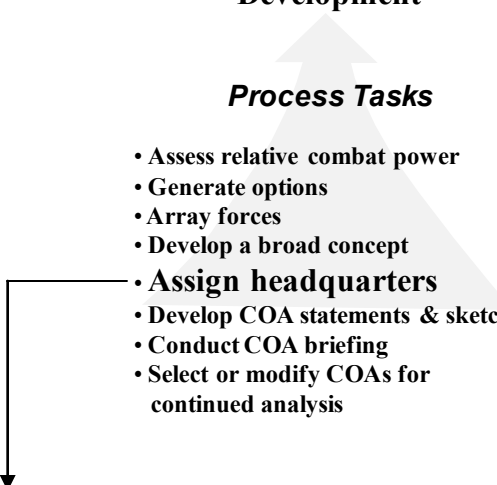
### **Task: Assign Headquarters**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

### Conduct COA Development

#### **Process Tasks**

- Assess relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array forces
- Develop a broad concept
- **Assign headquarters**
- Develop COA statements & sketches
- Conduct COA briefing
- Select or modify COAs for continued analysis

- 
- ✓ Create task organization.
  - ✓ Consider types of assigned units.
  - ✓ Consider span of control.
  - ✓ Consider entire battlefield organization.
  - ✓ Special Mission Command requirements for operations (e.g., passage of lines, river crossing, etc.).

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Task: Assign Headquarters

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The staff assigns HQs to groupings of friendly forces with the appropriate span of control for that HQ to create a task organization.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Task organization.

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

The first order of business is to determine the types of units to be assigned to a headquarters and what the scope of command and control should be. The XO and the S-3 must take a close look at the emerging task organization and ensure that it has been developed taking into consideration the entire organization for combat, and that it addresses any special mission command requirements that may be unique to the mission at hand (e.g. passage of lines, river crossing, or air assault).

The XO and the S-3 take a hard look at the time available and the commander's preferences. Then, the S-3 should assign generic headquarters, but not specific units, until analysis of which unit would best suit the specifics of the mission has been accomplished (This is generally a commander's task and is done following *COA Approval*).



The staff should use decision graphics as a tool for portraying necessary force information. Add any new decision graphics that are used to the Tactical SOP.

Training Analysis Feedback Team

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Step back. The XO and the S-3 evaluate the course of action to ensure the task and purpose that was assigned to the main effort “vertically” supports mission accomplishment of the unit and HHQ. Then look “horizontally” to ensure the supporting efforts task and purpose directly or indirectly support mission accomplishment of the main effort. If “vertical” and “horizontal” task and purpose alignment are off, adjust the COA as necessary. Remember, the task organization must take into account the entire battlefield organization. 
- Include all WFF representatives in the review process to ensure assets are used effectively to allow the main and/or supporting efforts to accomplish their task and purpose. Find another knowledgeable source, if available, and get a different perspective on the details of the course of action. 
- As you arrive at an effective organization for combat (task organize), check that all WFF staff representatives:
  - Have established clear responsibilities and authorities between subordinate and supporting units.
  - Have designated command and support relationships to weight the decisive operation and support the concept of operations.
  - Have properly used decision graphics as a tool for portraying necessary force information.
  - Are involved in evaluating the COA. If not, assets may not be used effectively to allow the main and/or supporting efforts to accomplish their task and purpose.
- Have the S-3 take the lead on assigning headquarters to groupings of forces two levels down, and check to ensure that designated command and support relationships weight the decisive operation.
- Remember that the flexibility of allocating available assets to meet mission requirements and establishing clear command and support relationships is fundamental to organizing for any operation and key to assisting the commander in achieving his desired end state.

**Step 3**



## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### **Task: Develop COA Statements and Sketches**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

### Conduct COA Development

#### **Process Tasks**

- Assess relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array forces
- Develop a broad concept
- Assign headquarters
- **Develop COA statements & sketches**
- Conduct COA briefing
- Select or modify COAs for continued analysis

#### **Sketches include:**

- ✓ Unit and subordinate boundaries.
- ✓ Unit movement formations (but not subordinate unit formations).
- ✓ Line of departure, or line of contact and phase lines, if used.
- ✓ Information collection and security graphics.
- ✓ Ground & air axis of advance.
- ✓ Assembly areas, battle positions, strong points, engagement areas, and objectives.
- ✓ Obstacle control measures and tactical mission graphics.
- ✓ Fire support coordination and airspace coordinating measures.
- ✓ Main effort.
- ✓ Location of command posts, and critical INFOSYS nodes.
- ✓ Known or templated enemy locations.
- ✓ Population concentrations.



### Course of Action Development (cont.)

#### Task: Develop COA Statements and Sketches

##### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The staff develops COA statements and supporting sketches for each COA. Together, each statement and sketch covers the “who, what, when, where, and why” for each course of action.

##### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Step 3

##### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Statement and sketch for each COA.

OIL

##### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

To this point the staff has been collectively involved in most of the COA-D efforts leading to this final step. Now, however, the S-3 and/or Operations Section should prepare the COA statements and supporting sketches. The COA statements and sketches are pivotal in the development of a solid solution to the unit's current tactical problem and serve as the basis for the OPORD concept of operations if you select that COA.

Avoid getting so caught up in the COA statement that you fail to apply the necessary detail to the COA sketch. Monitor development of the COA sketch. It should be combined with the COA statement to convey both graphically, and via narrative, the who (generic task organization), what (tasks), when, where, and why (purpose), for each subordinate unit.



Take the time to check with each member of the staff to monitor awareness of how their WFF area affects the COA and whether it has been accurately considered in the COA statement and sketch. Better to find out gaps now, rather than later during war-gaming.

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.



If the operation is phased, clearly define, in terms of an event or conditions, when each phase starts.



Succinctly stated, the progressive actions that you guide the staff through are:



Prepare the COA statement in terms of the battlefield organization and include the mission and the desired end state.



State the general type of offensive, defensive, or tactical enabling operation for the force and responsibility for the critical missions associated with the type of operation.



Use battlefield organization categories to describe how the integration of subordinate maneuver units and WFF supporting assets will achieve the decisive point and execute the scheme of maneuver.



Conclude the COA statement with the commander's desired end state from his intent.



Convey the scheme of maneuver using correct graphics.



Use decision graphics to show combat power.



Portray units in a manner that conveys relationship to the overall type of operation.



Include sketch graphics that provide a clear picture of the scheme of maneuver, direct and indirect fires planning, and areas of responsibility.



During the accomplishment of these actions, monitor:



That the previously-developed task list has been compared to the COA statement to ensure each task has been addressed.



That the COA statement has been written in terms of the battlefield organization and includes the mission (who, what, where, when, and why) and the commander's desired end state.



That the concept of operations connects subordinate elements, either directly or indirectly, and links, by purpose, all functional systems within the unit.



That the COA statement is complete enough to be used as the concept of operations in the final OPORD.

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 3

- That the staff articulates how the unit will successfully accomplish the mission in relation to the decisive point.
- That the staff includes all elements in the statement, such as task and purpose for the decisive operation, task and purpose for shaping operations, task and purpose for sustaining operations, task and purpose for information collection and security forces, priorities of commitment (tasks and purposes in descending order of priority) for the reserve force, and task and purpose for the Tactical Combat Force (TCF).
- That the staff uses decision graphics (They will help simplify COA Analysis as they sort out results from the war-game).
- A good way to check the validity of the COA statement is to use the battlefield organization categories of decisive, shaping, and sustaining operations to describe how the integration of subordinate maneuver units and WWF supporting assets will achieve the decisive point and execute the scheme of maneuver.
- Use the following list of sketch contents as a tool to guide staff efforts to create a clear picture of the scheme of maneuver, direct and indirect fire planning, and areas of responsibility:
  - Unit and subordinate unit boundaries to designate zones / sectors.
  - Unit movement formations (but not subordinate unit formations).
  - Additional phase lines.
  - Assembly areas.
  - Battle positions.
  - Strong points.
  - Ground and air axes of advance / direction of attack.
  - Engagement areas.
  - Objectives.
  - Forward edge of the battle area.
  - Forward line of own troops and/or line of departure / line of contact.
  - Major man-made and natural obstacles.
  - Direct fire and indirect fire support coordination measures.

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Obstacle control measures and tactical mission graphics.
- Information collection and security graphics.
- Identifying features such as cities, rivers, and highways to enhance orientation.
- Designation of the decisive operation and shaping operations.
- Location of command posts and critical information systems (INFOSYS) nodes.
- Threat known or templated locations.
- At some point, all of the graphics from the sketch must be referenced to a map (either digital or analog). This can take a great deal of time and cause a delay before *COA Analysis*. Lean forward in the foxhole and either geo-reference the sketch to a map while the remainder of the staff works on the COA statement, or have the sketch done on a geo-referenced medium (map or Army Battle Command System).

Step 3

#### Notes:

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## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### **Task: Conduct a COA Briefing**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

### Conduct COA Development

#### *Process Tasks*

- Assess relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array forces
- Develop a broad concept
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statements & sketches
- **Conduct COA briefing**
- Select or modify COAs for continued analysis



- ✓ An updated IPB.
- ✓ Possible enemy COAs.
- ✓ The approved problem statement and mission statement.
- ✓ The commander’s and higher commander’s intent.
- ✓ COA statements and sketches, including lines of effort if used.
- ✓ The rationale for each COA, including –
  - ✓ Considerations that might affect enemy COAs, critical events for each COA.
  - ✓ Deductions resulting from the relative combat power analysis.
  - ✓ The reason units are arrayed on the sketch and staff use of selected control measures.
  - ✓ The impact on civilians and how it accounts for minimum essential stability tasks.
  - ✓ Updated facts and assumptions.
  - ✓ Refined COA evaluation criteria.

**Step 3**

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Task: Conduct a COA Briefing

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- The XO (or S-3) conducts and chairs the staff COA briefing to the commander (or XO).
- The staff principals (or members designated by Tactical SOP or the commander) attend the COA briefing to the commander and participate, as required.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- XO
- S-3
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- COA Briefing

#### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- After developing COAs, the staff briefs them to the commander. Remember that a collaborative session may facilitate subordinate planning.
- The briefing includes:
  - An updated IPB.
  - Possible enemy COAs.
  - The approved problem statement and mission statement.
  - The commander's and higher commander's intent.
  - COA statements and sketches to include lines of effort if used.

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="radio"/>    | The rationale for each COA, including:                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Considerations that might affect enemy COAs.                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Critical events for each COA.                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Deductions resulting from the relative combat power analysis. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The reason units are arrayed as shown on the sketch.          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The reason the staff used the selected control measures.      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The impact on civilians.                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | How it accounts for minimum essential stability tasks.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Updated facts and assumptions.                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Refined COA evaluation criteria.                              |

#### Notes:

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## Course of Action Development (cont.)

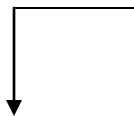
### **Task: Select or Modify COAs for Continued Analysis**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

### Conduct COA Development

#### *Process Tasks*

- Assess relative combat power
- Generate options
- Array forces
- Develop a broad concept
- Assign headquarters
- Develop COA statements & sketches
- Conduct COA briefing
- **Select or modify COAs for continued analysis**



- ✓ After the COA briefing, the commander selects or modifies those COAs for continued analysis.
- ✓ The commander also issues planning guidance.
- ✓ If the commander rejects all COAs, the staff begins again. If the commander accepts one or more of the COAs, staff members begin COA Analysis.
- ✓ The commander may create a new COA by incorporating elements of one or more COAs developed by the staff.
- ✓ The staff then prepares to war-game this new COA.
- ✓ The staff incorporates those modifications and ensures all staff members understand the changed COA.

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Task: Select or Modify COAs for Continued Analysis

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander (or XO) receives the staff's COA briefing, accepts or rejects the COAs, or provides guidance on COA refinement, which may include changes to COAs, or development of new COAs.

The commander (or XO) may provide directions on which COAs to analyze.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander

XO

S-3

Staff / Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Commander's (or XO's) guidance to refine existing COAs or develop new COA(s).

Commander's *COA Analysis* guidance.

OIL

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Remember, if all COAs are rejected, the staff must begin again. If one or more COAs are accepted, the staff can begin COA Analysis.




The commander may decide to create a new COA by incorporating elements from one or more of the COAs developed by the staff.

Based on what the commander hears from the staff, he may direct an entirely new COA based on his visualization.

Training Analysis Feedback Team



## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

As indicated by the exaggerated graphic below, many processes require a multitude of tools to achieve a successful end state. The MDMP is no different. This portion of this publication on *COA Development* only has the space to provide a few key ones.

However, two editions of *The Azimuth*, July 2012 and First Quarter FY 2013, will provide a broad array of tools developed by training teams and “borrowed” from open sources within the training community. Each has been reviewed, updated with current doctrine, and been broken down, in many cases, into step-by-step procedures.

There are numerous tools that are available to assist with the conduct of *COA Development*. Arguably, the best is the COA Development Briefing Format, a sample format has been included in this document.

#### TIP

The creation and use of planning tools separates successful staffs from staffs that struggle with processes.

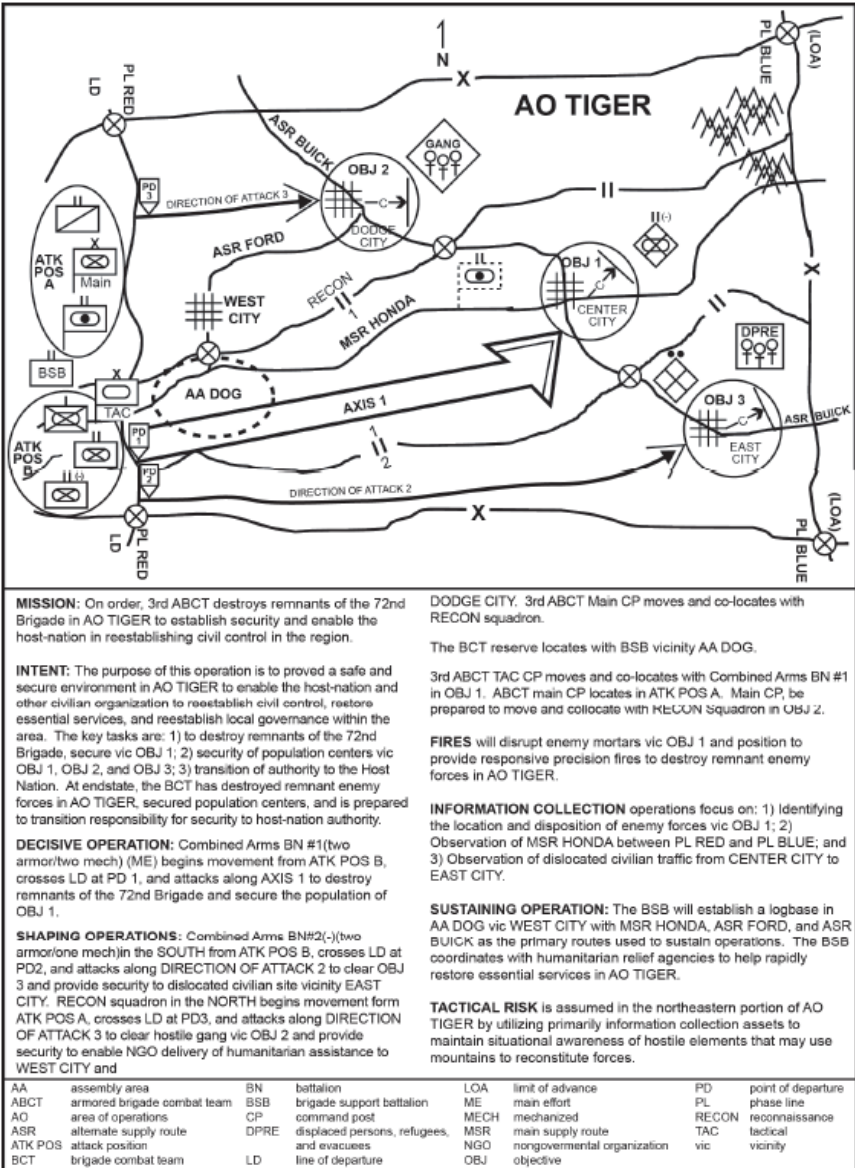


Which ones do I need? Which ones will work for me?

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Sample Brigade COA Sketch (extracted from Figure 9-5 , FM 6-0)



Step 3



## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### Sample COA Development Briefing Format

#### Sample COA Development Briefing Format

(Reference: FM 6-0, *Commander and Staff Organization and Operations*, May 2014)

(Unit Name)

(Date)

**Notes:**

- **Fonts:**
  - Headings: 36 Arial – Bold (Heading)
  - Text: Normally, 24 Arial – Bold (Body) but never smaller than 20 Arial – Bold (Body)
- **Pages:** Number all pages

#### Agenda

- Mission and CDRs intent of the HQs two levels up.
- Mission, CDRs intent, and concept of operations of the HQs one level up.
- An Updated IPB.
- Possible Enemy COAs.
- Approved Mission Statement (Problem Statement if used).
- COA Statement and Sketches (Lines of Effort if used).
- The Rationale for each COA, including:
  - Considerations that might affect enemy COAs.
  - Critical events for each COA.
  - Deductions resulting from the relative combat power analysis.
  - The reason units are arrayed as shown on the sketch.
  - The reason the staff used the selected control measures.
  - The impact on civilians.
  - How it accounts for minimum essential stability tasks.
  - Updated facts and assumptions.
  - Refined COA evaluation criteria.
  - Updated RI Status.

#### Purpose

- To provide the Commander with the staffs COA Development of higher HQ's OPORD.
- To seek Commander's approval of the COA Statement and Sketch.
- Receive Commander's guidance for COA Analysis.

#### Commander's Initial Guidance

**Notes:**

- BN CDR's initial planning guidance.

#### Commander's Intent

**Notes:**

- Two levels up.

#### Mission

**Notes:**

- Two levels up.



## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Sample COA Development Briefing Format (cont.)

Step 3

**Commander’s Intent**

Notes:

- Battalion Commander’s intent.
- Commander’s intent one level up.

**Mission**

Notes:

- One level up.

**Concept of Operations**

Notes:

- One levels up.

**Mission**

Notes:

- Approved battalion mission statement.
- Approved problem statement (if used)

**Updated IPB**

Notes:

- Enemy, terrain, weather, and key civil considerations.

**Most likely Enemy COA**

Notes:

- For additional guidance see FM 2-01.3 (C-2), para 1-28.

**Most Dangerous Enemy COA**

**Enemy SITTEMP**

Notes:

- For additional guidance see FM 2-01.3 (C-2), para 1-14.

### Assess Relative Combat Power

Elements of Combat Power	Enemy strengths/ weaknesses	Friendly strengths/ weaknesses	Advantage	
			Friendly	Enemy
INTELLIGENCE				
MOVEMENT and MANEUVER				
FIRES				
SUSTAINMENT				
PROTECTION				

**Course of Action Development (cont.)**

**Some Tools That May Help**

Sample COA Development Briefing Format (cont.)

**Assess Relative Combat Power (cont.)**

Elements of Combat Power	Enemy strengths/ weaknesses	Friendly strengths/ weaknesses	Advantage	
			Friendly	Enemy
MISSION COMMAND				
INFORMATION				
LEADERSHIP				

**Step 3**

**Troop-to-Task**

Mission/Task	Frequency/ Duration	Personnel Req.	Vehicle Req.	Specialty Equipment Req.	# PLTs Required

## Course of Action Development (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Sample COA Development Briefing Format (cont.)

#### COA 1 Task Organization

##### COA 1 Statement

- Mission:
- Intent:
- Decisive Operation:
- Shaping Operation:
- Fires:
- Reconnaissance and Surveillance:
- Sustaining Operation:
- Tactical Risk:

##### COA 1 Sketch

#### COA 1 Rationale

#### COA 2 Task Organization

##### COA 2 Statement

- Mission:
- Intent:
- Decisive Operation:
- Shaping Operation:
- Fires:
- Reconnaissance and Surveillance:
- Sustaining Operation:
- Tactical Risk:

##### COA 2 Sketch

#### COA 2 Rationale

##### Request for Information (RI) Status

Number of RI's **Submitted**: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of RI's **Answered**: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of RI's **Pending**: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Number of RI's **Disapproved**: \_\_\_\_\_

RI's Requiring Commander's Attention:

##### COA Evaluation Criteria

##### Refined Commander's Intent

Notes:

- BN CDR's Intent is 3-5 sentence long.

##### Refined Planning Guidance

Notes:

- BN CDR's initial planning guidance.



## Course of Action Analysis

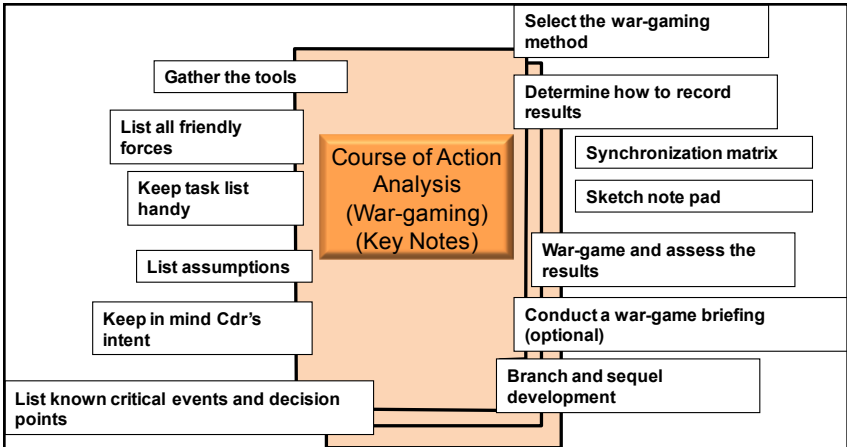
**COA Analysis** enables commanders and staffs to identify difficulties or coordination problems, as well as probable consequences of planned actions for each COA being considered. It helps them think through the tentative plan. **COA Analysis** may require commanders and staffs to revisit parts of the COA as discrepancies arise. **COA Analysis** not only appraises the quality of each COA, but also uncovers potential execution problems, decisions, and contingencies. In addition, **COA Analysis** influences how commanders and staffs understand the problem and may require the planning process to restart. War-gaming is a disciplined process, with rules and steps that attempt to visualize the flow of the operation, given the force’s strengths and dispositions, enemy’s capabilities and possible COAs, impact and requirements of civilians in the AO, and other aspects of the situation.

**FM 6-0**



### MDMP Step 4 Highlights

Step 4



## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Task Reference Legend

The following table is designed to assist commanders and staff members with a by-task, paragraph reference to FM 6-0. As you proceed through the **Course of Action Analysis** tasks that follow, use this table to quickly make that review.

#### STEP 4 — Course of Action Analysis and War-Gaming...9-121 thru 9-175

Course of Action Process Actions.....	9-126 thru 9-152
<i>Gather the Tools</i> .....	9-126
<i>List All Friendly Forces</i> .....	9-127
<i>List Assumptions</i> .....	9-128
<i>List Known Critical Events and Decision Points</i> .....	9-129 thru 9-130
<i>Select the War-Gaming Method</i> .....	9-131 thru 9-138
<i>Select a Technique to Record and Display Results</i> ....	9-139 thru 9-141
<i>War-Game the Operation and Assess the Results</i> .....	9-142 thru 9-151
<i>Conduct a War-Game Briefing (Optional)</i> .....	9-152
General War-Gaming Rules.....	9-153
War-Gaming Responsibilities.....	9-154 thru 9-175
<i>Mission Command</i> .....	9-154 thru 9-166
<i>Intelligence</i> .....	9-167
<i>Movement and Maneuver</i> .....	9-168
<i>Fires</i> .....	9-169
<i>Protection</i> .....	9-170
<i>Sustainment</i> .....	9-171 thru 9-174
<i>Recorders</i> .....	9-175

Step 4

# Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

## Trends (Current Comments)

### TASK: Perform COA Analysis Sub-task 1 - Gather the Tools

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

*Units sometimes fail to have all WFF representatives present for the war game and attempt to integrate and synchronize all WFF functional areas without their participation.*

*Staff WFF representatives do not always adequately prepare for the war game and starting COA Analysis is delayed.*

**DISCUSSION**

By war-gaming, the staff takes a COA, and through a series of action-reaction-counteraction steps molds it into what will become a detailed plan. Key to the entire war-gaming process is synchronization. When all WFF representatives are not present, it is unlikely that the required level of task synchronization, information exchange, and staff coordination will occur. The unit Tactical SOP should identify which staff members should be present for war-gaming and a detailed list of what each WFF should bring to the table. When staff members can review what they must be prepared to address, and what their WFF counterparts will address, they can arrive fully prepared to address their own inputs and how their inputs need to address the other WFFs.

When staffs fail to develop / refine critical planning products (event template, collection matrix, target matrix / attack guidance) to the appropriate level of fidelity during the earlier steps of the MDMP, starting the war game will either be delayed or executed without key input. If the S-3 is not aware of movement rates, the FSO not able to compute ammunition requirements to achieve required effects, the S-4 unable to compute fuel consumption based on time / distance traveled, and the S-1 unable to produce casualty estimates, you not only have incomplete staff estimates, but you may have a technical skill systemic problem as well.

The staff knowing what to address and where to apply their inputs during the war game is critical to adequate preparation. If a COA statement and sketch have been prepared but not made available to all members of the staff, being able to apply critical WFF input to that COA is jeopardized. If they are prepared and provided to the staff but overlook key WFFs in the battlefield framework, successful war-gaming is again in jeopardy. Determining the COA Analysis method as early as possible in the MDMP will facilitate parallel WFF product development and seamless integration (product threading). Every precaution must be taken to ensure staff common understanding. Precious time is lost when any WFF representative prepares unique input to support a COA that may be different than what is presented during war-gaming.

**Reminder...**

**Do not overlook the staff's need (even under time-constrained conditions) to review the commander's guidance, familiarize themselves with the COA statement and sketch, apply enemy and friendly situation and terrain to their tentative plan, and develop their specific WFF inputs.**

**Step 4**

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

**TASK: Perform COA Analysis**  
**Sub-task 2 – List Friendly Forces**

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

*Unit staffs often initiate COA Analysis without a complete list of friendly forces that can be committed to an operation.*

**DISCUSSION**

Unit staffs must refer back to the work done during Mission Analysis and COA Development. The XO and S-3 should check the force list that was developed, ensure there have been no changes since that list was established, and have it posted in the war game area for reference. Do not overlook placement of slice elements in the task organization. It can have a major impact on the success or failure of a COA.

**TASK: Perform COA Analysis**  
**Sub-task 4 – List Known Critical Events and Decision Points**

**FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

*Critical events and their supporting information that will assist the commander in decisionmaking are often incomplete and do not correlate with decision points.*

**DISCUSSION**

Analyzing a critical event and its supporting information to determine completeness and correlation with decision points requires detailed staff WFF knowledge (e.g., friendly and enemy unit capabilities unique to a WFF). Information unique to a particular WFF may be critical to an identified critical event, but if incomplete may alter the decisions that need to be made. It is important that each COA to be war-gamed be reviewed carefully for those events, areas, or points in the AO that may dictate a critical decision by the friendly commander. Since decision points are generally associated with the friendly force and the status of ongoing operations, it goes without saying that the list of critical events for that COA must correlate with them. Check CCIRs. They will provide you the insight you need to ensure proper correlation.

**Step 4**



## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

#### TASK: Perform COA Analysis

#### Sub-task 5 – Select the War-gaming Method

Step 4

#### FEEDBACK COMMENTS

*Failure of staff to define the battlefield in terms of space **and** time.*

*War-gaming methods, while detailed in FM 6-0, are not adequately addressed in the unit Tactical SOP. The result is incorrect application.*

*War-gaming methods are often incorrectly used because of incomplete COAs.*

#### DISCUSSION

It is important to have a full appreciation for time and space on the battlefield. Unit staffs, when using the belt or avenue-in-depth method of war-gaming, often fail to do time-distance analysis as to how long movement will take (considerations of the effects of terrain, weather, night, day, etc.) and the impact on fuel consumption and logistics resupply. This is especially critical for heavy and reconnaissance forces.

Selection of a war-gaming method (box, belt, avenue-in-depth) can be problematic when a detailed understanding of the techniques does not exist. The unit Tactical SOP is the answer to staff execution of complex, routine planning tasks. In the case of war-gaming methods, it is particularly important. The use of one particular method may not suffice for a given operation (e.g., cordon and search) in the current operational environment and a combination of methods may be necessary. How this is done is not in doctrine, but it can and should be in the unit Tactical SOP. Selecting a war-gaming method is sometimes driven by a available time and time alone. When time is critical (as it normally is) and knowing how to use war-gaming methods is discovery learning, successful plan development is unlikely.

This is another situation where the Tactical SOP can help. Detail the use of Feasibility, Acceptability, Distinguishability, Suitability, Completeness (FADS-C) screening criteria. If the staff prepares a COA where the decisive operation does not accomplish the mission, shaping operations do not facilitate conditions for success of the decisive operation, and sustaining operations do not enable shaping and decisive operations, the COA is certainly not complete. It is safe to assume that a case of omission this severe will not occur. However, it is a safe bet that a minor oversight in a COA may exist, and just may lead the staff to not select the most effective war-gaming method.

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

#### TASK: Perform COA Analysis

##### Sub-task 6 – Select a Method to Record and Display Results

#### FEEDBACK COMMENTS

*Failure of the staff to update map with graphic control measures (GCM) during COA Analysis*

*Units often assign recorders to list specific actions, locations, and tasks during war-gaming who have not been adequately trained on the methods available, nor have the availability of a unit Tactical SOP that details those methods.*

#### DISCUSSION

The staff may determine that boundaries, fire support coordination measures (FSCM) or any other type of graphics are necessary to successfully and safely complete their mission, but rarely take the time to draw the necessary GCMs on the overlay. A good TTP is to place the friendly higher headquarters (HHQ) order on the map with HHQ fires overlay. Then place a clear sheet of acetate over this and portray the friendly and enemy situation with some sort of “stickies” on top of that for ease of movement and removal after assessment of friendly and enemy losses. Another technique is to put the HHQ overlay over the friendly COA. During war-gaming, it is imperative that all graphics reflect any changes that have occurred.

Many planners do not realize the importance of this sub-task. Recording war game results gives planners a detailed, fully analyzed record on which a task organization and synchronization matrix can be built to prepare an operational plan. Assigning a recorder who is not familiar with, or has not been trained on, the doctrinal recording techniques of the synchronization matrix and sketch note method defeats the building block effectiveness of critical information that comes from war-gaming.

Recording techniques “how to” and any unique implementation guidance that supports them must be in the Tactical SOP. It goes without saying that the SOP will not be memorized, so it should be available to all staff personnel, especially where complex tasks require mastery. While the designated recorder should capture all war-gaming results, a good system of checks and balances is to spread the capture of certain critical information to key members of the staff (e.g., the XO records all decisions, the S-3 records all critical times and timings, and the Assistant S-3 records all subordinate unit taskings). Tactical SOP coverage of the myriad tasks of war-gaming is just part of the answer. These tasks must also be practiced.

# Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

## Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

### TASK: Perform COA Analysis

#### Sub-task 7 – Wargame the Operation and Assess the Results

FEEDBACK COMMENTS	DISCUSSION
<i>Failure of the staff to integrate the S-2 (enemy role player) into war-gaming.</i>	While staffs often use the S-2 to stimulate war-gaming, the enemy is very rarely used to its full potential. The enemy force used during the action-reaction-counteraction sequence should be used to help the staff develop branches and sequels during the war game, reflect the ECOA you are war-gaming against, determine where logistic resupply will be needed, determine where friendly losses, and in what number, might occur, and stimulate MEDEVAC / CASEVAC planning. The use of the threat commander should be tied in with the enemy decision support matrix and the S-3 and XO's war-game plan to cause the staff to consider all aspects of the operation.
<i>Even when time is available, unit staffs do not always war-game against several enemy COAs.</i>	War-gaming more than one friendly COA against several enemy COAs should always be the objective of the staff, because it facilitates branches and sequels that may need to be considered. When time is short and the commander chooses to war-game only one COA, it should still be war-gamed against two or more enemy COAs, including the most likely and most dangerous. If faced with war-gaming a single COA, it is important that the COA have sufficient flexibility to address several enemy COAs. A combination of options within a single COA allows the staff to war-game each option as an event, as opposed to adding a branch at the end of the war-game session.
<i>Event templating is a systemic weakness. Many units do not create or use an event template until late in planning and it is seldom tied to an information collection plan.</i>	Continual assessment and update of the most likely and most dangerous ECOAs by the S-2 will facilitate the development of a draft event template prior to the mission analysis briefing, and thus be in place for war-gaming. Remember...the enemy event template depicts where to collect the information that will indicate which COA the enemy may have adopted. "The differences between named areas of interest (NAI), indicators, and target position locations (TPL) associated with each COA form the basis of the event template." FM 2-01.3
<i>War-gaming is often not focused to a point that facilitates synchronization of the battalion plan.</i>	The BN XO must facilitate the war-gaming process and focus the staff on the critical events that need to be war-gamed and their relationship with the decisive point.

Step 4

# Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

## Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

### TASK: Perform COA Analysis

#### Sub-task 7 – Wargame the Operation and Assess the Results

##### FEEDBACK COMMENTS

*Unit staffs sometimes attempt to initiate war-gaming before developing a complete COA.*

*Units often fail to develop a war-gaming timeline before initiating the process. Even when one is established, it is not managed effectively and available planning time is exceeded.*

*While commanders may direct a single COA for war-gaming, (most often in the interest of time available) they do not always analyze the potential loss of flexibility and do not conduct a risk assessment beforehand.*

##### DISCUSSION

Insufficient detail in a COA may stem from time available, process steps omitted, and incomplete commander's guidance, but the result is always the same... a COA that is not synchronized to a point of precision that will facilitate successful execution. Omission of detail will generally result in entering the war-gaming process with problems like critical events and known decision points not identified and briefed to the staff, relative combat power not examined, the battlefield framework not developed, critical events list incomplete because of no fully developed scheme of maneuver, and lack of synchronization during execution. The lack of a developed and integrated COA before war-gaming results in the war-gaming process becoming a COA development session.

First, ensure there is a timekeeper. When staff members lack experience, it is not unusual to spend too much time explaining the line of reasoning that may have led them to proposing / taking a particular action. More time is often squandered when staff members "second guess" the S-2 as he fights the enemy commander's plan, or pontificate what other WFF should do to support a COA. The XO must monitor these types of time eaters and keep the war game focused. At some point during the war game, the timekeeper may foresee that there will be insufficient time to address all of the key events that should be addressed to achieve synchronization. When the XO is warned of this, he must consider the risks and decide to either stick to the original time line or extend it. Staying with the original timeline may result in a partially synchronized plan that winds up being unsuccessful. Taking more time to finish will reduce the available planning time for subordinate elements.

A commander's personal risk assessment when selecting a single COA is paramount. When a commander directs consideration of a single COA, it must be assumed that he has thought it through and considers it to be tactically sound and feasible. His decision to develop only one COA is based on good reasons, probably to save time and because he has limited staff support. However, there are risks. If, for example, the COA does not offer the flexibility to accommodate branches and multiple enemy COAs, the staff may spend too much time trying to verify, refine, synchronize, and integrate the COA and make modifications. Commanders who choose this option should direct that the directed COA be war-gamed against multiple enemy SITTEMPs. Risks may continue into execution if the CDR is the only one who understands the plan, his staff is playing catch-up, and battlefield hazards preclude the commander's intimate involvement in the battle.

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Trends (Current Comments) (cont.)

#### TASK: Perform COA Analysis

##### Sub-task 7 – Wargame the Operation and Assess the Results

#### FEEDBACK COMMENTS

*Unit Tactical SOPs often fail to identify the commander's guidance for how war-gaming should be accomplished, and the results expected.*

*The action-reaction-counteraction war-gaming methodology is often misunderstood and inadequately applied.*

#### DISCUSSION

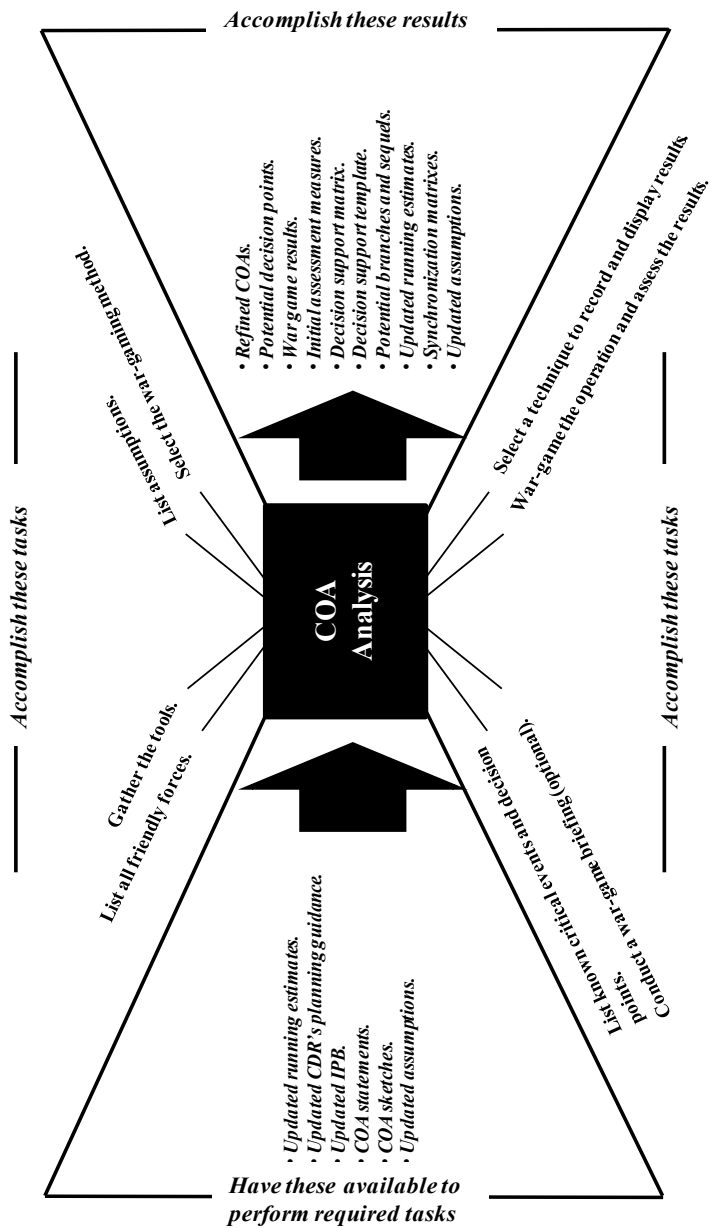
Most staff war-gaming task deficiencies can be rectified or at least reduced through the use of a detailed, up-to-date Tactical SOP supplemented by training and rehearsals. Capturing what the commander wants from the staff during war-gaming and what the staff can expect from the commander can and should be identified in the SOP. There will be those occasions where the SOP does not cover a situation or event, but adapting to a few changes rather than continuous discovery learning is an achievable objective. Staffs achieve synchronization during war-gaming with frequent, rigorous practice. Training facilitates staff recognition of what "right" looks like. After-action reviews at the end of a training session complete the learning curve.

In addition to addressing the methodology in the Tactical SOP, rehearsing key roles (OPFOR S-2, Maneuver S-3, Friendly S-2, FSO, Engineer, etc.) is also important. Key to the action-reaction-counteraction process is each staff member analyzing every critical event in terms of how the tasks identified within the critical event affect their WFF and what assets and actions can and should be applied. Being able to accomplish this analysis and develop the detail necessary to synchronize the plan requires that staff members be knowledgeable of their assets' capabilities and have an understanding of all the planning factors within a critical event.

Step 4

### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### MDMP Step 4 Inputs, Actions, and Outputs



**Step 4**



## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

What follows is a simplistic tool you can use to accomplish the eight sub-tasks that are performed during *Course of Action Analysis*. First, there is a brief section on “getting started.” Go through each of the preparatory considerations listed. They will get you off to a “high RPM” start to this MDMP step. Each task is then presented in four parts: the actions that must occur, the typical performers of those actions, the action results that should occur, and a check-the-box list of helpful tips.

### Getting Started

Check them off as you go.

Step 4

- War-gaming stimulates ideas, highlights critical tasks, and provides insights that might not otherwise be discovered. It is a critical step in the MDMP and should be allocated an appropriate amount of time. Either the XO or the commander determine how much time is available for war-gaming and ensure the timeline is followed.
- Like preparing for *Course of Action (COA) Development*, there are numerous actions that must take place and tools that must be on hand to facilitate smooth execution. Following are actions and considerations that are critical to your role of preparing the staff to conduct war-gaming.
- Know why you are doing the analysis. It allows you and your staff to synchronize the WFFs for each COA and identify the one that best accomplishes the mission. Ensure the staff refers to the unit tactical standard operating procedures or plans SOP. The Tactical SOP / Plans SOP should be the source document that establishes the procedures for the conduct of war game (e.g., who’s in charge, who attends, what tools should be brought, how to set up, who says what, when, and how to capture results).
- Enforce the timeline once the XO and the commander have decided how much time is available.
- The XO runs the war game. Let the commander reflect on what is developing. 
- Ensure the following:
  - The staff remains objective. Don’t become fixed on a single COA. Sometimes the commander will develop a COA, and it is easy to just go with it. Remind the commander to be objective as well. 







## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### **Task: Gather the Tools**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

#### COA Analysis (War-Game)

#### **Process Tasks**

- **Gather the tools**
- List all friendly forces
- List assumptions
- List known critical events and decision points
- Select the war-game method
- Select a technique to record and display results
- War-game the operation and assess the results
- Conduct a war-game briefing (optional)

Tools required include, but are not limited to –

- ✓ Running estimates.
- ✓ Event templates.
- ✓ A recording method.
- ✓ Completed COAs, including graphics.
- ✓ A means to post or display enemy and friendly unit symbols and other organizations.
- ✓ A map of the AO.

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Gather the Tools

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The staff gathers the necessary tools as directed by the XO or Tactical SOP / Plans SOP.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.


XO

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Tools and references for *Course of Action Comparison*.

Step 4

OIL

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.


There are numerous ways to war-game. Units war-game with maps, sand tables, computer simulations, and other tools that should accurately reflect the nature of the terrain.


Units will seldom have unlimited time to war-game. Since time wasted will always be detrimental to mission accomplishment, this first sub-task of *COA Analysis* takes on huge importance. You must prepare the staff to have the right information right the first time (This means gathering the tools must take place concurrently with COA Development to ensure you are prepared for the war game).

Notify the staff to get ready for the war game and remind them of their input requirements. Refer them to the Tactical SOP / Plans SOP, as it should provide the war-gaming location, assign a recorder, and dictate that the COAs identified during *COA Development* are available at the war game site for posting on maps and Army Battle Command Systems (ABCS) screens as appropriate.

### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Each WFF representative should carefully review all COAs selected for war-gaming and identify any WFF-unique requirements that will need to be addressed. 
- The XO is key here. While the unit Tactical SOP / Plans SOP should have all the war-gaming tools listed, he must direct the staff to gather the necessary tools, materials, and data for the war game.
- Following are sample tools for war-gaming:
  - Current running estimates.
  - “Smart Books”.
  - Event template.
  - Recording means (*Note: Due to the amount of information, consider using two recorders so they can compare notes.*)
  - Commander’s guidance posted in the CP, so all can review.
  - Completed COAs, to include maneuver, information collection, and security graphics.
  - WFF specific technical information regarding the COAs.
  - Doctrinal references.
  - Evaluation criteria definitions.
  - Complete unit “combat power” status of subordinate units.
  - Means to post and display enemy and friendly unit symbols.
  - Maps of the AO.
  - List of CCIRs.
- The goal for each staff member is to be prepared to concisely state how, where, and when his asset or capability can best be applied during the war game rather than wait for you or the S-3 to “pull” the information from them.

Step 4

**Notes:**

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## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### **Task: List All Friendly Forces**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

### COA Analysis (War-Game)

#### **Process Tasks**

- Gather the tools
- **List all friendly forces**
- List assumptions
- List known critical events and decision points
- Select the war-game method
- Select a technique to record and display results
- War-game the operation and assess the results
- Conduct a war-game briefing (optional)

- ✓ Commander and staff consider all units that can be committed to the operation, paying special attention to support relationships and constraints.
- ✓ List includes assets from all participants operating in the AO.
- ✓ Friendly forces list remains constant for all COAs.

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Task: List All Friendly Forces

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- The staff lists all available friendly forces that can be applied to the operation.
- Commander and staff consider all units that can be committed to the operation, paying special attention to support relationships and constraints.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Commander
- S-3
- S-3 Section
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Step 4

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- Initial task organization.

OIL

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- As units are considered for commitment to the operation, *pay particular attention to support relationships and constraints.*
- The S-3 should get the force list that was established as a result of *Mission Analysis* and *COA Development* and account for all available units.
- Ensure that what you have is the most current friendly force list available. Anything less may defeat the entire war-gaming effort.









## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Task: List Assumptions

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

### COA Analysis (War-Game)

#### *Process Tasks*

- Gather the tools
- List all friendly forces
- **List assumptions**
- List known critical events and decision points
- Select the war-game method
- Select a technique to record and display results
- War-game the operation and assess the results
- Conduct a war-game briefing (optional)

The commander and staff review previous assumptions for continued validity and necessity.

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Task: List Assumptions

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander and staff list and review previous assumptions for continued validity and necessity.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander

Staff / Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Revised assumptions.

**OIL**

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Since making assumptions are critical to planning, the staff must be alert for change and moving from assumptions to facts.

This is a perfunctory sub-task. Although highlighted as a separate sub-task in COA Analysis, it is, in fact, an ongoing effort throughout the planning process.

It is incumbent to have both the commander and staff periodically review all facts and assumptions throughout the MDMP. New facts may alter requirements and require a re-analysis of the mission. Assumptions may have become facts or may have even become invalid.

Facts and assumptions may change, and when this happens the staff must assess the impact of these changes on the plan and make the necessary adjustments, including changing the CCIRs, if necessary. Reviewing and listing assumptions before initiating war-gaming is an effective "check and balance" technique to ensure previous assumptions are still valid and necessary.





## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Task: List Known Critical Events and Decision Points

#### “Task Snapshot”

#### COA Analysis (War-Game)

#### Process Tasks

- Gather the tools
- List all friendly forces
- List assumptions
- List known critical events and decision points
- Select the war-game method
- Select a technique to record and display results
- War-game the operation and assess the results
- Conduct a war-game briefing (optional)



A critical event is an event that directly influences mission accomplishment. Critical events include –

- ✓ Events that trigger significant actions or decisions (such as commitment of an enemy reserve).
- ✓ Complicated actions requiring detailed study (such as a passage of lines).
- ✓ Essential tasks.

The list of critical events includes major events from the unit’s current position through mission accomplishment.

It includes reactions by civilians that potentially affect operations or require allocation of significant assets to account for essential stability tasks.

A decision point is a point in space and time when the commander or staff anticipates making a key decision concerning a specific course of action (JP 5-0).

Decision points may be associated with –

- ✓ The friendly force.
- ✓ The status of ongoing operations.
- ✓ CCIRs that describe what information the commander needs to make the anticipated decision.

A decision point requires a decision by the commander.

It does not dictate what the decision is, only that the commander must make one, and when and where it should be made to maximally impact friendly or enemy COAs or the accomplishment of stability tasks.

Step 4

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Task: List Known Critical Events and Decision Points

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The staff lists known critical events and decision points, to include: (1) events that trigger actions or decisions, (2) complicated actions requiring detailed study, and (3) essential tasks. (See Decision Support Template, Matrix, and Card Tools on pages 316-318.)

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Critical events with corresponding decision points.

**OIL**

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

The list of critical events includes major events from the unit's current position through mission accomplishment. It includes reactions by civilians that might affect operations or that will require allocation of significant assets to account for essential stability tasks.

A decision point may be associated with CCIRs that describe what information the commander requires to make the anticipated decision.

The PIRs describes what must be known about the enemy or the environment and often are associated with a named area of interest.

A decision point requires a decision by the commander. It does not dictate what the decision is, just that the commander must make one, and when and where it should be made to have maximum impact on friendly or enemy COAs or the accomplishment of stability tasks.

Critical events directly influence mission accomplishment, and a decision point is when the commander will make a critical decision.

### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- This is a critical sub-task leading up to the war game, and it can easily become unmanageable if the list becomes too long. It is incumbent on the staff to keep the list of critical events and decision points focused. Have the S-3 list the critical events and decision points for each COA to be war-gamed.
- There are basically two major requirements: First, have the staff review each COA to be war-gamed and identify those events that may directly affect mission accomplishment. Examples would be, but are not limited to:
  - Events that trigger significant actions or decisions.
  - Complicated actions requiring detailed study.
  - Essential tasks identified during *Mission Analysis*.
  - Major events from the unit's current position through mission accomplishment.
- Each critical event has an associated time frame within which it will occur. Staff members (e.g., engineer for breach times, chemical officer for smoke buildup and duration, FSO for time required to execute FSTs) should develop timing estimates prior to war-gaming.
- Second, talk with the commander to determine where and when he will make a decision. Have the S-3 put them on a list and make it available to the staff. While it will not dictate what the decision is, it clearly delineates to the staff that a command decision will need to occur and when and where it should be made to have maximum impact on friendly or enemy COAs. Remember, decision points are generally associated with the friendly force and the status of ongoing operations. Check for the decision point's association with critical information the commander must have to make an anticipated decision . . . essentially, CCIRs.
- The S-3 will know most of the critical times based on *COA Development*, but usually times will not get fully refined and synchronized until the war game. The XO should be the honest broker in terms of judging the impacts of time estimates.

Step 4





**Course of Action Analysis (cont.)**

**Task: Select the War-gaming Method**

***“Task Snapshot”***

**COA  
Analysis  
(War-Game)**

***Process Tasks***

- Gather the tools
- List all friendly forces
- List assumptions
- List known critical events and decision points
- **Select the war-gaming method**
- Select a technique to record and display results
- War-game the operation and assess the results
- Conduct a war game briefing (optional)



- ✓ Belt method.
- ✓ Box method.
- ✓ Avenue-in-depth method.

**Step 4**

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Select the War-gaming Method

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- S-3 determines which method(s) and technique(s) will be used to analyze the COAs. (See Belt, Avenue-in-Depth, and Box Method Tools on pages 319-324.)
- Alternatively, the staff can develop a different technique.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- XO
- S-3

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- Selected war-game method or combination of methods.

**OIL**

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- War-game methods can be used separately or in combination. As you see necessary, you and the staff may also devise a method of your own.
- Refer to FM 6-0, Figures 9-7 thru 9-12 and Tables 9-3 and 9-4. They are excellent examples of the three war-gaming techniques and the two techniques commonly used to record and display results.
- War-gaming is a conscious attempt by the commander and staff to visualize the flow of the battle, given friendly strengths and dispositions, enemy assets and possible COAs, and a set piece of ground. It attempts to foresee the action-reaction-counteraction dynamics of an operational concept. To accomplish this end, you will need to guide the staff to employ a method that best facilitates war-gaming the operation. FM 6-0 states that "Three recommended war-gaming methods exist: belt, avenue-in-depth, and box. Each considers the area of interest and all enemy forces that can affect the outcome of the operation. Planners can use the methods separately, combined, or modified for long-term operations dominated by stability."

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Like most tasks, there are a series of steps that must occur. First, confer with the S-3, and go back and review the staff's efforts from *COA Development* (a mission has been identified and several COAs have been developed. Several determinations have been made stemming from such things as: a generic task organization for a COA, a decisive point / result, significant events or risk associated with the operation, employment of major maneuver elements, security, the main battle, and reserve operations). A sequential description of tasks and purposes, including the purpose and priorities for each available fire support asset, the engineer priority of effort / support, and integration of engineer assets and obstacles with maneuver and fires has also been accomplished.
- Next, the XO and the S-3 review the doctrinal requirements for the mission at hand and confirm / decide on the sequence of operations and potential critical events that will unfold. Get the commander's input and approval. Note: Even though mission requirements were closely checked during *COA Development*, a recheck to see how best to war-game the operation is time well spent.
- Finally, the XO and the S-3 assess war-gaming methodologies against the operational mission in the selected COA and confirm whether the selected COA should be war-gamed using one particular methodology or a mix of all three doctrinal war-gaming methods. Carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of each method once a selection is made.
- In stability operations, the belt method can divide the COA by events, objectives (goals, not geographic locations), or events and objectives in a selected slice across all lines of effort. It consists of war-gaming relationships among events or objectives on all lines of effort in the belt.
- In stability operations, the avenue-in-depth method can be modified. Instead of focusing on a geographic avenue, the staff war-games a line of effort. This method focuses on one line of effort at a time, beginning with the decisive line, and includes not only war-gaming events, objectives, or events and objectives in the selected line, but also war-gaming relationships among events or objectives on all lines of effort with respect to events in the selected line.

### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- The XO, as the principal staff trainer, must be careful that the experience of the staff, amount of time available, and familiarity with a particular COA (if war-gaming a branch, or modification of an already-produced COA) are taken into consideration. You can ill-afford for the staff to be unfamiliar with the three different methods (belt, avenue-in-depth, box).
- As a minimum ensure the staff understands that:
  - When using the belt method, more than one critical event may be included. It supports sequential analysis, but avoid more than three critical events within a belt at one time. It will allow you and the staff to focus on critical events throughout the depth of the area of operations. Under most circumstances, it is the preferred method.
  - The avenue-in-depth method is good for offensive or defensive operations when in canalizing terrain that inhibits mutual support. It allows the staff to focus on one avenue of approach at a time.
  - The box method will provide detailed analysis of a critical area. It is a good technique when time is limited and the staff needs to focus on essential tasks / events and the preferred method to war-game actions on the objective.
- While not a traditional war-gaming method, you may want to recommend to the commander that he war-game by critical event. In this method, the information can be better input into a synchronization matrix and the timing worked out easier than trying to do multiple events in the belt or avenue-in-depth method. Consider this as a box around each critical event that might be a subset of the belt.

**Notes:**

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Step 4



## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

**Task: Select a Technique to Record and Display Results**

### “Task Snapshot”

#### COA Analysis (War-Game)

#### Process Tasks

- Gather the tools
- List all friendly forces
- List assumptions
- List known critical events and decision points
- Select the war-game method
- **Select a technique to record and display results**
- War-game the operation and assess the results
- Conduct a war-game briefing (optional)

- ✓ Synchronization matrix technique.
- ✓ Sketch note technique.

Step 4

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Select a Technique to Record and Display Results

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- S-3 determines which method will be used to record and display the results of the analysis and which staff members will be responsible for capturing the data.
- The two most common techniques are the synchronization matrix and the sketch note technique. (See Tools on pages 325-332.)

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- XO
- S-3

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- Selected method to record and display results.

OIL

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- War-game results provide a record from which to build task organizations, synchronize activities, develop decision support templates, confirm and refine event templates, prepare plans or orders, and compare COAs.
- Selection and implementation of a recording method (doctrinally, there are two) is a critical sub-task in war-gaming.
- Train the staff on the two doctrinal methods used to record and display results: the synchronization matrix and the sketch note technique, and ensure they know the advantages and disadvantages of each so they can help you determine which methodology will best suit yours and the commander's needs.
- In both methods, staff members record any remarks regarding the strengths and weaknesses they discover, but you must be cautious that the amount of detail provided does not impact the time available.

Training Analysis Feedback Team



**Course of Action Analysis (cont.)****Helpful Tips (cont.)**

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Ensure that how you and the commander want things done is addressed in detail in the unit Tactical SOP / Plans SOP. The staff's ability, especially if inexperienced, to execute either method can be greatly improved if the unit SOPs details how each method is done and provides examples.
- Review war-gaming procedures with the S-3, so that both of you can work closely with the staff during each turn. Before you get started, double check the COA selected for war-gaming. Then, confirm each critical event, sub-event, and associated times.
- The synchronization matrix is a tool the staff uses to record the results of war-gaming and to help them synchronize a COA across time, space, and purpose in relationship to potential enemy and civil actions.
- Use synchronization matrix job aids so that each critical event and applicable sub-event are addressed by WFF with supporting activities, unit elements, and tasks. As each war-gaming turn is taken, the commander and staff can consider these or similarly-detailed critical event lists / aids to explore each COA and arrive at the required level of synchronization.
- As the war-gaming of a critical event unfolds, the recorder notes specific actions, locations, and tasks. His notes are then recorded on a war-game worksheet, terrain sketch, execution matrix, or synchronization matrix.
- Provide a blank copy of the synchronization matrix to all war-game participants to help their participation preparation. If the staff members fill out a sticky note or portion of the synchronization matrix for the critical event prior to being called upon, the process will become faster with fewer transcription or interpretation mistakes.
- Next, monitor how the staff uses the information that has been collected and that the completed synchronization matrix clearly portrays the COA across time and space in relation to the enemy COA. Remember, the matrix is developed around selected functional areas or major subordinate commands of the unit. Other operations, functions, and units that are to be integrated may also need to be incorporated into the matrix. As the synchronization matrix supports

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.






















synchronization of a COA across time and space in relation to an enemy COA, it captures the relationship by relating / comparing the time or phase of an operation with the most likely enemy action and the decision point for the friendly COA.

Have the staff, at a minimum, capture "task and purpose" in each block of the synchronization matrix. Refer to the "task and purpose" used to array forces during *COA Development*. Capture the "desired effect" as well. It will facilitate understanding during execution.

If the sketch note method is selected, monitor note taking. Have the staff use brief notes addressing critical locations or tasks. Their notations should reference specific locations on the map or relate to general considerations covering broad areas. *Note: Organization can be a problem, so to facilitate understanding, have the staff use sequence numbers to reference their notes to the corresponding location on the map or overlay.* Actions may also be placed in sequential action groups with each sub-task highlighted by a separate number. The primary objective of the sketch note worksheet is to identify all pertinent data for an event. The sketch note method is particularly good for stability operations and when developing battle drills.

Note that while the sketch note method is a good technique to facilitate COA synchronization during war-gaming, it is historically not used by commanders and staffs as often as the synchronization matrix.

Use a war game work sheet (sketch note method) to identify all pertinent data for a critical event. Assign each event a number and title and use the columns of the worksheet to identify and list in sequence:

- Units and assigned tasks.
- Expected enemy actions and reactions.
- Friendly counteractions and assets.
- Total assets needed for the task.
- Estimated time to accomplish the task.
- The decision point (if any) tied to executing the task.
- CCIRs.
- Control measures.

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Note: Stability operations that depend on a strict timing sequence may be better suited to the sketch note technique.

- Both the synchronization matrix and the sketch note worksheet recording techniques contribute to the development and use of unit battle drills. Some battle drills may support a given event unchanged, and some may need to be refined for use based on information synchronization for a COA.
- If you are digital, use a single recorder and integrate laptops by WFF on a large screen matrix. This can be distracting and should not be projected all the time but is useful to review the turn following completion of a critical event.
- Having scribes by WFF armed with paper, pencil, 3x5 cards, and sticky notes is always effective. Ensure your scribes understand military language and can recognize the proper formatting of grid coordinates.
- Remember, how COA synchronization is recorded can make or break successful war-gaming. There must be a definitive, well-designed, and commonly-understood technique for gathering staff war-game input, and using it to determine the viability of a given COA. Available time, fatigue, staff experience, and the fog of battle dictate commonly understood execution processes (battle drills), and the technique employed for war-gaming is a primary catalyst for determining what they need to be.

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Step 4



### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

## Task: War-Game the Operation and Assess the Results

### “Task Snapshot”

### COA Analysis (War-Game)

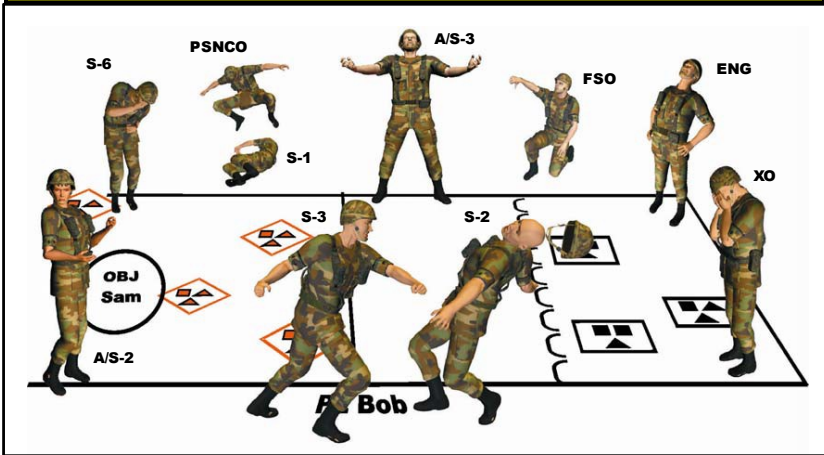
#### Process Tasks

- Gather the tools
- List all friendly forces
- List assumptions
- List known critical events and decision points
- Select the war-game method
- Select a technique to record and display results
- **War-game the operation and assess the results**
- Conduct a war-game briefing (optional)

Step 4

War-gaming is a conscious attempt to visualize the flow of operations given the friendly force’s strengths and disposition, enemy’s capabilities and possible COAs, and civilians.

### War-gaming: The Thrill of Victory / The Agony of Defeat



Cartoon courtesy of LTC (R) Neil A Garra; S2Company.com

### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

#### Task: War-game the Operation and Assess the Results

##### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

Task actions are covered in detail in “Helpful Tips.” (See below)

##### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

##### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

War-game results are identified in “Helpful Tips.” (See below)

##### Helpful Tips

OIL

Check them off as you go. If you don’t do them, check that someone has.

During war-gaming, the XO is the catalyst to ensure the commander and staff can foresee the battle’s action, reaction, and counteraction dynamics. He must have the staff analyze each selected event, identify tasks that the unit must accomplish one echelon down, using assets two echelons down, identify each COA’s strengths and weaknesses, and adjust as necessary.

All that has been done during the previous six sub-tasks has been preparatory for the war-game itself. War-gaming is a process whereby the staff visualizes the execution of each friendly COA in relation to established enemy COAs using an action-reaction-counteraction methodology. Sounds simple enough, but it is complex when viewing the enormity of WFF considerations that must be taken into account, the exploration of a plan’s possible branches and sequels, and the importance of the results.

The war game focuses not so much on the tools used but on the staff members that participate. They should be those who are deeply involved in developing COAs. Following are the responsibilities of key staff members during war-gaming. Refer to them as you review the war game process. Also review the extensive warfighting function

Training Analysis Feedback Team

Step 4

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

collaboration list provided earlier in this document.



XO – The XO coordinates all staff actions and serves as the referee providing on the spot arbitration between the friendly and enemy commander during the war game. He is also responsible for ensuring the staff stays on time and on track during the process. Ultimately he, with input from the commander, determines which events will be war-gamed in a time constrained environment ensuring that the decisive operation is always assessed.



S-2 – The S-2 plays two roles during the war-game. First, he provides input as the friendly intelligence officer identifying IR, refining the SITTEMP and EVENTEMP, to include the NAIs, continues to participate in the targeting process through the refinement of high-value targets (HVT) and their subsequent delineation as high-payoff targets (HPT), and recommends PIRs that correspond to decision points. Second, he role-plays the non-compliant enemy commander by developing decision points based on his SITTEMP and projecting enemy reactions to friendly actions. He projects both enemy losses based on the friendly maneuver plan and also adjudicates friendly casualties to stress the friendly CASEVAC and maintenance recovery systems. In order to lessen the load for the S-2, consider using the assistant S-2 in one of these roles . . . if experienced enough. Note, the S-2 is a tool for friendly staff planning and is not supposed to win. However, certain realistic enemy reactions may cause branches or sequels to be developed or may prove to make the COA fail the FADS-C test. The S-2 needs to ensure he uses the same set of enemy reactions (based on friendly maneuver) for each COA in order to not skew the results of war-gaming. This doesn't mean the S-2 does the same thing all the time. If necessary, he should exploit vulnerabilities in the friendly plan to drive changes in maneuver.



S-3 – The S-3 generally selects the technique for war-gaming and role plays the friendly commander. He will be assisted by other staff members such as the aviation officer and engineer. He must ensure the war-game covers every operational aspect of the mission.



Fires – The chief of fires (FSO) assesses the fire support feasibility of each COA. He will develop the fire support matrix and measures of effectiveness. He develops an HPTL, target selection standards, and attack guidance matrix. He identifies NAIs, TAIs, HVTs, HPTs, and additional events which may lead to positioning of assets.

Step 4

### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Protection – The chief of protection (or protection representative) advises the commander on matters involving security, personnel recovery, CBRN operations, explosive ordnance disposal, and force protection issues. He will assess MP operations and their role in supporting freedom of maneuver / movement, as well as security of ground lines of communications (GLOCs), operational law enforcement, and operational internment and resettlement operations.
- Sustainment – The S-1 assesses the personnel aspect of building and maintaining the combat power of units. He should point out the personnel shortfalls and estimates potential losses based on enemy reactions. His primary responsibility, with the Surgeon Section, is to develop a CASEVAC Plan (**not a list of personnel recovery assets**) and ensure it is tested during war-gaming. The S-4 assesses the logistics feasibility of each COA. He determines critical requirements, problems, and deficiencies. He determines if there is additional support required for civilians and develops sustainment triggers to assist in re-supplying the force.
- Mission Command – The S-6 assesses network operations, electromagnetic spectrum operations, and network defense and information protection. He determines communication requirements based on his analysis of systems and terrain. The IO officer assesses how effectively the operation reflects the information-related messages and themes. He assesses the effectiveness of media and how themes impact various audiences both in and outside the AO. The S-9 ensures each COA integrates civil considerations in both tactical and sustainment issues. The civil affairs officer (or commander designee) represents the other actors' points of view if they are not available for the war game. The SJA advises the commander on all matters pertaining to law, policy, regulations, and good order and discipline. He provides legal advice across the full range of military operations.
- The XO should get together with the S-3 to discuss the flow of the war game. It is important that it have a definite structure, that the structure is available for all to see in the unit SOP, and that all staff participants understand it. **Consider the following process as a way to war-game:**
  - First, you select the critical events to be war-gamed, generally not more than five. Note: This does not mean you can't do fewer or more than five, just that available time and fatigue will influence what is manageable.

Step 4



## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Typical events in a deliberate attack are the approach, establishing the support by fire, the breach, the assault, actions on the objective, and the enemy counterattack. For a defense, events might include the security zone fight, the fixing, assault, and exploitation force fight, the repositioning plan, and the commitment of the reserve. Your first critical event in any environment should be the initial set. This sets the stage for the upcoming operation and positions critical assets. From this position, especially during war-gaming of stability operations, you may find there are few changes to many of the subordinate units.

Second, consider the situation a kinetic environment and have the force with the initiative (the attacker) begin the first turn of the war game with the appropriate action, e.g., when conducting a movement to contact, the friendly force has the initiative.

If the attacking element is friendly, the S-2 will begin by briefing the enemy SITTEMP, and the S-3 will address the information collection effort and describe the maneuver action. He describes the action for the event in detail from start to finish, states the task and purpose, how the units relate to each other on the battlefield, the timing involved in movement, and other significant aspects of the battle. *A security patrol or combat logistics patrol in a stability environment that comes under attack should not be considered the attacker. The action should be the attack on the convoy, the reaction should come from blue forces, and the counteraction should come from the enemy.*

Third, the defender responds to the action sequence with reactions by WFF. The designated enemy representative is first and addresses enemy maneuver. He is followed by the other applicable WFF. Again, the focus is on a logical visualization of the action with the reaction addressing each one of the friendly force's actions. Example: If the S-3 described a friendly element's occupation of a support-by-fire (SBF) position vicinity XX, the S-2 should address the enemy's indirect fires on the friendly element as part of the reaction.

Fourth, the attacker then addresses counteractions beginning with maneuver. Example: The S-3 addresses maneuver counteractions and is followed by individual staff members addressing their particular WFF. Referring back to the aforementioned SBF, the S-3 states that the friendly element repositions to vicinity XX to

Step 4



### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Step 4

- Know the bottom line. You and the staff are working together to develop a synchronized / shared vision of the fight.
- When time is limited and there is doubt that sufficient time can be applied to war-gaming, starting with the objective may be the best sequence to pursue. This situation is more apt to occur in the current OE than in an offensive / defensive environment, where movement to an objective and associated activities and time requirements will probably affect resulting actions on the objective. Try to allot a specific amount of time for each critical event.
- After a full iteration of action-reaction-counteraction, you should ask if any staff member has other actions to synchronize for the turn. This is a good time for you to ask, "Can anyone else contribute to the fight during this event?"
- Recording the results of the war game is fraught with potential pitfalls. Staffs can find themselves falling into the trap of simply filling out blocks in the synchronization matrix rather than visualizing the fight. The synchronization matrix must not become the focus of the war-game. It must be viewed as a valuable staff tool to assist in visualizing the operation.
- Compare the finished synchronization matrix with current operations overlays to ensure proper control measures are portrayed.
- Other war-gaming actions that you should take include:
  - Adding "triggers" to specific actions recorded on your synchronization matrix to ensure they are executed at the proper time and place.
  - Being prepared to go back if you and the staff fail to gain sufficient clarity of an event to warrant it.
  - Advising the staff to always think . . . "What if we are successful?" ... "What if we are not?".
  - Ensuring the staff considers all possible forces, including templated forces outside the AO that can influence the operation.
  - Having the staff continuously look for ways to create conditions for success, protect the force, and shape the AO.
  - Continuously pursue risk management. Have every WFF perform a risk assessment for each COA and propose controls.

### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Not overlooking the WFF assets needed to synchronize sustainment operations.
- Always maintain tactical flexibility, if you can. You may need, as an example, to brief the commander that withholding some of the unit's assets for unforeseen tasks or opportunities is necessary, albeit risky.
- Making sure you validate the composition and location of the decisive operation, shaping operations, and the reserve if the commander requires changes.
- Having the staff "earmark" the commander's input with yellow "stickies." The recorder should post them to the synch matrix.
- Looking for situations, opportunities, or additional critical events that you believe should be analyzed further.
- Always seeking to retain or regain the initiative. Look for ways to take the enemy force out of what appears to be their most likely COA.
- Entering graphic control measures on the operations overlay when they are talked about, e.g., if the staff talks about establishing a re-trans site, mark it on the overlay. When the staff talks about an ammunition exchange point, mark it. At the same time when the re-trans site or ammunition exchange point is discussed, ensure the appropriate staff member gives the 8-digit grid coordinate for emplacement. When the staff talks about an infiltration route, mark it along with the passage point and release points. Even though a war-game briefing may not need to be done for the commander, it is a very effective technique to ensure all members of the staff understand the results of the war-game before presenting the commander with the COA decision briefing.
- Ensure the staff is familiar with the results listed in FM 6-0, Table 9-5. Develop a checklist matrix to judge the effectiveness of your war-gaming efforts. Use the following actions as a checklist:
  - Refinement or modification of:**
  - Each COA including identifying branches and sequels that become on-order or be-prepared missions.
  - Locations and times of decisive points.
  - Threat event template and matrix.

Step 4

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Task organization, including forces retained in general support.
  - Mission command requirements, including control measures and updated operational graphics.
  - CCIRs and IRs, including the LTIOV, and incorporating them into the Collection Plan and Information Management Plans.
- Identification of:**
- Key or decisive terrain and determining how to use it.
  - Tasks the unit retains and tasks assigned to subordinates.
  - Likely times and areas for enemy use of weapons of mass destruction and friendly chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear defense requirements.
  - Potential times or locations for committing the reserve
  - The most dangerous enemy COA.
  - The most dangerous civilian reaction.
  - Locations for the commander, CPs, and INFOSYS nodes.
  - Critical events.
  - Requirements for support of each WFF.
  - Effects of friendly and enemy actions, along with second and third order effects, on civilians and infrastructure, and how these will affect military operations.
  - Or confirming the locations of named areas of interest, target areas of interest, decision points, and the IRs needed to support them.
  - Analyzing and evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of each COA, hazards, assessing their risk, developing controls for them, and determining residual risks.
  - Coordination required for integrating and synchronizing interagency, host nation, and non-governmental organization involvement.
- Analysis of:**
- Potential civilian reactions to operations.
  - Potential media reactions to operations.
  - Potential impacts on civil security, civil control, and essential services in the AO.

Step 4

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

**Development of:**

- Decision points.
- A synchronization matrix.
- A decision support template and matrix.
- Solutions to achieving minimum essential stability tasks in the AO.
- The Collection Plan with graphics.
- Or refinement to, information-related activity themes and messages.
- Fires, protection, and sustainment plans, and graphic control measures.

**Commander and staff:**

- Determining requirements for military deception and surprise.
- Determining the timing for concentrating forces and starting the attack or counterattack.
- Determining movement times and tables for critical assets, including information systems (INFOSYS) nodes.
- Estimating the duration of the entire operation and each critical event.
- Projecting the percentage of enemy forces defeated and remaining in each critical event and overall.
- Projecting the percentage of minimum essential tasks that the unit can accomplish.
- Anticipating media coverage and impact on key audiences.
- Integrating targeting into the operation, to include identifying or confirming high-payoff targets and establishing attack guidance.
- Allocating assets to subordinate commanders to accomplish their missions. If there is time, go back and war-game from each decision point, but make a “different” decision to develop branches and sequels.

Step 4



## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### **Task: Conduct a War-game Briefing (Optional)**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

### COA Analysis (War-Game)

#### **Process Tasks**

- Gather the tools
- List all friendly forces
- List assumptions
- List known critical events and decision points
- Select the war-game method
- Select a technique to record and display results
- War-game the operation and assess the results
- **Conduct a war-game briefing (optional)**



A war-game briefing format includes the following:

- ✓ Higher headquarters’ mission, commander’s intent, military deception plan.
- ✓ Updated IPB.
- ✓ Friendly and enemy COAs that were war-gamed, including –
  - ✓ Critical events.
  - ✓ Possible enemy actions and reactions.
  - ✓ Possible impact on civilians.
  - ✓ Possible media impact.
  - ✓ Modifications to the COAs.
  - ✓ Strengths and weaknesses.
  - ✓ Results of the war-game.
- ✓ Assumptions.
- ✓ War-gaming technique(s) used.



## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Task: Conduct a War-game Briefing (Optional)

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

- The staff delivers a briefing (optional) to all affected elements to ensure everyone understands the results of the war-game.
- The commander modifies, updates, and approves CCIRs.
- Staff revises their respective running estimates.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Commander
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- War-game briefing.
- Results of the war-game.
- Commander-approved CCIRs.
- Revised running estimates.

OIL

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- The staff uses the optional war game briefing for review and ensures that all relevant points of the war game are captured for presentation to the commander or XO. Note: In a collaborative environment, the briefing may include selected subordinate unit staff representatives.
- The briefing format includes:
  - HHQ mission, commander's intent, and Military Deception Plan.
  - Updated IPB.





## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

As indicated by the exaggerated graphic below, many processes require a multitude of tools to achieve a successful end state. The MDMP is no different. This publication on *Course of Action Analysis* only has the space to provide a few key ones.

However, two editions of *The Azimuth*, July 2012 and First Quarter FY 2013, will provide a broad array of tools developed by training teams and “borrowed” from open sources within the training community. Each has been reviewed, updated with current doctrine, and been broken down, in many cases, into step-by-step procedures.

There are numerous tools that are available to assist with the *Course of Action Analysis*. Two of the most useful are the Decision Support Matrix and the Synchronization Matrix, which have been included in this book.

**TIP**

**The creation and use of planning tools separates successful staffs from staffs that struggle with processes.**

Step 4

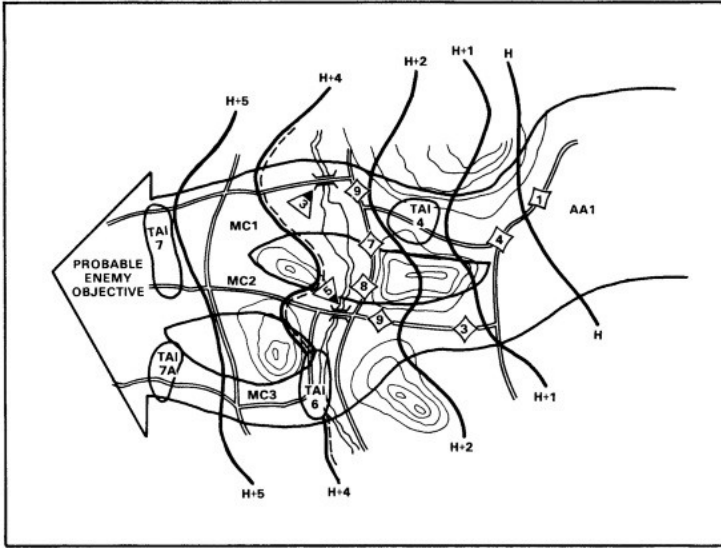


Which ones do I need? Which ones will work for me?

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Sample Decision Support Template (DST)



Step 4

Sample Decision Support Matrix (DSM)

Decision Support Matrix (DSM)			Operation/Plan	
DP #	Decision	Criteria	PIR /NAI	Action
	What decision must be made	The criteria is the condition(s) that when met require the decision to be made. IF the enemy does .....	What PIR(s) and NAI(s) are linked to the DP	The action is the response taken to the criteria once the decision has been made. THEN we do.....
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## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

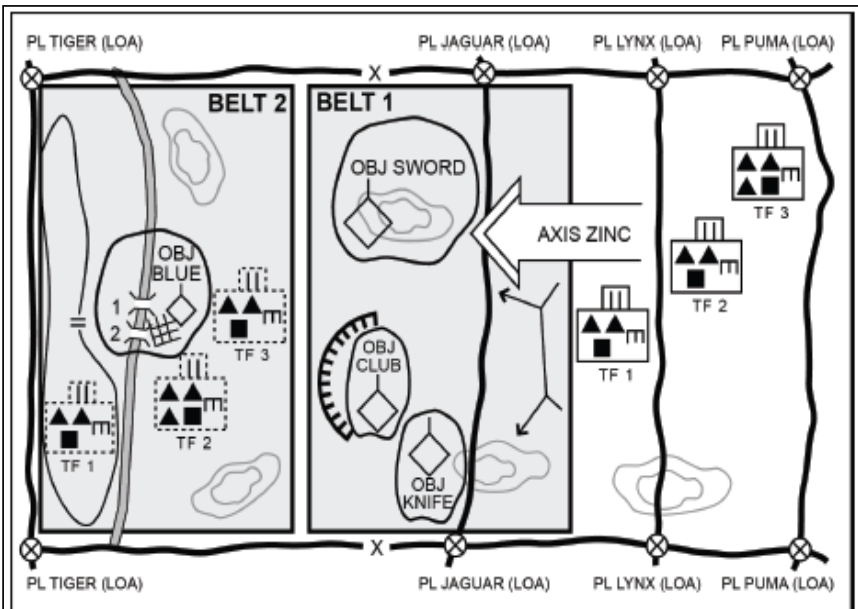
### Some Tools That May Help

#### Belt Method Course of Action

The belt method divides the area of operations into belts (areas) running the width of the area of operations. The shape of each belt is based on the factors of METT-TC. The belt method works best when conducting offensive and defensive tasks on terrain divided into well-defined cross-compartments, during phased operations (such as gap crossings, air assaults, or airborne operations), or when the enemy is deployed in clearly defined belts or echelons. Belts can be adjacent to or overlap each other.

This war-gaming method is based on a sequential analysis of events in each belt. Commanders prefer it because it focuses simultaneously on all forces affecting a particular event. A belt might include more than one critical event. Under time-constrained conditions, the commander can use a modified belt method. The modified belt method divides the area of operations into not more than three sequential belts. These belts are not necessarily adjacent or overlapping but focus on the critical actions throughout the depth of the area of operations. (FM 6-0, paragraphs 9-132 thru 9-133)

#### Sample Belt Method Course of Action (Re. Figure 9-7, FM 6-0)



Step 4





### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

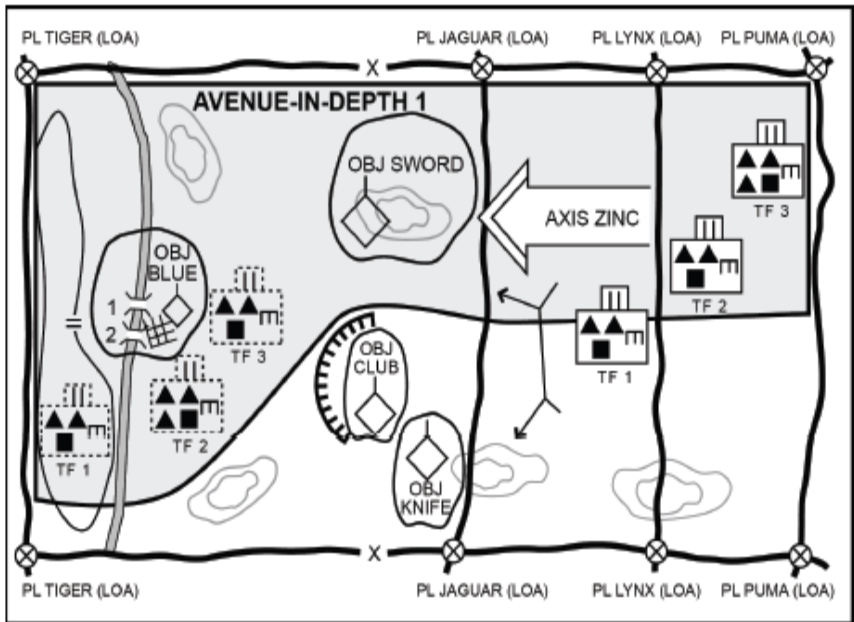
## Some Tools That May Help

#### Avenue in Depth Method Course of Action

The avenue-in-depth method focuses on one avenue of approach at a time, beginning with the decisive operation. This method is good for offensive COAs or in the defense when canalizing terrain inhibits mutual support.

In stability tasks, planners can modify the avenue-in-depth method. Instead of focusing on a geographic avenue, the staff war-games a line of effort. This method focuses on one line of effort at a time, beginning with the decisive line. The avenue-in-depth method includes not only war-gaming events and objectives in the selected line, but also war-gaming relationships among events or objectives on all lines of effort with respect to events in the selected line. (FM 6-0, paragraphs 9-135 thru 9-136)

*Sample Avenue in Depth Method Course of Action  
(Re. Figure 9-9, FM 6-0)*



Step 4



### Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

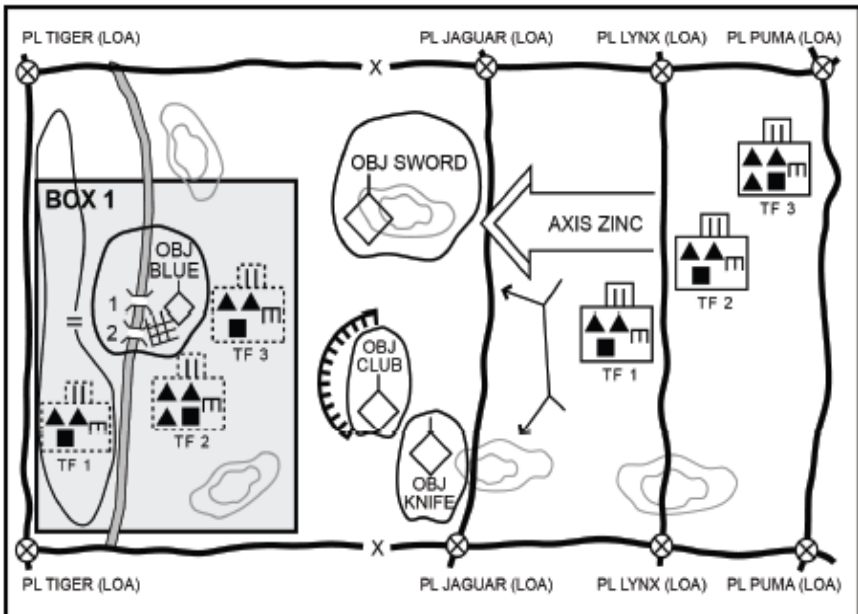
## Some Tools That May Help

#### Box Method Course of Action

The box method is a detailed analysis of a critical area, such as an engagement area, a wet gap crossing site, or a landing zone. It works best in a time-constrained environment, such as a hasty attack. The box method is particularly useful when planning operations in noncontiguous areas of operation. When using this method, the staff isolates the area and focuses on critical events in it. Staff members assume that friendly units can handle most situations in the area of operations and focus their attention on essential tasks.

In stability tasks, the box method may focus analysis on a specific objective along a line of effort, such as development of local security forces as part of improving civil security. (FM 6-0 paragraphs 9-137 thru 9-138)

*Sample Box Method Course of Action (Re. Figure 9-11, FM 6-0)*



**Step 4**



## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### Synchronization Matrix

The synchronization matrix is a tool the staff uses to record the results of war-gaming that helps them synchronize a course of action across time, space, and purpose in relationship to potential enemy and civilian actions. The first entry in the left column is the time, event, or phase of the operation. The second entry is the most likely enemy action. The third entry is the most likely civilian action. The fourth entry is the decision points for the friendly COA. The remainder of the matrix focuses on selected warfighting functions, their subordinate tasks, and the unit's major subordinate commands. (FM 6-0, paragraph 9-140)

**Synchronization Matrix (Sample 1) (Re. Table 9-3, FM 6-0)**



Time/Event/Phase		H - 24 hours (or event or phase)	H-hour (or event or phase)	H + 24 (or event or phase)																								
Enemy Action		Initiates threat activities and movements	Defends from security zone	Commits reserve																								
Population or Civilian Action		Orderly evacuation from area continues																										
Decision Points		Conduct aviation attack of OBJ Irene																										
Control Measures																												
Movement and Maneuver	1st ABCT	Move on Route Irish	Cross LD	Seize on OBJ Irene																								
	2d ABCT	Move on Route Longstreet	Cross LD	Seize on OBJ Rose																								
	3d ABCT			FPOL with 1st BCT																								
	Avn Bde	Attack enemy reserve on OBJ Irene																										
	BFSB																											
Reserve																												
Information Collection																												
Fires		Prep fires initiated at H-5 Suppression of enemy air defense initiated																										
Protection	Engineer																											
	PMO																											
	CBRN																											
Sustainment																												
Mission Command			Main CP with 1st BCT																									
Close Air Support																												
Electronic Warfare			Enemy command and control jammed																									
Nonlethal Effects		Surrender broadcasts and leaflets																										
Host Nation																												
Interagency																												
NGOs			Begins refugee relief																									
<p><b>Note:</b> The first column is representative only and can be modified to fit formation needs.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>AMD</td> <td>air and missile defense</td> <td>H</td> <td>hour</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Avn Bde</td> <td>aviation brigade</td> <td>LD</td> <td>line of departure</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ABCT</td> <td>armored brigade combat team</td> <td>NGO</td> <td>nongovernmental organization</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CBRN</td> <td>chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear</td> <td>OBJ</td> <td>objective</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CP</td> <td>command post</td> <td>PMO</td> <td>provost marshal office</td> </tr> <tr> <td>FPOL</td> <td>forward passage of lines</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>					AMD	air and missile defense	H	hour	Avn Bde	aviation brigade	LD	line of departure	ABCT	armored brigade combat team	NGO	nongovernmental organization	CBRN	chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear	OBJ	objective	CP	command post	PMO	provost marshal office	FPOL	forward passage of lines		
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CP	command post	PMO	provost marshal office																									
FPOL	forward passage of lines																											



Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

Some Tools That May Help

Synchronization Matrix (Sample 2)

CRITICAL EVENT	INITIAL SET	ACTION	REACTION	COUNTERACTION
SUB EVENT				
TIME				
<b>WFF MOVEMENT AND MANEUVER</b>				
<b>SCOUTS</b>				
TASK (What will this unit do?)				
PURPOSE (What does this action allow us to do?)				
<b>SNIPER SQUAD</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>TM 1</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>TM 2</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>TM 3</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>TM 4</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>2/A/33 BSTB (SAPPER)</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>3/45 EN (RT CLR)</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>ANA TM 1</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>ANA TM 2</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>ANA TM 3</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>ANA WPNS</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>RECON PLT</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>MORTAR PLT</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>AT PLT</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>HVY MG PLT</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				

The "initial set" entry box is critical in establishing starting positions for friendly and threat forces. In many instances, future entries, based on the initial set, will require minimal changes.

The commander and staff consider all units that can be committed to the operation, paying special attention to support relationships and constraints. This list includes assets from all participants operating in the AO. The friendly forces list remains constant for all COAs.

Step 4



Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

**Some Tools That May Help**

Synchronization Matrix (Sample 2) (cont.)

CRITICAL EVENT	INITIAL SET	ACTION	REACTION	COUNTERACTION
SUB EVENT				
<b>TIME</b>				
<b>WFF INTELLIGENCE</b>				
NAI				
TIED TO WHICH PIR?				
COLLECTION ASSET TASKED				
TIED TO A DECISION?				
<b>HCT TM 3</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>WFF FIRES</b>				
<b>TASK</b> (What we will do to the enemy, i.e. Destroy, Disrupt, Delay, Limit, Divert. This becomes part 1 of FST Purpose)				
<b>PURPOSE</b> (What does this action allow us to do? This becomes part 2 of FST Purpose)				
<b>EXECUTION</b> (Describes HOW we will accomplish this task)				
<b>METHOD</b> (How we will accomplish the task)				
- Lethal				
POF				
Azimuth of Fire)				
2/A/2-122 FA (DS) (Task, Purpose)				
Orientation, Targets)				
Orientation, Targets)				
Orientation, Targets)				
Orientation, Targets)				
Orientation, Targets)				
COLT 3 (Task, Purpose)				
COLT 4 (Task, Purpose)				
CAS (ACAs, SEAD, Trigger to IP, Trigger to TGT, Terminal Control)				
HELO (ACAs/ACP, SEAD, Trigger to IP, Trigger to TGT, Terminal Control)				
- Non-Lethal				
IO (Asset, Task, Purpose, Method, Location, Targets, Talking Points)				
PA (Asset, Task, Purpose, Method, Location, Targets, Talking Points)				
<b>1/4/324 TMD</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
Location, Targets)				
<b>1/D/155 CA BN</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
<b>2/D/155 CA BN</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
are in effect)				
<b>ASSESSMENT</b> (What is success? What is reattack criteria?)				



The Intelligence Collection Plan continues to be addressed throughout the war-game process. By ensuring requirements are recorded based on friendly actions and threat reactions, the collection matrix will be flushed out and subordinate elements can be tasked with specific collection tasks.



Determine the level of detail required to ensure minimal issues need to be revisited during the war game. Ensuring each staff member gets a blank copy of the synch matrix to be used allows them to pre-fill out their war game worksheet for each critical event addressed.

Step 4

## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

Synchronization Matrix (Sample 2) (cont.)

CRITICAL EVENT SUB EVENT	INITIAL SET	ACTION	REACTION	COUNTERACTION
<b>TIME</b>				
<b>WFF SUSTAINMENT</b>				
PERSONNEL (Status/Key Shortages)				
BAS LOCATION				
AXP LOCATION				
MEDEVAC LZ LOCATION				
CLASS I (Status/Location)				
CLASS III (Status/Location)				
CLASS V (Status/Location)				
SMALL ARMS				
MORTAR				
MAINTENANCE STATUS (Projections)				
FSC LOCATION (Assets/Locations)				
SUSTAINMENT TRIGGERS (Anticipation)				
<b>WFF MISSION COMMAND</b>				
CMD GRP (LOCATION, MANNING and FUNCTION)				
MAIN CMD POST (LOCATION, MANNING and FUNCTION)				
CTCP (LOCATION)				
FTCP (LOCATION)				
RETRANS 1 (NET and LOCATION)				
RETRANS 2 (NET and LOCATION)				
RISK				
ACCIDENTAL TACTICAL				
<b>WFF PROTECTION</b>				
SURVIVABILITY				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
CBRNE				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
ADA				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
EEFI				
<b>Enemy Reaction/Action</b>				
TASK				
PURPOSE				
Enemy Decision Points				
<b>COUNTER ACTION</b>				
MANEUVER				
INTELLIGENCE				
FIRES				
SUSTAINMENT				
COMMAND AND CONTROL				
PROTECTION				
<b>COA STRENGTHS</b>				
<b>COA WEAKNESSES</b>				



The war-game is based on the action-reaction-counteraction process as depicted above. Be careful as you execute this process to determine who has the initiative. This is important because the process is lengthy and time consuming. Having to continue through multiple iterations of action-reaction-counteraction-counteraction-counteraction because the S-3 determined he was the aggressor based on the assumption that he was conducting a reconnaissance patrol will waste the staff's time and tax their patience. BLUF...being on the offense does not automatically make you the action portion of the process. Being in the defense does not automatically make you the reaction part of the process. The local security patrol patrolling outside the FOB that sets up a hasty ambush is the aggressor, not the enemy force trying to attack the FOB!

The action-reaction-counteraction process may need to continue to ensure all possibilities and second and third order effects are addressed but this *generally* does not happen.



Course of Action Analysis and War-gaming are not synonymous. They are two separate pieces of the same task step. That is why they are listed separately. The war-game is the action-reaction-counteraction process that allows for the synchronization of all elements and support across space and time. The analysis comes in by determining if there are specific decisions the commander must make, where he must make them, and how this creates branches or sequels the staff must address. Course of action analysis defines the individual strengths and weaknesses of each COA based on comparison of the COA to the evaluation criteria, the commander's intent and guidance, and FADS criteria. The analysis of this step provides direct input into the creation of the decision matrix during COA comparison. Remember to treat these COAs as individual entities during COA analysis and do not compare one COA to another. Also ensure each set of enemy actions remains consistent throughout the war-game to ensure results are not skewed.

Step 4



## Course of Action Analysis (cont.)

### Some Tools That May Help

#### Sketch Note Technique

The sketch note method uses brief notes concerning critical locations or tasks and purposes. These notes refer to specific locations or relate to general considerations covering broad areas. The commander and staff mark locations on the map and on a separate war-game work sheet. Staff members use sequential numbers to link the notes to the corresponding locations on the map or overlay. Staff members also identify actions by placing them in sequential action groups, giving each subtask a separate number. They use the war-game work sheet to identify all pertinent data for a critical event. They assign each event a number and title and use the columns on the work sheet to identify and list in sequence:

- Units and assigned tasks.
- Expected enemy actions and reactions.
- Friendly counteractions and assets.
- Total assets needed for the task.
- Estimated time to accomplish the task.
- The decision point tied to executing the task.
- CCIRs.
- Control measures.
- Remarks.

**Step 4**

#### Sample Sketch Note Technique (Re. Table 9-4, FM 6-0)

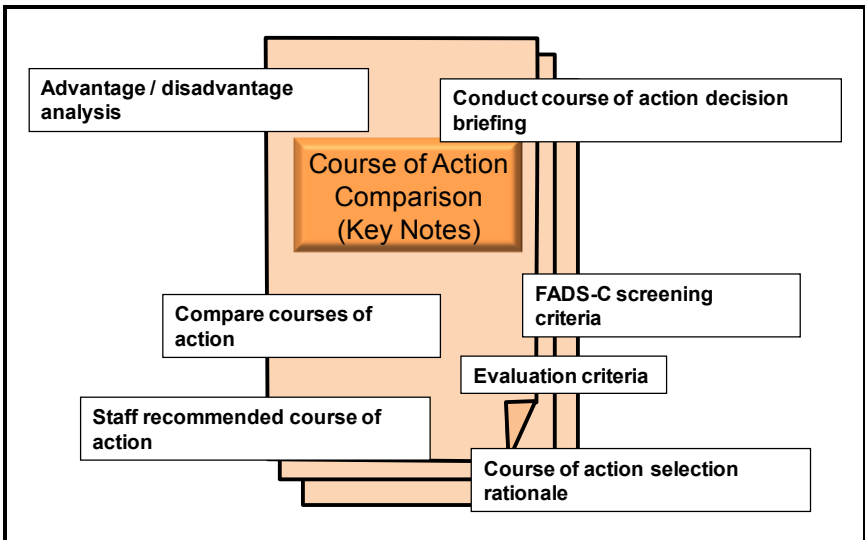
Critical Event	Seize OBJ Sword
Sequence number	1
Action	TF 3 attacks to destroy enemy company on OBJ Sword
Reaction	Enemy company on OBJ Club counterattacks
Counteraction	TF 1 suppresses enemy company on OBJ Club
Assets	TF 3, TF 1, and 1-78 FA (155-SP)
Time	H+1 to H+4
Decision point	DP 3a and 3b
Commander's critical information requirements	Location of enemy armor reserve west of PL Jaguar
Control measures	Axis Zinc and support by fire position 1
Remarks	



## Course of Action Comparison

**Course of Action Comparison** is an objective process to evaluate COAs independently of each other and against set evaluation criteria approved by the commander and staff. The goal is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of COAs, enabling the selection of a COA with the highest probability of success and further developing it in an operation plan (OPLAN) or order (OPORD) (FM 6-0). *Note the highlights of this step in the following graphic.*

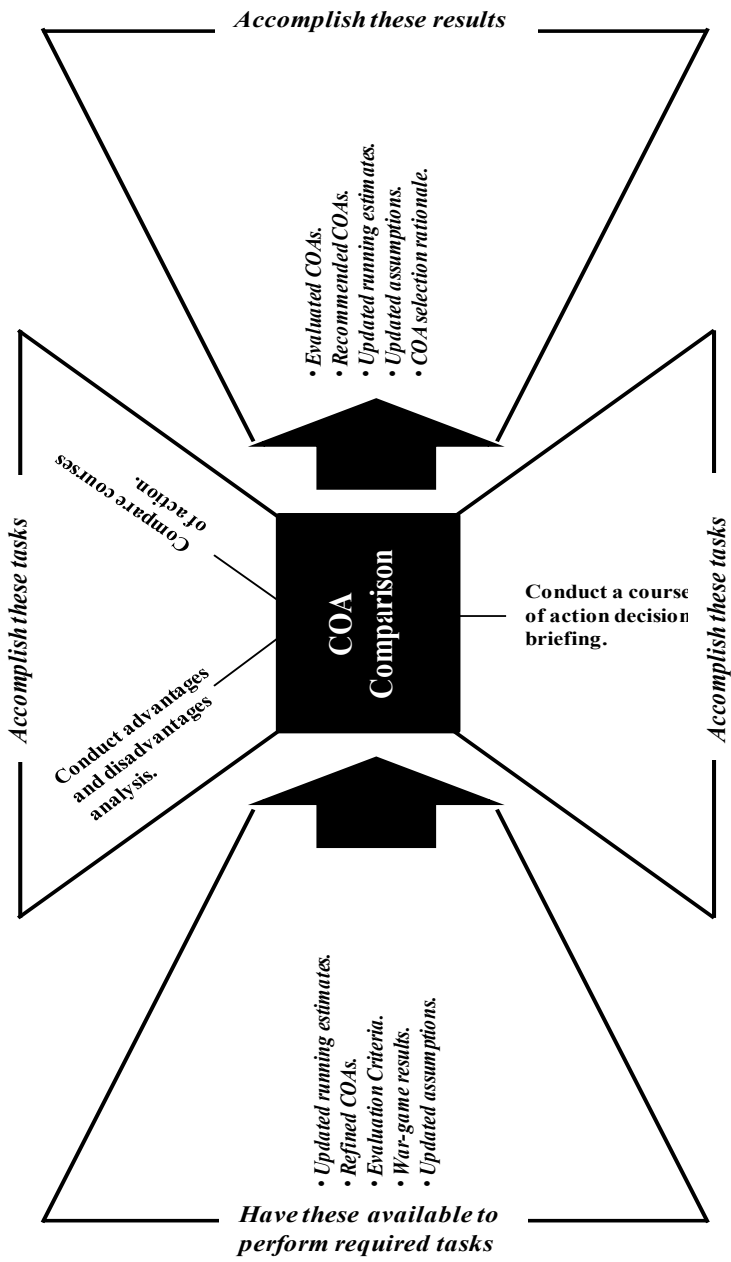
### MDMP Step 5 Highlights





### Course of Action Comparison (cont.)

#### MDMP Step 5 Inputs, Actions, and Outputs



**Step 5**



## Course of Action Comparison (cont.)

### **Task: Conduct Advantages and Disadvantages Analysis**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Course of Action Comparison

### *Process Tasks*

- Conduct advantage and disadvantage analysis
- Compare courses of action
- Conduct a course of action decision briefing

- ✓ All staff members analyze and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each COA from their perspectives.
- ✓ Each staff member presents their findings for the others’ consideration.
- ✓ Using the evaluation criteria the staff outlines each COA, highlighting its advantages and disadvantages.
- ✓ Comparison of strengths and weaknesses.

### Course of Action Comparison (cont.)

What follows is a simplistic tool you can use to accomplish the three sub-tasks that must be performed during *Course of Action Comparison*. Each task is presented in four parts: the actions that must occur, the typical performers of those actions, the action results that should occur, and a check-the-box list of helpful tips.

#### **Task: Conduct Advantages and Disadvantages Analysis**

##### **Actions That Must Occur**

Check them off as you go.

- The staff, led by the XO, determines the comparison technique that facilitates reaching the best recommendation for a decision by the commander.
- The staff uses previously developed and refined evaluation criteria to outline each COA and highlight advantages and disadvantages.
- Staff members analyze and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each COA from their WFF perspective.
- They then present their findings for other staff consideration.

##### **Typical Performers of the Actions**

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- XO
- Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

##### **Results That Should Occur**

Check them off as you go.

- Evaluation (strengths and weaknesses) of each COA by WFF.
- Highlights of each COA’s advantages and disadvantages.
- Comparison of each COA’s strengths and weaknesses.

### Course of Action Comparison (cont.)

OIL

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- Before you get started, orient yourself on how the process of COA comparison should take place. Bottom line . . . You are comparing feasible COAs to identify the one with the highest probability of success.
- The XO is the manager here. Have each staff member analyze the advantages and disadvantages of each COA from their perspective, and then present their findings to the rest of the staff for their consideration. The methodology for conducting the analysis should be identified in the unit Tactical SOP / Plans SOP.
- Monitor your use of the evaluation criteria developed during *Mission Analysis*. They should be applied as the you outline each COA. Comparing the strengths and weaknesses of COAs identifies their advantages and disadvantages with respect to each other.
- Caution . . . with time running out, convenience can lead to error. Don't let the staff make something up just to have advantages and disadvantages. These should have been drawn, at least partially, by listing the advantages and disadvantages of each COA during *COA Analysis* based on comparison to the evaluation criteria.
- Take the list of advantages and disadvantages and place them in a simple matrix.



Step 5

#### Notes:

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## Course of Action Comparison (cont.)

### **Task: Compare Courses of Action**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Course of Action Comparison

### **Process Tasks**

- Conduct advantage and disadvantage analysis
- **Compare courses of action**
- Conduct a course of action decision briefing



- ✓ Staff uses any technique that helps develop those key outputs and recommendations and assists the commander to make the best decision.
- ✓ A common technique is the decision matrix.
- ✓ Decision matrix uses evaluation criteria developed during mission analysis and refined during COA development to help assess the effectiveness and efficiency of each COA.
- ✓ Staff compares feasible COAs to identify the one with the highest probability of success against the most likely enemy COA, the most dangerous enemy COA, the most important stability task, or the most damaging environmental impact.

**Step 5**

### Course of Action Comparison (cont.)

#### Task: Compare Courses of Action

##### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.


The staff, led by the XO, determines the comparison technique that facilitates reaching the best recommendation for a decision by the commander. They then compare their advantages and disadvantages with respect to each other.

The staff develops a recommendation for the COA that best accomplishes the mission.

The targeting team meets to finalize targeting products to support the approved COA. The team also finalizes input to the Information Collection Plan and performs required coordination.

##### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.


XO

Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

##### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.


Recommended COA.

Comparison technique.

Finalized targeting products.

Evaluation of each COA by WFF.

OIL

##### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

The bottom line here is to compare COAs against criteria that, when met, produce mission success. Use your own matrix (use the evaluation criteria developed during *Mission Analysis*) to compare COAs with respect to their functional areas.

### Course of Action Comparison (cont.)

#### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.



This is a critical sub-task. Your choice of technique to make a COA comparison is not dictated by doctrine (you may use any technique that facilitates reaching the best recommendation and the commander making the best decision); however, the most common technique is the decision matrix.



Staff members using their own matrix to compare COAs with respect to their functional areas can be an effective technique, depending on the staff's experience. XO, Remind the staff that as they develop their matrix, they use the evaluation criteria developed during *Mission Analysis*.



The XO must advise the staff that a decision matrix alone does not provide decision solutions. Its greatest value is providing a method to compare COAs against criteria that, when met, produce mission success (They are analytical tools that staff members use to prepare recommendations. Commanders provide the solution by applying their judgment to staff recommendations and making a decision).



Ensure you know if lower is better or higher is better when developing your decision matrix.



Remember, as stated earlier, a criterion with a weight of two (2) can negate two evaluation criteria with a weight of one (1). It is entirely possible for one course of action to be mathematically better un-weighted but worse as weighting is applied. Apply weighing of criteria judiciously and never after the comparison to break a tie.



There is always the possibility of a tie. This should have been mitigated by choosing an odd number of criteria but happens if two or more courses of action can achieve success. This is why the commander has a staff. He relies on his subject matter experts in each WFF or staff area to make a recommendation. Ultimately, he will make the decision based on his own experience and judgment.

**Notes:**

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Step 5





## Course of Action Comparison (cont.)

**Task: Conduct a Course of Action Decision Briefing**

*“Task Snapshot”*

### Course of Action Comparison

*Process Tasks*

- Conduct advantage and disadvantage analysis
- Compare courses of action
- **Conduct a course of action decision briefing**



- ✓ Staff identifies its preferred COA and makes a recommendation.
- ✓ If the staff cannot reach a decision, the COS (XO) decides which COA to recommend.
- ✓ Staff delivers a decision briefing to the commander.

**Step 5**

### Course of Action Comparison (cont.)

#### Task: Conduct a Course of Action Decision Briefing

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The staff identifies its preferred COA, makes a recommendation, and then delivers their recommendation in a decision briefing to the commander.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

XO  
Staff/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

COA decision briefing.



#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

**FM 6-0 states that if the staff cannot make a COA decision, the XO makes the decision. The commander relies on his staff to make the decision and support it. The decision made by the staff is not binding on the commander . . . he will ultimately make his decision based on staff recommendation, personal experience, and his own internal MDMP.**



All war-gamed COAs will be presented in the COA decision briefing, where the commander will decide which will best accomplish the mission.

Recheck the previously-approved evaluation criteria. If they have not been applied, fix it now.

Don't allow the commander to make a COA decision based solely on the numerical values applied in a decision matrix. Making a subjective judgment based on quantifiable analysis can be risky.



Step 5

## Course of Action Comparison (cont.)

### Helpful Tips (cont.)

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.



The XO should ask the commander to apply his judgment to the staff's recommendations. He may not agree with what you and the staff have done and want to provide additional guidance.



Look for and advise the staff that the eventual selection of a COA should as a minimum:



Pose the least risk to the unit and mission accomplishment.



Best position the unit for future operations.



Provide the best flexibility to meet unknowns.



Provide maximum latitude for initiative by subordinates.



Be the simplest plan that accomplishes the preceding criteria.



The COA decision briefing should include:



The commander's intent of the higher and next higher commanders.



The status of the force and its components.



The current IPB.



The COAs considered, to include:



Assumptions used, especially any new ones made.



Results of running estimates.



Summary of the war game for each COA to include critical events, modifications to any COA, and war-gaming results.



Advantages and disadvantages (including risks) of each COA.



Completed COA decision matrix.



The recommended COA (*Note: if a significant disagreement exists, the staff should inform the commander and discuss as necessary*).



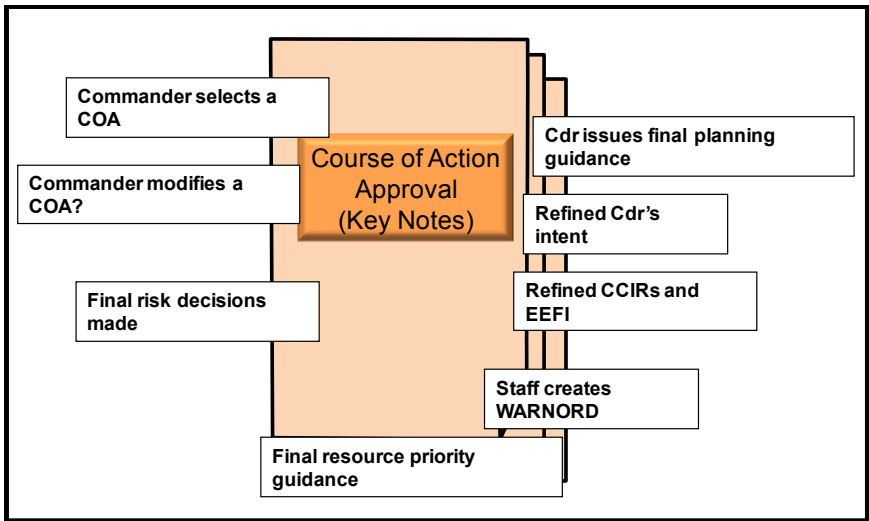
The COA decision briefing is where the commander expects to hear the staff's preferred COA. In situations where the staff is unable to decide, the XO must make the call. As stated above . . . this is rare as the commander generally holds his staff to the standard of making a recommendation based on the COA Analysis and WFF perspective.



## Course of Action Approval

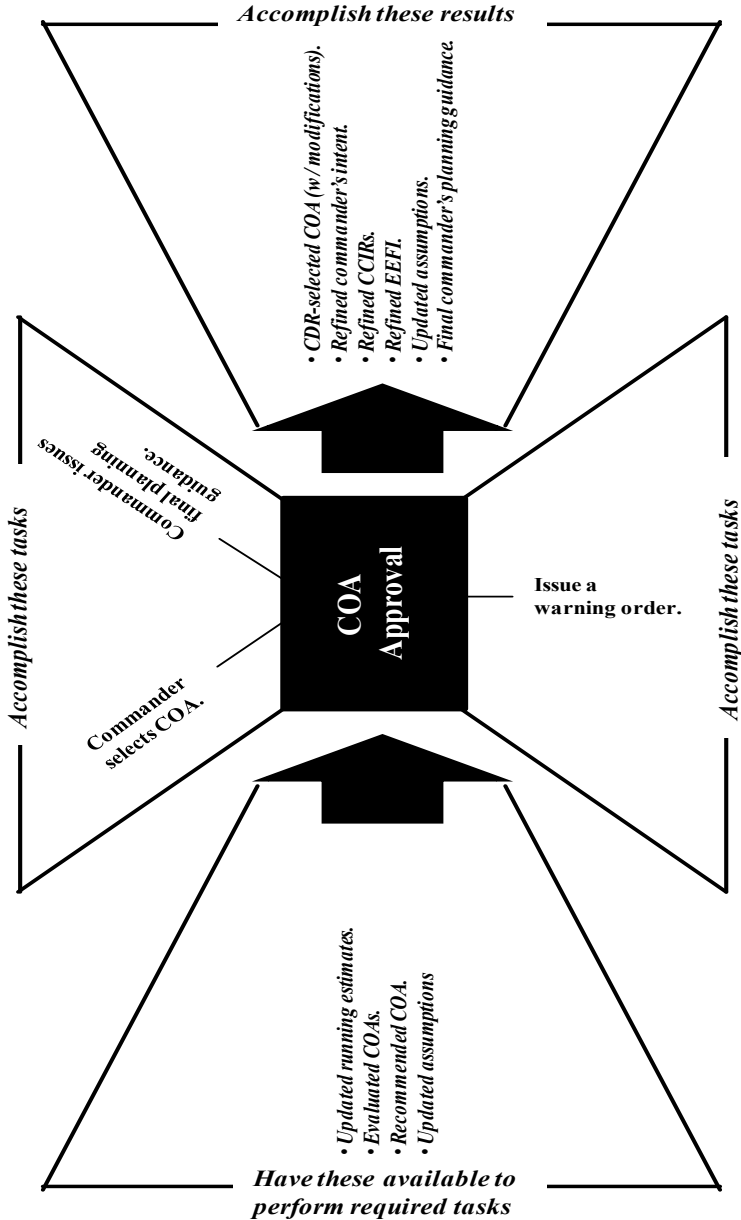
After the decision briefing, the commander selects the COA to best accomplish the mission. If the commander rejects all COAs, the staff starts *COA Development* again. If the commander modifies a proposed COA or gives the staff an entirely different one, the staff war-games the new COA and presents the results to the commander with a recommendation (FM 6-0). *Note the highlights of this step in the following graphic.*

### MDMP Step 6 Highlights



## Course of Action Approval (cont.)

### MDMF Step 6 Inputs, Actions, and Outputs



**Step 6**

## Course of Action Approval (cont.)

### **Task: Commander Selects COA**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Course of Action Approval

### *Process Tasks*

- **Commander selects COA**
- **Commander issues final planning guidance**
- **Issue a warning order**

- ✓ **Commander selects the COA to best accomplish the mission.**
- ✓ **If commander rejects all COAs, the staff starts COA development again.**
- ✓ **If commander modifies a proposed COA or gives the staff an entirely different one, the staff war-games the new COA and presents the results to the commander with a recommendation.**

## Course of Action Approval (cont.)

What follows is a simplistic tool you can use to accomplish the three sub-tasks that must be performed during *Course of Action Approval*. Each task is presented in four parts: the actions that must occur, the typical performers of those actions, the action results that should occur, and a check-the-box list of helpful tips.

### Task: Commander Selects COA

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

The commander selects the COA that best accomplishes the mission.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

Commander

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

Approved COA.

Additional COA Development guidance, if refinement is required.

OIL

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

Although the staff recommends a COA, they must remain flexible in case the commander desires to modify or replace it.

The key task here is to provide the commander with a COA that he will clearly see as the best to accomplish the mission. Keep in mind that if he rejects it, *COA Development* may start again. If the commander modifies it or presents you with a completely new COA, war-gaming is again necessary.

Remind the staff that this will throw off the timeline of products to subordinate elements. It is always best to be too thorough in the beginning than to have to change.







## Course of Action Approval (cont.)

### **Task: Commander Issues Final Planning Guidance**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Course of Action Approval

### *Process Tasks*

- Commander selects COA
- **Commander issues final planning guidance**
- Issue a warning order

- ✓ Final planning guidance includes a refined commander’s intent (if necessary) and new CCIRs to support execution.
- ✓ Also includes any additional guidance on priorities for the warfighting functions, orders preparation, rehearsal, and preparation.
- ✓ Guidance includes priorities for resources needed to preserve freedom of action and ensure continuous sustainment.

### Course of Action Approval (cont.)

#### **Task: Commander Issues Final Planning Guidance**

##### **Actions That Must Occur**

Check them off as you go.

- The commander issues final planning guidance.

##### **Typical Performers of the Actions**

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Commander

##### **Results That Should Occur**

Check them off as you go.

- Commander’s final planning guidance.
- Refined commander’s intent (if necessary).
- New CCIRs to support execution.
- Approved CCIRs.
- Commander’s analysis of acceptable risk.

**OIL**

##### **Helpful Tips**

Check them off as you go. If you don’t do them, check that someone has.

- The commander’s COA decision and final planning guidance lead to production of the WARNORD.
- The commander may provide additional guidance, to include:
  - New CCIRs to support execution.
  - Additional guidance on priorities of WFF activities.
  - Orders preparation guidance.
  - Rehearsal guidance.
  - Preparation guidance.
  - Priorities for resources required to preserve freedom of action and assure continuous sustainment.
  - The risk the commander is willing to accept.

**Step 6**



## Course of Action Approval (cont.)

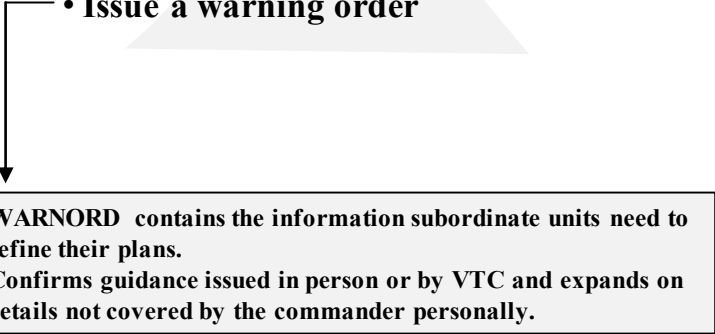
### **Task: Issue a Warning Order**

#### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Course of Action Approval

### *Process Tasks*

- Commander selects COA
- Commander issues final planning guidance
- **Issue a warning order**

- 
- ✓ **WARNORD** contains the information subordinate units need to refine their plans.
  - ✓ Confirms guidance issued in person or by VTC and expands on details not covered by the commander personally.

### Course of Action Approval (cont.)

#### Task: Issue a Warning Order

#### Actions That Must Occur

Check them off as you go.

Once the commander has approved the COA to develop, the S-3 Section issues a WARNORD to subordinate and supporting units for planning purposes.

#### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

S-3 Section

#### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

WARNORD to subordinate and supporting units with approved COA.

**OIL**

#### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

After the commander's final decision and planning guidance check to see that a timely WARNORD gets out to subordinate units so they can develop their plans.

The contents of this WARNORD, often referred to as WARNORD # 3, should be detailed in the unit Tactical SOP / Plans SOP. Contents normally include:

Mission.

Commander's intent.

Updated CCIRs and EEFI.

Concept of operations.

AO.

Principal tasks assigned to subordinate units.

Preparation and rehearsal instructions not included in SOP.

Final timeline for the operations.

**Step 6**

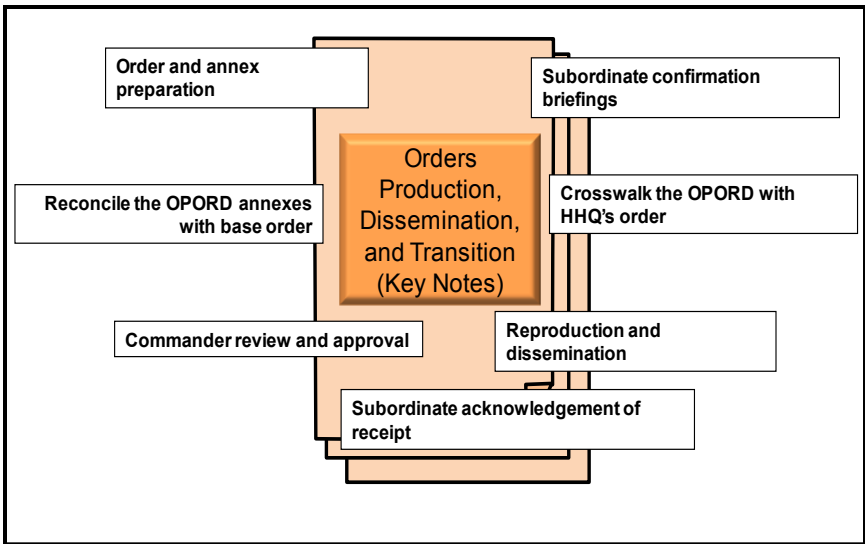




## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition

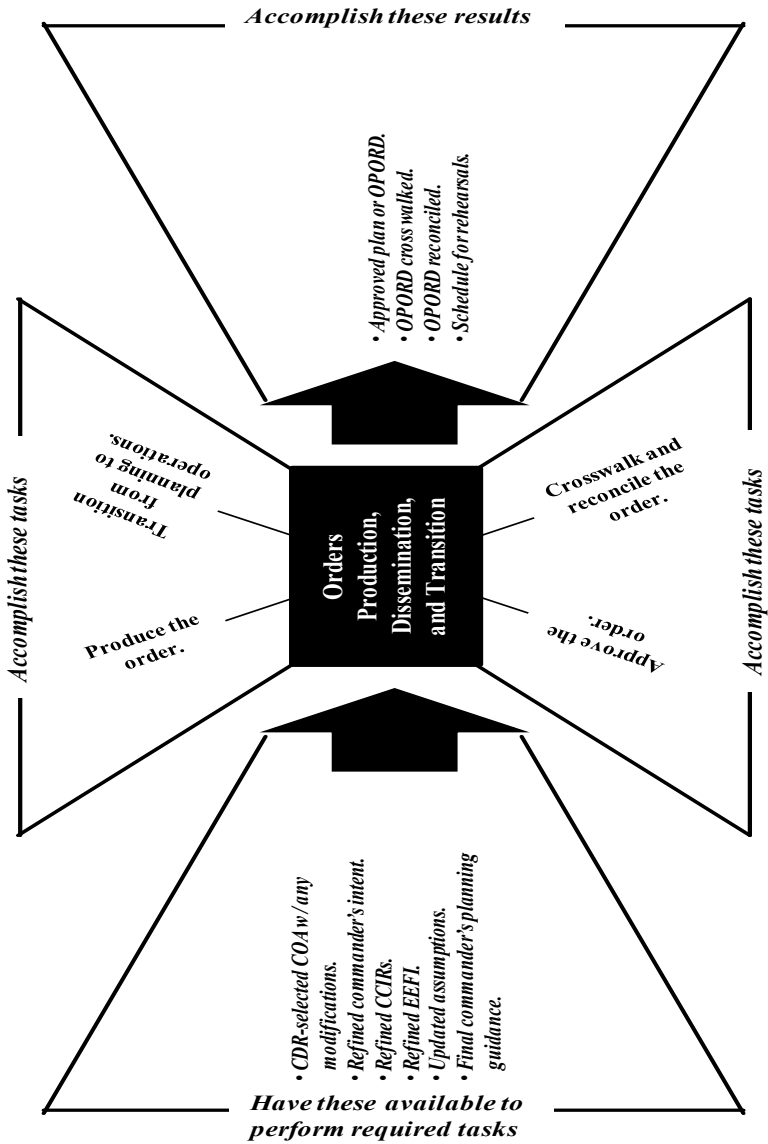
The staff prepares the order or plan by turning the selected COA into a clear, concise concept of operations and the required supporting information. The COA statement becomes the concept of operations for the plan. The COA sketch becomes the basis for the operation overlay. If time permits, the staff may conduct a more detailed war-game of the selected COA to more fully synchronize the operation and complete the plan. The staff writes the OPORD or OPLAN using the Army's operation order format. (FM 6-0) *Note the highlights of this step in the following graphic.*

### MDMP Step 7 Highlights



# Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

## MDMP Step 7 Inputs, Actions, and Outputs



## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

**Task: Produce and Disseminate the Order and Transition from Planning to Operations**

### *“Task Snapshot”*

## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition

### *Process Tasks*

- Produce the order
- Reconcile the plan / order
- Crosswalk the plan / order
- Approve the plan / order

- ✓ Staff prepares the order or plan by turning the selected COA into a clear, concise concept of operations and the required supporting information.
- ✓ The COA statement becomes the concept of operations.
- ✓ The COA sketch becomes the basis for the operation overlay.
- ✓ Staff writes the OPORD or OPLAN using the Army’s operation order format.
- ✓ Plan is reconciled internally ensuring attachments are complete and in agreement with the base order.
- ✓ Plan is crosswalked to ensure unity of effort.
- ✓ Commanders review and approve orders before the staff reproduces and disseminates them.
- ✓ Subordinates immediately acknowledge receipt of the higher order.
- ✓ If possible, the higher commander and staff brief the order to subordinate commanders in person.
- ✓ The commander and staff conduct confirmation briefings with subordinates immediately afterwards.
- ✓ Confirmation briefings can be done collaboratively with several commanders at the same time or with single commanders.

### Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

What follows is a simplistic tool you can use to accomplish the single sub-tasks that must be performed during **Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition**. Each task is presented in four parts: the actions that must occur, the typical performers of those actions, the action results that should occur, and a check-the-box list of helpful tips.

#### **Task: Produce and Disseminate the Order and Transition from Planning to Operations**

##### **Actions That Must Occur**

Check them off as you go.

- The staff assists the S-3 during the orders production process by coordinating and integrating risk controls into the appropriate paragraphs and graphics.
- The staff develops and updates running estimates and OPORD annexes for inclusion into final OPORD.
- The S-3 Section develops the selected COA into a clear, concise concept of operations and supporting information by writing a complete five-paragraph field order with the concept of operations, scheme of maneuver, required fire support, and operational graphics.
- The S-3 Section collects and integrates staff annexes into the OPORD.
- The staff ensures the plan or order is internally consistent and is nested with the higher commander’s intent. They do this through:
  - Plans and orders reconciliation.
  - Plans and orders crosswalk.
- The staff ensures that the base plan or order and all attachments are complete and in agreement. This identifies discrepancies or gaps in planning. If staff members find discrepancies or gaps, they take corrective actions. Specifically, the staff compares the commander’s intent, mission, and commander’s CCIRs against the concept of operations and the different schemes of support (such as scheme of fires or scheme of sustainment). The staff ensures attachments are consistent with the information in the base plan or order.

**Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)*****Task: Produce and Disseminate the Order and Transition from Planning to Operations*****Actions That Must Occur**

Check them off as you go.

- The staff compares the plan or order with that of the higher and adjacent commanders to achieve unity of effort and ensure the plan meets the superior commander's intent. The crosswalk identifies discrepancies or gaps in planning. If staff members find discrepancies or gaps, they take corrective action.
- The commander reviews OPORD, directs modifications, if required, and approves final version for distribution. The commander may delegate review and approval to the XO or S-3.
- The commander and staff brief the OPORD to subordinate commanders. S-3 Section reproduces and distributes the OPORD once the commander has reviewed and approved it.
- S-3 OPS NCO supervises the production and distribution of the final OPORD, annexes, and graphics.
- The commander and staff participate in formal or informal confirmation briefing(s), as required, with subordinate staffs after order issue. This ensures that subordinate staffs understand the commander's intent and concept.
- The staff transitions from plans-to-operations by ensuring members of the current operations cell fully understand the plan prior to execution. Responsibility for maintaining the plan shifts from the plans (or future operations) cell to the current operations cell. At this point the current operations cell becomes responsible for controlling the execution of the operation order. This responsibility includes answering requests for information concerning the order and maintaining the order through fragmentary orders. This transition enables the plans cell to focus its planning efforts on sequels, branches, and other planning requirements directed by the commander.

## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

### Typical Performers of the Actions

Check as your SOP may dictate. Add where appropriate.

- Commander
- XO
- S-3 Section
- Staff/ Other

### Results That Should Occur

Check them off as you go.

- Final approved and signed OPORD and copies that include:
  - Risk controls integrated into the appropriate paragraphs and graphics.
  - Updated running estimates and/or annexes.
  - Finalized operations annexes.
  - Clear and concise concept of operations.
  - Scheme of maneuver.
  - Required fire support.
  - Completed OPORD annexes.

OIL

### Helpful Tips

Check them off as you go. If you don't do them, check that someone has.

- At this point, the staff has completed the planning process, but timely preparation, review, and confirmation of the order must still occur. Following are some associated basic tenets:
  - The COA statement for the approved COA becomes the concept of operations (paragraph 3b.) for the plan.
  - The refined COA sketch, after war-gaming, becomes the basis for the Operation Overlay.
  - Your staff must assist subordinate units with their planning and coordination.
- Implement risk controls by integrating them into appropriate order paragraphs and graphics.
- Unless otherwise delegated, the commander should be the last to have eyes on, review, and approve the order.







## Final Three Steps of MDMP

### Some Tools That May Help

As indicated by the exaggerated graphic below, many processes require a multitude of tools to achieve a successful end state. The MDMP is no different. This publication of the *final three steps of MDMP* only has the space to provide a few key ones.

However, two editions of *The Azimuth*, July 2012 and First Quarter FY 2013, will provide a broad array of tools developed by training teams and “borrowed” from open sources within the training community. Each has been reviewed, updated with current doctrine, and been broken down, in many cases, into step-by-step procedures.

**TIP**

The creation and use of planning tools separates successful staffs from staffs that struggle with processes.



Which ones do I need? Which ones will work for me?





# Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

WARNORD Format w/Instructions (Re. Figure C-4, FM 6-0)

[CLASSIFICATION]

(Change from verbal orders, if any) (Optional)

[Heading data is the same as for OPLAN/OPORD]

**WARNING ORDER [number]**

**(U) References:** Refer to higher headquarters' OPLAN or OPORD and identify map sheets for operation (Optional).

**(U) Time Zone Used Throughout the OPLAN/OPORD:** (Optional).

**(U) Task Organization:** (Optional).

**1. (U) Situation.** The situation paragraph describes the conditions and circumstances of the operational environment that impact operations in the following subparagraphs:

- a. (U) Area of Interest.
- b. (U) Area of Operations.
- c. (U) Enemy Forces.
- d. (U) Friendly Forces.
- e. (U) Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Nongovernmental Organizations.
- f. (U) Civil Considerations.
- g. (U) Attachments and Detachments. Provide initial task organization.
- h. (U) Assumptions. List significant assumptions for order development.

**2. (U) Mission.** State the issuing headquarters' mission.

**3. (U) Execution.**

- a. (U) Initial Commander's Intent. Provide brief commander's intent statement.
- b. (U) Concept of Operations. This may be "to be determined" for an initial

WARNORD.

- c. (U) Tasks to Subordinate Units. Include any known tasks at time of issuance of

WARNORD.

- d. (U) Coordinating Instructions.

**4. (U) Sustainment.** Include any known logistics, personnel, or Army health service support preparation tasks.

**5. (U) Command and Signal.** Include any changes to the existing order or state "No change."

**ACKNOWLEDGE:**

[Commander's last name]

[Commander's rank]

**OFFICIAL:**

[Authenticator's name]

[Authenticator's position]

**ANNEXES:** List annexes by letter and title.

**DISTRIBUTION:** List recipients

[page number]

[CLASSIFICATION]



**Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)**

OPORD Format w/Instructions (Re. Figure C-2, FM 6-0)

**[CLASSIFICATION]**

Place the classification at the top and bottom of every page of the OPLAN or OPORD. Place the classification marking (TS), (S), (C), or (U) at the front of each paragraph and subparagraph in parentheses. Refer to AR 380-5 for classification and release marking instructions.

**Copy ## of ## copies**  
**Issuing headquarters**  
**Place of issue**  
**Date-time group of signature**  
**Message reference number**

The first line of the heading is the copy number assigned by the issuing headquarters. Maintain a log of specific copies issued to addressees. The second line is the official designation of the issuing headquarters (for example, 1st Infantry Division). The third line is the place of issue. It may be a code name, postal designation, or geographic location. The fourth line is the date or date-time group that the plan or order was signed or issued and becomes effective unless specified otherwise in the coordinating instructions. The fifth line is a headquarters internal control number assigned to all plans and orders in accordance with unit standard operating procedures (SOPs).

**OPERATION PLAN/ORDER [number] [(code name)] [(classification of title)]**

Number plans and orders consecutively by calendar year. Include code name, if any.

**(U) References:** List documents essential to understanding the OPLAN or OPORD. List references concerning a specific function in the appropriate attachments.

(a) List maps and charts first. Map entries include series number, country, sheet names, or numbers, edition, and scale.

(b) List other references in subparagraphs.

**(U) Time Zone Used Throughout the OPLAN/OPORD:** State the time zone used in the area of operations during execution. When the OPLAN or OPORD applies to units in different time zones, use Greenwich Mean (ZULU) Time.

**(U) Task Organization:** Describe the organization of forces available to the issuing headquarters and their command and support relationships. Refer to Annex A (Task Organization) if long or complicated.

**1. (U) Situation.** The situation paragraph describes the conditions of the operational environment that impact operations in the following subparagraphs:

a. (U) Area of Interest. Describe the area of interest. Refer to Annex B (Intelligence) as required.

b. (U) Area of Operations. Describe the area of operations (AO). Refer to the appropriate map by its subparagraph under references, for example, "Map, reference (b)." Refer to Appendix 2 (Operation Overlay) to Annex C (Operations) as required.

(1) (U) Terrain. Describe the aspects of terrain that impact operations. Refer to Annex B (Intelligence) as required.

(2) (U) Weather. Describe the aspects of weather that impact operations. Refer to Annex B (Intelligence) as required.

[page number]  
**[CLASSIFICATION]**

**Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)**

OPORD Format w/Instructions (Re. Figure C-2, FM 6-0) (cont.)

[CLASSIFICATION]

**OPLAN/OPORD [number] [(code name)]—[issuing headquarters] [(classification of title)]**

Place the classification and title of the OPLAN or OPORD and the issuing headquarters at the top of the second and any subsequent pages of the base plan or order.

c. (U) Enemy Forces. Identify enemy forces and appraise their general capabilities. Describe the enemy's composition, disposition, location, strength, and probable courses of action. Identify known or potential terrorist threats and adversaries within the AO. Refer to Annex B (Intelligence) as required.

d. (U) Friendly Forces. Briefly identify the missions of friendly forces and the objectives, goals, and missions of civilian organizations that impact the issuing headquarters in following subparagraphs:

(1) (U) Higher Headquarters Mission and Intent. Identify and state the mission and commander's intent for headquarters two levels up and one level up from the issuing headquarters.

(a) (U) Higher Headquarters Two Levels Up. Identify the higher headquarters two levels up the paragraph heading (for example, Joint Task Force-18).

1. (U) Mission.

2. (U) Commander's Intent.

(b) (U) Higher Headquarters. Identify the higher headquarters one level up in the paragraph heading (for example, 1st [U.S.] Armored Division).

1. (U) Mission.

2. (U) Commander's Intent.

(2) (U) Missions of Adjacent Units. Identify and state the missions of adjacent units and other units whose actions have a significant impact on the issuing headquarters.

e. (U) Interagency, Intergovernmental, and Nongovernmental Organizations. Identify and state the objective or goals and primary tasks of those non-Department of Defense organizations that have a significant role within the AO. Refer to Annex V (Interagency Coordination) as required.

f. (U) Civil Considerations. Describe the critical aspects of the civil situation that impact operations. Refer to Appendix I (Intelligence Estimate) to Annex B (Intelligence) as required.

g. (U) Attachments and Detachments. List units attached to or detached from the issuing headquarters. State when each attachment or detachment is effective (for example, on order, on commitment of the reserve) if different from the effective time of the OPLAN or OPORD. Do not repeat information already listed in Annex A (Task Organization).

h. (U) Assumptions. List assumptions used in the development of the OPLAN or OPORD.

2. (U) Mission. State the unit's mission—a short description of the who, what (task), when, where, and why (purpose) that clearly indicates the action to be taken and the reason for doing so.

3. (U) Execution. Describe how the commander intends to accomplish the mission in terms of the commander's intent, an overarching concept of operations, schemes of employment for each warfighting function, assessment, specified tasks to subordinate units, and key coordinating instructions in the subparagraphs below.

[page number]

[CLASSIFICATION]

## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

OPORD Format w/Instructions (Re. Figure C, FM 6-0) (cont.)

[CLASSIFICATION]

OPPLAN/OPORD [number] [(code name)]—[issuing headquarters] [(classification of title)]

a. (U) Commander's Intent. *Commanders develop their intent statement personally. The commander's intent is a clear, concise statement of what the force must do and conditions the force must establish with respect to the enemy, terrain, and civil considerations that represent the desired end state.*

*It succinctly describes what constitutes the success of an operation and provides the purpose and conditions that define that desired end state. The commander's intent must be easy to remember and clearly understood two echelons down. The commander's intent includes:*

**Purpose**—an expanded description of the operation's purpose beyond the "why" of the mission statement.

**Key tasks**—those significant activities the force as a whole must perform to achieve the desired end state.

**End state**—a description of the desired future conditions that represent success.

b. (U) Concept of Operations. *The concept of operations is a statement that directs the manner in which subordinate units cooperate to accomplish the mission and establishes the sequence of actions the force will use to achieve the end state. It is normally expressed in terms of the commander's desired operational framework as discussed in ADRP 3-0. It states the principal tasks required, the responsible subordinate units, and how the principal tasks complement one another. Normally, the concept of operations projects the status of the force at the end of the operation. If the mission dictates a significant change in tasks during the operation, the commander may phase the operation. The concept of operations may be a single paragraph, divided into two or more subparagraphs, or if unusually lengthy, summarize here with details located in Annex C (Operations). If the concept of operations is phased, describe each phase in a subparagraph. Label these subparagraphs as "Phase" followed by the appropriate Roman numeral, for example, "Phase I." If the operation is phased, all paragraphs and subparagraphs of the base order and all annexes must mirror the phasing established in the concept of operations. The operation overlay and graphic depictions of lines of effort help portray the concept of operations and are located in Annex C (Operations).*

c. (U) Scheme of Movement and Maneuver. *Describe the employment of maneuver units in accordance with the concept of operations. Provide the primary tasks of maneuver units conducting the decisive operation and the purpose of each. Next, state the primary tasks of maneuver units conducting shaping operations, including security operations, and the purpose of each. For offensive tasks, identify the form of maneuver. For defensive tasks, identify the type of defense. For stability tasks, describe the role of maneuver units by primary stability tasks. If the operation is phased, identify the main effort by phase. Identify and include priorities for the reserve. Refer to Annex C (Operations) as required.*

(1) (U) Scheme of Mobility/Counter mobility. *State the scheme of mobility/counter mobility including priorities by unit or area. Refer to Annex G (Engineer) as required.*

(2) (U) Scheme of Battlefield Obscuration. *State the scheme of battlefield obscuration, including priorities by unit or area. Refer to Appendix 9 (Battlefield Obscuration) to Annex C (Operations) as required.*

(3) (U) Scheme of Information Collection. *Describe how the commander intends to use reconnaissance missions and surveillance tasks to support the concept of operations. Include the primary reconnaissance objectives. Refer to Annex L (Information Collection) as required. (Note: Army forces do not conduct reconnaissance missions and surveillance within the United States and its territories. For domestic operations, this paragraph is titled "Information Awareness and Assessment" and the contents of this paragraph comply with Executive Order 12333.)*

[page number]

[CLASSIFICATION]



## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

OPORD Format w/Instructions (Re. Figure C-2, FM 6-0) (cont.)

[CLASSIFICATION]

**OPLAN/OPORD [number] [(code name)]—[issuing headquarters] [(classification of title)]**

d. (U) Scheme of Intelligence. *Describe how the commander envisions intelligence supporting the concept of operations. Include the priority of effort for situation development, targeting, and assessment. State the priority of intelligence support to units and areas. Refer to Annex B (Intelligence) as required.*

e. (U) Scheme of Fires. *Describe how the commander intends to use fires to support the concept of operations with emphasis on the scheme of maneuver. State the fire support tasks and the purpose of each task. State the priorities for, allocation of, and restrictions on fires. Refer to Annex D (Fires) as required.*

f. (U) Scheme of Protection. *Describe how the commander envisions protection supporting the concept of operations. Include the priorities of protection by unit and area. Include survivability. Address the scheme of operational area security, including security for routes, bases, and critical infrastructure. Identify tactical operating forces and other reaction forces. Use subparagraphs for protection categories (for example, air and missile defense and explosive ordnance disposal) based on the situation. Refer to Annex E (Protection) as required.*

g. (U) Cyber Electromagnetic Activities. *Describe how cyber electromagnetic activities (including cyberspace operations, electronic warfare and spectrum management operations), supports the concept of operations. Refer to Appendix 12 (Cyber Electromagnetic Activities) to Annex C (Operations) as required. Refer to Annex H (Signal) for defensive cyberspace operations, network operations and spectrum management operations as required.*

h. (U) Stability Tasks. *Describe how stability tasks support the concept of operations. Describe how the commander envisions the conduct of stability tasks in coordination with other organizations. (See ADRP 3-07.) If other organizations or the host nation cannot provide for civil security, restoration of essential services, and civil control, then commanders with an assigned area of operations must do so with available resources, request additional resources, or request relief for these requirements from higher headquarters. Commanders assign specific responsibilities for stability tasks to subordinate units in paragraph 3j (Tasks to Subordinate Units) and paragraph 3k (Coordinating Instructions). Refer to Annex C (Operations) and Annex K (Civil Affairs Operations) as required.*

i. (U) Assessment. *Describe the priorities for assessment and identify the measures of effectiveness used to assess end state conditions and objectives. Refer to Annex M (Assessment) as required.*

j. (U) Tasks to Subordinate Units. *State the task assigned to each unit that reports directly to the headquarters issuing the order. Each task must include who (the subordinate unit assigned the task), what (the task itself), when, where, and why (purpose). Use a separate subparagraph for each unit. List units in task organization sequence. Place tasks that affect two or more units in paragraph 3k (Coordinating Instructions).*

k. (U) Coordinating Instructions. *List only instructions and tasks applicable to two or more units not covered in unit SOPs.*

(1) (U) Time or condition when the OPORD becomes effective.

(2) (U) Commander's Critical Information Requirements. *List commander's critical information requirements (CCIRs).*

(3) (U) Essential Elements of Friendly Information. *List essential elements of friendly information (EEFI).*

(4) (U) Fire Support Coordination Measures. *List critical fire support coordination or control measures.*

[page number]

[CLASSIFICATION]

## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

OPORD Format w/Instructions (Re. Figure C-2, FM 6-0) (cont.)

[CLASSIFICATION]

**OPLAN/OPORD [number] [(code name)]—[issuing headquarters] [(classification of title)]**

(5) (U) Airspace Coordinating Measures. *List critical airspace coordinating or control measures.*

(6) (U) Rules of Engagement. *List rules of engagement. Refer to Appendix 11 (Rules of Engagement) to Annex C (Operations) as required.*

**(Note:** *For operations within the United States and its territories, title this paragraph “Rules for the Use of Force”.*

(7) (U) Risk Reduction Control Measures. *State measures specific to this operation not included in unit SOPs. They may include mission-oriented protective posture, operational exposure guidance, troop-safety criteria, and fratricide avoidance measures. Refer to Annex E (Protection) as required.*

(8) (U) Personnel Recovery Coordination Measures. *Refer to Appendix 13 (Personnel Recovery) to Annex E (Protection) as required.*

(9) (U) Environmental Considerations. *Refer to Appendix 5 (Environmental Considerations) to Annex G (Engineer) as required.*

(10) (U) Soldier and Leader Engagement. *State commander’s guidance for target audiences and reporting requirements.*

(11) (U) Other Coordinating Instructions. *List in subparagraphs any additional coordinating instructions and tasks that apply to two or more units, such as the operational timeline and any other critical timing or events.*

**4. (U) Sustainment.** *Describe the concept of sustainment, including priorities of sustainment by unit or area. Include instructions for administrative movements, deployments, and transportation—or references to applicable appendixes—if appropriate. Use the following subparagraphs to provide the broad concept of support for logistics, personnel, and health service support. Provide detailed instructions for each sustainment subfunction in the appendixes to Annex F (Sustainment).*

a. (U) Logistics. *Refer to Annex F (Sustainment) as required.*

b. (U) Personnel. *Refer to Annex F (Sustainment) as required.*

c. (U) Health Service Support. *Refer to Annex F (Sustainment) as required.*

### **5. (U) Command and Signal.**

a. (U) Command.

(1) (U) Location of Commander and Key Leaders. *State where the commander and key leaders intend to be during the operation, by phase if the operation is phased.*

(2) (U) Succession of Command. *State the succession of command if not covered in the unit’s SOPs.*

(3) (U) Liaison Requirements. *State liaison requirements not covered in the unit’s SOPs.*

b. (U) Control.

(1) (U) Command Posts. *Describe the employment of command posts (CPs), including the location of each CP and its time of opening and closing, as appropriate. State the primary controlling CP for specific tasks or phases of the operation (for example, “The division tactical command post will control the air assault”).*

[page number]

[CLASSIFICATION]

## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

OPORD Format w/Instructions (Re. Figure C-2, FM 6-0) (cont.)

[CLASSIFICATION]

**OPLAN/OPORD [number] [(code name)]—[issuing headquarters] [(classification of title)]**

(2) (U) Reports. *List reports not covered in SOPs. Refer to Annex R (Reports) as required.*

c. (U) Signal. *Describe the concept of signal support, including location and movement of key signal nodes and critical electromagnetic spectrum considerations throughout the operation. Refer to Annex H (Signal) as required.*

**ACKNOWLEDGE:** *Provide instructions for how the addressees acknowledge receipt of the OPLAN or OPORD. The word “acknowledge” may suffice. Refer to the message reference number if necessary. Acknowledgement of an OPLAN or OPORD means that it has been received and understood.*

[Commander’s last name]

[Commander’s rank]

*The commander or authorized representative signs the original copy. If the representative signs the original, add the phrase “For the Commander.” The signed copy is the historical copy and remains in the headquarters’ files.*

**OFFICIAL:**

[Authenticator’s name]

[Authenticator’s position]

*Use only if the commander does not sign the original order. If the commander signs the original, no further authentication is required. If the commander does not sign, the signature of the preparing staff officer requires authentication and only the last name and rank of the commander appear in the signature block.*

[page number]

[CLASSIFICATION]

## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

OPORD Format w/Instructions (Re. Figure C-2, FM 6-0) (cont.)

[CLASSIFICATION]

**OPLAN/OPORD [number] [(code name)]—[issuing headquarters] [(classification of title)]**

*(ANNEXES: List annexes by letter and title. Army and joint OPLANS or OPORDs do not use Annexes I and O as attachments and in Army orders label these annexes "Not Used." Annexes T, X, and Y are available for use in Army OPLANS or OPORDs and are labeled as "Spare." When an attachment required by doctrine or an SOP is unnecessary, label it "Omitted.")*

- Annex A—Task Organization
- Annex B—Intelligence
- Annex C—Operations
- Annex D—Fires
- Annex E—Protection
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- Annex Y—Spare
- Annex Z—Distribution

**DISTRIBUTION:** *Furnish distribution copies either for action or for information. List in detail those who are to receive the plan or order. Refer to Annex Z (Distribution) if lengthy.*

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[CLASSIFICATION]



## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

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## Orders Production, Dissemination, and Transition (cont.)

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(Re. Table C-2, FM 6-0)

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

### A

**ABCS** - Army Battle Command Systems  
**ACoS** – assistant chief of staff  
**ADA** – air defense artillery  
**AI** – area of influence  
**AO** – area of operations  
**ARNG** – Army National Guard  
**ASCOPE** – areas, structures, capabilities, organizations, people, and events  
**ATTP** – Army Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures

### B

**BDE** – brigade  
**BUB** – battle update briefing

### C

**CA** – civil affairs  
**CASEVAC** – casualty evacuation  
**CBRN** – chemical, biological, radioactive, and nuclear  
**CCIR** – commander’s critical intelligence requirement  
**CDR** – commander  
**COA** – course(s) of action  
**COA-D** – course of action development  
**COO** – combined obstacle overlay  
**COP** – common operational picture  
**CP** – command post  
**CTCP** – combat trains command post

### D

**DP** – decision point  
**DSCA** – defense support of civil authorities (replaced civil support)  
**DSM** – decision support matrix  
**DST** – decision support template  
**DTED** – digital terrain elevation data

### E

**EEFI** – essential element(s) of friendly information  
**EVENTEMP** – event template

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

### F

**FADS-C** – feasible, acceptable, distinguishable, suitable - complete  
**FFIR** – friendly forces information requirement  
**FM** – field manual  
**FRAGORD** – fragmentary order  
**FSC** – forward support company  
**FSCM** – fire support coordination measures  
**FSO** – fire support officer  
**FSMT** – forward support medical evacuation team  
**FSP** – forward supply point  
**FST** – fire support tasks

### G

**GCM** – graphic control measure  
**GLOC** – ground lines of communication

### H

**HHQ** – higher headquarters  
**HN** – host nation  
**HPT** – high-payoff target  
**HPTL** – high-payoff target list  
**HVT** – high-value target  
**HVTL** – high-value target list

### I

**INFOSYS** – information systems  
**IPB** – intelligence preparation of the battlefield  
**IR** – information requirement  
**ISR** – intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (per Army terminologist)  
**IVL** – intervisibility line

### L

**LD** – line of departure  
**LEIOV** – latest event information of value  
**LOA** – limit of advance  
**LOC** – line of communications  
**LOS** – line-of-sight  
**LTIOV** – latest time information is of value

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

### M

**MA** – mission analysis

**MC** – mission command

**MCOO** – modified combined obstacle overlay

**MDMP** – Military Decisionmaking Process

**MEDEVAC** – medical evacuation

**METT-TC** – mission, enemy, terrain, time available, troops available and civilians

**MISO** – military information support operations (formerly PSYOPS)

**MOE** – measure of effectiveness

**MOP** – measure of performance

### N

**NAI** – named area(s) of interest

**NCO** – noncommissioned officer

### O

**OAKOC** – observation and fields of fire, avenues of approach, key terrain, obstacles, and cover and concealment

**OE** – operational environment

**OIL** – observations, insights, and lessons

**OPFOR** – opposing force

**OPLAN** – operation plan

**OPORD** – operation order

**OPSEC** – operational security

### P

**PIR** – priority intelligence requirement

**PLT** – platoon

### R

**RETRANS** – retransmission

**RFI** – request for information

**ROE** – rules of engagement

**RTO** – radio-telephone operator

## Acronyms and Abbreviations

### S

**SA** – situational awareness  
**SIGO** – signal officer  
**SIR** – specific information requirement  
**SITTEMP** – situation template  
**SJA** – Staff Judge Advocate  
**SOP** – standard operating procedure  
**SU** – situational understanding

### T

**TAFT** – Training Analysis Feedback Team  
**TAI** – targeted area of interest  
**TLP** – troop-leading procedure  
**TO** – task organization  
**TPED** – tasking, processing, exploitation, and dissemination

### W

**WARNORD** – warning order  
**WFF** – warfighting function

### X

**XO** – executive officer

## Glossary

This glossary contains a selection of terms, with definitions, intended to assist the unit commander and staff when executing the MDMP. The definitions were taken from selected ATTPs, ADPs, ADRPs, Joint Technical Publications (JTP), and several FMs.

-A-

**Area of Influence (AI)** – A geographical area wherein a commander is directly capable of influencing operations by maneuver and fire support systems normally under the commander's command or control. JP 1-02

**Area of Interest (AOI)** – That area of concern to the commander, including the area of influence, areas adjacent thereto, and extending into enemy territory to the objectives of current or planned operations. This area also includes areas occupied by enemy forces who could jeopardize the accomplishment of the mission. JP 2-03

**Area of Operations (AO)** – An operational area defined by the joint force commander for land and naval forces. Areas of operations do not typically encompass the entire operational area of the joint force commander, but should be large enough for component commanders to accomplish their missions and protect their forces. JP 3-0

**Areas, Structures, Capabilities, Organizations, People, and Events (ASCOPE)** – Acronym is retained but no longer formally defined. ADRP 6-0

-C-

**Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIR)** – (joint) An information requirement identified by the commander as being critical to facilitating timely decision-making. The two key elements are friendly force information requirements and priority intelligence requirements. JP 3-0

**Course of Action Development (COA-D)** – The COA development step generates options for follow-on analysis and comparison that satisfy the commander's intent and planning guidance. FM 6-0

**Combined Obstacle Overlay (COO)** – The combined obstacle overlay is used to depict areas where military mobility can be categorized as unrestricted, restricted, or very restricted. Unrestricted areas are free of any obstacles or restrictions to movement. Restricted areas are usually depicted on overlays by diagonal lines to indicate terrain that hinders movement to some degree. Very restricted areas are usually depicted by crosshatched diagonal lines to indicate terrain that severely hinders or slows military movement unless some effort is made to enhance mobility. JP 1-02

**Training Analysis Feedback Team**

## Glossary

**Common Operational Picture (COP)** – (Army) A single display of relevant information within a commander’s area of interest tailored to the user’s requirements and based on common data and information shared by more than one command. ADRP 6-0

-D-

**Decisive Point (DP)** – (joint) A geographic place, specific key event, critical factor, or function that, when acted upon, allows commanders to gain a marked advantage over an adversary or contribute materially to achieving success. JP 3-0 (Note: In this context, adversary also refers to enemy.)

**Decision Support Matrix (DSM)** – A written record of a war-gamed course of action that describes decision points and associated actions at those decision points. ADRP 5-0

**Decision Support Template (DST)** – A combined intelligence and operations graphic based on the results of war-gaming. The decision support template depicts decision points, timelines associated with movement of forces and the flow of the operation, and other key items of information required to execute a specific friendly course of action. JP 2-01.3

**Digital Terrain Elevation Data (DTED)** – A standard of digital datasets which consists of a matrix of terrain elevation values.

-E-

**Essential Element of Friendly Information (EEFI)** – (Army) A critical aspect of a friendly operation that, if known by the enemy, would subsequently compromise, lead to failure, or limit success of the operation, and therefore should be protected from enemy detection. ADRP 1-02

**Event Template (EVENTEMP)** – A model against which enemy activity can be recorded and compared. It represents a sequential projection of events that relate to space and time on the battlefield and indicate the enemy’s ability to adopt a particular course of action. The event template is a guide for information planning. FM 2-01.3

**Execution Matrix** – A visual and sequential representation of the critical tasks and responsible organizations by time or for a tactical operation used as a staff tool. FM 6-0



## Glossary

-F-

**Friendly Force Information Requirement (FFIR)** – (joint) Information the commander and staff need to understand the status of friendly force and supporting capabilities. FM 6-0

-I-

**Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB)** – IPB is the staff planning activity undertaken by the entire staff to define and understand the AO and the options it presents to friendly and enemy forces. It includes input from the whole staff. IPB is a systematic process of analyzing and visualizing the enemy and AO in a specific geographic area for a specific mission or in anticipation of a specific mission. FM 2-0

**Information Requirement (IR)** – Any information element the commander and staff require to successfully conduct operations. ADRP 6-0

**Intelligence Warfighting Function** – The related tasks and systems that facilitate understanding of the operational environment, enemy, terrain, and civil considerations. ADP 6-0

-L-

**Latest Event Information of Value (LEIOV)** – A subset of LTIOV, an event which dictates the latest time the information can be used by the commander in making the decision the priority intelligence requirement supports. ATTP 2-01

**Latest Time Information is of Value (LTIOV)** – The time by which information must be delivered to the requestor in order to provide decisionmakers with timely intelligence. FM 2-01.3

-M-

**Modified Combined Obstacle Overlay (MCOO)** – A digital or analog graphic depiction of the terrain which provides the basis for identifying air and ground AA and mobility corridors. It integrates into one overlay all obstacles to movement, including but not limited to, built-up areas, slope, soil, vegetation, and transportation systems. FM 2-01.3

## Glossary

**Military Information Support Operations (MISO)** – Planned operations to convey selected information and indicators to foreign audiences to influence their emotions, motives, objective reasoning, and ultimately the behavior of foreign governments, organizations, groups, and individuals in a manner favorable to the originator's objectives. JP 3-13.2

**Mission Command** – The conduct of military operations through decentralized execution based on mission orders. Successful mission command demands that subordinate leaders at all echelons exercise disciplined initiative, acting aggressively and independently to accomplish the mission within the commander's intent. ADP 6-0

**Measure of Effectiveness (MOE)** – A criterion used to assess changes in system behavior, capability, or operational environment that is tied to measuring the attainment of an end state, achievement of an objective, or creation of an effect. JP 3-0

**Measure of Performance (MOP)** – A criterion used to assess friendly actions that is tied to measuring task accomplishment. JP 3-0

**Movement and Maneuver Warfighting Function** – The related tasks and systems that move forces to achieve a position of advantage in relation to the enemy. Direct fire is inherent in maneuver, as is close combat. ADP 6-0

-N-

**Named Area of Interest (NAI)** – The geographical area where information that will satisfy a specific information requirement can be collected. Named areas of interest are usually selected to capture indications of adversary courses of action, but also may be related to conditions of the AO. FM 2-01.3

-O-

**Operational Environment (OE)** (joint) – A composite of the conditions, circumstances, and influences that affect the employment of capabilities and bear on the decisions of the commander. JP 1-02

**Operational Theme** – The character of the dominant major operation being conducted at any time within a land force commander's area of operations. The operational theme helps convey the nature of the major operation to the force to facilitate common understanding of how the commander broadly intends to operate. ADP 3-0

## Glossary

**Operations Process** – The major mission command activities performed during operations: planning, preparing, executing, and continuously assessing the operation. The commander drives the operations process. ADRP 1-02

**Orders Group** – A group assembled to receive a commander's orders. The basic composition of this group is normally prescribed in the standard operating procedures of the unit or formation concerned. ADRP 1-02

**Overlay Order** – A technique used to issue an order (normally a fragmentary order) that has abbreviated instructions written on an overlay. ADRP 1-02

-P-

**Priority Intelligence Requirement (PIR)** – (joint) An intelligence requirement, stated as a priority for intelligence support, that the commander and staff need to understand the adversary or the operational environment. JP 2-0

**Protection Warfighting Function** – The related tasks and systems that preserve the force so the commander can apply maximum combat power. ADP 6-0

**Probability** – In risk analysis, the likelihood that an event will occur. There are five degrees of probability: frequent (A), likely (B), occasional (C), seldom (D), and unlikely (E). ATP 5-19

-R-

**Reconnaissance and Surveillance (R&S)** – Two of the primary information collection tasks. *Reconnaissance* are those operations undertaken to obtain, by visual observation or other detection methods, information about the activities and resources of an enemy or adversary, or to secure data concerning the meteorological, hydrographical or geographical characteristics and the indigenous population of a particular area. *Surveillance* is the systematic observation of aerospace, surface, or subsurface areas, places, persons, or things, by visual, aural, electronic, photographic, or other means. Surveillance involves observing an area to collect information. FM 3-55

**Risk Management (RM)** – *Risk management* is the process of identifying, assessing, and controlling risks arising from operational factors and making decisions that balance risk cost with mission benefits. ATP 5-19

**Rules of Engagement (ROE)** – Directives issued by competent military authority that delineate the circumstances and limitations under which United States forces will initiate and / or continue combat engagements with other forces encountered. JP 1-04

**Training Analysis Feedback Team**

## Glossary

-S-

**Situational Awareness (SA)** – Immediate knowledge of the conditions of the operation, constrained geographically and in time. ADRP 1-02

**Specific Information Requirement (SIR)** – All information elements the commander and staff require to successfully conduct operations; that is, all elements necessary to address the factors of METT-TC. For the purposes of the intelligence warfighting function and R&S synchronization, validated information requirements are requirements that fill a gap in knowledge and understanding of the area of interest (terrain and weather, and civil considerations) or the enemy. FM 2-0

**Situation Template (SITTEMP)** – A series of projections that portray, based on enemy doctrine, the most probable disposition and location of enemy forces within constraints imposed by weather and terrain. FM 2-01.3

**Situational Understanding (SU)** – The product of applying analysis and judgment to relevant information to determine the relationships among the operational and mission variables to facilitate decisionmaking. ADP 5-0

-T-

**Troop-Leading Procedure (TLP)** – A dynamic process used by small-unit leaders to analyze a mission, develop a plan, and prepare for an operation. ADP 5-0

**Tasking, Processing, Exploitation, and Dissemination (TPED)** – The Joint R&S concept of operations which addresses how all available collection assets are used to answer the Joint force's intelligence requirements. FM 3-55

-W-

**Warfighting Function (WFF)** – A group of tasks and systems (people, organizations, information, and processes) united by a common purpose that commanders use to accomplish missions and training objectives. ADRP 3-0



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